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**NGYF and National Black Chamber of Commerce Announce National Partnership to Provide Job Skills, Employment Opportunities for Previously Disconnected Youth**

**ALEXANDRIA, Va. –** The [National Guard Youth Foundation](http://www.ngyf.org/) (NGYF), the non-profit that supports the evidence-based National Guard Youth Challe*NG*e Program, and the [National Black Chamber of Commerce](http://www.nationalbcc.org/) (NBCC) today announced plans to launch a partnership to increase youth exposure to career opportunities and help youth build valuable job skills, learn the basics of business and entrepreneurship, and engage in positive employment.

Nearly one million young men and women drop out of school, leaving them with little to no opportunity to achieve their full potential. The partnership between NGYF and NBCC will help graduates of the Challe*NG*e program, which include “at-risk” 16-18 year-olds who were previously disconnected from education and the workforce but have since earned a high school diploma or GED, to take their first steps into the workforce. Working with local chambers, community leaders, philanthropists and the private sector, the partnership will provide youth with economically sustainable opportunities through apprenticeships, internships and jobs.

“It’s important that these young men and women have another chance to earn a high school diploma or GED, but it’s equally important to ensure they are prepared for the workforce,” **said Louis A. Cabrera, President of the National Guard Youth Foundation**. “We are proud to partner with the National Black Chamber of Commerce to provide meaningful opportunities to both the youth and the employer, and to help these young men and women achieve economic self-sustainment.”

“The National Black Chamber of Commerce is excited to team with the National Guard Youth Foundation as a conduit to linking our communities and businesses with this vital resource as an economic life-line of mutual benefit.  Everyone who wants a chance, deserves a chance to be economically empowered!” **Said Harry C. Alford, President/CEO and co-founder of NBCC.**

The goal of the partnership is to expose youth who may have limited opportunities and social networks to minority business leaders, entrepreneurship, career possibilities, educational options and workforce development programs to help them make informed education and career decisions that lead to positive employment.

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**About the National Guard Youth Challe*NG*e Program**

Conducted at 35 academies across the country, the National Guard Youth Challe*NG*e Program is operated in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau, state governments and local sites. The program consists of a 5 1/2-month residential phase framed around eight core components: academic excellence, responsible citizenship, physical fitness, leadership/followership, job skills, service to the community, health and hygiene and life coping skills, and a 12-month post residential phase during which mentors continue to provide guidance and support to graduates.

Helping more than 130,000 teens to date turn their lives around, Challe*NG*e is recognized as among the most cost-effective, highly rated programs of its kind for youth who have dropped out of school.

* An independent, multi-year study of the program by MDRC shows that high school diploma/ GED attainment increased by 29%; college attendance increased by 86% and annual earnings increased by 20%.
* An independent cost-benefit analysis by the RAND Corporation shows a 166% return on investment in the program – every dollar spent yielded a return of $2.66 in benefits to society.

**About the National Guard Youth Foundation**

The National Guard Youth Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to addressing the nation’s school dropout crisis by giving youth a second chance through the National Guard Youth Challe*NG*e Program. NGYF advocates for and supports Challe*NG*e, run by the National Guard; raises awareness of the impact that the school dropout crisis has on our society, economy and national security; and provides Challe*NG*e graduates with scholarships and career support to help them continue on their path of success. For more information, visit [www.ngyf.org](http://www.ngyf.org).

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**About the National Black Chamber of Commerce**

The National Black Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in Washington, D.C. in March 1993 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization. Its mission is to economically empower and sustain African American communities through entrepreneurship and capitalistic activity within the United States and via interaction with the Black Diaspora. For more information on the organization, visit [NationalBCC.org](http://www.nationalbcc.org/).