



For Immediate Release:

June 8, 2015

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National Guard Youth Foundation Announces Spring Scholarship Recipients

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Graduates to Use the Funds Toward College, Trade and Vocational Schools

Alexandria, Va. – The National Guard Youth Foundation (NGYF), the national nonprofit that supports the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, today announced the winners of the NGYF spring scholarship competition. The awards include \$3,000 scholarships renewable for up to two years or \$5,000 scholarships renewable for up to four years.

“We want every graduate of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program to grow into successful, self-sustaining young adults and these scholarships are a critical part of helping them along that path,” **said Louis A. Cabrera, President of the National Guard Youth Foundation.** “I congratulate the recipients of the scholarship competition who have taken the “ChalleNGe” to change their lives for the better.”

\$3,000, two-year scholarship winners:

- **Rain Avina – Ft. Stewart Youth ChalleNGe Academy at Ft. Stewart, Ga.**
- **Samuel Green – Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Pierce, Idaho**
- **Bryton Layfield – Louisiana Youth ChalleNGe Program in Camp Minden, La.**
- **Shyla Nemec – Oregon Youth ChalleNGe Program in Bend, Ore.**
- **Mikaela Smart – Lincoln’s ChalleNGe Academy in Rantoul, Ill.**

\$5,000, four-year scholarship winners:

- **Donavan Akers – Mountaineer ChalleNGe Academy in Kingwood, W.Va.**
- **Michael Gochenour – Idaho Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Pierce, Idaho**
- **Yazmin Morales – Oregon Youth ChalleNGe Program in Bend, Ore.**
- **Nicole Rector – Virginia Commonwealth ChalleNGe Youth Academy in Virginia Beach, Va.**
- **Sara Young – Hawaii National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Barber’s Point, Hawaii**

Conducted at 35 academies across the country, the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe 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, as importantly, a 12-month post residential phase that matches a mentor to each graduate.

Helping more than 131,000 teens to date turn their lives around, ChalleNGe 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.

NGYF awards two- and four-year scholarships to graduates of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program to contribute to tuition and tuition-related expenses for colleges, vocational and trade schools. Last year, NGYF awarded nearly \$500,000 in tuition assistance to ChalleNGe graduates. The next scholarship competition will be held in the fall.

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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 ChalleNGe Program. NGYF advocates for and supports ChalleNGe, 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 ChalleNGe graduates with scholarships and career support to help them continue on their path of success. For more information, visit www.ngyf.org.