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Youth ChalleNGe still accepting at-risk teens

CAMP GUERNSEY, Wyo. – The Wyoming Youth ChalleNGe Program (WYCP) still has room in its current class for interested applicants. People interested can still join the class, which began Sunday, through Wednesday.

WYCP can house 75 cadets at their campus on the Wyoming National Guard's Camp Guernsey Joint Training Center cantonment area. The five-month in-residence program is provides the teens with the academics to pass the GED, and gives the cadets the confidence and skills to be a positive force in their communities.

"The numbers game that matters is the number of kids we can help get their lives back on track," said David Juliano, the program's deputy director. "Registration is still open until Wednesday and we are working to help applicants that didn't make it, get through our doors."

"It can be a really scary thing for these kids to walk away from what they know," WYCP director Don Smith said. "We can't force them into the program, we can't make them stay, but we can give them hope and the skills to develop that hope into a lifetime of success."

Once the five months of courses are completed, cadets graduate and are placed into jobs, schools, or the military. While the National Guard facilitates the program, cadets have no military obligation.

WYCP graduated a class of 23 in December, placing 12 cadets in college or job training. The other 11 cadets were placed into jobs or opted to join the military.

Cadets are also mentored for at least their first year away from the program. Mentors are a WYCP requirement, and cadets are paired with their mentors before graduation, maintaining contact multiple times per month.

For more information on enrolling a cadet, contact the Wyoming Youth Challenge Program at 307-836-7512.