



The Bluegrass Bugle

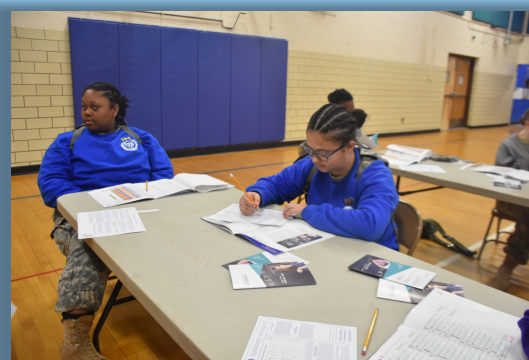
Volume 49 Issue 05 | Bluegrass Youth ChalleNGe Academy Newsletter

Crossing the finish line

Many of our cadets simply dreaded the thought of being here for 22-weeks on Day 1; now that graduation is upon us, they can't believe it's already here. We're glad we got to share so many experiences with these cadets this class, as we hope to continue to provide opportunities to the cadets of the Bluegrass Youth ChalleNGe Academy that they otherwise wouldn't typically get. As this group of cadets is ready to ring out of the Academy, their future is now in their hands. We hope they continue to use the skills and life lessons they learned at the BCA as they move forward in life!

"If it doesn't challenge you, it won't change you."

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Making Use of Mental Health Resources

In an era where the challenges facing today's youth seem more complex than ever, programs that aim to empower and support our youth are crucial. Serving the youth is of paramount importance for several reasons, and mental health emerges as a central concern. Many youth grapple with adverse life circumstances, such as poverty, family instability, or trauma, which can contribute to the development of mental health issues. With WellFront Readiness Solutions partnering with the Bluegrass Youth ChalleNGe Academy, they have provided ample care for the youth. Therapists are available at nearly all times of the waking hours for our cadets, so that they have someone to communicate with should the need arise.

Youth are disproportionately vulnerable to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and behavioral disorders. The Bluegrass Youth ChalleNGe Academy acknowledges the critical role that mental health plays in overall well-being and personal development. By providing a structured and supportive environment, the program, along with WellFront, aims to break the cycle of adversity and equip our cadets with the tools to navigate life's challenges more effectively. In the context of mental health, the program plays a pivotal role in breaking the cycle of adversity and fostering resilience.

Commandant's Corner

You've done it cadets, you've completed the residential phase of the program! It doesn't stop here though. We expect to hear what you're up to for the next 12 months and we can only hope it is a path of success and accomplishment! We know it hasn't been easy, that there were times when you wanted to quit, yet you stuck it out and here you are. For some, it was a breeze; for others, it was indeed quite the challenge. Just know that with accomplishing this, there isn't anything you can't set out to do if you really want to finish what you started! Congratulations!

CSM M. Davis



Our cadets participating in several activities!





Spreading cheer during the Holidays

Shortly after Thanksgiving Pass, our cadets had the opportunity to participate in several local events. Mrs Reynolds, one of our instructors through Eminence Independent Schools, has been practicing with her selected choir for the last couple months. They put on a concert for our cadets here at the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy before going out into the community to provide some holiday cheer. Not only has the choir been involved in such events, but the Academy as a whole got to participate in the Bardstown Christmas Parade during the first week of December. "It was a great experience for us, and a great way for them to show the hard work that we put into drill and ceremony. They were cheering us on and very excited to see us," Cadet Smith said of the event afterwards. The Bardstown Parade lasted over an hour with our cadets marching the entire way. Though they didn't march, the cadets got to partake in the Light Up Louisville ceremony and witness the lighting up of all the trees in downtown Louisville. Even though we are at the end the cycle, we still want the cadets to get out as much as they possibly can and spread not only the word about the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy, but of holiday cheer as well!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CSM Davis
Commandant



As there has been with several other staff members of the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy to hold different positions, Mr. Davis is no stranger to that as well. Joining the Academy in 2016, he has been a driving factor in helping the cadets that come through our doors. Originally starting as a cadre, Mr. Davis then moved into a case manager position, followed by being a recruiter for our cadets. He has since taken the role of Commandant, where he not only oversees the cadre, but makes sure that the cadets learn to live by the blue book during the residential phase of the program. Mr. Davis is always willing to go above and beyond when it comes to making sure the cadets of the Academy not just make it to graduation, but teach them to become the best versions of themselves in the process!

Upcoming Events

December 16: Class 49 Graduation

January 14: Class 50 Intake Day





Participating in a Mock Trial

For the better part of the last month, several of our cadets had been in preparation for quite the daunting task. Judge Shumate, a district court judge for the 9th district, which presides over Hardin County, visited the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy in November and tasked our cadets with the events of a mock trial. They were assigned roles either on the prosecution team, the defense team, or as a jury member. A scenario was given to them in which they had to plan for their evidence, witness testimonials, cross examinations, and try to convince the jury to reach a verdict they were fighting to accomplish. For the next several weeks, they began prepping how they would present their case, what questions they would be asking witnesses, and find evidence to support their case among many other challenges that come with law representation. Once the day of the mock trial arrived, the entire Academy was taken to the Hardin County Government building in Elizabethtown, where Judge Shumate presided over our cadets case. In the end, it was the prosecution team that “won” their case as they were able to convince the jury to render a guilty verdict against the defendant.

When you're watching a court case, have you ever thought about the work put in behind the scenes? The BCA Mock Trial conducted by Judge Shumate was a great opportunity to for us cadets to experience the thrill of participating in a real trial. It was incredible to see a single sentence prompt spring into a full hour and a half of back-and-forth debate. Working the side of the prosecution, myself and my co-attorney Cadet Martin took on the challenge of building a reinforced case to take down the defendant and prove them guilty. This included creating multiple pieces of fortified evidence, prepping the witnesses, and proving the guilt of the accused. Working against the defense counsel meant constructing ways to disprove their evidence, crushing their story, and speculating just what hand they might play to win the case. Within working on the case, we learned a lot about the formalities and “lingo” of the court room. With the guidance of Judge Shumate and Colonel Briscoe, we learned formalities such as laying down the foundation for evidence, objecting to the opposing counsel's questions and evidence, and the all-around structure of what takes place in a real court case. Getting to work on an unfamiliar assignment with the other cadets on my counsel was an experience that was truly exceptional.

When we arrived to the courthouse, we were directed to our correct seating. We were given a run through of how a real trial would work, followed by the introduction by our bailiff. As the prosecuting counsel, we were the first to call our witnesses to the stand. Going through the court formalities and laying the foundation for our case was my personal favorite part of the whole trial. Being called up to the stand was nerve-racking yet exciting. Everyone's eyes were focused on me, but it was important to stay composed to deliver a strong case. The hardest part of the trial was having to cross examine the opposing counsel. We only had a few minutes to create questions based around their direct examination to try and break down their case. After both counsels did their questions, and all the examinations were done, the jury was brought into a separate room to discuss the verdict. After minutes of discussing, they had come up with a verdict. The defendant was found guilty! It was a tough trial and a close case that had everyone on their toes. Both counsels put a lot of hard work in and presented an amazing case. With the guidance of Judge Shumate, we were able to successfully go through the motions of a full trial. I believe that having the opportunity to participate in this trial has truly been an eye-opening event. The BCA Mock Trial was an overall extraordinary experience, from the start all the way to the final sentencing.



We asked a few of our cadets what their favorite memory of their time at the BCA was, and any advice they would give to incoming cadets of Class 50!



"Some of my favorite memories are playing basketball against SFC Truckey. Before you come to BCA, learn how to make a bed! It will be a big help, this place is good for discipline and schooling. SFC Chantz and SFC Truckey always helped put everyone in a better mood and make the day go by faster." - Cadet Almgren

"While here at BCA, my favorite memory was the evening conversations, they go crazy! A piece of advice I would give the next class is just listen to what you're told because the laps, push-ups, burpees, and military pushes aren't worth it! DO NOT forget to lock your locker; don't leave it unsecured and unsupervised. Finally, don't let your past define who you are or hold you back from your dreams and what you want to achieve. SFC Smith and SFC Robinson have helped me the most because whenever I was in one of my moods, they were right there making sure everything was okay with me." - Cadet Gammon



"My favorite memory of BCA is when we were at Tri-State. We were down a few points to Michigan and there was only a few seconds left in the game. They decided to play the ball and threw a pick 6 that won us the game! The advice I would give to Class 50 is to have patience. Make it through the first two weeks, and the rest will fly by until the end. SFC Cyr and SFC Chantz helped me the most here. SFC Cyr helped me with soccer, and by just being there for us cadets." - Cadet Harrison

"My favorite memory of BCA is from Family Day; I was shown support from so many families and spend time with them. My words of encouragement to the next class is follow the rules, find someone to help you, and don't get into fights. Mr. Sherman, one of the many great therapists here at BCA, has helped me so much in lifting my spirits and guiding me in the right direction." - Cadet Brook



"One of my favorite memories would have to be the water balloon fight with SFC Robinson. One thing I wish I knew before I came here was that you're going to lose people but you're also going to gain people. One thing about the BCA is that we are family. Since being here, SFC Robinson has helped me become a strong, independent woman. She has helped me through the ups and downs, when I was angry, and when I was crying. I am so thankful for her." - Cadet Elliott



"My favorite memory while at the BCA was the Kentucky Kingdom trip, but I also love playing basketball here at the Academy. My words of advice are that it does start slow but the more you want to achieve and do better, it does smooth out and start to become fun." - Cadet Epps

"My favorite memory of BCA was meeting new people and making new friends. My words of advice would be to just keep going; it will get better as time goes on. SFC Jenkins has helped me by giving me words of encouragement and to keep pushing me through." - Cadet McCarty



"My favorite memory here at BCA Would have to be Tri-State and seeing how the other Academies operate, and walking the track here. Words of advice I would give the next class is the first two weeks are the hardest. I didn't think I would make it. Once you pass it, it's straight to the finish line and here I am now! I'm going to call out SFC Holmes, without him I probably wouldn't have made it this far in the cycle. He has been there for me from the beginning." - Cadet Murray



CENTER-STAGE CADETS



"My favorite memory here was getting to know people and getting the opportunity to make friends. I also loved overcoming the hard challenges I was having and knowing I can overcome anything in life. My words of advice would be to keep your head up, don't look back, and keep moving forward to success instead of looking back into the past and going back to the negativity. SFC Barton has helped me the most because if I wasn't doing something right, she would help me fix it so I wouldn't make that same mistake again. Once I graduate the program, I'm going back home and back to school. This place has helped me with behavior, time management, friends, communicating, P.T., and school. I plan to keep my grades up and get a part-time job."

- Cadet Hightower, Directors Platoon



"My favorite memory here was either the Haunted Forest or Tri-State. I'm all around thankful for the BCA and all the memories I have created. Some words of encouragement I would give is to make sure you hang around the right group of people. Keep pushing through no matter what because this Academy really will benefit you. Use the Academy and Staff resources to your advantage to become the best that you can! SFC Scalia and Mr. Benny have helped me by keeping my in-line, always taking my words into consideration, keeping me up to standard, giving me a male figure to speak with, and just by having a sense of humor and selflessness. I plan on going back to school, staying on top of my work and attendance, and trying to be a better me every day!"

- Cadet Sturdevant, 3rd Platoon Blackhawks

Message from the Deputy Director:

"I would like to congratulate Class 49 for finishing the residential phase of the program! We know it wasn't an easy 22 weeks, and for all of you that have made it to graduation to cross the stage, we couldn't be more proud of you!"

Scott Brown, Deputy Director
Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy



Message from the Director:

"Cadets, it's very hard for me to say goodbye, so I will say farewell and hope and pray our paths will cross again. I would like to leave with you with what I think a young woman and man will need to be successful in life whatever their endeavors may be. You must have these qualities and attributes that I call the acronym triple CCC, ID:

The first letter is (C) Character: build a good reputation; be liable; express gratitude; help people in need.

The second letter (C) Confidence: speak truth to power; be self-disciplined; be accountable for your words, actions, and attitude.

The third letter (C) Courage: have the courage to do the right thing; do what you say you'll do; think before you act.

The fourth letter (I) Integrity: be honest, don't deceive, cheat, or steal; play by the rules.

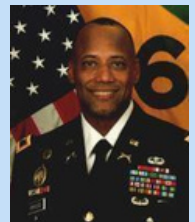
The last letter (D) - stands for Dignity and Respect - treat all people fairly; follow the golden rule; be tolerant and accepting of differences.

I want to encourage you to find yourself something that will inspire you when adversity comes knocking at your door to lift you up. Yes, you will have some rough days, and when I get down, I reflect on the good things that the Lord has brought me through.

Cadets, you have reached another milestone and victory in your life by completing the Youth Challenge program. You have shown us that you demonstrated great care and commitment to excellence.

I encourage you to stay the courage as you continue to navigate your future endeavors. It has been my honor to serve as your director for class #49. I am very proud of you and congratulations! Go forth and continue to do great things...HOOAH!"

Col. (R) Detrick Briscoe, Director
Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy



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