Yokosuka base library: Wealth of knowledge at your fingertips

Story and photo by Jeffrey C. Doepp, CFAY Public Affairs

The base library, located in the Community Readiness Center (CRC) and run by the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department onboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), offers an extensive wealth of entertainment and knowledge for all age groups, right at your fingertips.

According to MWR Library Director Jeffrey Conner, since the library's relocation into its new facility on the first floor of the CRC in June 2009, the number of visitors to the library has increased by at least 50 percent from the old location.

"Patronage by active duty personnel is also several times higher primarily due to its new location and what the library offers," Conner said. "The library regularly has more than 400 visitors most weekdays, and nearly 10,000 visitors, frequently more, every month."

Although anyone can walk through the door and read newspapers, magazines and books; only authorized ID card holders can use the internet-connected computers, study or TV rooms, or check out materials.

Ray Thompson, a civilian employee at the Navy College Office and father of two young children, uses the library regularly for both himself and his children.

"I check out items for myself and my kids all the time," Thompson said. "As children get older, their tastes in things change. It can get expensive trying to keep up with that. The library allows me to be able to provide good, entertaining and educational material to my children without emptying my wallet. I especially like the DVD collection the library offers."

The DVDs Thompson refers to is an extensive collection for adults and children and includes popular feature films, documentaries, musical movies and concerts, and DVDs on exercise, travel, education and language.

"The library also has audio books on CD and we will soon be offering Playaways. Playaway Views are hand-held video devices that hold up to 80 hours of material geared mainly toward children and are suitable for long drives or trips," said Conner. "In addition, the library also has 20 public internet workstations including four Macintosh computers. There are five TV rooms available for those 18 years and older and five near-sound proof study rooms. And, like all MWR facilities on base, free Wi-Fi is available throughout the library."

According to Conner, among the most popular books are the graphic novels, which are a growing collection, and are found both in the main section and in the children and teen rooms.

(Left) Yokosuka Base Library Administrative Assistant Wendy Miyazono returns a DVD to its proper location while Library Clerk Mikki Thompson assists a customer Nov. 30. The library has an extensive collection of DVDs for adults and children that includes popular feature films, TV series, documentaries, music movies and concerts, and educational and language study DVDs.

Photo by Jeffrey C. Doepp

Also, for those interested in learning more about Japanese history and culture, there is a separate book collection that includes fiction by Japanese authors, biographies and non-fiction books.

"The Japanese non-fiction books include language study and travel guides," said Conner. "And, all the books are in English but are solely about Japanese history and culture."

Beyond materials, the library does monthly displays highlighting special events such as African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Native-American and women's history, along with special celebrations.

"The library also hosts a weekly children's story time at 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday," Conner said. "Annually, there is the Summer Reading Program that regularly attracts nearly 500 participants from the ages of newborn to 17. Special programs are centered on Banned Books Week, Teen Read Week and other occasions."

According to Conner, because of the new facility and the increase in the materials offered, the Yokosuka base library is equal to or better than many public libraries in the United States.

"The new facility is worlds better than the old one, thanks in part to the tremendous support from the Navy, MWR and CFAY" said Connor. "It is more than twice as big, much brighter and has a more welcoming appearance. Also, I think the new location is responsible for the sizable increase in the number of people using the library everyday, including young Sailors."

Thompson, who uses the library on a regular basis, echoes a similar opinion about what the library offers and its improvements.

"I think the design, layout and location is some of the reasons why I use it so often," he said. "Compared to the old library and its previous location, when I walk in now, I don't feel like I'm in a library on base but in a library back home in the states. I'm really thankful that it's here."

According to Conner, the base library can provide tremendous opportunities for educational self improvement, research needs, personal growth and entertainment for everyone.

"Whether you are working on a degree, doing after school homework, enjoying a movie or TV program, surfing the web or just relaxing with a magazine, a library has to be able to offer all things to all people, and the Yokosuka Base Library with its great staff, is very good at doing that," Conner added.

For more information on the base library and all it has to offer, call 243-5574 or visit the MWR website http://mwryokosuka.wordpress.com/library/.

Commissaries to end magazine sales overseas

By Leslie Brown, DeCA public affairs officer for Europe Area

FORT LEE, Va. - Defense Commissary Agency officials have announced the end of magazine sales in their overseas stores beginning January 2012. This affects all commissaries in Europe, the Pacific (Japan, Okinawa, South Korea and Guam) and Puerto Rico.

(Right) A display of magazines is shown at the check out counters in the Yokosuka Commissary Nov. 30. The Defense Commissary Agency announced the end of magazine sales in their overseas stores beginning January 2012.

Photo by Jeffrey C. Doepp

DeCA will continue to sell the Stars & Stripes newspaper since they are printed in theater. Commissaries in Alaska and Hawaii are not affected by this sales change. Magazines will also continue to be available in military exchanges and bookstores located near most overseas commissaries.

"With the rising costs in transportation and declining sales, the decision was made to end the sale of magazines in our stores in Europe and the Pacific," said Chris Burns, director of sales. "We have to be fiscally responsible with our taxpayer-provided resources, and this is one way we can do that."

Before deciding to cease magazine sales overseas, DeCA officials had tried other options such as deleting slow-selling titles and reducing the volume of magazines shipped to overseas stores. However, the negative sales trend didn't change.

"The decision to eliminate magazine sales overseas was not an easy one, but a decision that had to be made in our fiscally constrained environment," Burns said. "The contract for selling magazines in the overseas stores ends in fiscal 2012, so this is the proper time to make this change. By eliminating the logistical costs of airlifting magazines to overseas distribution centers, we're able to keep other important products flowing to our store shelves," Burns said.

Pet of the Week

This is Francesca, though she prefers to be called Frances. She will sit, stay, and even twirl for treats. She isa shih tzu. To find out more about Frances, 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