



Today's ChalleNGe...Tomorrow's Success

**MENTOR APPLICATION
PACKET**

Application for Class: January to June _____
 July to December _____

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Texas ChalleNGe Academy
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SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FINDING YOUR MENTOR APPLICANT(S)!

Dear Texas ChalleNGe Academy Applicants and Parent(s):

The Texas ChalleNGe Academy is a 17 1/2-month program. The time spent living at the program site is called the residential phase. The 12 months after the cadet returns home is referred to as the post-residential or mentoring phase. During both of these phases the Cadet is required to be in contact with his/her Mentor weekly. All Cadets must have a Mentor, no exceptions will be made. Your Mentor applicant(s):

1. Must be the same gender as the youth
2. Should be at least 25 years old
3. Must NOT be a member of the immediate family (the definition of immediate family or household member includes anyone who is the cadet's primary caregiver or lives with the cadet.)
4. Should live within a reasonable distance of where the youth will live during the post-residential phase.
Reasonable distance is defined as the distance acceptable to both the Mentor and the youth
5. Must consent to a criminal history background check. This check must be free of any sex crimes or domestic violence. It must also be free of felonies, alcohol or substance abuse within the last seven years
6. Must have a desire to volunteer some of their time for the youth and the program.

Prior to acceptance you must recruit ONE DEPENDABLE ADULT ROLE MODEL - called a PRIMARY MENTOR - that meets the criteria listed above and that can attend the three-hour Mentor Training. It is your responsibility to keep your Mentor Applicant informed about your acceptance status so he /she can get on the training schedule. The youth does not need to know the adult but should do the "asking" for their help. The Mentor Brainstorm Worksheet is provided for your use and has helped 9 out of 10 youth find dependable mentor nominee. For help selecting your mentor go to www.ngycp.org/etc/mentor/engage.htm/. We suggest the following as good sources for Mentor recruits:

1. Ask retired adults from your community.
2. Ask at local Churches for interested members.
3. Ask at local Civic Organizations (Lion's, Kiwanis, Rotary, Elk's, VFW, etc.).
4. Ask work associates, friends, or neighbors of immediate or extended family members.
5. Ask your community protectors such as firemen and police officers.
6. Ask National Guard members from your community.
7. Ask school teachers, counselors, coaches, ROTC leaders, military recruiters, and pastors.

If you have any questions regarding any of the Mentor Application forms, or the mentoring program, feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mentor Coordinator
Shirley Jones
sjones@riceraiders.net

979-234-3531 Ext. 2013

Finding a Mentor Worksheet

Use this worksheet to help you network. Don't concentrate on what a mentor is or needs to do. Just fill in as many names of people that you or someone else may know. These do not need to be people that anyone knows well. Use the back if necessary. Get as many people as you can to help you fill in more names. The object is to come up with as many names as you can. Once finished, use the list to contact people and ask for help either to find an adult interested in mentoring, or to consider it themselves. Discuss the names with your family and pick your top three to five choices for a mentor. Contact them or ask someone that knows them better to introduce you. Explain that you are applying for a military-style academy to further your education and you need an adult teammate to mentor you. If they have questions that you are not sure about, be sure to give them the application anyway, and point out the toll-free number they can call to find out more before deciding. Follow up with them in a few days. If they agree to sign up, be sure and thank them. If they decline, be sure and thank them for thinking about it, and politely ask if they may know someone else who might be interested.

Dad's Friends	Mom's Friends	Brother's Friends	Sister's Friends	Parents of Friends
Uncle's Friends	Aunt's Friends	Cousin's Friends	Past/Present Work Associates	Work Associates of Parents
Work Associates of other Family	Neighbors	Neighbors' friends and family	Family/Friends that attend a church	Church friends of those members
Pastors	Retired People anyone knows	Teachers or people they know	Local Business Owners/Workers	Cell Phone Directories
Holiday Card Lists	Email Addresses	Community Leaders	Others	

EXPLANATION TO POTENTIAL MENTOR VOLUNTEER

PURPOSE: Each student attending the TCA is paired with an adult mentor—chosen by the student—to help advise, guide, and assist them throughout the goal process and following graduation. We may also submit an application to be considered as a mentor for a student who, because of their individual circumstances, is unable to find a mentor.

ATTN: Mentor Nominee - *KEEP PAGE FOR YOUR REVIEW*

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Texas ChalleNGe Academy is to provide a highly disciplined, safe, and professional learning environment that empowers at-risk youth to improve their educational level and employment potential and become responsible and productive citizens of the State of Texas.

BACKGROUND:

The Texas ChalleNGe Academy (TCA) is part of the national Youth Challenge Program, authorized and funded by the Department of Defense and conducted by the National Guard. The Youth Challenge Program was established in 1993 and there are currently 40 programs in 29 states and Puerto Rico (some states have more than one program). The goal of the program is to give dropouts a second chance to complete their high school education. One of the most important things you need to know is that the program is **voluntary** and a student/dropout has to apply and compete for admission. The TCA is not like a regular high school and it is not easy. It is a 22-week residential program conducted in a quasi-military format that provides our principles, structure, and emphasis on discipline and personal responsibility. The student is a member of a 50 person training platoon, lives in a dormitory, wears a uniform, meets military grooming standards, observes military customs and courtesies, does lots of marching, and perhaps most importantly he/she is held accountable for their words and actions. The staff is caring, dedicated, trained, and committed to helping the student; they understand and appreciate the courage and commitment it took to make the decision to attend the TCA. They will do everything they can to help the student succeed; however, they will not cut the student any slack or go easy on them in terms of meeting our high standards. The staff uses a “**hands off**” approach that is tough and disciplined, yet caring and respectful, to instruct, train, and motivate the student. After graduating from the TCA, the student continues to work with an adult mentor in a positive relationship that supports the student in applying the positive values and new skills acquired during the 22-week residential phase. This post-graduation mentoring phase is a major factor in the overall success of the Youth Challenge Program and we devote a significant amount of staff time and attention to supporting the mentoring program. **NOTE: Each student is required to have a mentor to attend the TCA and we cannot complete processing their application without having an approved mentor.**

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Mentoring is a positive one-on-one relationship between a youth and an adult that provides emotional support, advice, and guidance to help the younger person deal with the challenges of life. The goal is to help the young person gain the skills and confidence to deal with those situations and be able and responsible to make good choices in the future. Examples of challenges and situations where a mentor’s advice and guidance could be important, if not critical, include: making education and career choices; seeking, performing, and holding a job; managing personal finances; owning a home or renting an apartment; teen pregnancy and parenting skills; substance abuse; etc. Your role is not to replace a parent or guardian, but to provide additional information and perspectives that might not be available to the child.

WHAT’S EXPECTED OF YOU AS A MENTOR FOR A TCA STUDENT?

If you agree to be a mentor for a specific student, or want to be considered for a mentor position with a student/applicant, you’re making a commitment of time, attention, and some expense. We can’t quantify any of these, however, in terms of the potential impact you could have on a young person’s life the cost is negligible and the rewards are immense. This is not a token or nominal position and you can plan on the following:

- Submit an application providing all requested information.
- The TCA staff will review the application and references and coordinate the required background check.
- Attend one mandatory half-day training session (three hours) at location to be announced.
- Maintain weekly contact with the student/mentee during the residential phase primarily via letter.
- Mentor will be invited to Family Day and Mentor Match Day events. Mentors are asked visit mentees during scheduled home passes, mentor-specific visitations, and/or through attendance at graduation.
- After graduation, maintain weekly contact with the student/mentee for the next 12 months, with a minimum of four (4) hours of face-to face contact each month. Once a month you'll submit a brief online report of the student/mentee's progress. **This is when the student/mentee needs you the most and your time investment is most critical to their continuing development and future success.**
- **IF YOU CANNOT MEET THESE EXPECTATIONS - PLEASE DO NOT APPLY.**

GOALS OF MENTORING A STUDENT/GRADUATE OF THE TCA:

- 1) Create a positive one-on-one relationship built on trust, honesty, and open communication.
- 2) Maintain regular/on-going contact with the student throughout the program to help them keep their focus and effort in building, implementing, and attaining the goals they set for themselves while attending the Academy.
- 3) Help the student understand and embrace the positive qualities and traits of a responsible citizen and a successful student, employee, parent, etc.
- 4) Be a listener; earn the Cadet's trust; provide advice and guidance as the student makes decisions and deals with the inevitable issues and challenges of life.

MANDATORY ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TO BE A MENTOR:

- Should be a resident of Texas
- Should be at least 25 years old (some exceptions apply; former graduates must be at least 21 years old)
- Must be of the same gender/sex as the student/applicant
- Mentor cannot be an immediate relative, either by marriage or bloodline, or someone living in the same household
- Mentor must live within a reasonable distance to where the student/applicant will live during the post-residential phase (usually their hometown). This is to minimize travel.
- Willing to MEET EXPECTATIONS OUTLINED ABOVE for up to 17½ months with four contacts per month, 4-hours personal contact each month during post-residential phase.

DISQUALIFYING FACTORS:

- A history of arrest or conviction for a sex offense
- A felony conviction within the last seven years (case by case consideration beyond that)
- Any alcohol, drug, or substance abuse with the last five years
- A history of domestic violence (reports, charges, convictions)
- Failure to follow through on commitment on previous TCA or ChalleNGe mentorships.

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION:

If you are interested in becoming a mentor and are able to commit to the youth AND to the program, please complete the attached application forms. **Please note and understand that we must ask for personal and sensitive information in the application process.** This information will be used to conduct a criminal background check and a sexual offender registry check by law enforcement agencies. The application forms and the information therein will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed to law enforcement agency personnel.

TCA-MENTOR 1 – PROSPECTIVE MENTOR INFORMATION

NAME OF STUDENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MENTOR: _____

PROSPECTIVE MENTOR INFORMATION

MENTOR NAME: _____	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Date of Birth _____				
Marital Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Married	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/> Single	<input type="checkbox"/> Widow

RACE:	<input type="checkbox"/> White (Not of Hispanic Origin)	<input type="checkbox"/> Black	<input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/ Alaskan native	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Other/Multi-Racial

ADDRESS:			
Street _____	Home Phone: _____		
City _____	Cell Phone: _____		
State _____ ZIP CODE _____	Email: _____		
How long have you been a resident of Texas? _____	Years _____	Months _____	
What other states have you lived in during the last ten years? _____			
Are you related to this youth? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If yes how: _____		
Do you speak more than one language? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, what language(s) _____			

Employer Name _____	Employer Phone No _____
Address _____	City _____ State _____ ZIPCODE _____
Job Title _____	Dates of Employment From _____ To _____
Employment Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary
	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed

What are your interests and/ or hobbies? _____

If this match does not work out, would you consider mentoring another youth from your area? Yes No

MENTORING AGREEMENT

PURPOSE: This document must be signed in the presence of the youth applicant and the primary mentor applicant. This agreement provides the essence of why you are entering into this mentoring relationship. As a volunteer mentor prospect, you should know that your application and eventual training does not guarantee your youth will be accepted into the program, or will complete the program if they are accepted. Entering the mentor screening process through application and training will nonetheless send a very strong message to the youth that you care for his/her future and success. Official mentoring will start from the “match” as designated by the academy only. If a student fails to complete the program, official mentoring will cease, but friendships cannot be mandated or managed. The parents/guardians, youth, and mentor nominee will decide in such circumstances the degree of the adult volunteer’s involvement.

The TCA Mentor and Youth Applicants agree to:

Keep in touch through letter writing when the class begins and during the steps before being officially matched by the TCA RPM department. These steps include mentor training, youth training, complete paperwork from both Mentor and Mentee, adult background check, mentor screening, notification of approval, and a face-to-face meeting between both Mentor and Mentee. We will not spend time alone unless the legal guardian approves or until officially matched by TCA.

Commit to maintaining weekly contact through letter writing, phone, email, or any other form of communication permitted by the academy until finished with the 17 ½ month program.

Spend time together in person at least four hours per month during the Post Residential Phase, when and if the student returns to the hometown community.

Work together in any revision of the Cadet’s Post Residential Action Plan (P-RAP). Notify each other in advance if it is impossible to keep an appointment.

Do our best to get to know, trust, respect, and communicate with each other. Allow the TCA staff to mediate one or both parties if they wish to terminate the agreement.

Update the TCA staff monthly and at the end of our 17 ½-month agreement decide our plans, and celebrate our time together.

We understand these terms of the Mentoring Agreement and will abide by them if officially matched by the Texas ChalleNGe Academy.

ChalleNGe Mentor Applicant Signature and Date

ChalleNGe Youth Applicant Signature and Date

ChalleNGe Mentor Applicant PRINTED

ChalleNGe Youth Applicant PRINTED

TCA-MENTOR 4 – AUTHORIZATION FOR MENTOR BACKGROUND CHECK

PURPOSE: This form asks direct questions about your background that must be answered in order for us to conduct the necessary background check. The questions are necessarily personal and sensitive – as would be expected when the safety and security of a young person is involved.

NAME OF THE STUDENT YOU WISH TO MENTOR: _____

In order to process your application to be a mentor for a student attending the TCA, we must conduct a reference check and a criminal background check and sexual offender registry check. The information listed on the Prospective Mentor Information form and this document is used to conduct the background investigation. TCA staff will not disclose this information to any third party not involved in conducting that investigation. TCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age or religion.

NAME: _____ Note: Your Social Security Number is necessary to conduct the background check. If you prefer not to disclose it, please contact our office about providing a fingerprint criminal history background check at your own expense.	SSN: _____	
Have you ever been arrested for a sex-related crime? If YES , explain the incident and specify the state it occurred in and the date.	YES	NO
Have you ever been arrested a crime involving force and/or a minor? If YES , explain the incident and specify the state it occurred in and the date.	YES	NO
Have you ever been arrested for an offense involving drugs or alcohol? If YES , explain the incident and specify the state it occurred in and the date.	YES	NO
Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic violations? If YES , explain the incident and specify the state it occurred in and the date.	YES	NO
Do you have any charges pending other than minor traffic violations? If YES , explain the incident and specify the state it occurred in and the date.	YES	NO
Driver's License Number: _____	State: _____	Expiration Date: _____
Auto Insurance: _____		
Please attach a photocopy of your Driver's License and valid Driver's Liability Insurance Card. Processing your application may be delayed if not provided with this form.		

AUTHORIZATION FOR MENTOR BACKGROUND CHECK (Continued)

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

While serving as a mentor for a student in the Texas ChalleNGe Academy, you will gain information that may be considered personal and/or confidential and should be treated accordingly. Besides breaching the trust that is the foundation of your mentoring relationship, an improper disclosure to an unauthorized third party could constitute a violation of Texas law and make you subject to legal action. All records dealing with your student/mentee must be treated as confidential.

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

I hereby grant to the Texas ChalleNGe Academy, the Texas National Guard, and appropriate law enforcement agencies permission to check my references and civil or criminal records to verify any information provided in this application. My signature below certifies that I have read the above material and understand the purpose and nature of the background investigation. Further, I understand my duty as a mentor to abide by the laws of the State of Texas and the laws and policies governing the preservation of confidential information.

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

MENTOR TRAINING COMMITMENT

PURPOSE: Training is offered three or four times per class. It is conducted in conjunction with mandatory screenings for the youth and family. Please ensure the youth and family can reach you as soon as they are invited to one. Alternately, you may call our offices for available dates or visit our website <http://www.texaschallengeacademy.com> to see when and where we have scheduled Mentor Training opportunities. If you miss out on a scheduled training date, you must contact us to schedule training in Eagle Lake. (Shirley Jones – 979-234-3531 ext. 2013 or email sjones@riceraiders.net)

) Now that you are aware of this information, please initial each line below acknowledging your training requirement.

____ I am applying to become this young person's mentor to provide an additional listening ear, caring heart, and positive adult role model. I will do my best to set a good example and follow through with my commitment regardless of the youth's progress.

____ I am committing to this young person and will attend the three-hour Mentor Training. I understand that as a mentor applying in conjunction with a youth, I must reserve a training date and location with the mentoring office by phone or email (provided above).

____ I understand that my training requirement will prepare me for the Texas ChalleNGe Academy mentoring relationship and that in attending I am already planting a seed of help in the life of this youth.

____ I accept the possibility that the youth may not act as responsible as I would like in the beginning of our relationship, that my efforts may not be repaid by his or her gratitude during this time, and that if the youth quits at any time I am welcome but not obligated to continue in the mentoring program.

MENTOR LIABILITY RELEASE

PURPOSE: This form advises you that you are agreeing to hold the State of Texas/Texas ChalleNGe Academy harmless for injuries, damages and/or losses you incur as a result of volunteering to become a Mentor and participating in mentoring activities. It also explains that as a Mentor you are not considered an agent, employee or representative of the Texas ChalleNGe Academy and is therefore not covered under any state/agency insurance or Labor and Industries disabilities coverage for any expenses, injuries damages, or losses you incur as the result of your participation as a mentor.

Volunteer Mentor Activities. I understand and agree that while volunteering as a mentor I will be engaging in school- based and community-based mentoring activities with my matched Youth Academy Cadet Mentee. I understand that these activities may include a variety of interactions between my mentee and myself to include; letter writing/email correspondence, telephone calls, and day visits on and off Texas ChalleNGe Academy (TCA) campus during the residential phase. These activities may have inherent risks such as physical activities, community service projects or recreational activities. I recognize that I must exercise care in supervising my mentee during the residential and post-residential phase of the mentoring relationship; including planning and selecting the type of activities we participate in during our visits together. Further, I understand that the goal of mentoring is to develop a positive adult/youth relationship. I agree that I am responsible for choosing and conducting all activities with my mentee, and I agree that such activities will be legal and focus on trust and relationship building, open communication, mentee social skill building, and other related activities will be conducted in the State of Texas during both the residential and Post Residential Activity Phase (P-RAP).

Volunteer Mentor Status. I also understand and agree I am not an agent, employee or representative of the State of Texas/ TCA in my capacity as a mentor, nor will I claim to be such a representative, officer or employee of the TCA. I will not make any claim of right, privilege or benefit that would accrue to such an employee. I do not expect to receive any monetary wages for services rendered during the mentoring period and understand as a volunteer I am not covered for any injury, damage or loss suffered while acting in the capacity as a mentor. I understand that if I use my private motor vehicle in the course of my volunteer mentor duties, it is my obligation to obtain and maintain state required liability insurance to cover any accidents involving my vehicle and to maintain the appropriate legally required vehicle operator's license. I further understand that it is my responsibility to obtain and maintain insurance policies for damage, loss or liability on all personally owned, leased or rented equipment I use while performing as a volunteer mentor. Texas ChalleNGe Academy, Texas Military Department and the State of Texas will not provide any liability or other insurance coverage.

Hold Harmless. The Mentor will hold harmless the Texas ChalleNGe Academy, Texas Military Department , State of Texas, and its employees while performing his/her mentoring activity, from any and all costs, claims, judgments, and/or awards of damages (both to persons and/or property), which may accrue to or be suffered by any person(s), or property, arising out of mentoring activities.

The Mentor agrees to and hereby does waive any and all claims for personal injury and damages or losses to property, including expenses or lost revenues, in connection with mentoring activities.

In case any claim, suit or action is brought against the Texas ChalleNGe Academy, Texas Military Department, State of Texas, and its employees, arising out of the mentoring activity, the mentor shall, upon notice of such claim, suit or action, defend the same at his/her sole expense and satisfy any judgment and/or award of damages.

This indemnification and waiver shall survive the termination of this release.

Mentor's Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name: _____

IF NOT SIGNED, THIS APPLICATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

LIST THREE (3) REFERENCES FOR MENTORS (ONLY ONE MAY BE A RELATIVE). YOU MAY USE TWO OF THESE REFERENCES WHEN ASKING FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING MENTOR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL RESPONSE FORMS ABOUT YOU.

After completing the form below please take a moment to complete the following spaces on the next two forms and then ask a personal and a professional reference to complete them for you: Names of student, mentor applicant (that's you) and print your name in the first paragraph.

Last Name:		First Name:		Middle:
Address:			City:	
State:	Zip:	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Message Phone:
Email:				
Relationship to Applicant:	Friend	Neighbor	Other:	
	Relative	Work Associate		
Last Name:		First Name:		Middle:
Address:			City:	
State:	Zip:	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Message Phone:
Email:				
Relationship to Applicant:	Friend	Neighbor	Other:	
	Relative	Work Associate		
Last Name:		First Name:		Middle:
Address:			City:	
State:	Zip:	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	Message Phone:
Email:				
Relationship to Applicant:	Friend	Neighbor	Other:	
	Relative	Work Associate		

