



THE CYBERSENTINEL

The official newsletter of CyberPatriot – AFA's National Youth Cyber Education Program

JULY 2025

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CyberPatriot 18

Register your team today for CyberPatriot 18. The 2025-26 season of the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition has begun! The final deadline to register a team is October 1, 2025.

CYBER PATRIOT 18

Reminder: If you are a returning team, you must re-register for the new season. Team registrations from previous seasons do NOT carry over each year.



You can also promote the competition in your school or organization by downloading the CyberPatriot 18 promo flyer, which is available on the competition dashboard. Use the blank box on the flyer to fill in additional details about how students can get involved!

As of June 30th, just under 2000 teams are registered for the competition. Registration will remain open through October 1st for any team to join.

REGISTER A CYBERPATRIOT 18 TEAM TODAY

If you register now, your team will gain access to the summer exhibition round and early fall training round. Payment and competitor registration are not required to participate in the exhibition round, so you can sign up today risk-free!

CP-18 Exhibition Round



CP-18 Exhibition Round is now available through August 25 for all teams registered for 2025-26 competition season. The Exhibition Round is a great resource to recruit competitors to your CyberPatriot teams and to allow for practice for existing teams. In this round, both the Windows 10 and Ubuntu 22 virtual images come with an answer key at the bottom of the ReadMe file.

CyberPatriot Demo

Don't forget about the CyberPatriot Demo! This demo is a partial simulation of a CyberPatriot image, with a built-in tutorial. The Demo aims to introduce teachers, students, organizational leaders, and others to the CyberPatriot competition.

The small software package (50 MB) is designed as an informational and recruiting tool that can be used as a presentation or hands-on activity at an event, conference, meeting, or in the classroom (in-person or virtual).

To order the Demo download (free of charge), you must complete the [Demonstration Software Order Form](#). The Demo download and setup instructions are included in the Quick Start Guide, which can be accessed once the order form is submitted.



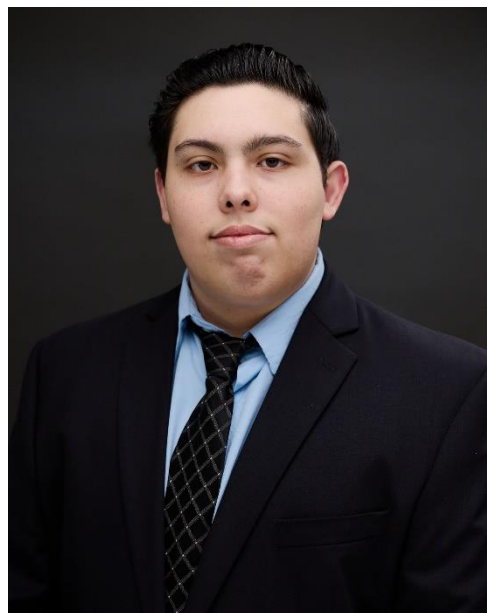
FREE Cisco NetAcad Self-Paced Courses



Want to continue learning about cybersecurity outside of the CyberPatriot Competition? Check out Cisco Networking Academy's FREE self-paced courses. There is a wide selection of courses available for beginner and advanced students. You can share these courses with friends and family too. [Click here to see what is available!](#)

CyberPatriot Alumni Spotlight

Joseph Gentile | CyberPatriot XIII, XIV, XV, XVI



What are you up to now?

I am finishing my associate degree in cybersecurity and intend to pursue a bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity and Networking. While completing my degree program, I work as an IT Field Service Technician at my local school district where I assist students and faculty members with technical problems and networking difficulties. I also serve as a technical mentor for my former high school Cast Tech where I teach students about Cisco networking, Windows security and Linux configuration while demonstrating various platforms such as Putty and Wireshark to help them understand network security and switch and router configuration.

How did participating in the CyberPatriot competition influence your plans for your future?

My participation in the CyberPatriot Competition introduced me to the field of IT and cybersecurity in a profound way. My first practical encounter with foundational skills revealed my passion for problem-solving and critical thinking within this sector. The opportunity to

interact with cybersecurity professionals including military members and government contractors added significant value to my experience. Learning about their journeys and receiving their guidance created a transparent vision of my potential career paths along with a strategy for my immediate preparation. This inspirational experience pushed me toward continuous education and made me seriously contemplate a career path in cybersecurity.

What was the most valuable lesson you learned from CyberPatriot?

My greatest takeaway from CyberPatriot was understanding how essential teamwork and personal motivation are to success. In the competition you collaborate with your teammates who each handle different systems or tasks. Team support becomes invaluable when you experience obstacles because you depend on your teammates to ask for help and exchange ideas which leads to mutual learning. I discovered how essential it is to maintain motivation and keep going even when tasks become difficult. When challenges arise, you must persist through them or take a break before approaching the issue again with renewed insight. Adopting this mindset enabled me to develop both as a team member and as someone who solves problems.

What is your advice for the next generation of CyberPatriot?

My advice for the next generation of competitors is to go all in. Embrace your mistakes and feelings of being stuck or overwhelmed as they represent the core of the learning process. CyberPatriot serves as a competition and an opportunity to explore your potential. Always take advantage of chances to push your limits and explore more deeply through questioning. Build trust with your teammates by sharing information and admitting when you lack knowledge because you develop and grow through mutual efforts. Most importantly, believe in yourself. Even when something seems impossible, keep pushing. That one issue you can't crack - you will figure it out. Maintain your curiosity and hunger while recognizing that this journey has just commenced. The abilities you develop during this experience will unlock many opportunities beyond your expectations.



Fun Fact: My favorite activity involves disassembling electronics like old laptops and game controllers to understand their mechanisms, but I do confess to having even dismantled a toaster once (my apologies to Mom!). My curiosity about understanding the underlying reasons for how things work eventually brought me to my career in cybersecurity. The process of examining systems while identifying their weaknesses provides an exciting opportunity to develop solutions and enhancements. It's like solving a real-life puzzle.

**Do you want to be featured in an issue of the CyberSentinel?
Complete the [survey](#) and your story could be in the spotlight!**

CyberPatriot in the News

[Free CyberPatriot camps teach tech skills to Decatur youth](#)

The Decatur-Morgan County Chamber and Calhoun Community College host free CyberPatriot Camps for students to learn cybersecurity basics this summer.

[Osborn High Shines in SkillsUSA and CyberPatriot Programs During School Board Spotlight](#)

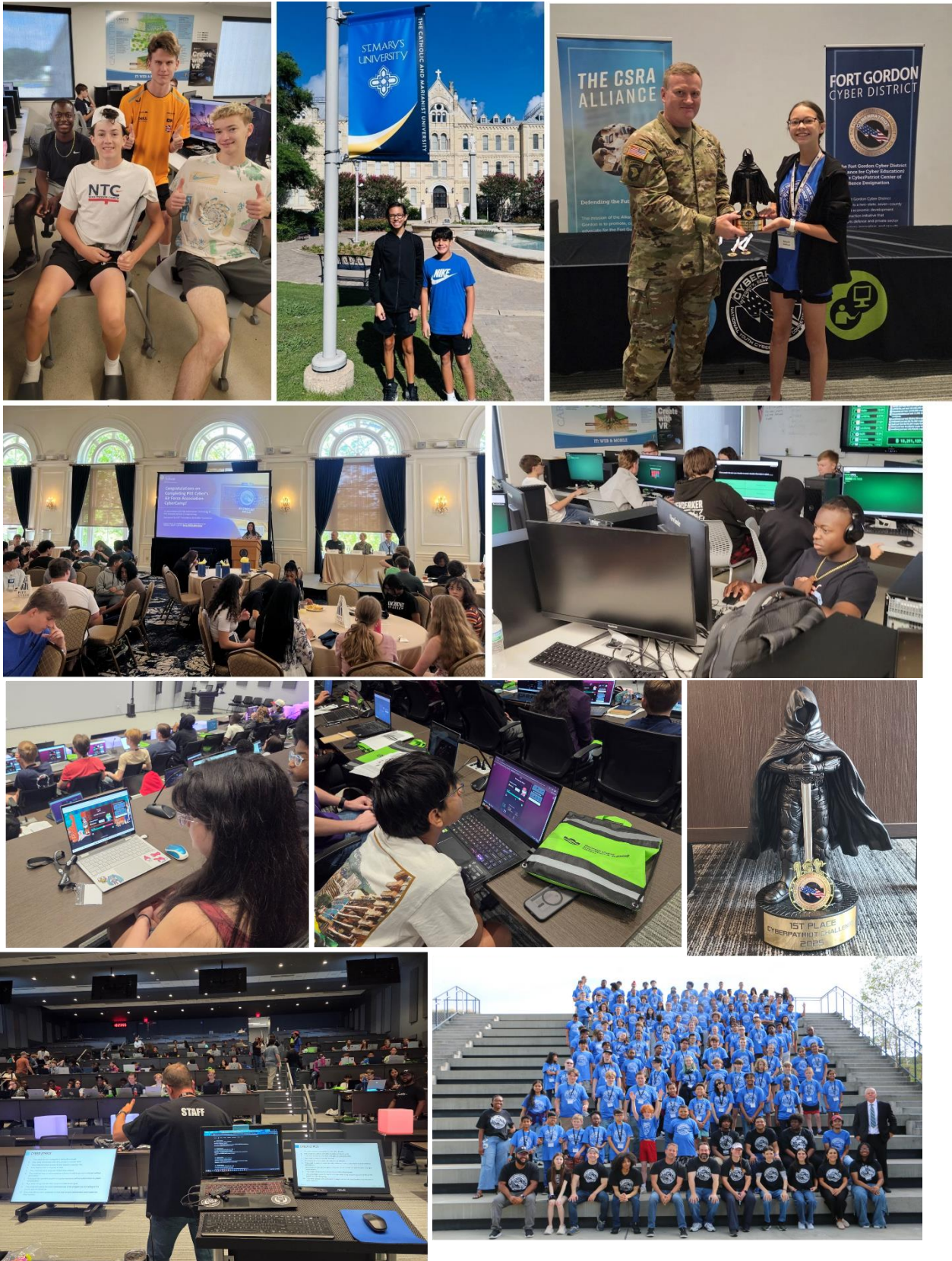
The Manassas City School Board opened with inspiring highlights from Osborn High School, as Superintendent Dr. Kevin Quesada and Communications Director Almeta Radford recognized two student achievement programs that reflect the school division's growing emphasis on career readiness and technical skills.

[CyberPatriot Events Reflect Growing Interest in IT Careers](#)

Organizers for CyberPatriot camps like those hosted by Calhoun Community College say they've seen a trend of rising interest among middle and high schoolers in cybersecurity and IT-related fields.

AFA CyberCamps Highlight

We are almost halfway through our 2025 CyberCamp schedule. Check out some of the fun photos from camps so far this summer! We look forward to seeing more from the camps in the upcoming weeks.



Thank you to all the CyberPatriot Sponsors who make our program possible:

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Please send email highlights or accolades to info@uscyberpatriot.org.*