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Dept. of Military Affairs: Wisconsin Challenge Academy public affairs

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Seventy cadets from 29 counties will graduate from the Wisconsin National Guard Challenge Academy in a ceremony Saturday, Dec. 17 at Sparta High School. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Aaron Hunnel will speak to the graduates, encouraging them to continue along the positive path the program has set them on. Wisconsin's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp, and other representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs will also attend and congratulate graduates.

The Challenge Academy reshapes the lives of at-risk 16-to-18-year-olds. Using a structured, military-style environment, state-certified teachers and counselors build cadets' academic abilities, character, self-confidence and personal discipline.

After graduating from the 22-week residential phase of academy training, cadets work with hometown mentors who offer guidance and encouragement in pursuing their new direction in life. The National Guard Youth Challenge Program currently operates 40 programs in 29 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. Nationwide, more than 190,000 teens have graduated from this free program since its inception in 1993.

The Wisconsin Challenge Academy will begin its next class Jan. 25, 2023. Contact the Challenge Academy's website (www.challengeacademy.org) or call 888-968-8422 to apply or for more information.