



## State of Wyoming Military Department Office of the Adjutant General

5500 Bishop Boulevard  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3320  
<http://www.wy.ngb.army.mil>

June 16, 2011

### For immediate release

#### Media contact:

#### Public Affairs Office, [ngwyo.pao@ng.army.mil](mailto:ngwyo.pao@ng.army.mil).

Deidre Forster, 307-772-5253; cell 307-631-4153; email [deidre.forster@us.army.mil](mailto:deidre.forster@us.army.mil).

Lt. Col. Samuel House, 307-772-5935; email [samuel.house@us.army.mil](mailto:samuel.house@us.army.mil).

1st Lt. Christian Venhuizen, 307-772-5040; email [christian.venhuizen@us.army.mil](mailto:christian.venhuizen@us.army.mil).

Master Sgt. Trudy Woodcock, 307-772-5229; email [trudy.woodcock@us.army.mil](mailto:trudy.woodcock@us.army.mil).

WyMD-11a\_20

## WyNG teams with peace officers to mentor Wyoming's youth

By Pfc.Dusty J. Chamberlain

Public Affairs Specialist

197th Public Affairs Detachment, Wyoming Army National Guard

CASPER, Wyo. – On a clear cool morning in early June, children from around Wyoming gathered in the mountains overlooking Casper to learn critical life long skills.

Camp P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D, "Peace Officers Striving to Create and Re-enforce Dreams" has been a joint effort between the Wyoming Peace Officers, Volunteers of America and the Wyoming National Guard to teach Wyoming's at-risk youth the importance of teamwork, communication, respect, leadership and how to conquer personal fears.

Brittany Goodvin, the grants coordinator for the VOA, explained this is a premier leadership camp held every June for students between their fifth- and sixth-grade years. School counselors, school resource officers and D.A.R.E. instructors select the children from all around the state to attend, she continued.

"It's amazing to be able to work with these children, and be able to witness them overcoming their greatest fears," said Goodvin.

Goodvin also explained, "with all the camps available to children, such as 4-H, scouts, and sports camps, the school resource officers and D.A.R.E. officers in Wyoming's schools refer the children who are least likely to attend any other camp" by keeping their eyes out for at-risk children, as well as those who exhibit remarkable leadership qualities.

Heath Steel, executive vice president for VOA, explained he learned about the program in 2003 when he traveled to Maine to participate in their program. He then came back to Wyoming to implement what he learned into a P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D. program for Wyoming's youth. The camp has been held every June on Casper Mountain for the last eight years, with expansion camps planned for Montana this year and Colorado in the near future. Sadly, Steel continued, these three are the only camps of their kind left in the country, as Maine discontinued their P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D. program soon after his visit.

Sgt. 1st Class Kris Green, Wyoming National Guard Counter Drug Program administrator, and P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D. volunteer since 2004, explained in years past they have had more than 100 children attend, representing county school districts from all over the state. This year, to offer higher quality mentorship of the children, the program accepted 84 children from 12 counties.

"Our vision of accomplishment at this camp is to instill in the children a sense of teamwork, confidence and leadership," said Green.

Counter Drug has teamed with D.A.R.E. to hold drug resistance programs in the state's schools, said Green. Children can only learn so much about the side effects of drugs, so P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D. strives to teach children the confidence, leadership, and teamwork for making the choices to stay off drugs, he continued.

In 2004, VOA approached Counter Drug and the Wyoming National Guard with a proposal for P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D., requesting participation and demonstrations such as the Wyoming Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command's climbing wall, and military Blackhawk or Kiowa helicopters, said Green.

Mike Scott, a sheriff with Natrona County and D.A.R.E. officer said, "the day the National Guard brings their equipment into camp is the most exciting day for these kids. They love to see the cool equipment the military has."

The Wyoming Army National Guard's 67th Army Band regularly participates by putting on a concert for the campers; unfortunately the band was unable to participate this year due to statewide flood control.

Sgt. Colby White, a member of the band, the Cheyenne Police Department, and Cheyenne South High School's resource officer, explained during the course of the week-long camp, children are taught the fundamentals of archery, rifle marksmanship, as well as numerous military based exercises designed to get each group to work as a team, which is something a lot of children do not get the opportunity to do.

"It's great to work with the children, to give them a sense of confidence to take home and to implement into their everyday lives," said White.

"Our ultimate goal is to build leadership skills in all the campers and to establish long lasting relationships between the campers, the peace officers and the National Guard," said Goodvin.

During the camp's designated "National Guard Day," Wyoming Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Luke Reiner, as well as State Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Allan made an appearance to discuss with the children the importance of teamwork, communication, leadership, and good decision-making in everyday life.

"An organization is only as strong as its weakest link," said Reiner, before answering the numerous questions posed by the campers.

Allan discussed with the children the meaning of a term he used when he was younger; what does it mean to be "hip," but with a military twist? He discussed the seven core Army values, placing strong emphasis on honor, integrity and personal courage. Allan explained that using these three values in each decision would help the children make the right choice and in turn be successful in life.

In measuring success of the P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D. program, the VOA can surely measure its success by the desire of the campers and mentors wanting to return. Once a child goes through the program, they can return during their high school years as a junior mentor.

"Adult mentors are hard to come by to participate in the program, but once they witness the positive growth of the campers, they never want to leave," said Goodvin.

Junior mentor from Natrona County, Krissy Slagle said she attended the camp when she was 12, and returned this year to build on her own leadership qualities, share her experiences from her time as a camper, and to help mentor the children.

"It's a good camp," she said, "offering to kids valuable lessons in life. I hope to take what I've learned here and pass it on to others."

Camp P.O.S.T.C.A.R.D. is funded by grants through the Volunteers of America, and is free for students to attend, said Goodvin. Anyone interested in attending can contact the local school resource officer or D.A.R.E. Officer for additional information.