

MOUNTAINEER CHALLENGE ALUMNI

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Mountaineer Challenge Academy Welcomes 62nd Class



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CADET TO CADRE



John Moore graduated from the Mountaineer Challenge Academy's first class of 2016 with 154 other cadets.

As a cadet, Moore admits he was young and definitely mischievous. "I could have done more while I was a cadet." He says he was motivated and determined to finish the course, and believes he helped motivate his fellow cadets.

After graduation he got his first job at 17 years old working at KFC. He worked various jobs for the next year and a half and ultimately decided to attend the Mountaineer Job Challenge program to get his Pre-Apprenticeship in Building Construction. Moore earned the STAR award for his leadership skills and his performance.

Moore returned to MCA in April 2023 at the encouragement of Nurse Collingwood and other staff members. "I'm not really sure what brought me back, but I've been given a purpose and a duty to fulfill."

Moore says MCA changed his life for the greater good. "It's given me a much different outlook on life. It's given me almost an edge for things I've set out to accomplish. It's given me a mindset that I can accomplish anything I truly want to if I stick it out and give 100%."



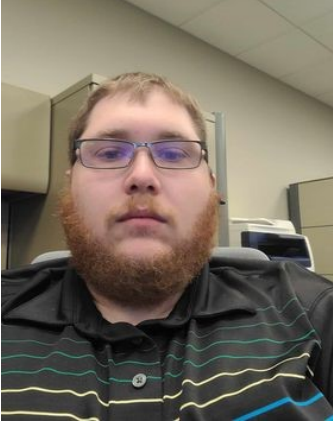
MCA South

West Virginia Division of Natural Resources Police officers recently partnered with Mountaineer Challenge Academy staff to provide an opportunity for cadets to go through a hunter education course and participate in an antlerless deer hunt in Roane County. "This is an outstanding opportunity for the Natural Resources Police to partner with the Challenge Academy staff in providing an opportunity for these young cadets to harvest their first deer safely and ethically,"



said Col. Bobby Cales, chief of the WVDNR Law Enforcement Section. "We enjoy watching these young hunters take what they've learned in our hunter education program and utilize that knowledge in a field setting." The four cadets chosen for the hunt had never hunted or fired a gun before. During the hunt, which took place on private land on Dec. 10, each cadet was paired with a WVDNR Police officer and a volunteer, who provided guidance and assistance. Three of the four cadets were able to harvest a deer.

THE ROAD to success



Jim Nicholson (Class 2-2005)

Jim is currently supporting 18 offices as a Senior Cyber Security Engineer for a law firm in the heart of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. "I'm married and when I'm not working, I'm playing dad to two wonderful kids."

Layla Sawyers (Class 2-2013)

Since graduation, Layla has gone to college and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Liberty University. She is currently working towards her Master of Business Administration with a Business Analytics concentration. She is currently working as a Senior Business Analyst for Cigna and live in Philadelphia, PA. Last November she ran Philadelphia half marathon - something she does not think she would have pursued if it were not for her time at MCA. "When I was at MCA, I was a homeless, unaccompanied youth. I would not be where I am today or have the opportunities that I have had if it were not for this program."



Jacob Rubin (Class 1-2015)

Jacob has worked numerous jobs, but working at MCA-South for almost 2 years was the start of his real journey into becoming who he wanted and needed to be. Once his time with MCA-South came to an end he decided to move out of state to Lexington, Kentucky. "I became a police officer with the Lexington Police Department and I have never been happier. It is the best job!"

Want to be featured in our next Alumni newsletter? Contact Roxanne Bright (roxanne.l.bright@wv.gov) and let her know what you've been up to since you left MCA. We love to hear how well our graduates are doing!

Elisha Smith (Class 1-2017)

Elisha is working at Donald R Kuhn Juvenile Center as a Correctional Officer. She works with juveniles and she is trying to help make a positive change with them.



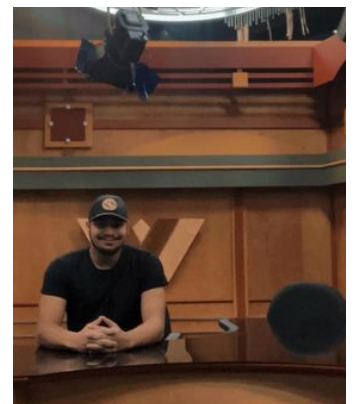
Tyler Tolley (Class 2-2017)

Tyler went to work in construction after graduation. In August 2022 he went to the West Virginia Police Academy and he graduated in November 2022, He was the 190th basic class he now works as a patrolman for Charleston West Virginia and has a beautiful family.

Ryan Bass (Class 2-2014)

Graduating from MCA, Ryan felt the freedom and the excitement of excelling way beyond his peers. Obtaining his high school diploma at 16, led to some amazing opportunities! He was selected to attend the Legislature and Earl Ray Tomblin even recognized him on television! He did 4 years active in the Marine Corps as a Utilities Engineer! He learned about basic operations and during his last year in, he noticed he took a fascination in music, audio, and video.

“Now I am proud to say with the help of Mountaineer ChalleNGe, and the United States Marine Corps, I am pursuing my very own dreams at working for PBS and West Virginia Public Broadcasting while going to college at Los Angeles Film School for Music Production and Audio Engineering. It’s been a long ride, but a few years of experience, learning, and discipline can really make a difference in someone’s life.”



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Our cadets say that the food at MCA is one of their **favorite** things here. Here is one of their favorite recipes, straight from the DFAC!

Pepperoni Rolls

- ¼ cup warm water
- 1 (.25-ounce) package active dry yeast
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour, divided (plus more if needed)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 8 TBSP unsalted butter, divided
- 2 TBSP honey
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- 8 to 9 ounces thinly sliced pepperoni
- 1½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350.

In a small bowl, place 1/4 cup warm water and sprinkle the yeast over it. Let it sit until dissolved and creamy, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large mixing bowl, combine 3 cups flour and salt.

In a small saucepan, melt 4 tablespoons butter over medium-low heat. Whisk in the honey and buttermilk, and heat just until warm to the touch (do not boil). Remove from heat and whisk in the egg.

Add the water and yeast mixture to the flour, along with the buttermilk mixture. Mix with a wooden spoon until the dough just comes together. At first it will be quite sticky. If needed, add the remaining 1/2 cup flour, bit by bit, kneadable.

Resist the temptation to add a lot of flour; you want a soft dough that's still kneadable.

Transfer to a clean counter and gently knead by hand until smooth and supple, about 5 minutes. I don't need to flour my counter—if the dough sticks, it needs more flour. Place the dough in a large, greased bowl, cover, and let rise on your counter until doubled in bulk, 1 to 2 hours.

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds and line two baking sheets with parchment.

Divide the dough into 12 equal pieces and let them rest on a lightly floured surface for 10 minutes.

Melt the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter. Divide the pepperoni into 12 roughly equal piles.

Take a piece of dough and pat it into a square roughly 4 to 5 inches across. Imperfection is totally acceptable here, and in fact slightly preferable. Shingle the pepperoni slices over the square, leaving a 1/4-inch border around the dough. Roll up the dough and firmly pinch the bottom seam to seal. Place it seam-side-down on the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough. You'll wind up with 6 rolls per sheet.

Brush the rolls with half of the melted butter. Cover each baking sheet with a clean dish towel and let rise for 30 minutes. The rolls will not puff up visibly.

Bake until lightly browned, 30 to 40 minutes, rotating the sheets from top to bottom and back to front halfway through baking. Immediately after removing from the oven, brush with the remaining butter—you may need to rewarm the butter slightly before brushing.

Serve warm or at room temperature. Keep the cooled rolls at room temperature in a tightly sealed plastic bag or wrapped in plastic wrap for up to 3 days.

To freeze the baked rolls, cool completely. Wrap each roll in plastic wrap, then in foil, and then pop the individually wrapped rolls in a zip top storage bag. Freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw on the counter and, for the best eating experience, warm in a microwave for 15 to 30 seconds before eating.



Interested in mentoring future cadets? If you live in West Virginia and are at least 25 years old you could qualify. Contact the RPM Office at the Mountaineer Challenge Academy at 304.791.7387 for more information.