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**National Guard Youth Foundation Celebrates 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ChalleNGe  
Champions Gala**

*Country Music Star Randy Houser, NASCAR driver Tyler Reddick, and Fox News Channel's  
Jon Scott Help Celebrate National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program Success*

Alexandria, VA – On Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, the National Guard Youth Foundation (NGYF) will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its ChalleNGe Champions Gala, which has been instrumental in raising millions of dollars over the past ten years to enable NGYF to help at-risk youth turn their lives around and continue a path of success through scholarship funds and workforce and skills development efforts. This year's gala will celebrate the success of the **Youth ChalleNGe Program**, the program supported by the NGYF, by bringing together congressional and military leaders, the business community, alumni, graduating cadets and noted celebrities including country music star Randy Houser and NASCAR driver Tyler Reddick. FOX News' Jon Scott will emcee the event.

**Presented by lead sponsor Michael Baker International, the gala will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC from 5:30 – 10:00 p.m. ET.**

Since the ChalleNGe program's inception in 1993, over 130,000 cadets have graduated [please verify this number. I think we used 130K last year] with almost half (64,284 graduates) in the past 10 years alone. In last year's class, a record 9,300 youth graduated with high school diplomas or GEDs and this past year, nearly \$500,000 in scholarships were awarded by NGYF to approximately 300 graduates. Additionally, through strategic partnerships, NGYF has been able to provide ChalleNGe programs with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills training and an opportunity for participation in a media arts curriculum. By 2020, NGYF hopes to expand the program so that it can accommodate 20,000 at-risk youth every year across the nation.

“We are proud of the thousands of youth who have witnessed firsthand through ChalleNGe that when one door closes, another can open. When others see failure, we see hope for these at-risk teens. But the journey doesn't end on graduation day. We need to help these young men and women continue that upward trajectory long after graduating from ChalleNGe.” **said Gen. Craig McKinley, USAF (Ret.), Chairman of the NGYF Board of Directors.**

According to an MDRC study on ChalleNGe, participation in the program increases college attainment by 86 percent and ChalleNGe participants are 29 percent more likely to attain a high school diploma or GED than those who have dropped out and don't attend.

Sponsor contributions will help provide ChalleNGe participants with the resources and mentorship every young person deserves, so they have the opportunity to achieve a successful and productive future. In addition to Michael Baker International, this year's sponsors include Microsoft, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Airbus, Lockheed Martin, McGladrey, and Arnold & Porter.

Former U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA), honorary co-chair of the National Guard Youth Foundation since its inception, will be honored with the *ChalleNGe Champion Lifetime Achievement Award* and Thomas J. Campbell, chairman of the board of directors at Michael Baker International, lead event sponsor, will receive a *ChalleNGe Champion Award*.

Seating at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual ChalleNGe Champions Gala is limited. For more information, please visit <http://www.ngyf.org/events/championsgala>.

**\*\*\*Media planning to attend must RSVP to [Ashley Saunders](mailto:asaunders@ngyf.org) at [asaunders@ngyf.org](mailto:asaunders@ngyf.org).**

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### **About The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program**

ChalleNGe is a 17-month, voluntary, second-chance program for 16- to 18-year-old struggling youth who have dropped out of school. Participants have the opportunity to enhance life skills, increase self-esteem, learn job skills, and earn a high school diploma, GED or return to high school to graduate with their peers. ChalleNGe has undergone rigorous evaluations, the results of which show it yields success for both its participants and its funders. Since the program's inception in 1993, ChalleNGe has grown to 35 programs [Did Texas open its second program last month? So is this now 36?] in 27 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC, and has helped more than 130,000 [please verify] former dropouts make it to graduation day.

### **About The National Guard Youth Foundation**

The National Guard Youth Foundation, a 501(c)(3), supports the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program's efforts to address the nation's high school dropout crisis by giving troubled youth a second chance, helping them graduate and continue their education or join the skilled workforce in America. NGYF awards scholarships and facilitates job opportunities for ChalleNGe graduates. To learn more about NGYF's initiatives, please visit [www.ngyf.org](http://www.ngyf.org).