



Texas Challenge Academy

**Texas National Guard
Youth Challenge Program**

A YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM OF THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD FOR AT-RISK TEENS

WE ARE NOT A BOOT CAMP!

Texas ChalleNGe Academy is a 5 ½ month residential military academy sponsored by the Texas National Guard. We are a tuition-free education program for 16-18-year-olds who are disengaged from school. We offer academic instruction, but more importantly we provide structure and discipline to help our cadets develop personal accountability and become successful adults.

The National Guard Youth Challenge Program currently operates 40 programs in 28 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. There are 2 campuses in the state of Texas, located in Sheffield and Eagle Lake. The program mission is to help reclaim the potential of at-risk youth and decrease Texas high school drop-outs. TCA helps youth become successful, responsible, and productive citizens through a program of mentoring, education, physical fitness, and volunteer service to the community. Applicants are 16-18-year-old teens who have either dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of high school. Cadets live on campus for 5 ½ months during the residential phase of the program. They may recover credits, earn their GED or, if qualified, earn their high school diploma. Academies are tuition-free, accredited high schools and based on Equal Opportunity principles. After graduation, Cadets return home and meet with a mentor every week for 12 months, which helps keep their resolve and change their lives for the better.



**Accepting applicants
throughout the state of Texas**



**Rebuild. Restructure.
Educate. Restore.**

The 8 Core Components

- **Academic Excellence** - designed to increase grade levels in reading and mathematics, to earn a GED or high school diploma
- **Leadership and Followership** - teaching positive roles within social groups
- **Responsible Citizenship** - understanding civic responsibilities and social accountability
- **Job Skills and Vocational Training** - resume writing, job interview skills, and career exploration
- **Life Skills** - anti-bullying/teamwork skills, anger management, drug and alcohol avoidance strategies, self-discipline
- **Health & Hygiene** - nutrition basics, substance abuse awareness, and positive relationship skills
- **Volunteer Service** - performing at least 40 hours of service to the community
- **Physical Fitness** - daily fitness activities and intramural sports

PROGRAM GOALS

To recover educational credits and assist Cadets with integrating back into their original school district for high school completion, or pursue a GED or high school diploma

To provide a safe haven—a structured, disciplined environment in which to learn and grow

To prepare a foundation of positive values that foster maximum educational and growth potential

To serve by providing the opportunity to give back to the community through service to their communities

To mentor cadets through a continuous relationship with a positive role model for 12 months following the 22-week residential phase



History & Information

Formerly known as Seaborne Conservation Corps and Seaborne Challenge Corps, TCA became part of the National Guard Youth Challenge Program in July of 1999 as the program's 26th state. Seaborne was an initiative of Texas A&M University at Galveston, the United States Navy, Americorps, and the Texas National Guard. Due to the devastation of Hurricane Ike's landfall on Galveston Island, the program was relocated to Sheffield in west Texas. The program's success and popularity lead to a second campus being added in 2015 in Eagle Lake. The Texas Challenge Academy, now in its 17th year, is an accredited high school based on a quasi-military training curriculum and an academic partnership with the Iraan-Sheffield and Rice Consolidated Independent School Districts. Teens ages 16-18 from across the state can begin classes in January, March, July, and September each year. Applicants must be committed to 5 ½ months of residential education and training, followed by 12 months of mentoring in their home communities. TCA Cadets are offered the opportunity for high school credit recovery, obtaining their GED's and in some cases, earning their high school diplomas. TCA is **tuition-free** to the families we serve, with funding provided by both the federal and state governments, as well as private foundations. TCA is open to all students without regard to race, sex, religious affiliation, or household income. Prospective cadets must complete an application, attend a presentation, and submit to an interview to determine their suitability and likelihood of success in the program.

The Texas Challenge Academy is not a juvenile detention center, a court-ordered boot camp, mental health facility, or a drug or alcohol treatment center. It is not affiliated with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or the Texas Youth Commission, nor does it require military service from Cadets.

Graduate Testimonial



Eric Capuano

"Setting foot at Seaborne Challenge Corps, as it was known at the time, I had no idea that I'd ever be capable of anything noteworthy in my life. Being a 'poor performer' in the public school system basically drained me of any self-confidence or aspirations of a greater future."

Seaborne Challenge was the turning point for me, as most graduates will agree. I left that school with confidence and pride a mile wide and went on to do things that still surprise me to this day. But I never forgot where I found that confidence and the opportunity which unlocked that capability in me.

I was a Staff Sergeant in the Air Force working on Predator and Reaper drone aircraft. Since then, I've separated from active duty and began working full-time for Samsung in Austin, Texas as an engineering technician responsible for making microprocessors. I still hold my job with Samsung but have spent the last two years serving full-time with the Texas Air National Guard as a cyber security specialist working in a highly-classified environment with some of the nation's most cutting-edge computer systems. In this position, it is my responsibility to analyze threats to the infrastructure of the Air Force and develop tactics and techniques to mitigate those threats. I spend my free-time tinkering in robotics and engineering and have founded the Central Texas chapter of a community for operators of small civilian drone aircraft. This group's primary goal is promoting the use of flying robots for civilian, recreational, agricultural, search and rescue as well as hobby purposes. Our larger community is 3000+ members strong worldwide.

"Without the education, confidence and motivation I gained as a graduate of the Texas Challenge Program, I couldn't have started the career I have nor experienced the success that I have been so fortunate to experience. I feel that one of the most important things I can do is instill a confidence in those kids that I know I longed for at that age."



CONTACT US

Website and Applications
www.texaschallengeacademy.com

Main Phone Line (Toll Free)
 1-877- 822-0050

Call a Recruiter near you
 Austin/San Antonio: (979) 232-1589
 Dallas: (979) 232-1594
 Eagle Lake: (979) 232-1595
 Fort Worth: (979) 232-1593
 Houston: (409) 939-3772
 West Texas/Panhandle: (432) 693-7152

Email
tca_admissions@ricecisd.org

WHAT SUPPORTS HAVE TO SAY

"Our society runs on disposable goods. Items are used, thrown away, and quickly forgotten. As a professional educator and counselor for more than 24 years, I unfortunately see this 'disposal' attitude applied to students. Unwise choices made by students can cause them to drop out of high school with little to no means of finding a career to support themselves. Hope is lost and the students continue into a vacuum of never finding a way back into productive society. The Texas National Guard Youth Challenge Program offers an alternative to combat this 'disposable' child attitude. TCA works tirelessly to instill an education, mental and physical strength, and above all, the desire to make good choices. The Academy literally turns lives around one cadet at a time. They give the young adults role models and support to achieve their dreams. I highly support the Texas Challenge Academy for their insight into students and their intense mission to reveal the students' given gifts needed for a successful life." -**Glen-Ellen Hancock, M.Ed., LPC, NCC, RPT Texas Counseling Association Counselor of the Year**

"Last year, I became aware of a program that I now consider to be outstanding in reaching and turning around young people at risk of not finishing high school. Texas Challenge Academy is a National Guard program established in Texas about 15 years ago. Twice a year, they begin a class at their facility in Sheffield, Texas at no cost to teens 16—18 who have applied for admission. Almost all of the cadets were destined to lead difficult lives without much hope for success. After 5 months in residence, almost all graduated with at least a GED, some with high school diplomas and a real plan for their future. Graduates go back to their high school to finish their diploma, join the military, enter trade and technical schools and colleges and/or join the workforce as productive and contributing members of society. Most importantly, they walk away with a new-found

confidence in themselves and a real appreciation for those around them. In my estimation, Texas Challenge Academy is nothing short of phenomenal.

-Matt Hayes Justice of the Peace, Tarrant County Precinct 7 "We Can't Thank You Enough"

"When my 16-year-old son came home for his first liberty, we were so very proud of him. When we picked him up, he was standing up straight with his shoulders back, proud of the changes he had made. The change in him is a miracle. We sent a child and TCA is making him a man. He is so proud of what he's been able to do physically, and still pushes himself beyond what he feels is his limit. Thank God for TCA. Our son is out there doing what he thought was impossible. He's learned to have faith in himself. Our thanks and prayers go out to everyone at TCA." -**All our gratitude, Mike and Deana**

"Before my son went to TCA in Sheffield in January, he was on the wrong road, making bad decisions for himself. We were looking at fines for him not going to school. My husband and I went to the principal and told him we were out of answers and we had nowhere to go from here. He told us about Texas Challenge Academy. My son, Steven, agreed to go, and he was made to see that he does have a future and that he is worth something. He now has self-esteem, self-worth, and pride in himself. Because of Texas Challenge Academy and Steven's hard work, he took the oath to join the Air Force to train to be a pilot - a dream of his since childhood." -**Schona Moore, proud parent of Steven Moore, Jr.**

"I don't know all of your names, but this thank you card goes to all of you. You have to have passion and belief in what you're doing every day. I am amazed at your program and what you do. Because of your program, my son has been rescued. Thanks for caring about these kids!" -**Cliff and Lisa Davis**



More Graduates & Testimonials

130,000 National Graduates • 3,200 Texas Graduates



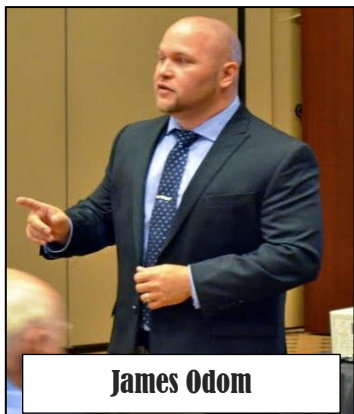
Stephanie Bertrand

"As a young teenager, I didn't make the right choices in life and I wasn't 'the model child' by far. I started getting arrested at thirteen years old for stealing my parent's cars and running away. I was always in the detention center for fighting and skipping school until finally I was forced to drop out in the eighth grade after becoming pregnant at fourteen years old."

It wasn't until my daughter was born when reality finally hit me! All my friends were having fun, getting ready for high school and actually getting to enjoy their teenage years while I was a young mother with a world of responsibility ahead of me at such a young age. "How could I do this to myself?" I would ask myself that question every night as I cried myself to sleep.

Since graduation I've had several wonderful job opportunities and two beautiful daughters that both look up to me. My oldest daughter even remembers coming to visit me on family days. I'm currently an Environmental, Health and Safety Manager for Brock Service (industrial, construction contractor) at Chevron Phillips Chemical Plant in Baytown Texas. I've been in the industry for over 13 years and in management since I was 25 years old in a male-dominated industry. I am still utilizing the strong ethics and leadership skills that I received from Seaborne.

"Thanks to Texas ChalleNGe, I was blessed with a second chance to make something of myself, become part of something positive, learn the true meaning of 'TEAM' and become someone my daughters can look up to with pride. I can honestly say that without the encouragement and genuinely caring staff, I wouldn't be where I am today...taking with me priceless memories and lifelong friendships."



James Odom

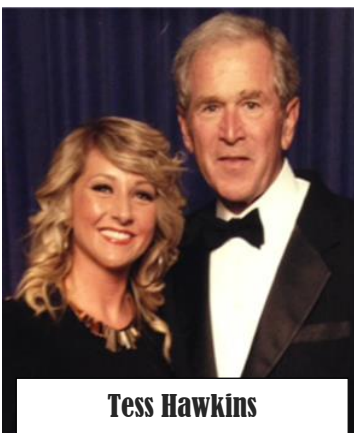
Since graduating TCA, my journey has involved educating the community on the topic of juvenile street gangs and the detrimental impact gangs have on our youth, families, and the community at large. I currently serve as the Gang Programs Coordinator for The Harris County Juvenile Probation Department and was instrumental in the development of both the 313th District Gang Court and the YESS program (formally the Gang Unit).

My previous roles include program management of the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office and serving as a national trainer and expert in the behavior of gang-involved youth. I am involved with various school districts to coach educational staff and administration on matters of gang-involvement, behaviors, and the attitudes and beliefs that result in gang-membership in and around Harris County. I am also a certified mediator with a clear devotion to ground-level work and mediating inter-gang rivalries.

**Odom has also acted as a TCA Ambassador at state legislative events helping to ensure TCA receives appropriate funding for operation.*

"Like most young kids without direction and purpose in their lives, I searched for significance in the streets. I stumbled across a street gang and found comfort in their destructive lifestyle. That decision caused me to

repeat the 9th grade three years in row, be placed on juvenile probation twice, and my home was shot at over seven different times. In an effort to survive and salvage my future, I enrolled in the Texas ChalleNGe Academy, formally known as Seaborne Conservation Corps. I graduated in 1996 and dedicated my life to helping at-risk kids like myself. I previously worked as a program manager for the City of Houston Mayor's Anti-Gang Office and have helped some of the most dangerous youth in Harris County. I also founded a gang education agency called Alternative Behavior and I'm currently employed with Harris County Juvenile Probation as the Gang Programs Coordinator. In my free time, I write a quarterly gang column for a local magazine and work hard to be the best husband, father, and role model I can possibly be. None of this would have been possible without TCA, the structure of the program and confidence instilled upon me as a teen has created the person I am today."



Tess Hawkins

"Early in my youth, I began to experiment with drugs and alcohol. The experimenting led to drug addiction, running away from home, and dropping out of high school. In January, 2003, I was accepted into Seaborne ChalleNGe Corps (Texas ChalleNGe). I was selected Squad Leader and Platoon Leader, earned my GED and graduated in 2003. I enlisted in the US Navy at 18 and, during that time, participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom."

"I grew up in a middle-class family in the suburbs of Kingwood where I was once an 'A-B' student and a competitive cheerleader at my 5-A high school. Early in my youth, I began to experiment with drugs and alcohol. The experimenting led to drug addiction, running away from home and school attendance issues. Shortly after starting my junior year of high school, I dropped out. At that point, my mom had felt that there was little hope for me. I would either end up dead on the streets or in jail at the age of 17.

In January, 2003, I was accepted into Seaborne ChalleNGe Corps where I was selected as Squad Leader and Platoon Sgt. I was also able to earn my GED and graduate in June.

In November, 2003, I enlisted in the US Navy at the age of 18. I spent Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve away from my family for the first time in my life, but that would prepare me for many deployments.

In March, 2004, I was assigned to the USS Nimitz in San Diego where I spent three years onboard. I spent eight months the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In November, 2009, I was onboard the USS Carl Vinson where we were dispatched to Haiti as first responders after the hurricane and later was in the Arabian Gulf when Osama bin Laden was buried at sea off the deck. In October, 2011, I was assigned to the Space and Warfare Command in San Diego. I was honorably discharged from the Navy after nine years.

"I recently earned my associates degree and am enrolled in a Bachelor's program. Without ChalleNGe, I wouldn't be where I am today."