Zushi Japan-America Society cooks up tempura for Ikego residents

(Left) Crystal Harmon learns how to cook mixed tempura from Sachiko Higuchi at the Zushi Japan-America Society and CFAY's Ikego Housing Detachment OIC office cultural exchange picnic.

Story and photo by Emma Damsky, Seahawk contributor

Zushi Japan-America Society and Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka's Ikego Housing Detachment officer-in-charge (OIC) office hosted a cultural exchange, tempura and barbecue picnic, at the Ikego campgrounds April 6.

Around 50 Japanese and Americans gathered to prepare, cook and eat food together at the pavilion. Society members taught Ikego residents how to make tempura, and Ikego residents brought American dishes to share including burgers and hot dogs from the grill.

"We continually try to strengthen the bond between us and the city of Zushi," said Chief Master-at-Arms Ronald Jones, Ikego's OIC. "These events have allowed us to have a closer relationship with one another. This is a way of bringing the [Japanese] culture onto the base."

Tempura is a style of cooking where vegetables and seafood are dipped in a light batter then deep-fried in hot oil.

President of the Zushi Japan-America Society, Sumiko Shimizu, said of the location "I hope many Americans and Japanese enjoy this campsite," and added that in previous years members would pick wild, edible plants in that area to include in the tempura.

A vast array of tempura was made including *kakiage* (mixed tempura), *eringi* (mushroom), *nanohana* (broccoli flowers), *syungiku* (leaves from the Chrysanthemum family), as well as sweet potato, acorn squash and other vegetables.

Danya Zimbauer, Ikego resident and participant, got hands-on experience in the preparation of the tempura by helping to slice the vegetables.

"I love tempura and was just surprised to learn how much variety there could be," said Zimbauer. "So that was nice to learn new authentic Japanese (food)."

Noted as being the best cook in the Society, Sachiko Higuchi said that the secret to cooking good tempura is the correct temperature. Her fellow members added that the balance of water with flour is important and having a good personality.

"I think it's really neat the stuff the Japan-America Society offers – just the interaction with the host nation," said Crystal Harmon, Ikego resident. "Having these kinds of events encourages you to go out and explore."

One of the newest members of the Society, Eriko Shinohara, said she recently moved back to Japan after several years in the U.S. and that she misses American food. "I didn't expect that I could meet many American people here today, so I am happy to meet them."

The picnic is an annual event at Ikego campgrounds and has been running for 10 years. For upcoming events organized by the Zushi Japan-America Society contact the Ikego OIC office.

KHS students must sign-up for after school buses

From Nick C. Kinnick High School Public Affairs

Nile C. Kinnick High School students desiring transportation on the Kinnick's activity bus or the special activity bus after certain home events must come in and sign up online on our school's SharePoint website. This is a security measure that allows us to know who is riding our activity bus and more importantly will enable us to quickly contact and notify parents during an emergency.

High school students can sign up for the Kinnick's activity bus anytime during the school day prior to 1 p.m. It only takes a few minutes for them to register. A valid school bus ID is required to ride the bus. This is a fairly simple and quick procedure. This policy goes into effect immediately as it has been mentioned previously in other correspondence from the school until it was ready for deployment. This policy will remain in effect until or unless another policy cancels it.

Please explain this new and important safety and security procedure to your teen. Signing up online also prevents them from having to sign up manually before they are allowed to board and ride Kinnick's activity bus. A current school year regular school bus pass must also be displayed by all students before they are allowed to board and ride these buses.

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The Chief Petty Officer Mess from *USS Fitzgerald* (DDG 62) was one of a few commands that setup booths at the event. The chiefs turned chefs for the day served barbecued meat and explained that along with sharing American culture, they wanted to be an example of the U.S. Navy Sailors who live and work in the area.

"Why barbecue? It has that unique American taste. We want to share part of who we are with them. If we could have made apple pie we would have," said Chief Gunner's Mate Alonzo Tate, who was handing out samples at the booth. "We're really enjoying the smiles our food is putting on their faces."

The event ended in the late afternoon with a record setting 7,390 guests in total with 6,718 of those coming from the Japanese community. More visitors came on base for this year's Friendship Day than in any other year.

"Every year we hold these events, its special," said Owen. "We are approaching 70 years [of having a detachment in Yokohama. It's another milestone. So, we are always looking forward to continue to have these type of events in the future."