

## **Youth ChalleNGe Academy Foundation Celebrates 25 Years, Honors Senators Sam Nunn and Saxby Chambliss**

ATLANTA (February 28, 2018) – The Youth ChalleNGe Academy Foundation, a nonprofit organization that supports Georgia’s three [National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academies](#), joined Governor Nathan Deal last month at the Georgia Freight Depot to celebrate 25 years of the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program’s incredible success.

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program is a nationwide program formed in 1993 by U.S. Sens. Sam Nunn and John McCain following a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS): “Forging a Military Youth Corps – A Military-Youth Service Partnership for High School Dropouts.” It has helped more than 160,000 young men and women across the nation earn a high school diploma, GED or continue their education. Today, there are 40 Youth ChalleNGe Programs located in 27 states and territories.

Georgia’s academies, located at Ft. Stewart, Ft. Gordon and Milledgeville, have graduated more than 16,000 cadets representing all 159 counties in Georgia.

“With our three programs in Georgia we represent over 10 percent of the nation’s success, which is phenomenal when you realize that we started with 100 percent dropouts” said Tina Coria, who chairs Georgia National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Foundation.

High school dropouts were deemed the greatest domestic threat to national security in a 1992 CSIS report, “Strengthening of America” report.

“I’m grateful to have a strong board comprised of dedicated individuals who are supporting the Georgia Youth ChalleNGe Academies and helping thousands of young men and women in this state turn their lives around,” said Coria.

“For our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Governor Nathan Deal joined us in honoring the incredible foundation laid by Senator Nunn when he created this program, as well as Senator Saxby Chambliss, another great Georgian, for carrying the water while serving on the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, to see that this pilot program was permanently authorized and funded.

“We are proud that this remarkably successful program got its humble roots from forward-thinking Georgians, and continues to grow thanks to the leadership of Governor Deal in opening up Georgia’s third Youth ChalleNGe Academy in Milledgeville.”

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Matthew Dubois joined Coria and the Governor at the gala to celebrate 25 years of success and to honor Senator Sam Nunn and Senator Saxby Chambliss. Senators Johnny Isakson and David Perdue will continue 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations with upcoming congressional events.

The Foundation also marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program at the Legislature during this year's "Guard Day at the Capitol," celebrating the program's proven success at improving the life skills, education levels and employment potential of thousands of young men and women across Georgia.

ChalleNGe serves those between the ages of 16 to 18 who have dropped out of school but are interested in turning their lives around and improving their chances for success. Application inquiries for ChalleNGe can be directed toward the Admissions Office at **800-278-2233**.

**About the Georgia Youth ChalleNGe Academy Foundation, Inc.:** The Georgia Youth ChalleNGe Academy Foundation, Inc.'s efforts are directed primarily toward developing, supporting and enhancing the Georgia National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Academies and its cadets with educational scholarships, public awareness initiatives, innovative partnerships and opportunities for training and developing workforce and life skills. Visit [www.gycafoundation.com](http://www.gycafoundation.com) to learn more.

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