

Setup for Success

SCHOOL PROGRAM GOES TO HEAD OF THE CLASS

By Scott J. Farrell

For the past 10 years, the YOU CAN School Program (YCSP) has been one of the Army National Guard's most popular educational outreach programs, introducing young adults around the country to essential life skills.

Building on the program's successes, the Strength Maintenance Division of the National Guard Bureau (NGB-ASM) recently updated the YCSP to be even more relevant, useful and engaging to today's students and educators.

MODERN MAKEOVER

A public service offered to high schools and colleges at no cost, the YCSP has more than 30 presentations that can give young adults essential skills, shift their thinking and help them make wise decisions—now and throughout their lives.

Relaunched at the start of the 2009–2010 school year, the YCSP has a fresh look, new and updated presentations, and social media resources.

Based on market research with RRNCOs, educators and students, NGB-ASM updated widely used classroom presentations and added new presentations highly relevant to today's career-minded young adults. The new YCSP presentations cover resume writing and workplace skills. The updated presentations inform students about budgeting, study techniques, test-taking skills, health and nutrition, lifelong learning, and interviewing.

New to the YCSP curriculum are online learning modules that educators can assign as homework or a computer lab activity. Used as homework, the online modules reinforce what was presented in the classroom through interactive games and exercises as well as video scenarios. For those who have not participated in the program, the online modules offer a taste of what will be covered in the classroom. There are currently eight online presentations that correspond to the new and updated classroom modules.



A Facebook page encourages students to share their successes and challenges, and to show support for the program and for the Guard.

To keep students connected to the program and its motivational message outside the classroom, NGB-ASM built multiple social networking and new media components into the re-energized program.

As part of the program relaunch, the Guard launched a YCSP Facebook page encouraging students to share their successes and challenges, and to show support for the program and for the Guard.

The new interactive features include a trivia-challenge widget and mobile application. Downloaded from the program's Web site, the widget enables students to practice test-taking on their computer's desktop. The mobile application is a way for them to practice their test-taking skills on an iPod touch, iPhone or another mobile phone.

RECRUITERS ON BOARD

Since the program relaunched in August with a redesigned Web site, NGB-ASM has received compliments from RRNCOs eager to use the new and updated YCSP presentations. The Web site has received a steady stream of program requests from educators.

"The YOU CAN School Program is a great resource," said Raymond Morgigno, principal at Pearl High School in Mississippi, where the Guard recently gave a study skills presentation.

"It broadens students' perspectives and helps them set their goals higher," confirmed Becky Rowan, a guidance counselor at the school.

Dr. Ray Davis, an education associate for career guidance in the Office of Career and Technology Education at the South Carolina Department of Education, is looking forward to reintroducing schools to the YCSP.

"The issues addressed by the YOU CAN School Program better enable our students to make a smooth transition into the workforce," Dr. Davis said.

RRNCOs can give the presentations in a number of classes, including history, English, physical education and business. The program is designed to help teachers meet state and national curriculum standards.

Sergeant First Class Mark Spencer, an RRNCO in the Connecticut Army National Guard, started using the revitalized program as soon as the school year started.

"The YOU CAN School Program is a wonderful opportunity for RRNCOs to connect with students who are interested in the Guard while providing a community service to our schools," he said. "The new presentations and features will help the Guard reach even more students with a motivational message."

To learn more about the YOU CAN School Program, visit YouCanSchoolProgram.com. **GX**

Check out the YOU CAN School Program on Facebook: Facebook.com/YOUCANSchoolProgram.