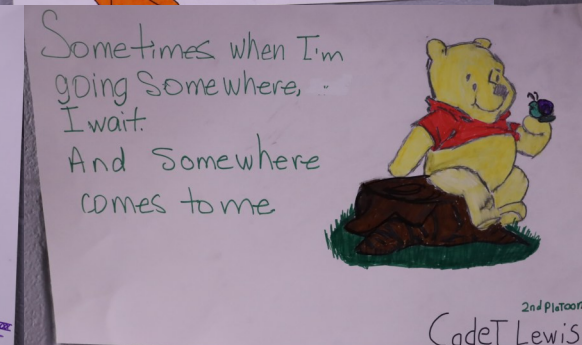
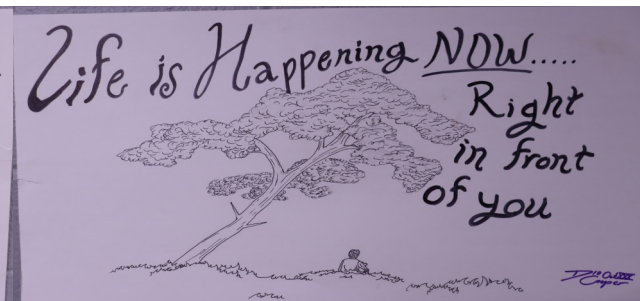
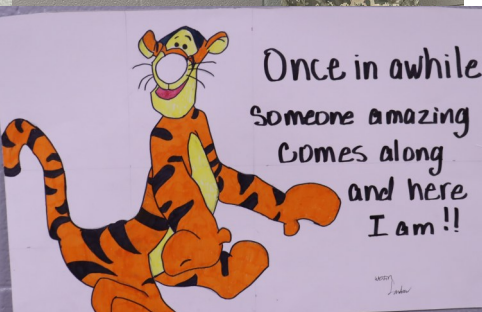
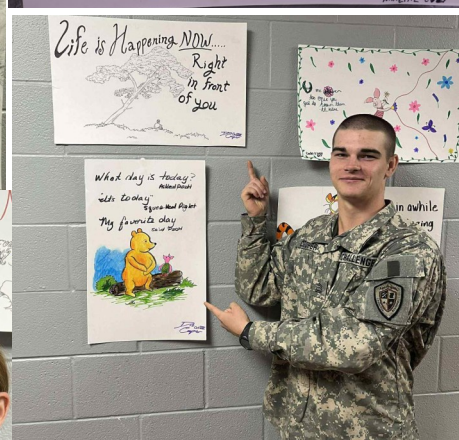
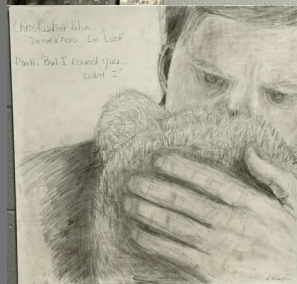


Recently, our Counseling Department incorporated creativity and expressive arts into the Christopher Robin Project with cadets. Cadets watched Christopher Robin (the live-action version of Winnie the Pooh) and later participated in a guided discussion exploring how, like Christopher Robin — who had grown up and lost his sense of self — individuals can lose touch with joy, imagination, and self-compassion due to the life challenges they have faced. This project encouraged cadets to live more fully in the present – not merely existing but rediscovering everyday joy in meaningful connections with others and in simple pleasures. Cadets selected their favorite quote from the movie and created artwork inspired by it, which was displayed within the Academy.

Cadets learned, as the Hundred Acre Wood reminds us, no matter how old we are, that imagination and curiosity are not childish — they are sources of resilience, creativity, and hope. Wonder keeps the spirit alive!



Since 2014, the Appalachian Challenge Academy has partnered with Dayspring Counseling Services to provide comprehensive therapeutic support to cadets throughout the program. All services are designed to enhance emotional well-being, build resilience, strengthen coping skills and interpersonal relationships. Licensed therapists and supervised counseling interns are onsite and available to provide both individual and group therapy for cadets who request or demonstrate a need for additional support. Rhonda Robinson, owner and lead counselor, is certified as a Certified Trauma Therapist and strongly believes in a holistic approach to treatment and healing. Treatment incorporates evidence-based practices and is tailored to the developmental needs of adolescents. Interventions focus on helping youth navigate mental-health challenges such as managing anxiety and stress, regulating emotions, healing trauma, strengthening attention and concentration, substance abuse education and prevention, overcoming feelings of abandonment or loss, addressing depressive symptoms, improving anger management. Treatment also supports psychosocial development, communication skills, self-esteem, and overall psychological resilience.

Parents and guardians have opportunities to consult with therapists by phone or virtually during the cadet's time in the program. Family therapy is also available to support communication, improve relational functioning, and promote a healthier transition home. Dayspring Counseling's goal is to equip each young person with the therapeutic tools, emotional insight, and behavioral skills needed to thrive—not only during their time at ACA, but also as they return home and continue into the post-residential phase of the program.

Pictured: Kayla Caldwell Masters Level Intern; Rhonda Robinson, LPCC-S; Jennifer Carnahan, LPCA



Class 028 Begins January 11, 2026

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