



Dream. Believe. Achieve.



ISSUE: 5304

THE BLUEGRASS BUGLE



From Day One to Done!

What once felt like a never-ending 22 weeks has officially transformed into a highlight reel of unforgettable moments for our cadets. Now that graduation day is here, it's hard to believe how fast their time at the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy has flown—because their adventure is really just getting started! Watching their growth has been an absolute privilege, and cheering on their transformation has been even better. As these young men and women step boldly into the next chapter, they take with them the skills, values, and confidence they worked so hard to build. We know they'll continue to rise to every challenge and shape a future fueled by resilience, determination, and purpose!

FRIENDLY RIVALRY FUELS SUCCESS



Cadets from Bluegrass Challenge Academy and Appalachian Challenge Academy came together for a spirited intrastate competition that highlighted teamwork, determination, and academy pride. The event featured a variety of challenges designed to test both physical ability and disciplined coordination, creating an atmosphere full of excitement and friendly rivalry. Appalachian Challenge Academy delivered an impressive performance in the physical fitness events—consisting of push-ups, sit-ups, a mile run, and a demanding litter carry. Their cadets also showcased strong skills in land-navigation, securing another well-earned victory through focus, strategy, and endurance. Bluegrass Challenge Academy countered with victories of their own. The cadets powered through the tug-of-war event, displaying unity, strength, and unshakable resolve. They also excelled in the drill and ceremony demonstration, where their precision, discipline, and attention to detail stood out. This friendly competition strengthened bonds, boosted morale, and reminded every cadet of the value of teamwork and perseverance.

STUDENT COUNCIL INITIATIVE

The beginning of the cycle was a struggle but things in life that are hard always are; the growth I've seen everyday in the cadets have shown that we keep going and we don't give up even, when things are not going the way we thought they would. There's been growth, hard work, dedication, and commitment. We've done so many fun things as well, like compete in Tri-State, community service trips, Commandants Cup and so much more. This cycle has been worth it for each and every cadet. I'm glad that I was able to do small things that affected this class and even more that will hopefully benefit incoming classes. I wouldn't have been able to do it without my vice president Cadet Swint, my secretary Cadet Richie, and all the representatives Cadet Brown and Cadet Bigham from Wolfpack, Cadet Love and Cadet Villar from Blackhawks, and Cadet Dailey and Cadet McDuffie from Bulldogs. The representatives have done a great job and keeping me informed on the ideas from the cadets. Cadet Richie does a very good job at keeping the meetings go smoothly and keep the notes of the meetings up to date. And last but not least my VP Cadet Swint has done an outstanding job for keeping me informed, giving me advice during meetings on what the best thing we can try to do to bring more fun things, and for trying his hardest to keep the meetings go smoothly and on track. This cycle has been worth it for a lot of people and I'm glad I was elected President for Class 53.



**Cadet Pelayo
Class 53 President**

A HIGH-FLYING OPPORTUNITY



One of the biggest highlights for every class at the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy is the trip to the State Capitol—made even more memorable with a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter ride provided by the National Guard. This November, our cadets were eager for takeoff, though the day began with unexpected delays as rain and lightning moved through the area. Despite the waiting and the weather challenges, spirits stayed high. Once the skies finally cleared, cadets loaded up for the long-anticipated flight. The excitement of flying in a military helicopter and seeing the world from that perspective is truly unforgettable. “The Black Hawk ride was one of my favorite parts of the Academy. It felt like the best roller coaster I’ve ever been on. It was top-tier; would 100% do it again!” shared Cadet Swint. Any nerves our cadets had disappeared the moment the helicopter lifted off, replaced by pure excitement as they soared above the landscape. When they touched back down, the thrill of the experience was unmistakable on every face.

Upcoming events

Dec. 13, Saturday: Graduation

Jan. 11, Sunday: Class 54 Intake Day



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Kasandra
Therapist

Ms. Kasandra is a compassionate and skilled therapist who plays a vital role in supporting our cadets as they work through personal challenges and develop stronger life skills. With her encouraging approach and thoughtful guidance, she helps cadets learn effective coping techniques, understand their emotions, and build confidence in themselves. Her dedication to their well-being is evident in the progress our cadets make every day. The BCA is truly thankful for Ms. Kasandra and the positive impact she has on each cadet she works with!

FROM THE ACADEMY TO THE COURTROOM

This past month, several cadets at the Bluegrass Youth Challenge Academy got the chance to take part in something really unique—a full mock trial experience. Judge Kimberly Shumate from Hardin County’s 9th District Court first introduced the idea when she visited the Academy in November, challenging them to step into the roles found in a real courtroom. Cadets took on a job, whether it was working with the prosecution, serving on the defense team, or sitting on the jury. Over the next several weeks, they worked hard to understand the case from every angle. Cadets reviewed evidence, prepared witness statements, built cross-examinations, and practiced the strategies they planned to use in court. It took teamwork, focus, and a lot of critical thinking as everyone prepared to present their side.



On the big day came, cadets traveled to the Hardin County Government building in Elizabethtown, where Judge Shumate oversaw the trial. Both sides presented their arguments with confidence in a courtroom that felt incredibly real. In the end, the defense convinced the jury to deliver a not-guilty verdict. While it was definitely exciting, the experience was also eye-opening. Cadets learned how the legal system works and what it really takes to build a strong case.

SENDING THEM FORWARD



As Class 53 prepares to graduate, Pleasant View Baptist Church honored the cadets with a memorable sendoff banquet. The evening served as a meaningful celebration of the cadets’ dedication, growth, and accomplishments over the past 22 weeks. Church members worked together to create a welcoming atmosphere, complete with a home-cooked banquet dinner that made the cadets feel valued and appreciated. Laughter, conversation, and heartfelt moments filled the room as volunteers and staff celebrated the hard work and determination shown by Class 53 throughout their time in the program. The banquet provided a unique opportunity for cadets to reflect on how far they’ve come and to feel the support of a community that believes in their success. Words of encouragement were shared, reminding the young men and women that their achievements are something to be proud of—and that their futures are full of promise. With full hearts and strong spirits, the cadets move forward knowing they have a community cheering them on.

Cadet Q & A: We asked several of our cadets what their favorite memory of their time at the BCA, and any words of advice or encouragement to incoming cadets of Class 54!



“My favorite memory was being able to connect with cadre and being able to open up, and having fun with the girls. My words of advice would be don’t be scared to be yourself. Have faith, the first two weeks focus on yourself, don’t be in drama, and before you know it, you’ll be home and a better version of yourself.” - Cadet Carter

“My favorite memory at the BCA is getting to ride the Black Hawk, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity! Some advice for the incoming cadets are to not let your fellow cadets dictate the way you go about the program. Just smile your way through and ask is it worth it.” - Cadet Dailey



“My favorite memory and my most memorable time spent here at the BCA is helping my fellow cadets get through the hard times when they thought they weren’t going to make it through the cycle. My words of advice to the next class is don’t pray for easier lives, pray to be stronger people. Don’t let the devil get to you!” - Cadet Miles



“My favorite memory at the BCA was learning discipline and how to control my emotions. My words of advice would be don’t tell everyone your business because they could hold it against you.” - Cadet Ferguson



“My favorite memory at the BCA was being around people my age and going on all the field trips. I would tell Class 54, be good and don’t have any drama! Look forward to what you want, not others.” - Cadet Colley

“My favorite memory at BCA was meeting new people, making new friends, and learning new coping skills. My words of advice for Class 54 are never doubt yourself in any situation and remember; the BCA isn’t just a program, it’s a challenge to lead you to success.” - Cadet Hodges



“I would say one of my favorite memories of being at the BCA is the ruck marches and making new friends, also reconnecting with an old friend. Overall, I can’t really say I have a favorite memory because BCA showed me a great time whether good or bad and I’ve learned a lot of good life lessons. My advice for the incoming class is to always think of how your choices can affect your future and those around you. Also, shift your perspective about things and don’t let your emotions drive the wheel!” - Cadet Maglalang



“My favorite memory was during elections. As soon as I got up to the podium and all of the cadets started cheering and clapping, and after I got done with my speech. I felt like I was going to try my best to make the time of everyone at the BCA an unforgettable, healthy, and fun time. My words of advice to Class 54 are don’t give up! I know it can be hard, but at the end of this program, it gets better. Also, come mentally prepared and try to come with a growth mindset.” - Cadet Pelayo



Dream. Believe. Achieve.



CENTER STAGE CADETS



Cadet Woods, Honors Platoon Wolverines

“My favorite memory of my time here at the BCA was probably all the times I asked to go up to Mr. Major’s office to say hi to him, and he acts silly whenever I talk to him. He’s kind of scary but he also makes me laugh a lot and he has made my time here at the BCA better. To Class 54, study your Blue Book those first two weeks! It will help you pass your level 2 test and even your level 3 or HP board. Also, stay out of drama because it will help you stay out of silly arguments. Have a positive mindset and don’t give up; this place will help you! Most importantly, don’t do silly things that will make you lose your level, and DON’T FRATERNIZE! After graduation, I plan to spend my winter break with my family in New York. After break, I will return to my home high-school and participate with my youth group that I will be a member of the board on, so I can be a leader, plan events, and help recruit new members!”



Cadet Harris, 3rd Platoon Blackhawks

“My favorite memory from the BCA has to be drill and ceremony, and all the nice people I got to meet and had a chance to get to know. I am very thankful for the BCA and everything it has done for me. My words for Class 54 would be do your best and do all you can. It’s a tough time but you will meet people that will help you through the program. You will miss people but the BCA will teach you how you need to make it in life. After graduation, I plan to go to JobCorps to weld, and then join the military. I haven’t decided if I want to be a Marine or U.S. Army.”

A message from the Director and Deputy Director:

“Today we honor the remarkable accomplishments of Class 53 of the Bluegrass Challenge Academy. Each of you has walked a demanding road—one that required discipline, grit, and a willingness to grow beyond your comfort zone. Through every challenge, you demonstrated not only perseverance, but a genuine commitment to becoming stronger, wiser, and more capable young leaders. What you celebrate today is not an ending, but the beginning of an exciting new chapter. Take the lessons, confidence, and personal growth you’ve earned and carry them boldly into the future. The opportunities ahead are limitless, and you now have the foundation to rise to any challenge that comes your way. Your next steps are yours to define—make them extraordinary.”



Mr. Timberlake
Director

“Class 53, You made it! It wasn’t pretty, but most things in life that you have to add to, to create a better outcome, aren’t worth all the fuss. You showed yourself that you can accomplish a huge task without any outside influence. This means something. When you look back at this, in the near term, it won’t resonate. But as you get older, this accomplishment will lead to another, then another, and then one day finishing tough things will just be what you’re made of.



I was told by a really good person once that people are like stained glass windows. That, when it’s all bright and shiny outside, their beauty shines. But when it’s all grey and gloomy, it takes that light from within for their true beauty to shine. Remember, if, down the road, it gets all grey and gloomy for you in your life, reach out to us on the MentorPro App. We’ll still be here for you if you need a hand. Congratulations, and good luck Class 53!”

Mr. Jensen
Deputy Director

INTERESTED IN ENROLLMENT?
FOR APPLICATION INFORMATION, CALL

(877) 599-6884

www.bcachallenge.com

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

 /bcachallenge

 /bcayouthchallenge