



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Angela Watson, [Watsona@pa.gov](mailto:Watsona@pa.gov)

## **Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy Graduates First Class of 2025**

**Annville, PA –** Today, 52 cadets from the Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy (KSCA) graduated from the 22-week residential phase of the program on their way to a brighter future.

The KSCA is designed to give challenged teens a second chance at obtaining their basic education and the opportunity to learn leadership, self-discipline, and responsibility while working toward finishing their education and building a better life.

In addition to their academic work, the cadets also attended classes that help prepare them for a future career, such as creating resumes, National Guard Employment Network accounts, and Indeed accounts. Other career-focused opportunities included access to thousands of certifications through IBM Workspace and Coursera.

Academy programming also introduced the cadets to the importance of community service. Cadets learned the value of giving back by volunteering at food banks, assisting with the annual March for the Fallen, and maintaining cemetery, park, and military ceremony grounds.

The cadets will now complete a 24-month mentorship phase of the program throughout various communities while they continue their education, join the workforce, or enter the military.

“This class of cadets brought an energy and level of focus that was extremely impressive,” said **Maj. Gen. John Pippy, Pennsylvania’s adjutant general and head of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA)**. “That is exemplified by the remarkable 88 percent retention rate since day-one of the program. The caliber of cadets, level of training, and incredibly committed staff all equate to the success that this program has been enjoying, and the great reputation the academy is developing. Best wishes to these young men and women as they enter the mentorship phase of the program.”

The opening of the academy at Fort Indiantown Gap (FTIG) in Lebanon County in July 2022 formally established the National Guard Bureau’s Youth ChalleNGe Program in Pennsylvania.

The program is open to 16- to 18-year-old Pennsylvania residents who are failing to progress in high school or may not be on a clear path to graduating. Applicants must be willing to be drug free, free of felony convictions, and voluntarily commit to the program. The first 22-weeks of the program consists of residential training at FTIG followed by 24-months of mentorship back in their home communities.

“It was an honor to be invited to speak at Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy graduation, celebrating the achievements and bright futures of these remarkable students,” said **Dr. George M. Schwartz (Brig. Gen. Ret.)**. “I am deeply inspired by their resilience and determination, and enjoyed sharing a message of encouragement as they embark on this exciting new chapter of their lives.”

The KSCA is a joint effort between the DMVA and the National Guard Bureau in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

The KSCA is now accepting applications for its next class, slated to begin in July.

For detailed eligibility requirements and to begin the application process, visit our [Eligibility and Admissions](#) webpage. If you prefer to have an application mailed to you or would like to talk with someone about this program, please contact the academy by emailing [RA-MVPACHALLENGE@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVPACHALLENGE@pa.gov), or by calling 717-861-7767 or 717-820-2936.

Cadets are introduced to the military structure and focus on eight core components: Academic Excellence; Physical Fitness; Leadership/Followership; Responsible Citizenship; Job Skills; Service to the Community; Health and Hygiene; and Life Coping Skills. Graduates often receive high school credits, credentials, or a GED. There is no tuition cost to attend. Meals, housing, uniforms, and school supplies are provided at no charge.

Since the program's inception in 1993, more than 215,000 young people have completed the ChalleNGe program nationwide. This award-winning program has been recognized as one of the nation's most effective and cost-efficient programs for targeting youth who have dropped out of school or are at the greatest risk for not satisfactorily progressing, are unemployed or under employed.

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program currently operates NGYCP has 37 Youth ChalleNGe and in 29 states and territories. The program is both federally and state funded.

More details about Pennsylvania's KSCA can be found at [Keystone State ChalleNGe Academy](#).

**NOTE:** Photos and video from this event will be available at [www.pacast.com](http://www.pacast.com).

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