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Contact:
[Ashley Saunders](#)
703-684-5437

Innovative Pilot Program to Prepare Youth in 14 Communities for Growing STEM Workforce

Alexandria, VA – The National Guard Youth Foundation (NGYF) is partnering with global engineering and design firm Michael Baker International and EverFi, a leading education technology company, to launch an interactive education initiative to help meet the job market's growing demand for employees with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. The new initiative provides STEM training resources to approximately 1,800 of Youth ChalleNGe Program participants across the country. The pilot phase begins at 14 locations and is underwritten by a donation from Michael Baker International.

“We are deeply committed to helping these young men and women find a pathway to success beyond graduation day and making sure they are ready to meet the growing demands of the workforce,” **said Louis A. Cabrera, president of NGYF.** “This initiative will expose ChalleNGe participants – many, for the first time – to career opportunities in the STEM field and will open doors for their futures. All of this is possible because Michael Baker International and EverFi recognize how important this cause is to these youth and our society.”

According to the U.S. News/Raytheon STEM index, the STEM job market in the United States has grown by more than 30 percent, from 12.8 million STEM jobs in 2000 to 16.8 million in 2013. ChalleNGe, which graduates 9,300 young men and women every year at 35 sites across the country, is a proven program for youth who are not succeeding in the traditional classroom setting.

The *Radius-STEM Readiness* course is a web-based program that uses online gaming and simulations to teach critical technology and coding skills, ignite interest in STEM, and expose students to STEM opportunities that they might never have dreamed were within their reach. The course features 16 modules that incorporate the real-world application of math and basic computer science skills in a secret-agent themed course. Engaging, interactive lessons focus on skill building and highlighting the career possibilities that a STEM education can unlock.

“We are dedicated to fostering the development and growth of the next generation of scientists, planners, architects and engineers, who are so vital to our country's future” **said Kurt Bergman, CEO of Michael Baker International.** “This investment ensures that driven and hardworking young adults can pursue career paths they are

passionate about. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the National Guard Youth Foundation and expanding the prevalence of STEM education opportunities across the nation.”

In addition to the Michael Baker International donation to launch the 14 pilot sites, the engineering firm and its leadership have donated more than \$1 million over the last five years to support NGYF programs.

"EverFi is proud to bring our STEM education course to ChalleNGe participants," **said EverFi Founder and CEO Tom Davidson.** "Through our partnership with the National Guard Youth Foundation, this technology is reaching cadets and inspiring them to be the creators and innovators of tomorrow."

The program's 14 pilot sites are located at:

- Alaska Military Youth Academy in Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska;
- Appalachian ChalleNGe Academy in Grays Knob, Kentucky;
- Bluegrass ChalleNGe Academy in Ft. Knox, Kentucky;
- Capital Guardian Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Laurel, Maryland;
- Ft. Gordon Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Ft. Gordon, Georgia;
- Camp Beauregard Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Pineville, Louisiana;
- Freestate ChalleNGe Academy in Gunpowder, Maryland;
- Montana Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Dillon, Montana;
- Puerto Rico ChalleNGe Academy in Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico;
- Commonwealth ChalleNGe Academy in Virginia Beach, Virginia;
- Washington Youth Academy in Bremerton, Washington;
- Mountaineer ChalleNGe Academy in Kingwood, West Virginia;
- Texas ChalleNGe Academy in Sheffield, Texas; and
- South Carolina Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Eastover, South Carolina.

NGYF is currently pursuing additional corporate partners to expand this curriculum to all 35 ChalleNGe programs across the country.

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.

About the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program

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 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, 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.

About Michael Baker International

Michael Baker International, LLC is a leading global provider of engineering and consulting services which includes planning, architectural, environmental, construction, program management, and full life cycle support services as well as information technology and communications services and solutions. The company provides its comprehensive range of services and solutions in support of U.S. federal, state, and municipal governments, foreign allied governments, and a wide range of commercial clients. Michael Baker International has more than 5,000 employees in over 90 locations across the U.S. and internationally. To learn more visit www.mbakerial.com.

About EverFi

EverFi, Inc. is the education technology innovator that empowers learners with the skills that prepare them to be successful in life. With backing from some of technology's most innovative leaders including Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt, and Twitter founder Evan Williams, EverFi has built the most comprehensive critical skills platform focused on Financial Education, Digital Citizenship, Cyberbullying, STEM Readiness, Entrepreneurship, Alcohol Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness. The EverFi Education Network is powered by over 1,000 partner organizations across all 50 states and Canada and has certified over 7 million students. Learn more at www.everfi.com.

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