



# ABOUT THE YOUNG MARINES

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## Who we are

The Young Marines is a youth education and service program for boys and girls, ages 8 through completion of high school. The Young Marines promotes the mental, moral, and physical development of its members. The program focuses on character building, leadership, and promotes a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. The Young Marines is the focal point for the U.S. Marine Corps' Youth Drug Demand Reduction efforts.

## Membership

The Young Marines is open to all youth ages 8 through completion of high school. The only membership requirement is that the youth must be in good standing at school. Since the Young Marines' humble beginnings, in 1958, with one unit and a handful of boys, the organization has grown to over 240 units with 10,000 youth and 3,000 adult volunteers in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and, Germany, Japan and affiliates in a host of other countries.

## Our Volunteers

Young Marine units are community-based programs lead by dedicated adult volunteers. Many of these volunteers are former, retired, active duty, or reserve Marines who believe passionately that the values they learned as Marines had a positive affect on them. It is through these caring adults that Young Marines learn the inner values of *Honor*, *Courage* and *Commitment*. Adult volunteers are individually screened by the National Headquarters based on background information and recommendations provided with each person's registration.

## Training

Upon joining a local Young Marine unit, youth undergo a 26-hour orientation program, generally spread out over several weekly meetings. This orientation program is affectionately called "Boot Camp." The youth learn general subjects such as history, customs and courtesies, close order drill, physical fitness, and military rank structure. After graduating from Young Marine "Boot Camp", the youth have the opportunity to learn more new skills, earn rank, wear the Young Marine uniform and work toward ribbon awards. Young Marines earn ribbons for achievement in areas such as leadership, community service, swimming, academic excellence, first aid and drug resistance education.

## National Programs

During the summer months, Young Marines have the opportunity to attend the Young Marines National Summer Programs of: Adventures, Challenges, Encampments, and Schools (SPACES). **Schools** consist of leadership courses. **Adventures**, have a historical emphasis and are designed with the younger child in mind. In contrast, older Young Marines can participate in Challenges. **Challenges** consist of training in areas such as survival skills, wilderness training, and water-based activities. Young Marine Encampments provide the opportunity for Young Marines of all ages to gather together and train as a large unit of up to 700 youth at a time. Over 3,000 Young Marines participate in the SPACES programs each year.

## Awards

The Young Marines is the proud two-time recipient of the Department of Defense's Fulcrum Shield Award for Excellence in Youth Anti-Drug Programs. The award recognizes military-affiliated youth organizations around the world that have made concerted efforts at spreading the anti-drug messages throughout their communities. The first award was presented to the Young Marines National Headquarters and the second to the Bakersfield Young Marine unit in California.

## R.Lee Ermey, the Young Marines official celebrity spokesperson

The Young Marines are honored to have R. Lee Ermey as their official celebrity spokesperson. Mr. Ermey garnered worldwide acclaim for his portrayal of Drill Instructor Gunnery Sergeant Hartman in Stanley Kubrik's film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). Ermey is the host of the History Channel's hit show, *Mail Call*.

## Chester, the official mascot of the Young Marines

*Chester*, the puppy bulldog, is the Young Marines official mascot. Chester enjoys all the benefits of Young Marine membership such as the opportunity to earn rank and ribbons, wear the Young Marine uniform, and a free subscription to the *Young Marine Esprit* magazine. Chester sometimes even makes guest appearances at unit meetings, graduations, and training conferences.



## Young Marines Veterans Appreciation Week

For one week in November each year, Young Marine units across the country celebrate Young Marines Veterans Appreciation Week (YMVAV). The purpose of the campaign is to challenge our Young Marines to dedicate some of their time to help our nation's veterans and to demonstrate, through their actions, their sincere appreciation for our veterans' service to our country. Unit projects include sending thank you cards to hospitalized veterans, cleaning up a disabled veterans yard, visiting veterans in the hospital, or simply setting up a community function to socialize with local veterans.

## Mission

The mission of the Young Marines is to positively impact America's future by providing quality youth development programs for boys and girls that nurtures and develops its members into responsible citizens who enjoy and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.



## Motto

Strengthening the lives of America's youth

## Young Marine Obligation

From this day forward, I sincerely promise, I will set an example for all other youth to follow and I shall never do anything that would bring disgrace or dishonor upon God, my Country and its flag, my parents, myself or the Young Marines. These I will honor and respect in a manner that will reflect credit upon them and myself. *Semper Fidelis.*

## Young Marine Creed



1. Obey my parents and all others in charge of me whether young or old.
2. Keep myself neat at all times without other people telling me to.
3. Keep myself clean in mind by attending the church of my faith.
4. Keep my mind alert to learn in school, at home or at play.
5. Remember having self-discipline will enable me to control my body and mind in case of an emergency.