

142 Cadets graduate from Lincoln's ChalleNGe Academy

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SPRINGFIELD- More than 140 Cadets graduated from the Rantoul, Illinois based Lincoln's ChalleNGe Academy (LCA), during a ceremony at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, Illinois June 10.

LCA is one of the most successful youth challenge programs in the nation. Approximately 75 percent of LCA graduates earn a graduate equivalency diplomas (GED), compared to the Illinois state average of 53 percent. Lincoln's ChalleNGe consists of a 22-week residential phase conducted in a quasi-military environment

followed by a 12-month post-residential phase when the cadets return to their communities and are paired with a mentor.



"It was an honor to speak at the Lincoln's Challenge Academy's graduation and I am very proud of each one of them," said keynote speaker, Brig. Gen. Paul, the Assistant Adjutant General, Illinois National Guard. "It took a conscious decision for each of them to enroll in this program and I hope this will be a springboard to their successful futures."

Noah Rogers was among the graduates who earned a GED.

"I plan to attend community college and join the United States Marines after this," said Rogers.

Rogers said he joined LCA after two cousins, who graduated from the academy, encouraged him to give it a try.

"I have never tried at other schools," said Rogers. "Coming here and giving it my best and succeeding feels really good."

Rogers was the Valedictorian of his class and was also awarded the leadership award.



"It's an amazing feeling to win these awards, I tried my hardest in class every day," said Rogers. "I was trying to be a role model for others because I thought that if they saw me doing stuff that they would start doing it too."

LCA Director Peter Thomas said he hopes the graduates hold onto the principles they were taught at the academy.

"These graduates found the strength, walked the path and I am thrilled to say that they succeeded," said Thomas. "These graduates will be the leaders of tomorrow and I hope they will continue to reach for stars."

Graduates who were awarded scholarships:

Noah Rogers – 1,000 dollars from Health Net

Ariyan Harrington – 1,000 dollars from Health Net

Janelle Collins – 1,000 dollars from BBQT Scholarship

Tamia Creed and Teun Sims – 500 dollars from the National Guard Youth Foundation

Stephanie Campos and Dean Funk – 500 dollar scholarship from the DNDC Telephone

Awarded Cadets:

Noah Rogers – Valedictorian, Academic and Leadership Award

Ariyan Harrington – Solitarian

Knock Out Drill Award – Jeremy Watson

