Military Saves campaign promotes culture of saving

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

Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Yokosuka hosts support events including financial management classes, financial briefs for service members and their families including single Sailors, teens and youth for Military Saves campaign week Feb. 19-26.

FFSC Yokosuka coordinated with Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Community Bank, Navy Federal Credit Union, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society and the Commissary to provide events for the Military Saves Week campaign. Military Saves is co-sponsored by Consumer Federation of America and Department of Defense (DoD) as an integral part of the DoD's financial readiness campaign.

"This was our opportunity for the military community to come together with other resources to focus on financial readiness of military members and their families," said Tricia Marino, FFSC Yokosuka personal financial manager. "This was a great way to motivate, educate and encourage our military families to save every month."

Military Saves' goal includes increasing services members and their families household short and long term savings while decreasing consumer debt.

Tricia Marino, FFSC Yokosuka personal financial manager, explains to children the inportance of saving during a presentation at School Age Care Feb. 24. The events for the day also included games that promoted the theme of saving money.

In the past five years, more than 100,000 military members and their families have taken the saver pledge to save money, reduce debt and build wealth over time.

"The savers pledge is about making a commitment to yourself to save for your future," said Marino. "You are stating you are ready to start saving and taking control of your money and not your money taking control of you. The key is to start saving now no matter how small. In the long run the results will be big. This year's slogan is 'Start Small Think Big.'"

Once someone takes the pledge they will receive monthly email newsletter with great information and tips they may not have known about otherwise. The most recent newsletter included tax information and a special code to get your FICO score for free. Anyone interested can still go to www.militarysaves.org and read the newsletters and get their code for a free credit score. This code is good until the end of March.

Military Saves seeks to develop a military command climate and overall culture that supports prudent financial behavior by focusing on education and counseling.

Support from the local banking community includes incentives for savings products, especially regular, automatic deposits, systematic increase in amount of deposits and advance planning for purchasing and investing.

"I would like to thank the many organizations on base that helped with this year's Military Saves Week campaign," said Marino. "Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, Community Bank, Navy Federal, Commissary, MWR Liberty Center, MWR Teen Center, MWR SAC, MWR Library, all have done a great job helping to promote a culture of savings."

Service members and their families are encouraged to take financial action to improve their financial well-being.

"Through out the year our focus is to empower members to become financially stable through saving, debt reduction and wealth-building over time. It is never too late to get started."

Patient Safety Awareness Week: Be aware for safe care

By Edwin Hanson, U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka

U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka is creating a culture of patient safety by educating staff and beneficiaries during the upcoming Patient Safety Awareness Week campaign.

March 4-10 is Patient Safety Awareness Week. This National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) program is designed to educate both healthcare providers and patients on the importance of healthcare safety. This year's theme, "Be Aware for Safe Care" focuses on the need for everyone to understand the importance of patient safety while recognizing the range of efforts being made to improve health safety in the US and worldwide.

Each year, healthcare organizations around the world take part in Patient Safety Awareness Week by prominently displaying NPSF campaign logos and promotional materials within their organizations, creating awareness in the community and making NPSF educational resources available to hospital staff. We are continuously working to educate our patients to ensure patients are involved in their care.

USNH Yokosuka will engage staff, patients and the community through educational and awareness activities specific to patient safety. The campaign seeks to make patients, providers, and the public aware of ways they can participate to improve patient safety. While efforts of the past decade have brought improvements, recent studies indicate that much work remains to be done.

"Be Aware for Safe Care" campaign emphasizes the fact that patient safety issues impact everyone. We want our patients to ask their provider questions and work with their provider to find answers that work for them. We encourage patients to let us know how we are doing so, please utilize our customer comment forms after every visit. Your opinion matters to us and is part of the process to improve not only patient safety but your health care in general.

For more information on patient safety at USNH Yokosuka, please contact Eddie Hanson, Patient Safety Manager, USNH Yokosuka at 243-9194.

USNH Yokosuka is the largest U.S. military treatment facility on mainland Japan and serves approximately 43,000 beneficiaries. A 47-bed core hospital in Yokosuka on the banks of Tokyo Bay is complimented by eight branch health clinics in Japan, Korea and Diego Garcia.

Using a supply closet prepared as a training aid, Edwin Hansen points out patient safety discrepancies. The closet has been made up to highlight common patient safety errors and bring awareness to patient safety creating a culture of safety for the entire command.
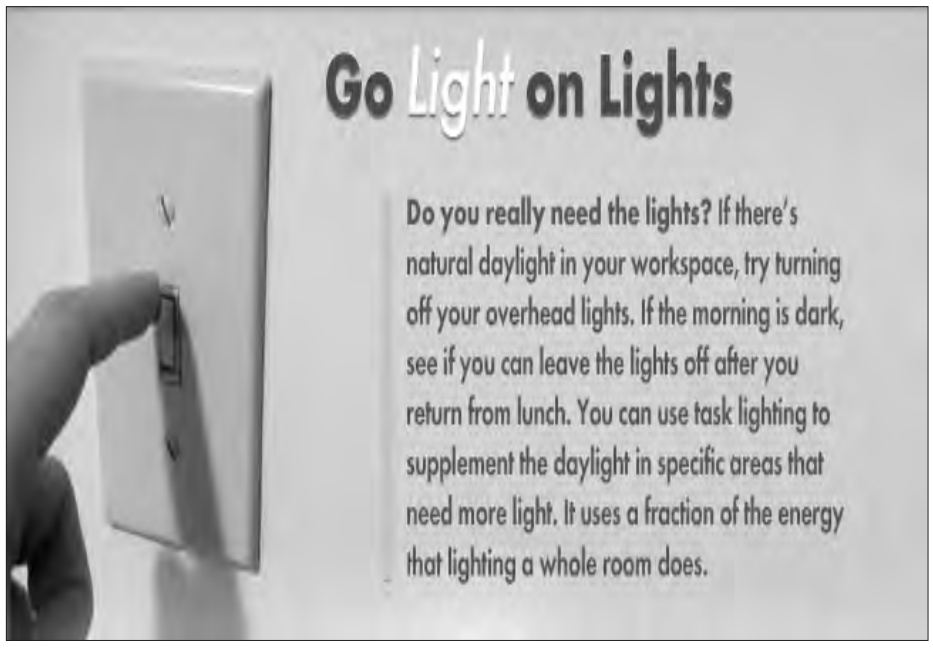
Photo by Richard McManus