



CIVIL AIR PATROL NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Civil Air Patrol's Junior Cadet Program Readies for National Launch

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. – The proven character-building power of the Civil Air Patrol's Cadet Program for youth 12-21 years old has been expanded to include a Junior Cadet Program for elementary school-aged children nationwide. The inspirational message of the program is *"Like the flight of the boomerang, the choices made today will come back to you tomorrow."*

A "liftoff" celebration for the new Junior Cadet pilot program will be held at 10 a.m. on Oct. 26 at Boaz High School's football stadium in Boaz, Ala. National, state and local dignitaries have been invited to attend. The celebration is planned to include a CAP aircraft fly-over, introduction of "Cappy" (the Junior Cadet mascot), a proclamation presentation, a hot air balloon lift-off, model rocket launches and music provided by the Boaz High School Band. As a special performance, the Jr Cadet's theme song, "Boomerang," from the CD "Closer" will be performed by the musical artist who sings this inspirational song: **Charlotte Ritchie**.

Approximately 300 teachers and 7,000 students in 20 public, private and parochial schools in Alabama, Florida, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Georgia, Nevada, and Puerto Rico -- are field testing the program this school year. The Junior Cadet Program will be available to all elementary schools in fall 2008.

The Junior Cadet Program will provide elementary students an introduction to vital life skills -- character education, academics with an aerospace emphasis, leadership opportunities and physical fitness. Designed by educators, it incorporates fun, hands-on activities with national standards-based lesson plans that can be integrated throughout the curriculum.

The program is intended to augment CAP's School Enrichment Program (SEP) for middle and high school students. The Air Force Association's Montgomery, AL Chapter 102 is providing partnership sponsorship while using the Jr Cadet program and mascot as an outreach initiative for local elementary schools. "It is anticipated that Air Force Association chapters across the nation will see the potential benefits of this program in their communities and will follow the Montgomery Chapter's efforts and provide similar partnership of this program for the future," said Tom Gwaltney, the Montgomery Chapter president.

"The CAP SEP for America's middle and high schools is playing a major role in improving student opportunity and responsibility nationwide," said Colonel Al Applebaum, CAP SEP National Director. "Teachers report better attendance, better test scores and lower incidence of behavioral problems. With the addition of this elementary Jr Cadet program, it is anticipated that these benefits will begin at the early ages and will only magnify in building better youth for tomorrow."

The SEP is credited with expanding the horizons of students in rural areas, where agricultural-related jobs dominate the economic environment. "These kids have never had the opportunity to be exposed to aviation the way they have since implementation of the CAP youth program," said Dr. Randall Haney, Boaz's assistant superintendent. "These young people now have an expectation to be involved in the aerospace developments of the future."

Leland Dishman, Boaz City School System superintendent, welcomes the addition of the CAP Junior Cadet Program.

"I'm glad to be a part of this pilot program," said Dishman, who said the program will create a seamless venue for character development among students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade. "The School Enrichment Program has allowed young people who were looking for something in which to belong an avenue to belong to something bigger than themselves, and they feel really good about themselves once they participate," he said. "I'm hopeful what we've done here in Boaz will expand across this great nation."

"We have top-end kids, and we want them to have top-end opportunities in the aerospace and aviation industry," said Dishman. "We think once our kids see what they can do and what kind of lifestyle they can have, we'll have a complete paradigm shift in attitude."

"Through the influence of this achievement-oriented program, students become more respectful, motivated, and goal-oriented as citizens and future leaders," said Susan Mallett, CAP SEP manager.

"Working as a team, **Civil Air Patrol** and the **Air Force Association** will mentor and inspire our nation's young people about aerospace careers to fulfill the workforce of tomorrow."

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