Sullivans students begin new school year

Story and photo by Steve Parker,
The Sullivans Elementary School Public Affairs

Bouncing back from a year that included vandalism, earthquakes, evacuations, and other crises, The Sullivans School opened its doors to students on Aug. 29 with cheerful hellos from smiling teachers, relieved good-byes from harried parents, and excited first steps from anxious students. The flag was raised for the first time in school year 2011-2012 as parents, teachers, and students looked on. The familiar opening theme from "The Entertainer" called students to class shortly thereafter.

Suspense has been building for all stakeholders in the Yokosuka community. The teachers began work the week before, greeting slightly more tanned versions of the friends and co-workers they had left behind last summer. The recent return of many family members from deployments added to rising level of excitement. The climactic event passed with a minimum of difficulties and a maximum fun quotient embraced by all.

The Sullivans School unveiled a new playground with no less than five towering play structures, a geodesic rope climbing unit, swings, shaded benches, and a field of emerald green Astroturf. The playground had just opened two days before the opening day of school and many children from the Yokosuka community were able to play on it for the very first time. Many students in the community watched the new playground being built all summer long without being able to enter the construction zone. Their "look but don't touch" patience was finally rewarded on the first day of play back at school. "It was a lot bigger than I expected,' stated Matt Donaldson, a fourth-grader from Steve Parker's class.

The playground was not the only thing new at The Sullivans School as roughly 30 percent of their staff was welcomed into new positions. Teachers, counselors, para-professionals, secretaries, and office automation clerks are just some of the new positions filled at the school. Long time principal, Walter Wilhoit left for a posting at sunny Rota, Spain and former vice principal, Andrea Mial left to fill a new principal slot in North Carolina.

The Sullivans proudly welcomes aboard Rosanna Currier as head principal. Currier is a 31-year veteran of DoDEA with experience in many curricular fields as a teacher, early childhood coordinator, administrator and curricular specialist. Currier states, "I am excited and please to be part of TSS and the Yokosuka community. In my short time here I can say with confidence and assure our parents that they are placing their children in the charge of an amazing group of competent, caring, and dedicated professional educators. We are all looking forward to a great school year!"

Sullivans students Levi Ferguson and Titus Miner play on the school's new playground Aug. 29.

Michael Ochoa comes to us from Kadena High School in Okinawa and joins The Sullivans as vice principal. He brings with him many years of experience coaching, teaching and working with children. Ochoa states, "I love to serve the children of those serving our country. It's my way of giving something back to the United States military community throughout the world." Lavern Outen returns for another outstanding year in her position as vice principal. Welcome back to everyone and let's make 2011-2012 an exceptional year.

Getting back to school

From CFAY Safety Office

It's that time of year again; the new school year is upon us. Hopefully the kids are as excited as the parents for this year's new adventure. With every adventure one must prepare and ensure it will be a safe one. Parents should take time to familiarize themselves with the CFAY school drop-off locations and policies. It's important to know which direction traffic should enter from the street and if the directions may change from drop-off to pickup. Always pay close attention to speed in school zones as it will change this year to 20kph and pay even closer attention to students who may be near curbs and on sidewalks crossing driveways. Parents should develop a map of the drop-off/pickup location and/or standard route that their student will take to and from school each day. Then, parents should travel this route a few times with their student before the bell rings that first day to make sure all agree on the same path and the student is aware of any and all safe crossings along the way. Having a printed map will not only help everyone remember the route, but in the event of an emergency, the designated person picking up a student will also know exactly where to meet the student. For students riding bicycles to school, parents need to ensure their child knows the safety rules of wearing helmets, appropriate shoes and clothing, students should be fully aware of the larger hazard, vehicles. It should be stressed that students who walk to school should cross at crosswalks and never cross a street between parked cars or in the middle of a block.As children head back to school, remind them about bike safety, traffic rules, stranger danger and the potential hazards of school playground equipment. Take care of their vaccinations and, of course, make sure they have everything on their school supply list.

DoDDS student meal price increase delayed

By Commander Navy Region Japan Public Affairs

The Navy announced it will delay the increase for the school meal program at all Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDs) Sept. 1.

The announcement is an update to the new policy released Aug. 19, which stated that beginning school year 2011-2012, the Department of Defense Dependent School (DoDDS) Student Meal Program will undergo a DoD-mandated three-year phased increase of meal prices at all overseas locations, including Navy Region Japan.

However, there will be no change for families qualifying for the Free and Reduced Meal Program.

The Navy will align implementation efforts with the Army and Air Force, who have already officially delayed implementation of fee changes until January 2012, to allow families more time to prepare for the increased cost.

To ensure equity across the services, the Navy will delay fee changes until January 2012 as well.

The changes in the DoD Student Meal Program, are mandated by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The DoD Student Meal Program remains a subsidized U.S. Department of Agriculture approved and nutritious option for families with school-age children.

For more information on DoDDS meal programs, families are encouraged to contact their local school food service vendor or school administrators.

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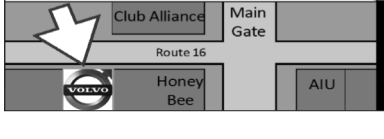
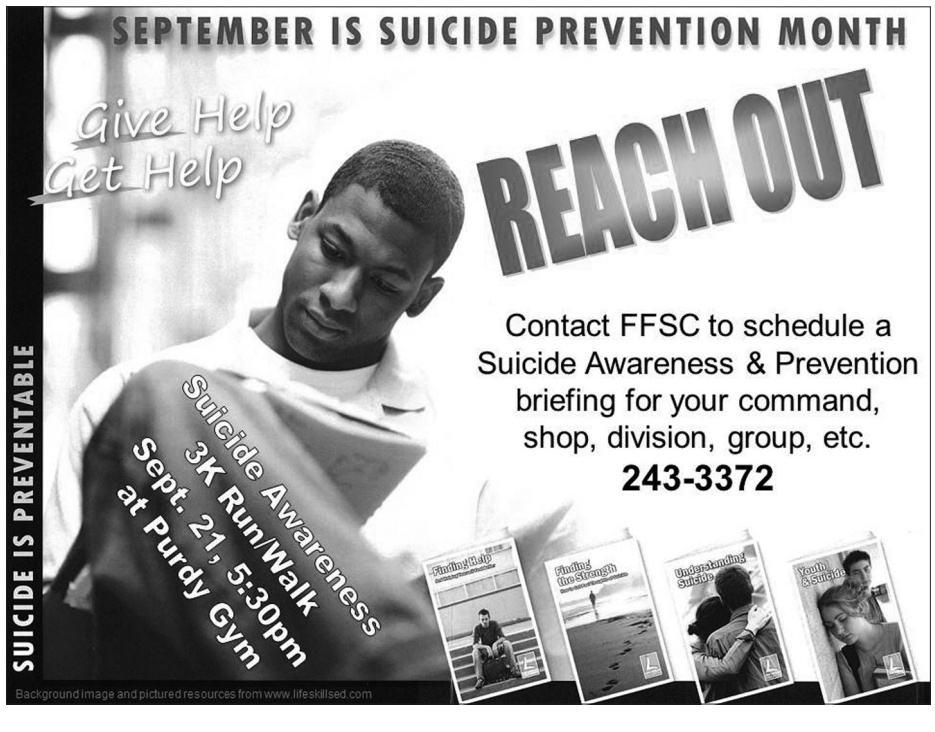
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