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White Paper: Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy (Executive Summary)

Since 1999 the **Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy** (MYCA) has graduated over 3,000 Cadets. The 17-month program (five month residential) is designed to intervene and assist 16-18 year old high school dropouts in reclaiming their lives. The program is free to applicants, has an educational and life skills component, is administered by the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (Michigan National Guard) and funded through a Federal (75%) / State (25%) cost share program. The MYCA is located at the VA Medical Center in Battle Creek, Michigan, and leads, trains, and mentors at-risk youth so they may become productive, employed, and law-abiding citizens. This program has been recognized as one of the state's most effective for targeting youth who are at the greatest risk for delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and criminal involvement.

Program Information

- Phase one of the MYCA consists of a five month residential program in a quasi-military environment focusing on eight core components that includes: Academic Excellence (seven Marshall High School & 19 Kellogg Community College credits), Life Coping Skills, Job Skills, Health and Hygiene, Responsible Citizenship, Service to the Community, Leadership, and Physical Fitness.

- Phase two of the MYCA consists of a Post-Residential mentoring program that tracks graduates as they utilize newly learned life coping skills, academic excellence, vocational skills, community service awareness, and employment preparedness. Graduates are encouraged to seek placement or completion of one of the following during the 12-month phase:

    - Return to community high school for diploma completion
    - Credit recovery for awarding of high school diploma
    - GED completion
    - Enrollment in two or four-year degree producing college/university
    - Enrollment in vocational tech / trades licensing program
    - Small business development (entrepreneurial)
    - Employment
    - Military induction
    - Acceptance to the Michigan Job ChalleNGe Program

- According to the 2012 MDRC study, 59% of graduates earned a GED or high school diploma, 45% joined the workforce, 41% continued their education, and 7% joined the military.

- The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is recognized by the National Governors' Association, State Legislatures, and the National Guard Association of the United States; all of which have acknowledged the youth challenge programs nationally with legislative resolutions supporting their efforts.

Dream • Believe • Achieve

For information on the MYCA, please call 800-372-0523 or visit MIYCP.ORG

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Graduate Demographic

- 16-18 year old Michigan resident (male & female)
- At-risk student: a student who requires temporary or ongoing intervention in order to develop life-coping skills and succeed academically
- Individuals committed to changing their lives
- Non-traditional learners
- Academically capable of achieving Michigan Merit Curriculum Standards or GED
- Students from all socioeconomic backgrounds
- Applicants from all ten Michigan Economic Development Regions
- Students with Individualized Education Program (IEP) - will accept up to 25 individuals per class
- Will evaluate and accept applicants on a case-by-case basis that have exhibited the following behavior: running away, self-harm or violent tendencies - normally will not accept severe cases of these or those that have all three traits
- Those with an interest in the military
- Ability to pass drug screening

What the MYCA is not

- Not a treatment facility
- Not a detention center – cannot accept applicants that are awaiting sentencing, indictment, or conviction of a felony charge or on probation (will accept some non-felony juvenile offenses & non-reporting probation)
- Not resourced to accept Cognitively Impaired (CI) applicants
- Not resourced to accept all Emotionally Impaired (EI) applicants (applications evaluated individually prior to acceptance)

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