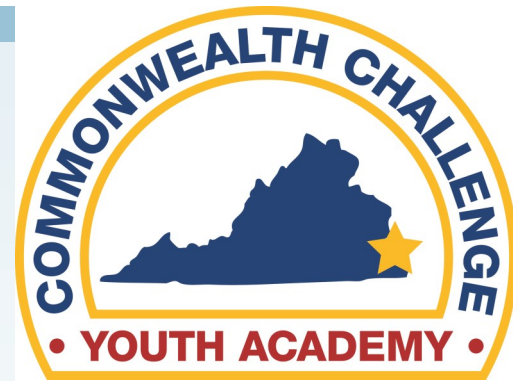


Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy
253 C Street, Camp Pendleton
Virginia Beach, VA 23451
www.vachallenge.org

January 2016
Class 44, Issue 3



Challenge Courier

A Message From our Director:

Dear Fellow Educators,

Class 44 is back in action after a well earned holiday pass with their families and are now in the home stretch. Graduation is a little more than a month away and there are still many more requirements to be satisfied including academic field trips, college and trade school visits, GED testing, intramural sports and completing the eight core component curriculum.

Recently Class 44 voted on their Student Council Association representatives. We are happy to announce that Cadet Johnson, 3rd Platoon from Onley, Va., was voted in as President, Cadet Frazier, 2nd Platoon, from Fredericksburg, Va. was named Vice President and Cadet Brown, R., 4th Platoon, from Richmond, Va. was named Secretary. In addition to the elected Cadets, several other Cadets took the initiative to run campaigns and present a speech to the entire class.

On January 11th, eleven of our Cadets earned Gold Phase, the highest individual award given to Cadets while in the residential phase. In order for Cadets to earn Gold Phase they must consistently demonstrate leadership, self discipline, mutual respect and outstanding behavior.

Class 44 remains committed to the core component of physical fitness they are currently participating in intramural flag football, soccer and intramural basketball. The competition, fitness and camaraderie learned from these activities will help them develop teamwork and character attributes that our Cadets can gain confidence from.

Academic success is another core component and a top priority here at Challenge. Cadets earn academic awards in each core subject, participate in extra curricula activities such as the Science Club and STEM Club. GED Cadets will test for the GED soon and Credit Recovery Cadets continue to earn High School credits towards their High School Diplomas. Cadets will also explore career opportunities at our upcoming career fair on Friday, February 19th, where over 20 Industry and Academic representatives will participate.

After graduating from the residential phase on March 5th, Class 44 will begin the twelve-month post-residential phase where each Cadet will continue to work with both their ChalleNGe career counselor and their mentor. During this phase,



Commonwealth Challenge Cadets meet with Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe and the First Lady of Virginia.



Cadets get to take part in many sports and activities, including Archery.





Commonwealth Challenge

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A Message From our Director, cont.

Cadets are required to be enrolled in high school or an institution of education such as college or trade school, be successfully employed for 30 hours or more per week, or join the military.

Thank you all for your continued support to the Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy. I look forward to continuing developing, building and strengthening our partnership as we look to serve the youth of Virginia.

E. MARK CHICOINE
Director



Cadets take a break between exercises at a Leadership obstacle course. Teamwork and morale are vital to Cadet success at Challenge.



Cadets get the chance to represent Challenge in competitions. Here are a couple of our basketball players getting ready to play.

Cadets Hone Job Skills to Earn Employment

My name is Ms. Veda King, and I am a Career Counselor for the Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy. I have been with the Academy since June 2015.

The focus of Career Counseling at Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy is to heighten awareness of career exploration, planning career goals, and personal career development. The Career Counseling Department is imperative for Cadet success at the Academy. Career Counseling assists in determining a Cadet's true potential, clear any doubts about the future, and support and motivate each cadet. I'm committed to teaching the necessary skills students need to explore their interests, and designing a realistic plan to help them achieve their personal, educational and career goals.

As a Career Counselor, I conduct classroom guidance lessons such as interviewing skills, resume writing, job application, and career assessments. I also meet with each cadet to provide individual counseling sessions.

In order to give the Cadets a chance to test out their skills, and meet potential employers, the Career Counseling Department organizes a Career Fair for each class.

Participating organizations include a variety of military, higher education, and industry representatives. Our current class's career fair will take place February 19th, and will feature approximately 20 representatives from area and statewide employers.

I also coordinate college visits to expose Cadets to the college experience. Cadets from Class 44 will have the opportunity to visit Tidewater Tech and Centura College in the coming months, and will be able to meet with their representatives to learn more about their educational options.

If you would like to learn more about the Career Counseling Department I can be contacted via email at vking@vachallenge.org or at 757-491-5932, ext. 249. I look forward to continue working on improving the future prospects of our Virginia youth.



Challenge Color Guard preparing to present at Tidewater Community College's graduation ceremony.



Commonwealth Challenge

Youth Academy



FEATURE: Cadets Nominate SCA Representatives; Johnson named President.

By: Alex Dye, Admissions and Public Affairs

CAMP PENDLETON, Va.- The Cadets of Commonwealth Challenge Class 44 have spoken, and a new SCA Cabinet was voted into office just before Pass in December 2015. Cadet Diamond Johnson, 3rd Platoon, was voted in as President, after impressing her classmates with a detailed speech.

Johnson, 16, from Onley, Va. and Nandua High School, brings passion, creativity and ideas to the position. A position she didn't even think she would get, at first.

"I didn't think I would make it," said Johnson. "Everyone was telling me I would get it, and I kept telling myself I wasn't going to get it, and they kept encouraging me, so I went for it."

With the Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy being a highly structured learning environment, Johnson sees her Presidency as an opportunity to give Cadets a chance to express their personality.

"I like to have fun," said Johnson. "I figured the things I'd bring to the table would be beneficial, fun and exciting. I want to turn it up a notch. I don't want it to be so serious all the time."

One of Johnson's first moves in office was to open a suggestion box, giving the Cadets a place to voice their opinions. Through this initiative, Johnson organized a Talent Show for any Cadets interested in displaying their best song, poem or other skill.

Johnson also collected theme ideas for the end of the year Awards Banquet, as well as scheduling an end of the year camp fire for Cadets to get together.

Coming into Challenge, Johnson wasn't very familiar with the program, as she had only heard of Challenge a week before Class 44 began. However, Johnson came in with goals in mind.

"I came to Challenge because I wanted to better myself," said Johnson. "Where I was from was small, and easy to get in trouble. I wanted to get out. I enjoy who I've become. Things that would bother me at the beginning of the program don't bother me, anymore. I love going to class."

Johnson has plenty of aspirations, once her residential phase at Challenge is up in March. She plans to resume her job at McDonald's, graduate high school, then pursue a career in dental hygiene. Johnson, an avid rapper, also hopes to pursue her passion in entertainment.

President Johnson is joined in the SCA Cabinet by Cadet Byron Frazier-Gibbs, Vice President, of Fredericksburg, Va. and Stafford Senior High School, and Cadet Rashawn Brown, Secretary, of Richmond, Va. and the Academy at Virginia Randolph.



*Commonwealth Challenge Class 44 SCA Representatives (from left to right):
Cadet Johnson, President
Cadet Frazier, Vice President
Cadet Brown, R., Secretary*



Commonwealth Challenge Class President Diamond Johnson participates in group work in math class.



Cadet Johnson (second from left) and her fellow 3rd Platoon mates pose for a picture at the Aviation Museum.



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Youth Academy



*Cadet Charboneau, Gold Phase
Mattaponi, Va.
Gloucester High School*



*Cadet Howard, Gold Phase
Norfolk, Va.
Granby High School*



*Cadet Hunter, Gold Phase
Hampton, Va.
Hampton High School*



*Cadet Jaime, Gold Phase
Virginia Beach, Va.
Princess Anne High School*



*Cadet Melone, Gold Phase
Ashburn, Va.
Loudoun Academy of Science*



*Cadet Orange, Gold Phase
Virginia Beach, Va.
Green Run High School*



*Cadet Ruffin, Gold Phase
Suffolk, Va.
King's Fork High School*



*Cadet Thomas C., Gold Phase
Virginia Beach, Va.
Kempsville High School*



*Cadet Williams C., Gold Phase
Smithfield, Va.
Poquoson High School*



*Cadet Williams K., Gold Phase
Danville, Va.
George Washington High School*



*Cadet Williams Z., Gold Phase
Virginia Beach, Va.
Tallwood High School*

*On behalf of all Challenge
Staff, Congratulations to
the first group of Gold
Phase Cadets!*



Commonwealth Challenge

Youth Academy



Cadets Earn Highest Honor in First Round of Gold Phase

By: Alex Dye, Admissions and Public Affairs

CAMP PENDLETON, Va. — 11 Cadets from the Commonwealth Challenge Youth Academy earned the highest honor for their sustained progress and leadership, during the first Gold Phase ceremony of Class 44 on Monday, January 11, 2016.

Of the 167 Cadets to start the program, these 11 Cadets have most exemplified the Eight Core Components of Challenge. The Components include Academic Excellence, Life Coping Skills, Job Skills, Health and Hygiene, Responsible Citizenship, Service to the Community, Leadership/Followership and Physical Fitness.

The Gold Phase Cadets hail from all corners of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Cadets to earn Gold Phase on January 11 include: **Cadet Charboneau** (Mattaponi, Va., Gloucester High School), **Cadet Howard** (Norfolk, Va., Granby High School), **Cadet Hunter** (Hampton, Va., Hampton High School), **Cadet Jaime** (Virginia Beach, Va., Princess Anne High School), **Cadet Melone** (Ashburn, Va., Loudoun Academy of Science), **Cadet Orange** (Virginia Beach, Va., Green Run High School), **Cadet Ruffin** (Suffolk, Va., King's Fork High School), **Cadet Thomas, C.** (Virginia Beach, Va., Kempsville High School), **Cadet Williams, C.** (Smithfield, Va., Poquoson High School), **Cadet Williams, K.** (Danville, Va., George Washington High School). and **Cadet Williams Z.** (Virginia Beach, Va., Tallwood High School).

Gold Phase occurs weekly during weeks 15-22 of the Challenge program. In order to earn Gold Phase, cadets must be outstanding in all phases of their daily life. The Cadets must be punctual, comply with physical fitness standards, be respectful to peers and staff, adhere to uniform and classroom standards and comply with honor codes.

As a reward for their achievements, Gold Phase Cadets are allowed even longer phone calls to family and friends. Cadets may also use CD players with five CDs, in their free time. Gold Phase Cadets may also be given the privilege to speak at Orientations, media interviews or other functions

Cadets also receive a gold rope, in order to show their status on their uniforms.



A Gold Phase Cadet views an exhibit at Historic Jamestowne.



Gold Phase Cadets stand at the position of attention (POA) with gold ropes in hand.



Staff congratulate Silver and Gold Phase Cadets on their achievements.



Commonwealth Challenge

Youth Academy



Cadets Keep Busy Academic Calendar

By: Erin Riddle, Science Teacher

CAMP PENDLETON, Va.- Class 44 has been busy with Science/Stem Club, going on weekend field trips to multiple sites that have educated the cadets in all areas including the Military Sciences, and now preparing for the upcoming GED test. Other cadets are continuing to work on their credit recovery high school courses through the "Edgenuity" Program and have been actively participating in extra time daily after school, as well as 2-4 additional hours every weekend.

In academic classes, the GED students will be taking the "GED Ready" test the third week of January, and the actual GED test around the middle of February. The cadets will continue to learn material on the GED in all academic areas, as well as beginning a comprehensive review of what has been learned since day one.

In addition to the weekend educational fieldtrips, the Science Club participated in an Ecological Assessment on the Camp Pendleton beach in November when the cadets completed a biotic survey, took water measurements of temperature, PH level and Turbidity. In December the Science Club dissected owl pellets and then contributed their findings/data to a national database called "Carolina Owl Pellet Interactive Database". In January the Science club visited the Planetarium in Virginia Beach which featured information about current nighttime constellations as well as a film about the "Science behind Black Holes".

To parents and educators, please encourage your student to study and review class materials and previous lessons nightly prior to sleeping. Scientific studies have stated the sleep activates the brain to transform short term memories into long term memory retrieval.

While some of the cadets may seem a bit apprehensive about their upcoming testing, we thank you for remaining supportive in your positive comments when speaking to him/her on the phone. We have really appreciated your supportive and encouraging comments on Facebook and throughout your nightly communications with student. Please continue to refrain from negative phone calls, do not schedule appointments during the week of GED testing, and always let your cadet know that you believe in him/her. It is the time in the program when the high school Credit Recovery cadets are realizing that they have a pending deadline to complete academic classes.

Caregivers, please continue to encourage your cadet to work efficiently throughout the day, and utilize extra class time as much as possible. Our daily motto for cadets in both programs is, "Stay positive and focused!"



Members of the Class 44 Science Club at the oceanfront with Ms. Riddle.



Science Club members taking samples of ocean water for analysis.



Cadets intensely focus in class, especially as it gets closer to testing time.



Commonwealth Challenge

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The Cadets have a packed schedule over the next couple months, as they wind down to the end of the residential phase. Cadets will be preparing for testing, exploring their future at a career fair, spending time with loved ones on Family Day, and much more. Below is a schedule of upcoming events.

JANUARY

30 Jan: Nauticus Field Trip

FEBRUARY

06 Feb: Family Day

08-19 Feb: GED Testing

10-12 Feb: Tidewater Tech Tour

19 Feb: Parent Workshop/Career Fair

20 Feb: Mentor Workshop

21 Feb: Field Trip to Mount Lebanon

23 Feb: Awards Banquet

21-27 Feb: Service to Community Opportunities

29 Feb: Field Trip (Bowling/Skating)

MARCH

01 Mar: Field Trip (Bowling/Skating)

04 Mar: Graduation Rehearsal

05 Mar: CLASS 44 GRADUATION

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