KHS Drama Club performs Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit"

Story by Joe Schmitt, CFAY Public Affairs

Nile C. Kinnick High School Drama Club onboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) performed a production of Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" in the school's Little Theater Dec. 1-3.

"Blithe Spirit" was the longest running non-musical play in the West End Theatre, one of the largest theatres in Theatreland, London's equivalent to Broadway in New York.

Nineteen students and four facility members as a part of Kinnick's Drama Club had spent more than 10 weeks preparing for this production.

"We had our first rehearsal Sept. 20," said Benjamin Lewis, Nile C. Kinnick High School Drama Club advisor. "So we have been working on the production for 10-and-a-half weeks, and we have been working on the set and set pieces since Oct. 22."

Josiah Magnusson, playing the part of Charles, next to Victoria Thompson, playing the part of Ruth Condomine, in Nile C. Kinnick High School students portrayal of "Blithe Spirit" a play by Noel Coward, Dec. 1. The students are part of the school's drama club and gave their first performance of the school year.
Photo by Margaret Seward

The Drama Club members had been working hard juggling a full schedule to make sure the production was ready.

"While trying to juggle marching band, jazz band, choir and three AP classes, I found it very hard to find time to work on my lines and character," said Josiah Magnusson, who portrayed Charles, in "Blithe Spirit". "There definitely were a lot of things I could have done differently with my character, but I am satisfied with the outcome."

Magnusson, a senior this year, had performed in three other productions while at Kinnick. The students' hard work has not gone unnoticed.

"Working with the students has been amazing," said Lewis. "Their dedication and hard work is beyond that I have ever seen. We frequently would meet for two-hour rehearsals, and then the students would go home, and on their own time, Skype with each other to practice their lines."

Along with the students onstage, there is a group of behind-the-scenes crew that had work equally as hard.

"Without techies to run what occurs backstage, between scenes, the lights and sounds, it would be too difficult to perform plays such as "Blithe Spirit"," said Kristina Rae Broome, behind-the-scenes manager. "Techies are just as important as actors; they're what make the show run smoothly."

According to Lewis, this has been a play of firsts.

"This is my first time directing anything," said Lewis. "This is my wife's first time directing a high school play. Of our seven actors, five of them have never been in a high school play, and even the two that have been in a high school play, this was their first lead role. The student who ran the sound had never used a light board until a few weeks ago. The leader of our stage crew has never been involved in a high school play."

For Ayumi Okamura, who played the role of Madame Arcarti and is a senior at Kinnick. It was her first time in a playing a leading role.

"I felt very nervous at first, but once I got the knack of it, I never looked back," said Okumura. "There was some work involved preparing for this role, like learning certain words that I don't normally use. Other than that I acted like myself with extra energy."

Victoria Thompson, a junior at Kinnick and who portrayed Ruth Condomine, played in other plays while in middle school and has been involved in colorguard for the past three years.

"I am honored to be a part of "Blithe Spirit"," said Thompson. "Being chosen for a lead role in this wonderful production has been a privilege. I was very nervous because I wanted everyone to enjoy what we worked so hard to achieve, but now I am extremely excited to finally be performing for an audience."

CFAY VITA Center looking for volunteers for tax season

By Jeffrey C. Doepp, CFAY Public Affairs

With a respectful nod to the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy Legal Service Office (NLSO) Pacific Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Center on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY), is looking for a few good men and women to sign up for training Jan. 9 through 13 to help prepare tax returns.

The VITA Center is a program setup by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and run by NLSO Pacific. The program uses volunteers from the community to help provide extra staff to assist community members in filing their tax returns.

According to Lt. j.g. Erin Janofski, a defense attorney at NLSO Pacific, anyone can volunteer and no previous experience is needed.

"All we ask is that volunteers attend the January tax training and agree to volunteer at the tax center on a regular schedule," Janofski said. "This can be as much as everyday or as little as two days a week."

The training will be held in the Fleet and Family Support Center Area Orientation Brief-Intercultural Relations (AOB-ICR) classroom at the Community Readiness Center Jan. 9-13 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"The training will be conducted by a representative from the IRS," Janofski said. "Upon completion of the training, volunteers will receive an IRS certification and gain valuable knowledge on tax preparation procedures. But, most importantly, volunteers will be providing invaluable assistance to the Yokosuka base community."

The Vita Center, located on the third floor of the Community Readiness Center, provides tax preparation assistance to service members and their families, free of charge.

"I have always used VITA as long as I have been in the Navy," said Chief Navy Career Counselor Tasha Wright, who is assigned to CFAY. "I recommend everyone use the service. I used it last year and they did a great job, so I know the volunteers are well trained. Plus, it's free."

(Right) FC1 Christopher Thalman of Fleet Coordinating Group helps IT2 Brandon Williams from CNFJ fill out his income tax return Feb. 8. Thalman gained knowledge on tax preparation procedures and became a volunteer at the VITA Center after attending the required training.
Photo by Joe Schmitt

According to Janofski, the VITA Center, which will open in February and continue through the beginning of April, would not exist without the help from volunteers.

"Being overseas, we want to ensure that our Sailors and their families have access to responsible and accurate tax preparation services," Janofski added. "We can't do that without the help of our dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers."

To sign up for training, or for more information email erin.janofski@fe.navy.mil.