

## ► TABLE OF CONTENTS ◀

Page 2.	Class Advisor Contact Information Sheet
Page 3.	Section 1. MYCA Program Overview – Pre-Challenge
Page 4.	ChalleNGe, 8 Core Components
Page 5.	High School and College credits
Page 6.	Section 2. Academics – TABE and ASVAB test
Page 7.	GED Requirements
Page 8.	Section 3. Role of the Mentor
Page 10.	Mentor Reporting
Page 11 – 20.	Section 4. Post residential Action Plan (PRAP)
Page 21.	Section 5. Placement Requirements – Background, Criteria
Page 22, 23.	Obtaining Placement
Page 24.	Verification, Guidelines for Parents/Mentors
Page 26.	Appendix A. Glossary
Page 28.	Appendix B. Needs of Youth
Page 30.	Appendix C. Keys of Success
Page 32.	Appendix D. Role of a Mentor
Page 33.	Appendix E. Stages of a mentor Relationship
Page 36.	Appendix F. Position Description Cadet
Page 37.	Appendix G. Position Description Mentor
Page 38.	Appendix H. Cadet Mentor Agreement
Page 39.	Guidelines for Parents
Page 40.	References, Resources, Websites
Page 41.	Movies and Recommended Reading List

## Class Advisor Contact Information

The Class Advisors are your primary point of contact for the Academy. They are responsible for providing the best support possible to your cadet and to you. Class Advisors begin their involvement during the application process and develop a relationship with their cadets during the residential phase. During the residential phase is also when they begin to develop a relationship with their cadets mentors.

Class Advisor caseload is assigned alphabetically using the cadets last name. The assignments and each Class Advisors contact information is provided below.

Cadets with last name beginning with A – F:

Chris McNees  
269-968-1003.1                      [mcneesc@michigan.gov](mailto:mcneesc@michigan.gov)

Cadets with last name beginning with G – O:

Katie Cassini  
269-968-1134                      [cassinik@michigan.gov](mailto:cassinik@michigan.gov)

Cadets with last name beginning with P – Z:

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## Section 1. Michigan's youth ChalleNGe Academy Program Overview

The Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy (MYCA, the Academy) is a secondary level education opportunity for Michigan's 16-18 year old at-risk youth. For MYCA purposes, "at-risk" is defined as already dropped out or dismissed from high school, or enrolled/attending but will not graduate within the prescribed four years. The ChalleNGe Program offers its Cadets (students) a variety of educational and vocational opportunities as well as developing life skills necessary to become successful members of their communities.

All MYCA cadets are volunteers. All cadets complete a somewhat lengthy application and screening process. Application includes attending an eligibility seminar and interview, submitting a paper application along with copies of supporting documents (birth certificate, ssn card, etc), 2 completed mentor applications, satisfactorily completing a selection board, and attending an open house with tour of the facilities. All these steps are mandatory and typically take place over at least several weeks. At any time an applicant can withdraw their application (whether or not their parent/guardian agrees) and the Academy is under no obligation to accept any applicant. Applicants are not eligible if they have any felony convictions, they are on supervised/reporting probation, are not a resident of the state of Michigan, and if they do not complete the application process. If the admissions people feel a candidate is not motivated or suited to succeed here, they may not be selected to attend. If the admissions people are made aware in any way that an applicant is being forced to attend, we will not accept that applicant. Applicants have several opportunities to talk to current cadets and graduates to ask questions and get answers from someone they can relate to. We want the applicants to understand as best as is possible what they will commit to and experience. If they want to attend, knowing what to expect, their odds of completing the residential phase are very good. Success here is largely based on the individual wanting to be here and wanting to make a change for him/herself.

The Academy operates within a military structure, but is not a military prep school, or "boot camp". Many of our applicants and cadets will never be eligible for military service for various reasons. Military style organization helps staff and cadets in many ways including developing leadership/followership skills, teamwork, responsibility, respect for authority, etc.

MYCA is a 3 phase, 17-month training program. The first two weeks (first phase) is called Pre-Challenge. Second phase is the 20 week long Challenge. Third phase is a 12 month period called the Post Residential phase, or Post-Res. Each phase is explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

**Pre-Challenge** is conducted at Fort Custer Training Center in Battle Creek. Pre-Challenge is intended to be the most demanding 2 weeks of a cadet's life. It is as close to military recruit training as we can make it without the emphasis on the purpose of the military. The days are long, mental and physical activities are rigorous and personal time is very limited. Wake up is at 5:15 am and candidates are in some form of instruction, practicing what has already been taught, or moving from one event to the next, until lights out at 9:30 pm. Emphasis is on preparing the "candidates" for the Challenge Phase that will follow. Staff members make clear what the requirements and expectations are, how to meet the requirements and expectations, and hold the candidates accountable. Candidates do only what they are ordered to do or at least given permission to do. Everything is to be done in a specific way. There are no alibis or excuses and little if any grey areas. Any time a candidate does not do as directed, or does something without direction or permission they are assigned a consequence – usually some type of physical exercise or running. There are no telephones, television, video games or games of any type. Mail (snail mail) is the only contact with other than staff people. One graduate described Pre-Challenge as "being sore, tired and hungry the whole time. But it was worth it." Pre-Challenge is where the cadet's attitude and desire to complete the twenty-week Challenge phase are tested and assessed. If the cadet graduates from the pre-challenge phase he/she will earn the title "cadet" and is eligible to attend the 20 week Challenge phase. Pre-Challenge ends with a formal completion ceremony with parents and mentors welcome to attend.

**Challenge phase** is conducted mainly on the grounds of the VA Medical Center in Battle Creek. During the Challenge phase, cadets will use and further develop the attitudes and skills introduced in Pre-Challenge. Days begin at around 5:15 am and cadets are active until lights out at around 9 pm. Cadets participate in daily physical training and classroom instruction in math, science, social studies, english and a first year college computer class. Additionally, each cadet receives training/classes in various life skill topics, and job skill topics. Three nights each week are spent at the Calhoun Area Technical Center attending classes in a vocational skill such as carpentry, auto repair, culinary arts or others. Evenings and weekends are spent doing homework, preparing for inspections (personal, living quarters and drill and ceremony), and performing service to community projects. Cadets set goals for themselves during this phase and develop their own Post Residential Action Plan (PRAP). PRAP will be covered in more detail in Handbook Section 4. Graduation requirements include completing 40 hours of service to community activities, completing their PRAP, demonstrating proper/expected behavior, obtaining placement (Handbook Section 5) and demonstrating an acceptable level of understanding of **all** of the 8 Core Components (see Handbook Section W). Failing to meet minimum standards in any of the 8 Core Components can be cause for dismissal and not graduating. Upon successful completion of ChalleNGe, cadets enter the third phase - the 12-month Post Resident Phase.

**Post-Res** Cadets work toward the achievement of their PRAP goals with the support of their Mentor, family and MYCA staff members. Continuing their education in some way, entering the work force, military service, or a combination of these become part of their daily activity. Cadets are still active, enrolled members of the Academy until the end of the 12 month Post Res period. Cadets are expected to participate in the mentoring relationship, pursue their goals as outlined in their PRAP, have consistent, monthly contact with their Class Advisor, and uphold the standards of the Academy. Post Res is a different type of challenge for the cadets. Can and will they use what they have learned during the Residential Phase and continue to develop into successful, productive young adults? Preparing them to meet this challenge is what the Academy is all about.

The goal of the Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy is to produce men and women who are well rounded in many areas and ready to become productive members of society. The ChalleNGe program is designed to help the cadets to develop skills in and gain appreciation of what are termed the “8 Core Components”. Each cadet must perform to the best of their ability and will be evaluated in each of the 8 Core Components. Failure to demonstrate a certain amount of skill and understanding in any of the 8 Core Components can be reason for dismissal.

### **The Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy 8 Core Components are:**

1. LIFE COPING SKILLS - Understanding basic economic and personal financial management as well as demonstrating knowledge and understanding of coping strategies.
2. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE- Increase educational level or obtain the G.E.D.; understand the importance of continuing education; achieve academically to the best of their ability.
3. SKILLS TRAINING - Complete the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB); conduct personal career research; demonstrate knowledge and skills required to seek and obtain employment; demonstrate knowledge of skills required to maintain employment.
4. RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP – Demonstrate basic understanding of the Constitution and the U.S. government; participate in student government; demonstrate an understanding of election/voting process; 18-year-old males will register with the Selective Service Board.
5. LEADERSHIP/FOLLOWERSHIP – Hold a leadership position; show evidence of motivation and self-discipline; maintain personal living area; demonstrate good citizen values; function as a team member.

6. HEALTH/HYGIENE – Demonstrate an understanding of the effects of substance abuse; demonstrate understanding of proper nutrition; demonstrate understanding of sexually transmitted disease; demonstrate healthy living behaviors.
7. PHYSICAL FITNESS – Participate in physical fitness training; understand how to improve level of fitness; demonstrate knowledge of fitness concepts.
8. SERVICE TO COMMUNITY – Participate in planning of service to community project; complete 40 hours of service to community; demonstrate awareness of community values.

Training is provided in each of the Core Components. In most cases there is daily opportunity to explore, apply and develop more thorough understanding and better skill in these areas. Academy staff members, particularly the Cadre are good role models for the behaviors associated with the 8 Core Components.

Academic Excellence is one of the 8 Core Components – for many of our cadets it is the one they are most interested in. As mentioned previously, the cadets attend classes Monday – Friday on the Battle Creek Public Schools schedule. **Cadets who complete the residential phase, meet the requirements in the 8 Core Components, and pass all their classes will earn high school credits from Battle Creek Public School System, and up to 15 college credits from Kalamazoo Valley Community College.** Credits are awarded as shown below.

Battle Creek Public Schools credits

Math	.5 cr
Science	.5 cr
Social Studies	.5 cr
English	.5 cr
Physical Edu	.5 cr
Vocational class	1.5 cr
Total	4 cr

Kalamazoo Valley Community College credits

Health & Hygiene	WPE 101	2 SH
General Phys Ed	WPE 999	2 SH
Safety & First Aid	WPE 112	2 SH
Military Science/Leadership	ECR 999	3 SH
Nutrition/Disease Prevention	NUT 130	2 SH
Job Search Skills	BUS 250	2 SH
Computers	CIS 100	2 SH
Total		15 SH

High school credits are awarded by Battle Creek Public Schools, and college credits are awarded by Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The Academy does not award any of these credits. Transcripts for these credits must be requested from, and are supplied by the institution that awards the credits.

## **Academic Assessment**

Academically, the cadets are expected to advance their ability as far as possible in their time at the Academy. Cadets are tested in a couple of ways to identify their ability and to measure how far they progress while here. Tests include the GED (pre-tests and actual tests), Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test, and TABE test. Cadets are tested at various times during the residential phase to track progress, as well as to predict whether a given cadet will pass the GED exams. Each of these tests will be examined in the following paragraphs.

### **TABE test**

The TABE test is the first of the assessment tests and is given during the second week of the residential phase. It is a standardized test used to gauge a person's skill level in specific subjects. Cadets are tested again at the end of the residential phase to measure progress.

Math and reading are the subjects tested. Scores will be a number that indicates the grade level and month the person is working at. For example, a math score of 5.7 indicates the person is working at fifth grade, seventh month in math. Each cycle we will have cadets reading and with math skills well below fifth grade, as well as up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and everywhere in between. Our teachers and other staff members get an idea of how difficult class work will be for some of the cadets based on this test.

### **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)**

Each cadet will have the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test. The ASVAB serves 2 purposes for Academy cadets. First, it provides an indication of what vocational fields each cadet is suited for or has some ability in; second, it gives an indication of a cadet's ability to read and comprehend and their math skills. Counselors and other staff members can use this information to help a cadet decide on a career path and identify placement options.

The ASVAB has 10 sections. There are 2 sections involving math skills, 2 sections dealing with reading and word comprehension, and 6 sections that assess present knowledge and skills in vocational fields such as mechanics, tools and their uses, science, etc.

ASVAB is not a "pass/fail" test. Scores are in percentile form. For example, a score of 40 in the science field means that person scored better than 39 people out of 100 who took that same version of the test. In another example, an AFQT score of 55 means that this person scored better than 54 out of 100 in the math and reading comprehension areas.

Cadets pay most attention to the AFQT. This score is what the military uses to determine if the person is eligible for enlistment. Cadets will often say they "passed" or "failed" the ASVAB based on how high this score is. Each military service sets a minimum score they will accept. If a cadet scores below the minimum a branch of service they are interested in joining will accept, they consider that to mean they failed. In reality it means they scored lower than some other people.

AFQT scores are an indication of the math skill and reading ability of a cadet. Scores in the 30's indicate math and reading ability somewhere around the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The higher the score, the more capable a person is in using math skills and reading, which indicates a higher grade level.

GED pre-tests are given in all of the classes at least 3 times during the residential phase. Ideally the scores will get higher the later in the cycle we go. As each teacher covers more of the material on the GED and the cadets are exposed to the material longer, scores should increase. GED pre-tests are approximately half of the questions on the actual tests and with half of the time allowed for the actual tests. Late in the cycle, the cadets will take a practice GED using actual GED tests that are no longer used, with the full time allowed. All these practice tests indicate progress in the material as well as

predict how each cadet will score on the actual exam. The actual GED exam will be taken the last week they are here.

A fairly accurate picture of a cadet's academic ability becomes clear when ASVAB scores are compared to the TABE test scores, pre-GED test scores and a cadets class grades.

### **GED Requirements**

Passing and earning the GED has two requirements. Minimum score needed to pass each of the 5 tests that make up the GED exam is 410. Additionally, to pass the whole GED exam requires an average score of 450 on all 5 exams. A person can score 410 on all 5 exams and not earn the GED because the average is not 450 or higher even though they passed each individual test. A person who scores 410 on one test must make up the additional 40 points with higher scores on one or more of the other tests so the average for all tests is 450 or higher.

MYCA is the only place in the state of Michigan where a young person can earn and receive a GED without having to wait for their peers at the high school to graduate. MYCA is an authorized exception to this GED policy in the state of Michigan. Persons other than MYCA graduates who pass the GED exams younger than 18 years of age will not receive the GED certificate until their peers graduate high school.

Cadets will take the GED exams the last week of the residential phase. Results are typically not available for 3-4 weeks. Cadets who pass the GED will receive the certificate in the mail directly from the State. Cadets who do not pass the exam or do not take all of the tests may have to request the results or transcripts. Transcripts can be requested from the testing site or directly from the State of Michigan.

Cadets are not forced to take all of the tests. If they intend to pursue a high school diploma they are typically recommended to take 4 of the 5 subject tests. Ideally, they pass the tests. If pursuing the diploma does not work out, passing the last GED subject exam will earn them the certificate. In this way, all cadets are primed to earn either the diploma or the GED. The goal is to help them earn a high school level credential.

#### **\*\*Note\*\***

The most recent address on file or that your cadet provides on the GED test paperwork is where the results or certificate will be sent. Remind your cadet to make sure the address on file is current before taking the exams.

## **Role of the Mentor**

Mentor's are to be a role model, friend and advocate to a Cadet. Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between a youth and a caring, interested adult who consistently supports and guides them. Mentoring begins during the Residential Phase (Pre-ChalleNGe and ChalleNGe), and continues throughout the 12 months of Post-Res, and hopefully beyond. In some cases, the mentor is the only positive adult in the cadet's life.

During the Residential Phase, the Mentor develops and/or builds on their relationship with their cadet primarily by mail and during visitations. Developing a strong relationship will allow the mentor to gain the trust and respect of their cadet. Trust and respect will make it possible for the mentor to influence, and guide the cadet during the Post-Res phase. Without establishing a sound relationship first, the cadet will be less willing to discuss their plans, concerns and decisions with the mentor in the future. Even if you knew the cadet well prior to them attending the Academy, they will have changed quite a bit and so will you. Please do not take the relationship for granted – it is the key to how much the cadet will allow you into their life.

### **Mentor requirements during Residential Phase include:**

- (1) Cadets will write letters to their mentor at least every 2 weeks beginning week 5. Mentors need to write their cadet at least as frequently. Letters do not need to be lengthy, just encouraging and showing interest in the cadet. A short note, inspirational quote, a joke or cartoon are good substitutes, though cadets need to know what you are thinking and asking as well.
- (2) Visitations are very important to the cadets. Contact with people other than MYCA staff members is not often, and the cadets look forward to these visits. If you are not able to attend a visitation, we request you inform your cadet as soon as possible, and inform your cadets Class Advisor as well. Keeping your cadet and our staff informed will make your absence less of a problem for the cadet. Frequent communication with your cadet will go a long way toward establishing an effective mentoring relationship. Please make every attempt to attend visitations.
- (3) Attend the mentor training session. This is mandatory for the primary mentor, and recommended for the secondary mentor.
- (4) Help your cadet plan for their future as much as they are willing to let you. Help them identify and compare options.
- (5) Help your cadet obtain placement, if needed.

Mentoring is a bit different during the Post-Res phase. It should be more direct and personal. You are still their advocate, guide, and hopefully a person they will talk to. It's easier from the standpoint that you now have more opportunity for face to face contact and to share activities with your cadet.

### **Mentor requirements during Post-Res include:**

- (1) at least 4 contacts each month with your cadet
- (2) at least 2 of these contacts are face to face
- (3) helping the cadet to follow their PRAP and adjust or revise it when needed
- (4) send us a Monthly Mentor Assessment (MMA) at the end of each month. The MMA is a sort of "progress report" on how your cadet is adjusting to being home, and how your mentoring relationship is developing. Post-Res staff members review every MMA to see if or how we can support the cadet and you as their mentor. Your cadet has earned whatever support we can provide, and so have you.
- (5) Contact your Class Advisor with any questions, concerns or just to discuss how things are going.

As a Mentor you will support your Cadet in maintaining the basic values and lifestyle changes introduced in the Residential Phase of the Academy while transitioning back to their home environment

and a more common lifestyle. The goal of the Post Residential Phase is to build on their accomplishments during the residential phase, and to encourage and support continued growth and positive change. A Mentor is essential to assist these young adults to develop and mature. Young adults and youth will decide who they will follow or accept advice from. Many begin to understand while they are here at the Academy that the people they allowed to influence them in the past were taking them in a direction they really did not want to go. The Academy shows them an alternative, and you as their mentor are a big part of the alternative when they return home. Consider that all the old influences and distractions are waiting for the cadets when they return home. You are the closest person that can help them remember what they have learned and help them to choose to be as successful and productive as they are capable of.

**Confidentiality.** Part of gaining your cadets trust and respect is based on what and how much they think you will tell others about your conversations and activities with them. Cadets are taught during mentee training that you as their mentor are obligated to report any time your mentee is involved in illegal activity, has harmed themselves or others, or is planning to do so. Your cadet should expect you to report those situations to their parents, the Academy or other authorities as necessary and proper. We strongly recommend you not discuss any other topics or situations with other people unless your cadet agrees.

**Resources.** You may encounter situations where your cadet needs a temporary place to live, food, medical attention, substance abuse treatment or any number of other things. Each county in the state of Michigan has resources, though no 2 counties may offer the same resources or at the same level. Many of the resources you will be able to locate are on the internet. A different method is to dial “211” on any telephone. This telephone number accesses a whole network of resources and is staffed by people who will help you and your cadet to access the resources needed.

## Mentor Reporting

Beginning the month after you attend training, you will submit a Monthly Mentor Assessment (MMA) to your Class Advisor each month. The MMA is similar to a progress report. Reporting this information serves 2 main purposes:

- (1) Information provided on the MMA is reported to the National Guard Bureau (NGB) in Washington DC electronically by Academy staff members, specifically the Class Advisors. As mentioned earlier, what the cadets are doing and how well during Post Res is the measure of how effective the Academy is in helping them become productive, successful citizens. If the program succeeds in helping the cadets, funding will continue so other youth will have the opportunity. Your MMA's supply that information.
- (2) Your remarks and the information supplied by you as mentor give Academy staff members indication of how much involvement and help from us is needed. Our staff members will support our cadets and their mentors in any way possible if we know there is a need and it is appropriate for us to be involved.

Information required is detailed on the form. Please verify the information periodically rather than assume nothing has changed. Provide all the information. All the information is required to be reported to NGB.

Assessments can be submitted by mail, fax, or email. If you prefer the email version, contact your Class Advisor.

Submit the form at the end of each month. Provide the best, most accurate information possible. Even if your cadet is not acting very well, or is not maintaining their placement, put accurate information on the form. Indicating they are having problems is one way for us to know they need help.

Our Class Advisors average case load consists of approximately 60 cadets in Post Res, 40 cadets in the Residential phase, and however many are applying for the upcoming class. In other words, they are very busy people. You can help us immensely by submitting the MMA on time.

If we do not get the information to verify placement from you, the Class Advisors are required to contact the cadets employer or school to verify placement. Doing so takes considerable time and resources that can be better used to help the cadets. Some businesses and schools are not willing to provide this information to us or may charge a fee. The Academy does not have the resources to obtain the information in this case. Please submit your MMA with accurate information and on time.

## Post Residential Action Plan

Cadets are required to properly complete a Post Residential Action Plan (PRAP) in order to graduate. The PRAP is essentially a set of goals they will set for themselves to accomplish during the Post Res period and possibly beyond. While preparing the PRAP they will learn the process of setting proper goals, monitoring progress toward a goal, adjusting their activity needed to accomplish the goal when necessary, and establishing new goals. Cadets will receive guidance throughout the Residential phase and will hopefully discuss this plan with you as their mentor. As mentor during the Post Res period, we expect you to help your cadet work their plan, adjust it when necessary and to hold them accountable to their goals.

Cadets must set their own goals and determine how they will work towards them. If someone else sets the goal or dictates how they are to work towards it, they will not accept ownership for the goal or the plan. Help them to identify and compare options, and help them to decide for themselves how to pursue their goals. Then help them work through the process.

The following pages are a template or example of the PRAP forms. Not all pages are included here. These examples are provided so you can see the format.

PRAP is viewable online at <https://achievement.ngcp.org>. A username and password will be provided by contacting Mike Krajnik at [krajnikm@michigan.gov](mailto:krajnikm@michigan.gov), or by contacting your cadet's Class Advisor. We encourage you to get involved in helping your cadet develop their goals and plans as soon as possible. If you do not have a computer or internet capability, public libraries have computers with internet access for free. Various email sources such as Yahoo.com allow you to establish an account for free. Getting involved with this is another way to help establish the relationship that is a critical part of effective mentoring.

**Cadet Name: Sample**



## Post-Residential Action Plan

### **Goal Development** **and** **Action Planning Workbook**

**“Unless youth leave ChalleNGe with a realistic Cadet Action Plan and the ability to continue to plan effectively throughout their lives, they are unable to maximize this second chance. To be successful, ChalleNGe youth must graduate from the program with a working plan, a functional skill set for planning, and guidance in the Cadet Action Plan implementation.”**

## **Post-Residential Action Plan**

The Cadet P-RAP is a comprehensive goal setting application that guides each cadet to a quality career and residential placement strategy by developing specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound goals and steps. Satisfactory completion of the P-RAP is a **requirement** for graduation. A satisfactory P-RAP will contain the following information:

- **Short-term goals: Academic Excellence, Service to the Community, Physical Fitness, Job Skills, Life Coping Skills, Leadership/Followership, Health & Hygiene, Citizenship** (goal, methods, barriers, resources, strategies).
- **Long-term Career Goal:** (goal, methods, barriers, resources, strategies).
- **Intermediate Primary Post-Residential Plan:** Primary Goal, Housing, Transportation, Physical Health (goal, methods, barriers, resources, strategies).
- **Intermediate Alternate Post-Residential Plan:** Alternate Goal, Housing, Transportation, Physical Health (goal, methods, barriers, resources, strategies).
- **Other Goals:** These may include an alternative placement, transportation, or housing goals.
- **Examining Placement Options** (3 options, advantages, disadvantages, resources)
- **Transition Goal, if needed** (goal, methods, barriers, resources, strategies).
- **Post-Residential Calendar:** A detailed, day-by-day description of placement-oriented activities for each of the first \_\_\_\_ days of the Post-Residential Phase.

## S.M.A.R.T Goals

The National Guard ChalleNGe Program is committed to the education of young people. Success in this program requires personal commitment, hard work, and a clear focus. All cadets will need to identify a goal for each of the Eight Core Components as a “road map” to guide you towards successful completion of this program. Each goal completed will be a S.M.A.R.T. goal. S.M.A.R.T. goals are:

**Specific**: Each goal will be well-detailed to show an understanding of *exactly* what the cadet is looking to achieve and what will be needed to achieve it.

**Measurable**: Each goal will allow the cadet to see progress on a certain scale at certain intervals.

**Attainable**: Each goal will reflect a sense of planning to help mark a clear path for achievement.

**Realistic**: Each goal will take in to consideration the cadet’s personal strengths and weaknesses in order to create reachable objectives the cadet is serious about pursuing.

**Time-bound**: Each goal will have a reasonable time limit and/or time-based regimen that will require commitment and sacrifice to attain

Each Cadet must answer the following questions about their goal:

1. **What is my goal? (Outcomes)**
2. **What steps are necessary to achieve my goal? (Methods)**
3. **What might keep you from reaching my goal? (Barriers)**
4. **Who or what will support me in reaching my goal? (Resources)**
5. **What steps will I take to overcome what is keeping me from reaching my goal? (Strategies)**

## SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL GOALS

The P-RAP is a living document. Each cadet will develop a S.M.A.R.T. goal based on each of the eight Core Components and explain the elements that both help or hinder each goal.

<b>1. Academic Excellence</b>	<b>Date</b>
<p>All cadets attend academic classes preparing them for testing for the General Education Development (GED) diploma. Evaluation of Cadets' progress during the Residential Phase is measured using the survey or the complete battery of Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) scale scores. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•TABE Reading growth</li> <li>•TABE Total Math growth</li> <li>•GED/High School Diploma success</li> <li>•Other test scores</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Outcome:</b> What is your goal?</p>	
<p><b>Methods:</b> Explain the steps necessary to achieve your goal.</p>	
<p><b>Barriers:</b> Explain what will keep you from reaching your goal.</p>	
<p><b>Resources:</b> Who or what will support you in reaching your goal?</p>	
<p><b>Strategies:</b> Explain what steps you will take to overcome what might keep you from reaching your goal.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6. Job Skills</b></p> <p>Career exploration and preparation are accomplished through career assessment, interest inventories, and skills training.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Job Search Skills</b></li> <li>• <b>Job Applications</b></li> <li>• <b>Resume Preparation</b></li> <li>• <b>Job Interview Skills</b></li> <li>• <b>Work Ethics</b></li> <li>• <b>Educational Alternatives</b></li> <li>• <b>Financial Aid</b></li> <li>• <b>School Selection</b></li> <li>• <b>School Application</b></li> <li>• <b>Orientation to Military Branches</b></li> <li>• <b>Military Benefits</b></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Outcome:</b> What is your goal</p>	
<p><b>Methods:</b> Explain the steps necessary to achieve your goal.</p>	
<p><b>Barriers:</b> Explain what will keep you from reaching your goal.</p>	
<p><b>Resources:</b> Who or what will support you in reaching your goal?</p>	
<p><b>Strategies:</b> Explain what steps you will take to overcome what might keep you from reaching your goal.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7. Health &amp; Hygiene</b></p> <p>Cadets attend classes on hygiene, nutrition, and substance abuse prevention. Courses in human sexuality, family planning, and communicable diseases will help cadets learn the physical and emotional effects of their decisions as they make their way into society. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hygiene</li> <li>•Substance Abuse Prevention</li> <li>•Nutrition</li> <li>•Safe Lifestyle Choices</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date</b></p>
<p><b>Outcome:</b> What is your goal?</p>	
<p><b>Method:</b> Explain the steps necessary to achieve your goal.</p>	
<p><b>Barriers:</b> Explain what will keep you from reaching your goal.</p>	
<p><b>Resources:</b> Who or what will support you in reaching your goal?</p>	
<p><b>Strategies:</b> Explain what steps you will take to overcome what might keep you from reaching your goal.</p>	

## Long-Term Career Goal

The P-RAP is a living document. This goal requires the cadet to state and describe an “ideal-based” yet realistic career goal that will begin at the end of the Post-Residential Phase and carry them well into adulthood. This goal should be completed by week 13. Remember to make all goals **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-Bound.

<b>Career Goal: Long-Term</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>Long Term Career Goal</i>	
<i>Methods:</i> Explain the steps necessary to achieve your goal.	
<i>Barriers:</i> Explain what will keep you from reaching your goal.	
<i>Resources:</i> Who or what will support you in reaching your goal?	
<i>Strategies:</i> Explain what steps you will take to overcome what might keep you from reaching your goal.	

Transportation Goal: Long-Term	Date
<i>Long Term Transportation Goal:</i>	
<i>Methods:</i> Explain the steps necessary to achieve your goal.	
<i>Barriers:</i> Explain what will keep you from reaching your goal.	
<i>Resources:</i> Who or what will support you in reaching your goal?	
<i>Strategies:</i> Explain what steps you will take to overcome what might keep you from reaching your goal.	

Housing Goal: Long-Term	Date
<i>Long Term Housing Goal:</i>	
<i>Methods:</i> Explain the steps necessary to achieve your goal.	
<i>Barriers:</i> Explain what will keep you from reaching your goal.	
<i>Resources:</i> Who or what will support you in reaching your goal?	
<i>Strategies:</i> Explain what steps you will take to overcome what might keep you from reaching your goal.	

## Intermediate Post-Residential Goals

The Intermediate goals include Placement, Transportation, Housing and other goals that support the cadet's long term career goal. Foirmat and appearance are the same as the Short Term Residential and Long Term goals.

### Examining Placement Options

*Before the cadet lists his/her Intermediate Post-Residential Plan, they will need to examine various placement options by completing the following chart. The cadet should review this sheet with their mentor.*

Placement Option	Advantages (+)	Disadvantages (-)	Resources needed
<b>First Option:</b>   <b>Residential:</b>	1.)  2.)  3.)	1.)  2.)  3.)	1.)  2.)  3.)
<b>Second Option:</b>   <b>Residential:</b>	1.)  2.)  3.)	1.)  2.)  3.)	1.)  2.)  3.)
<b>Third Option:</b>   <b>Residential:</b>	1.)  2.)  3.)	1.)  2.)  3.)	1.)  2.)  3.)

## Cadet Placement Requirements

Cadets are required to be “placed” in order to graduate the residential phase of the Michigan Youth Challenge Academy. Placement must meet specific criteria to be considered acceptable or valid. Before defining acceptable placement, let’s explain why this is a requirement.

### **Background**

Cadets work very hard during the residential phase to learn and accept new behaviors and standards. When the cadets leave the Academy most of them will return to their homes, neighborhoods and schools with all the distractions and problems that were there before. Placement is a part of the cadets moving on and into the next part of their life, as opposed to just leaving the Academy or “getting out”. Placement is one way to occupy their time in a productive way, and to provide some of the structure they become used to at the Academy. Placement validates and builds on the behaviors and standards learned at the Academy.

Cadets are asked to give some thought to what they will do and become when they return home. Different methods and tools are used to help them explore their likes/dislikes, and their options. Ideally, their placement will be in an occupation or line of work they enjoy, or will be a stepping stone to get them closer to an occupation they will enjoy.

Placement is an important part of the Post Residential Action Plan (PRAP). PRAP is a process each cadet works through during the residential phase to develop a set of goals for themselves. These goals are intended to be accomplished during the 12 month Post Residential phase and focus them on a productive future.

Cadets begin assessing their placement options and attempting to obtain placement in weeks 3 and 4. Their training continues and progress toward placement is monitored until valid placement is set and verified. Cadets not trying to get placed or relying on others are not meeting Academy standards. Lack of progress toward placement can be a reason to drop a cadet from the Academy.

Placement is the main criteria used to evaluate Michigan Youth Challenge Academy. Academy funding and whether it will continue to be available to serve Michigan’s at-risk youth is dependent on how many of our cadets are productive when they return home. If we can not prove what the cadets are doing, and if the majority are not engaged in positive activities, the Academy will be considered to have failed. **Placement is monitored by National Guard Bureau in Washington DC monthly during the 12 months of the post residential phase.**

### **Placement Criteria**

“Placement” is defined as full time activity. Full time means totaling 32 hours per week or more. The time can be occupied with employment, some form of continuing education, the military, or a combination of them. For example, a cadet may work full time, attend school full time, or be full time military. A different example is a cadet who works part time and attends college or vocational school part time – combined they equal full time. A third example is a cadet who is a military reservist or National Guardsman and working or attending school as well.

The Academy strongly recommends cadets NOT work directly for their parents/guardians or their mentor. Cadets are expected to be learning and practicing independence. Working for parents or mentors does not really qualify in that respect. In past classes where cadets were placed this way, any problems at home spilled over to the job, and vice versa. Any parent or mentor who employs their cadet is probably not doing that cadet any favor. It may get them placed and eligible to graduate, however this type of placement often does not last very long. Cadets become used to earning what they get while at the Academy, let’s keep it that way.

Age is a factor in obtaining placement. State and federal labor law limits certain occupations to persons 18 years of age and older. The military is not an option for 16 year olds, or 17 year olds without parents consent. Colleges sometimes will not accept 16 year olds, especially if they do not have a diploma or GED. State law limits the number of hours a youth can work based on time of year (summer or during the school year, their age and whether they have a diploma/GED or not. Go to [www.michigan.gov](http://www.michigan.gov) and search under “child labor laws” for more details. When helping your cadet sort out their options, keep their age at time of residential phase graduation in mind.

Cadets who return to high school are expected to have a part time job as well. Most high schools end classes by 3:00 pm. While at the Academy, cadets are busy from 5:15 am until around 9:00 pm every day. They learn to get things done while balancing several demands. Returning to high school and maintaining a job is no different. Earning their own money while going to school is a valuable experience.

Placement must be lined up and confirmed prior to graduation, usually no later than week 20. Placement must begin no more than 30 days after residential phase graduation – starting within a day or two is preferred and expected. A graduate who returns home and does nothing will quickly return to the habits and behaviors they had before coming to the Academy.

## Obtaining Placement

Because Michigan Youth Challenge Academy requires placement, quite a bit is done to support the cadets in achieving it. Each cadet is held accountable in the end, and that is possible because of the process and resources provided to the cadets. Finding a job and securing it, or applying and being accepted to a school are considered life skills the cadets will use over and over again in the future. Training and opportunity are provided to help them develop this skill.

Every cadet will complete tests and self assessments to help them identify occupations and career paths suitable for them. These tests sometimes indicate career paths the cadets are not interested in. Counselors and other staff members try to help the cadets sort out their likes and wants with their needs and abilities. Cadets get to know themselves during their time here – their true needs versus their wants, their capabilities and in some cases their limitations.

All the cadets receive training in preparing a resume and cover letter, job search, filling out job applications and interviewing skills. Academy counselors provide some of the training along with other staff members, and a Michigan Works representative provides some of the training.

Cadets prepare a resume and cover letter using the training provided. Time is made available in the school computer lab to prepare resumes. They are coached how to use the resume and cover letter and are expected to do so.

Cadets are required to make “placement calls” to potential employers hoping to set appointments for interviews or to interview over the telephone. Placement calls are frequently monitored by staff members and then the cadets are offered coaching to help them become more comfortable and proficient. Calls and mailed or faxed applications are required to be recorded so follow up is possible. All placement calls and applications submitted should be recorded on the cadets Placement Call Log.

Parents and mentors should send applications for businesses hiring in the cadets home community and close to where they will live when possible. The cadets are assisted in completing the applications and either mailing or faxing them to the businesses. Cadets will fill out applications using their home address and telephone number – not the Academy’s. Cadets will then make a follow up telephone call to inquire and request an interview. When a cadet schedules an interview, in most cases Academy staff members will drive and escort the cadets to the interview. In a case where the Academy can not provide the transportation, a parent/guardian or in rare cases another person is arranged to transport the cadet. **A job is considered full and valid placement if the first day of work is within 30 days of residential phase graduation and they will work 32 hours per week or more.** If both conditions are not met, the cadet will need schooling, a second job, or military to be fully placed.

For cadets interested in attending college, counselors work with the parents/guardians to arrange campus visits for placement tests and registration. Academy staff members do not usually take cadets for college visits – too often colleges need information or signatures from the parents, so parents will typically take cadets to college visits. **College counts for full placement if classes begin within 30 days of residential phase graduation and they are taking 12 credit hours or more.** Both criteria must be met or college will not be considered acceptable placement on it's own.

Returning to high school has become a more common placement in recent classes. When a cadet makes high school their preference, their transcripts are reviewed with them to see if returning is a realistic option. Look at the following examples:

- (1) A cadet who is 17 years old, who should be in their last year of high school, and who has earned less than 5 credits. Returning to high school is not a good option in this case. This cadet would require 2-3 years to earn enough credits to graduate meaning they would graduate at 19-20 years of age. Not realistic. In a case like this, counselors would help the cadet to understand why returning to high school is not realistic and advise them to look into other options.
- (2) A cadet who is 16 years old, who should be in their third year of high school and is missing less than 5 credits. Returning to high school is a realistic option in this case. Cadets earn 4 high school credits if they complete their classes here. This cadet could possibly start the next semester with their class and graduate on time.

Academy counselors and the Education Coordinator contact the high schools and work with the cadets looking at high school as an option. **High school alone is not considered acceptable placement.** High school does not occupy enough time, and typically classes will not start within 30 days of residential phase graduation.

Several cadets in each class make joining the military their first choice for placement. Military recruiters are given the chance to talk to all the cadets as a group. Any cadet who is interested in more information, or in joining is then allowed to meet with a recruiter here at the Academy. If and when a cadet is ready to enlist, and all paperwork is completed - including papers signed by the parent/guardian – a cadet is allowed to enlist. **If a cadet enlists in a branch of the military, a job is required in addition, unless the cadet will leave for recruit training (boot camp) within 30 days of residential phase graduation.**

More cadets are beginning to choose vocational or skilled trade education as their first choice for placement. Admissions or guidance counselors for this type of school are given the same access to the cadets as military recruiters. Academy staff members will help cadets to complete any applications needed and to get through the application process. Vocational training is a good choice for many of the cadets. **Vocational schooling must start within 30 days of residential phase graduation and must be full time to be considered valid placement.** If both criteria are not met, the cadet needs a job in addition to the vocational classes to be considered “placed”.

In cases where financial aid is needed for placement, counselors will guide the parents and cadet to apply for aid. Applying for financial aid frequently requires the private information the Academy has no need or desire for. Colleges and vocational schools usually have financial aid counselors to help you. The financial aid process typically begins with filling out a FAFSA form. The easiest way is to apply online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). Public libraries and your local Michigan Works offices have computers with free internet access available for public use.

## **Placement Verification**

Every cadet's placement is recorded and verified by a staff member. Different paperwork is required based on the specific placement. The requirements are:

When a cadet accepts a job offer, the employer is asked to send a letter stating:

- (1) the cadets name
- (2) the position they were offered
- (3) what the cadet will be doing
- (4) the number of hours the cadet will work each week
- (5) first day of work
- (6) their starting pay
- (7) a contact person and telephone number where they can be reached
- (8) should be on the business letterhead paper, or come with a business card

Cadets returning to high school are verified by a class schedule and either written or verbal confirmation from a counselor or other school official such as a principal. College placement is verified by a class schedule and paperwork proving the classes are paid for.

Military placement is verified by a copy of the enlistment contract.

Vocational or other education placement is verified by an acceptance letter or other written confirmation from the school.

A staff member will be assigned to contact the employer or school to verify the information in the placement letter. Once verified, the placement is valid.

## **Guidelines for Parents/Guardians and Mentors**

Obtaining placement is each cadet's responsibility.

Obtaining placement is NOT the parents/guardians or mentors responsibility. Assisting your cadet with placement is your responsibility.

Each cadet is given the training and resources to find placement for themselves. Each cadet is expected to make full use of what is provided and to make every effort to get placed. If a cadet gives their best effort, they will receive the full support of the staff as described earlier. Their effort will be rewarded, and they will obtain placement. History here at the Academy proves this is true.

What can and should parents/guardians and mentors do to support their cadet? Do what the cadet can not do for themselves. Some suggestions:

(1) Cadets do not know who is hiring near where you live, you do – stop at places with “help wanted” signs and get an application. Send the application to your cadet so he/she can fill it out and apply.

(2) More and more businesses have people apply using a computer in the store or shop. Your cadet can not go there to fill it out – stop in and complete the application for them, and let your cadet know you did so. You may need your cadets social security number or other information, so be prepared. If the employer asks why you are doing this, you can explain about the Academy or give them our telephone number. We are more than willing to answer any questions.

(3) If we ask your help in driving your cadet for an interview, please help if at all possible. Your cadet is working hard to meet this requirement and will appreciate your support.

(4) Network with friends and relatives that may know of job opportunities. Send any possible job openings to your cadet along with a telephone number and the name of the person they should speak with to schedule an interview.

(5) Allow and encourage your cadet to use the skills they are learning and go through the process of finding their own placement. Unless your cadet is trying to get placed in a dangerous or illegal activity, encourage them. Help them to understand what can be learned from each placement that will help them in the future. Realize that your cadet may not be cut out for college or the military, or they may not be interested. Support and encourage their interests, and respect their choices.

(6) If you have not registered your cadet at your local Michigan Works, do so. Michigan Works exists to help people find and keep jobs. Their services are free of charge. You will have to fill out some paperwork and build a simple resume, and this will help your cadet while at the Academy and in the future.

(7) Complete financial aid applications, other application paperwork and work with the school if needed. Please do this quickly to prevent delays and allow time to work through problems. If your cadet is 16 or 17, a work permit will be required from the last school they attended.

(8) Help your cadet consider transportation and living arrangements when working toward placement. Being hired at a business too far from home with no reliable way to get there will not last long.

(9) Do not do it for them. Let them go through the process and earn the pride and sense of accomplishment their effort deserves when they are placed.

(10) Establishing a work history and continuing education in some form is in each cadet's best interest and should be their priority. Some cadet's parents have asked or forced their cadet to quit their job or schooling to stay home to look after younger brothers and sisters, or possibly a sick or disabled parent. Parents that do this are harming their cadet. Responsibility for care of other family members should not fall on the cadet, and should not take the place of a job or school. It is not unreasonable to expect a cadet to help in providing care, but it should not be their full time responsibility.

(11) if an employer calls your home responding to a job application they received, contact your cadet as soon as possible with the information so they can schedule an interview. Your cadet's Class Advisor may help in getting this information to your cadet quickly.

(12) Help your cadet identify at least 2 personal references to use on job applications. Make sure your cadet has a working telephone number and valid address for each reference, and permission to provide that information to an employer if needed.

## **Conclusion**

Placement is a graduation requirement, without acceptable placement your cadet will not graduate. It is also a very important part of their future. Acceptable placement is a key to each cadet continuing to grow, and mature and build on what they work so hard to learn at the Academy. It is an indication of continued success.

Please do not take responsibility for placement from your cadet. Help them with things they can not do for themselves, and let them do what they can. Guide and encourage your cadet, and accept that they may want to try things you do not agree with. Please do not interfere with their placement or try to force placement in a specific area – they must live with it, not you. Help them identify and compare options, then respect and support any positive choices they make.

Michigan Youth Challenge Academy is dedicated to helping each cadet figure out the best path to their future. Processes and support are in place to get them started. Jobs, education, or military are all equally good options. Some cadets are better suited to and are more interested in one type of placement or the other. Some cadets will not qualify for one or the other option for various reasons. The bottom line is that the Academy fully supports any positive, productive activity a cadet chooses. The Academy is here to help them now and in the future whenever needed.

Please contact your cadet's class advisor or a staff member with any questions or concerns regarding placement.

## **Glossary of Terms**

BDU's – camouflage baggy cargo pants and blouse. Worn with a floppy boonie hat or knit watch cap. Cadets earn the right to wear this uniform at end of Pre-Challenge.

BMS – Behavior Modification Squad. Intense extra or remedial training assigned to cadets for repeated or serious violations of Academy rules and regulations. In some cases, this is the last chance before a cadet is dismissed from the Academy.

Cadet – Title earned by youth in the Residential phase following Pre-Challenge Completion.

Cadre – staff members responsible for direct supervision and training of the youth during the residential phase.

Candidate – youth in the Residential phase until week 3. Must earn the title “Cadet”.

Challenge – last 20 weeks of the Residential phase. Includes continued training in the military setting, classroom instruction in math, science, social studies, English, computers, vocational training, and life skills training.

Chow Hall – where the cadets eat most meals. Also used for training and other group activities.

Class A's – dress uniform. Light green collared, button up shirt, dark green slacks, beret, and ribbons. Cadets earn the right to wear this uniform by their performance.

Class Advisor – staff members who work with the cadets and mentors. Help with placement and support through the Post Res phase.

Company Commander – the highest ranking cadet. A leadership position.

D & C – Drill and Ceremonies. Marching and facing movements. Part of weekly inspection and platoon competition.

First Sargent – top “enlisted” person in a military unit. The Academy has a staff First Sergeant who oversees cadre and a cadet First sergeant who is responsible for all of the cadets. A leadership position.

Guidon – flag assigned to each platoon. A symbol of pride for each platoon. Streamers earned by performance are attached to the guidon. Carried at the front of each platoon.

KP – cadets assigned to serve meals and clean up after wards.

Incident Report – cadre or staff member documentation of a specific cadet's performance. Can be written positive or negative behavior.

Job Book – folder containing papers that document each cadet's performance. Similar to personnel file or service record. Inspectable item.

Latrine – restroom.

On Line – an order for the cadets to form a single file at the position of attention and be silent.

Placement – activity equaling at least 32 hours/week during Post-Res. Consists of education, employment, military service or a combination of them. Required for graduation of the residential Phase.

Platoon sergeant – top “enlisted” person in a platoon. At the Academy, a platoon consists of approximately 60 youth. A leadership position.

POA – position of attention. Standing up straight, head and eyes looking forward, heels together with feet forming a 45 degree angle, hands curled with thumbs held along the side of the thigh.

Post-Res – 12 month period following Residential phase. Active participation with a mentor, and maintaining placement are required.

PRAP – Post res Action Plan. Set of goals each cadet sets to accomplish primarily during the Post Res period. Completion is a requirement for graduation.

Pre-Challenge – first 2 weeks of Residential phase. Intense training and indoctrination period. Gives cadets the basic understanding of what is expected during the next 20 weeks. Completion is a significant accomplishment.

PT – physical training. Part of the daily routine.

PX Run – where cadets purchase personal hygiene items, clothing articles, school supplies.

Rack – bunk or bed.

Ruck – short for rucksack. Cadets carry them daily with school books, personal items, etc.

Smoke Session – PT assigned for disciplinary reasons. Frequently intense.

Squad Leader – cadet responsible for 10-15 cadets. A leadership position.

XO – second highest ranked cadet. A leadership position.

## **THE BASIC NEEDS OF YOUTH**

Explanation: As discussed in *Reclaiming Youth-at-Risk: Our Hope for the Future*, by Larry Brendtro, et al these youth focus on meeting four basic needs:

- **Belonging**: The need to be accepted and loved by others, rather than be alienated from them. They seek to gain the acceptance, attention and affection of others.
- **Mastery**: The need to be good at something, rather than stay caught in a cycle of failure. They seek to master their environment and achieve their goals.
- **Independence**: The need to gain control of ones destiny, rather than be at the mercy of others. They seek to control their world and gain the respect of others.
- **Generosity**: The need to give to others, rather than always receive. They need to be needed in the lives of others, to contribute to someone else's life and to be worth something to that person or culture.

Beneath all four lies the search for meaning. Youth at-risk strive to meet their basic needs because they want their lives to have meaning and importance. The drive to meet those needs becomes more urgent when their environment is unsafe or inadequate. Their reaction to unmet needs can be overt (Acting Out) or passive (Dropping Out). Some examples of possible reactions to unmet needs are shown on the next page.

**ACTING OUT**

**OR**

**DROPPING OUT**

**BELONGING**

Join gangs  
Crave affections  
Crave acceptance  
Become promiscuous  
Become overly dependent  
Open to cults

Unattached  
Rejected  
Guarded  
Lonely  
Aloof  
Isolated

**MASTERY**

Arrogant  
Risk Taker  
Cheater  
Delinquent  
Overachiever

Failure oriented  
Risk avoider  
Fears challenges  
Unmotivated  
Gives up easily

**INDEPENDENCE**

Bully others  
Misuse sex  
Manipulative  
Rebellious  
Reckless/macho

Submissive  
Feel inferior  
Helpless  
Irresponsible  
Lack confidence

**GENEROSITY**

Martyr attitude  
Co-dependent  
Over Involved  
Servitude  
Bondage

Anti-social  
Narcissistic  
Disloyal  
Hardened  
Exploitative

## **KEYS TO SUCCESS**

Keys to Success are offered in the following list. The list is not meant to be all inclusive, complete or without exceptions. Please consider each of the traits and attitudes and how they relate to the relationship you have with your cadet, and how they might relate to the relationship you are trying to build for the future with your cadet.

### **TIME INVESTMENT**

Mentoring is a slow process. Trying to get a lot done in small bursts or short amount of time is likely to fail. Like all healthy relationships, successful mentoring involves frequent contact and long-term commitments from both Mentor and youth.

### **COMMITMENT**

Youth-at-risk commonly feel like failures and resist forming relationships. They will probably try to undermine the relationship with you. Remember that you should view your commitment as a long-term investment, a commitment not linked to the youth's first response.

### **ACCEPTING YOUR YOUTH AS HE OR SHE IS**

Actions speak louder than words. It is critical that the youth understands that nothing s/he does will cause you to reject him or her. Nothing. Be prepared to the youth to test you on this.

### **EMPATHY**

It is important to be an effective listener and to win the right to be heard. Empathy requires us to hear the feelings, not just the words, of a troubled youth.

### **TRUST**

Trust builds slowly over time. Don't over-extend or pressure the youth for information at the beginning. Once information is shared with you, be careful how you use it.

Check with your Class Advisor concerning the rules for confidentiality. Generally, anything you are told in confidence you must keep in confidence, unless there is evidence of a crime committed by or against the youth. Be sure to communicate these rules to the youth early in the relationship. Avoid leading the youth to tell you something you don't want to know.

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

The other side of unconditional acceptance and trust is accountability. Effective mentoring relationships are marked by mutual accountability in areas of personal growth. Model this accountability before you ask it of your youth.

### **SINCERITY**

Be yourself. Don't try to be perfect...you're not. Remember what these youth are looking for someone who loves them unconditionally and values them as worthwhile human beings.

Yes, they need answers, but first they need a relationship with someone who respects them. Remember, the relationship is valuable in itself.

Be yourself. Don't try to be like the youth you mentor. If your culture is different from theirs, don't try to talk or dress like them. That would appear phony to them. But do pay special attention to cultural cues. Try to understand their music, clothes, friends, use of time, etc. These are indicators of the youth's values and beliefs.

### **EARNING THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD**

Don't come armed with answers; come with questions. Listen for feelings, not just words. Ask questions that carefully probe the values and beliefs that underlie the youth's words and actions. Watch body language. Pay attention to details. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

### **BEING PREPARED FOR TEACHABLE MOMENTS**

Convert crises to opportunity by being available to listen and offer support when the youth is ready to receive it, not when it is convenient for you.

## **PAIN+HOPE =CHANGE**

Remember: To change, a youth needs both the pains of failure and rejection, as well as hope in the form of a caring relationship and useful information.

### **MEASURING SUCCESS BY YOUR ACTIONS---NOT THE YOUTH'S RESPONSE**

Effective mentors are long-term investors. They commit to making deposits of unconditional love and acceptance regardless of how unlovable a youth may be.

Remember that mentoring is a long-term commitment; the payoff may not be recognizable for years.

### **CREATING SHARED EXPERIENCES**

It is very hard to develop a relationship with someone who has little in common with you and who may come from a completely different culture.

One way to overcome barriers and build understanding is by creating shared experiences with your youth.

Plan activities of interest to your youth that will engage both of you. The activities need not be expensive, but they should reflect the youth's interest, not yours.

## **THE ROLE OF A MENTOR**

Some mentors and cadets as well, have difficulty understanding what a mentor should or should not be. In other words, what are the “boundaries” or “limits”? the following one-word descriptions may be helpful as you try to answer that question.

Cadets are given training in their part of the mentoring relationship. When asked, their descriptions are similar if not exactly the same as the following lists:

### **What a Mentor Is:**

Listener  
Friend  
Coach  
Guide  
Helper  
Fallible Human

### **What a Mentor Is Not:**

Savior  
Foster Parent  
Ms. or Mr. Fixit  
Registered Advice-Giver  
Cool Peer  
Parole Officer  
Perfect

## THE STAGES OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Two different though similar descriptions are provided that explain how a mentoring relationship develops. Steps may be completed sooner or later than described – there is no set time table. Variables such as the frequency of your contact, commitment to the relationship, ability to relate to one another and communicate effectively affect the time it takes for your relationship to develop. Outside influences may be a factor. Other factors may include parental support, work schedules (yours and your mentees) and other people competing for time and influence with your mentee. Stages or steps may be repeated as different situations or changes in the relationship occur. These descriptions are provided to help you understand how your mentee may be responding to you at any given time and why.

The first explanation is used in other contexts such as “team building”. You may be familiar with these stages:

**Forming:** The relationship is in the first stages of development. There is usually a high degree of anxiety and uncertainty. Both may begin testing how much the other can be trusted and the extent of his or her commitment to the relationship.

Both parties may begin exploring mutual interest. This stage usually lasts for the first few weeks of a mentoring relationship.

**Norming:** During this stage, people search for a common language or commonly share experience. Trust is beginning to build as both find points of connection with one another.

Conversations move beyond simple “yes” or “no” responses into deeper discussions of meaningful issues. Roles become clearer. This stage may occur in the first four months of a relationship.

**Storming:** The relationship becomes rocky, usually having unearthed a difficult problem or sensitive subject. Many times this stage is marked by a significant setback or failure in the youth’s life, causing the mentor to believe that s/he is wasting time.

It is critical for the mentor to weather this storm and win the right to be heard by the young person. Often these failures or setbacks represent “teachable moments”, providing an opportunity for the mentor and youth to convert crisis into opportunity.

This stage may occur in the fifth to eighth month of the relationship.

**Performing:** In this stage of the relationship, trust deepens and both work together on solving a common problem. Both the mentor and youth have reached the point in their relationship where they are comfortable and secure in *their* relationship with each other. This may take a year to establish.

**Mourning (Morning):** This stage marks the end of the “formal” mentoring commitment and the beginning, or “reforming”, of a more natural, informal mentoring relationship. This generally occurs at the end of the initial one-year commitment and can be marked by a celebration of some sort.

About 80 percent of the mentoring relationships that reach this point continue on an informal basis for years.

Another way to describe the development of a mentoring relationship is detailed below in 3 stages: Building rapport and trust, Attainment of goals, and Termination.

## **1. Stage I - Building Rapport and Trust.**

Building trust takes time; it is not something that can be broken down to a specific increment of time. One of the best ways to build trust is to help your cadet quickly accomplish something tangible that is important to him/her. For example, assist him/her in following-up on an interest like meeting someone in an important area of interest.

Your cadet may test you (i.e. not follow direction or exhibit other rebellious behavior), particularly if from an unstable background where adults have repeatedly disappointed him/her. Your cadet may come from a family in which nothing can be taken for granted (i.e. family stability, home to live in, availability of basic necessities); therefore, your cadet may be slow to give his or her trust.

During this testing period, you can expect a variety of frustrating behaviors from your cadet:

1. Missed appointments
2. Phone calls not returned
3. Unreasonable requests
4. Angry or sullen behavior

Your best reaction to these behaviors is patience and firmness. Predictability builds trust; so be consistent:

1. Be on time for arranged meetings
2. Bring promised information and materials
3. Following through on agreements and arrangements with the cadet

Another key to gaining the cadet's trust is to provide reassurance that what you discuss together will be kept confidential. Early in the relationship you should explain that nothing your cadet tells you of a personal nature will be discussed with anyone else. Only issues directly involving Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy will be discussed with the Class Advisor. If you feel that it is important to involve another adult (i.e. the cadet's parent) reassure your cadet that you will discuss it first with him or her.

Difficulty in Stage I will vary depending on the relationship, so be prepared for initial disappointments and frustrations. It is very important that you do not blame yourself for such set backs.

## **2. Stage II - Reaching Goals.**

Once you have gained the cadet's trust, a solid foundation of mutual respect and caring will emerge. Once the testing is over, the rocky part of the relationship usually ends and the exciting progress should begin to take place.

A mentoring relationship can have many forms. You may establish a family-like relationship, where you are felt to be part of the family and where contacts are frequent and intense. You may develop a less intense, yet no less important relationship where the focus is on accomplished tasks. Each form has its value and you may find your relationship fluctuating between them over time.

Not all mentoring relationships proceed smoothly. When things are not working you must explore these issues:

1. The fit or match may not be right. Some people just do not "click" with one another.
2. Your cadet may have been so disappointed and damaged by earlier experiences-that he/she is unwilling to risk taking advantage of a helping relationship.
3. Some mentor/cadet combinations have difficulty progressing beyond the testing stage.
4. You may feel burdened by the relationship or feel angry or annoyed by the youth's behavior.

Particularly because many of these youth have already experienced so much disappointment in their lives, the most favorable resolution for problems is to work through them and move on to a more productive relationship. As mentor, you should be the adult in the relationship. In the event that you feel overwhelmed or at a loss, contact your Class Advisor.

As a mentor, it is imperative that you share your experiences with and receive support from the Class Advisor, other mentors and resource people. You may find through these networks that problems you are experiencing are not unique to you and your cadet. Your Class Advisor has typically worked with many cadets and mentoring relationships and may well have seen what you are experiencing. Networking will provide you with a larger group of supportive people who can help you find creative resolutions for your situation. Consulting reference materials such as those found in the appendix at the back of this handbook may also be helpful.

### **3. Stage III - Terminating the Relationship.**

The end of the mentoring relationship is a crucial part of the mentoring program because the relationship can shape how your cadet thinks about and learns from the experience. Mentors should discuss strategies and guidelines for ending the relationship with the Mentor Coordinator of the program. No matter what the strategy, plan ahead if possible with your -cadet for the end of the relationship.

**A. Guidelines for Planned Terminations.** When the mentoring relationship has been successful, the relationship will have lasted for a year. The program is not intended to last forever, but now you must prepare your cadet for the inevitable conclusion of a relationship upon which he may have relied for stability in his life. There are several things you can do to ease this final transition out of the Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy.

1. Alert your cadet well in advance about the ending of the relationship.
2. Be prepared for his/her anger or denial (often in the form of missed appointments).
3. Help your cadet monitor his/her feelings: Sadness, guilt, relief, etc
4. Use the termination process as a means to recall his/her progress and strengths
5. Help him/her grow from the process: Reassure your cadet about what he/she has learned. Stress his/her potential
6. Discuss positive actions and directions for the future
7. Assure your cadet about your own and the Class Advisor's confidence in him/her
8. Follow through with commitments or promises you have made to the cadet
9. Use role-playing activities to highlight the major points stated above. Also recall a termination experience from your own teen years and discuss with the cadet how you handled it
10. Be prepared for your own feelings to surface regarding the termination: sadness, guilt, relief, etc

**B. Guidelines for Premature Terminations.** When a mentor and cadet encounter continual difficulties, a premature termination may take place. Such a situation will usually be expected and will happen more quickly than a planned termination. Cadets are not likely to understand emotionally why the relationship is ending, particularly if you, the mentor; are ending it. Every effort will be made to match the cadet with another mentor, although this won't replace his first mentor. If you are willing, you can be matched with a new cadet.

Termination is more difficult for cadets whose lives have been filled with disappointment; they never get used to it. Their feelings regarding the termination must be monitored and released appropriately.

**\*\* If at all possible, follow through with your cadet to complete the Post Res period. Many of these youth are used to adults not honoring their commitments. These youth need to know adults – at least you – will honor your commitment and work with them to completion. Set the example, regardless of how they respond to you. Walking away only shows them how to quit on a commitment or an agreement.**

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION – CADETS**

<b>Position Summary:</b>	The cadet shares responsibilities for the relationship with the mentor and is accountable for progress towards his or her Post residential Action Plan
<b>Working Relationships:</b>	<p>Reports to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program staff during Residential Phase;</li> <li>2. Mentor during Post-residential Phase</li> <li>3. Class Advisor monthly during Post Res phase.</li> </ol> <p>Has regular contact with mentor from time of match throughout post-residential Phase. (2 meetings face to face per month, 2 Meetings by phone or mail per month)</p>
<b>Duties and Responsibilities:</b>	<p><u><b>Follows all MYCA policies and guidelines</b></u></p> <p>Maintains weekly communication with his or her mentor. The Cadet keeps appointments with the mentor and responds to phone calls or letters from the mentor</p> <p>Discusses his or her Post residential Action Plan with the mentor and strives to meet the goals of the Plan. The cadet seeks the help of the mentor when needed in following the Plan.</p> <p>Joins the mentor in contacting the Class Advisor monthly and in responding to communication from the Class Advisor.</p> <p>Participates in on-site visit with the mentor.</p> <p>Commits to stay drug free and employed or in school while in the post-residential phase</p>

Signed by Cadet: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **POSITION DESCRIPTION - MENTOR**

**Position  
Summary**

The mentor serves as a role model, friend and advocate to a cadet for at least 14 months.

**Working  
Relationships**

Reports to MYCA Class Advisor

Mentors one cadet

**Duties and  
Responsibilities**

Commits to spending at least 14 months in consistent contact with a cadet.

Returns completed screening materials promptly.

Attends mentor training to learn how to relate effectively to cadet.

Assists the cadet with the Post residential Action Plan development and discusses his or her progress in that Plan.

Makes consistent contact with the cadet. Four contacts per month are required. At least two of these must be face to face during the Post-residential Phase.

Observes all Program policies and guidelines for mentors. Discusses violations of policies by cadet with the Class Advisor.

Refers the cadet to community resources as needed and helps the cadet obtain those resources.

Plans and completes a service to community project with the cadet.

Participates in on-site visits, and takes part in relevant activities.

Shares occasional, informal and fun activities with his or her cadet. The mentor and cadet will jointly select and schedule the activities.

Communicates monthly by phone or mail with the Class Advisor. The mentor promptly informs the Class Advisor of problems or needs in the cadet's life or in their relationship.

Signed by Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

1. Please don't discuss your child with the MYCA Program mentor in the presence of your child. If you think there is something he or she should know, call him or her when your child is away.
2. If there is something about the relationship that concerns you, contact your Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy Class Advisor immediately. Not talking about your concerns may damage the relationship.
3. **Try to let the mentor know that her/his efforts are appreciated.**
4. Remember the relationship that exists is between your child and the ChalleNGe mentor. Don't request that you or other family members be included on outings.
5. Forgive minor mistakes in judgment. Although the mentor has received mentor training, he or she is neither a trained professional nor a perfect person. You will probably disagree with the mentor at times.
6. Do not deprive the child of the weekly contact with the mentor as a means of discipline. Remember, the mentor is volunteering their time and energy to be your child's friend. Encourage and support their time together.
7. The ChalleNGe mentor will be telling you when he or she will be returning your child. Make a point of being at home.
8. Give it time. This relationship needs time to develop-at least three months so don't judge it too quickly.
9. Your child's mentor is a person, too. Get to know them at least to the point where you feel comfortable.
10. Consider how you listen to and talk to your cadet. If you treat your cadet as you did before they attended the Academy, you will likely allow them to go back, or possibly drive them back to old behaviors. If how you interacted with your cadet before the Academy did not get the result you wanted, it will not work any better now.
11. Respect the privacy of the relationship between your cadet and their mentor. The mentor will not be effective in guiding your cadet if they can not have open and honest talks. Your cadet will be reluctant to be open and honest if they do not believe the mentor will keep the discussion private.
12. Do not expect the mentor to discipline or chastise your cadet. Mentors are to guide and support your cadet. Mentors can certainly tell your cadet when they do not agree with their behavior or decisions, and then try to influence their behavior. Discipline is not their responsibility.
13. Accept that the mentor's first and primary commitment is to your cadet. Even if the mentor is your best friend since childhood, in their role as mentor, supporting your cadet is their priority. Please allow this

This list of guidelines was established to help you help your child's relationship grow to reach its full potential. Your role in the development of this relationship is very important. Thank you.

Class Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## **REFERENCES**

*Community Support Mentor Handbook*, Tarheel Challenge Academy, North Carolina

*Life Skillbuilders*. Parlay International Kopy Kit, Emeryville CA.

*Mentor Handbook*. Arkansas Youth Challenge, Arkansas, 1997

*Worldview: Mentor Active Approach: Dare Mighty Things*, Inc., New Hampshire, 1996

*Lincoln ChalleNGe Mentor Handbook*

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Becker, James. *Mentoring High-Risk Kids*. Johnson Institute, Minneapolis, 1994

*Career Beginnings; Competency based Strategies Supporting Academic Achievement for College/Career Preparation*. School & Main, Boston, MA. 1993

*Career Connections*. A career exploration workbook developed by Patricia C. McGlaughlin and Fran Streitmatter, Cooperative Extension, Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1995.

*Leadership: Skills You Never Outgrow Level IV*. Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1987.

*Mentoring Resource Guide*. Workforce Opportunities Resource Curriculum, 1996.

*Setting Your Career and Life Directions*. JIST Works, Inc., Indianapolis, IN:, 1995.

*The Spirit of Excellence: A Manual for Mentoring and Tutoring African-American Children and Youth*-. One to One Partnership, Inc., Washington D.C.

*The Two of Us: A Handbook for Mentors*. The Baltimore Mentoring Institute; Baltimore.

Weinberger, Susan G. *The Mentor Handbook*. South Norwalk, CN: Educational Resource Network, 1990.

## **WEBSITES**

[www.ngycp.org](http://www.ngycp.org) – National Guard Youth Challenge Program site, has specific page for mentors

[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org) – national organization dedicated to mentors and mentoring

[www.focusas.com](http://www.focusas.com) – Focus Adolescent Services. One stop shopping for information on any topic involving adolescents.

[www.straightahead.org](http://www.straightahead.org) – site for Scott Larson’s organization. Good information for dealing with at-risk youth. Faith based, however the concepts can be applied in other contexts equally well.

[www.michigan.gov/mentormichigan](http://www.michigan.gov/mentormichigan) - state sponsored mentoring site

## **Movies**

*Renaissance Man.* (Danny DeVito)

Antwone Fisher. (Denzell Washington)

To Sir, With Love. (Sidney Poitier)

## **Recommended Reading**

*There Are no Children Here*, Alex Kotlowitz, New York: Doubleday, 1991

*Hungry Ghosts*, Mary Taylor Previte, Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994

*Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmond Perry*, Robert Sam Anson, First Vintage Books Edition, 1998

*Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls*, Mary Pipher, Ballantine Books, 1995

*Reclaiming Our Prodigal Sons and Daughters*, Scott Larson and Larry Brendtro, National Education Service, 2004

*For Parents and Teens, Dissolving the Barrier Between You and Your Teen*, William Glasser MD, Harper Collins, 2003

*Real Boys*, William Pollack Ph.D., Random House, 1999