Fire safety program teaches local students fire safety skills

Story and photo by MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

Students from Yokosuka area elementary schools participated in a fire-safety day camp program hosted by Commander, Naval Region Japan (CNRJ) Fire Department on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Aug. 3-10.

Three groups of 50 students who participated in the fire safety program came from many different elementary schools from the Yokosuka city area. Each group came on different days throughout the week.

The CNRJ Fire Department is one day of a five-day summer camp for the children. They also visit other places in the Yokosuka area like the earthquake museum.

Yuko Hasegawa, chief fire inspector, CNRJ Fire and Emergency Services said that the Yokosuka city residents are an important partner of ours, and it is very important that we share our knowledge with the larger community. The children attending the camp get an opportunity to learn risk management and other personal protection measures in case of an emergency.

Japanese students from Yokosuka area elementary schools participate in a fire-safety day camp program hosted by Commander, Naval Region Japan (CNRJ) Fire Department on board CFAY Aug. 3-10.

"Japanese education is a little bit different from that of the U.S. or some other country in that the children learn from a young age that adults must protect them from any danger," said Hasegawa. "So this training gives the children the education of how to evacuate from a fire or get out of dangerous situation if no adults are around to help."

The children were divided into smaller groups of about eight to 10 and rotated between different training areas including classroom lecture about the principles of staying safe in case of a fire or other catastrophes, how to use a fire extinguisher, how to escape a fire in the home and tools of a firefighter.

"We set up different stations for the children," said Hasegawa. "The first one teaching the children the difference between a Japanese and a U.S. fire extinguisher, another is the smoke house trailer where the kids learn to stay under the smoke, and we even teach them how to use a fire hose which the boys really love to do."

The program has evolved over the years to include new lessons and training stations.

"For those of you who were here last year, you will have some new things to do," said George Salcedo, fire prevention chief for the Kanto Plains area. "Every time you come here you have something new and exciting to learn."

The students had an opportunity walk around fire trucks and learn about its fire fighting capabilities. "Although the trucks are larger than the ones you see where you live, the insides and what they are capable of doing is identical," said Salcedo.

The kids really love to sit in the fire truck and try out all the equipment and get a feel for how big and heavy everything is said Hasegawa.

Kouta Ogishima, a local Yokosuka city fire prevention educator, whose district the schools resides, said that the fire safety training and education the children learn here will help to protect them if they happen to be in a dangerous situation. "Thank you CNRJ for allowing us to come on base and teach the children valuable skills," said Ogishima.

Pet of the Week

Jaime is a sweet, 3 month old kitten. She is playful, loving and her favorite toy is a crumpled-up receipt. Jaime is young enough to learn to live with kids, dogs and other cats. She will be a fantastic addition to any household. To find out more about Jaime, or any animal at Pets Are Worth Saving (P.A.W.S.) contact 243-9996, or e-mail usskittytalk.yokosuka@gmail.com, or visit the P.A.W.S. Web site at www.pawsyokosukajapan.com