

MOUNTAINEER CHALLENGE ALUMNI

Fall 2024

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Mountaineer ChalleNGe Academy Welcomes 63rd Class



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CADET TO CADRE



Stacy Navarro graduated from the Mountaineer Challenge Academy's second class of 2018 with 172 other cadets.

As a cadet, Navarro admits she was pretty easy, outgoing cadet. "I stayed on top of everything from uniform inspections, room inspections and school work as well. I stayed out of trouble, thankfully was never on D-Squad and was very competitive." She was one of few females who stayed in the 450 club and she enjoyed being in leadership.

After graduation, she got her own apartment and worked in retail until Covid hit. Shortly after that she got pregnant and bought a house with her husband. In 2022, she started a career as a correctional officer, but that career was cut short due to health issues. Navarro returned to MCA in March 2024 because of the positive impact MCA had on her life.

"Walking into the building for the first time gave me a fresh start to be a better version of myself. No one knew me or my background that gave me the opportunity to share all the good in me. It taught me to have integrity, be a team leader and a teammate in different situations. I wanted to show these kids I'm a product of all the good MCA can do for you. I can help in ways to make their life easier being a cadet. In my life I just wanted to help everyone and give everyone something I didn't have."



MCA South

Mountaineer Challenge Academy South continues to expand on the partnership with WV DNR. In Class 2-23 cadets in the ECO Club under the supervision of Instructor Doug Huff began constructing 8' picnic tables that are assembled at the academy and branded with the Challenge logo for use in our state parks. Class 1-24 has continued this mission. To date cadets have assembled forty tables that are now on display in Beech Fork State Park, Tomlinson Run State Park, Hawks Nest State Park, Kanawha State Forest, and Tu-Endie-Wei State Park. The work on these service to community projects will impact the residents



of the State of WV as well as the visitors who travel here to enjoy the natural beauty of our state. This project provides valuable support to our WV DNR in their efforts to aid in the exploration, conservation, development, protection, enjoyment, and use of the natural resources of the State of West Virginia. Please be on the lookout for a cadet assembled picnic table in a state park near you and, as always, Challenge yourself!

THE ROAD to success



Kierstyn Daft (Class 1-2015)

Kierstyn served a few years in the military and is now a member of her local VFW & The DAV, helping veterans in her area as well as honoring them by being a part of military funeral honor guard, along with other volunteer work. She is currently working at Nemaacolin Woodlands Resort as a security officer which my military background helped me secure.

Precious Thomas (Class 2-2015)

Precious is currently going to school for Early Childhood Education and she will graduate this year with her Bachelors Degree. She welcomed a baby boy 3 months ago .



Matthew Wright (Class 1-2019)

Matthew joined the Air Force after graduating from MCA. After working several odd jobs after his release from the military, he is currently serving as a Residential Advisor at the Mountaineer Job Challenge Program.

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!



Alyssa Davis (Class 2-2019)

Alyssa now works for the Interlock Department of the DMV in Charleston. She has a beautiful family with 2 baby girls and couldn't be happier. MCA helped her so much, and helped her grow so much as a person! She is forever grateful.

Emilee Ward (Class 2-2019)

Emilee is a mother of a 2 and a half year old boy. She is currently working at Summers county EMS which is ambulance service. She dispatches crews to emergencies and non-emergencies. She is also doing classes to further her career as a driver and later on she plans to take more classes to be EMT and paramedic certified. She also volunteers with Summers County Volunteer Fire Department, who covers most of the county with 6 other departments.



Kaylee Lester (Class 2-2022)

Since graduation, Kaylee has enlisted in the US Air Force. She is currently serving as an A1C. She moves all kinds of cargo around the world and is currently getting ready to head out on her first deployment.

Caden Sheppard (Class 1-2023)

Caden graduated and got a job at The Greenbrier, running escape rooms. As time went on he moved up, and started working in the museum, and bunker tour office. He still does all that as well as history tours/ presentation, and gives bunker tours. Class 61 came for a visit while Caden was still training, but as of December he can give the tour,



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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!

Chicken Bacon Ranch Pizza

- 1-pound homemade pizza dough (or store bought)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup ranch dressing
- 3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups chopped cooked chicken
- 4 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Roll out dough to about a 13-15 inch circle. Place on pizza pan.

Top dough with ranch and spread to an even layer. Sprinkle with cheese. Top with chicken and bacon. Bake for 15 minutes or until crust is golden.

HELP WANTED

Have you ever considered a career with the Mountaineer Challenge Academy?

MCA North
MCA South and
Mountaineer Job Challenge
are all hiring.

Positions include -
Squad Leaders
Dietary Assistants
Residential Advisors

You can check out the Employment Page on the MCA web page and fill out the WV Military Authority application.

If you have any questions, please contact HR Belinda Sharp at 304.282.3426