Golden moments

By Chaplain J. David Atwater

Once upon a time, there was a little boy from the wrong side of the tracks who grew up admiring a beautiful house high on the hill overlooking his town. Fortunately, he never lacked for any of the necessities of life. But he hated being poor. He noticed that people treated him differently. And it pained him to see his parents work so hard just to make ends meet. It just didn't seem right that some should be so favored and others should have so little. But his parents had instilled some rather clear core values in their son so that he grew up honest, persistent and a hard worker.

All the while, the boy kept looking up at that big old house on the hill. He noticed that, when the sun came up each morning, the windows seemed to turn to gold. And after a while, that house came to symbolize all that he had missed by growing up, as a school counselor once described him, a "disadvantaged child." So, year after year, he grew more and more determined. Someday, he resolved, he would own that house with windows of shining gold! And life would be good.

After a while people began to take notice that the young man worked hard, learned quickly, and could be trusted with responsibility. They nodded their heads in approval, and reckoned that he would go far. Meanwhile, he just kept working... and looking up the hill.

Years passed. The boy grew to be a man. And those painful lessons of his youth, learned through years of sacrifice and self-denial, served him well. He developed a keen sense for business, and a heart of compassion for those less fortunate. He seized each new opportunity for advancement, saved his profits, and invested wisely.

Before long, his ventures began to succeed beyond even his wildest imagination. And so it was that he finally realized his dream. He bought that house high on the hill. The one with the windows of shining gold he had admired so long.

But a strange thing happened as he walked through his new home that first time. Oh, he wasn't disappointed. It was a beautiful house. Perhaps even more than he had realized. The rooms were large, the furnishings he had chosen were magnificent, and the view was spectacular. But as he looked down the hill toward the town, it was late afternoon, and the sun had begun to set in the west. Suddenly he spotted his boyhood home. And every window was gleaming like the brightest gold!

Can the destination be reached without the journey? Could this man have fully appreciated his status without the struggle? Or was that struggle really a gift in disguise, as much as health or opportunity or natural ability? Were there blessings he could have enjoyed all along? You decide.

And what about our journeys - yours and mine? What struggles have stimulated our growth and development? How has pain and hardship been part of a process to make us stronger or better or more open to God? Could that be part of the reason the Bible tells us to "give thanks in all things?"

In his book, "*Invisible Lines of Connection*," Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, the Emanu-El scholar at Congregation Emanu-El, writes, "The closer we are to what is happening, the more we believe we are in complete control. The farther away we get, the more we are willing to acknowledge the participation of something greater." Kushner has served as rabbi-in-residence at Hebrew Union College in New York City where he taught spirituality and mentored rabbinic students.

May God guide us as we ponder and discover his leading in our lives, and give thanks.

TOWN HALL, cont. from pg. 10

Q: What is the status of the new teen center?

A: The building in nearly completed, however, the fire suppression system still needs to be installed. The cost of this has pushed the budget past what local approval allows. MWR and Naval Facilities Command Far East are working on a solution to bring the cost within budget. Once this is done, work will resume. At this point, a firm completion date is still to be determined. Without a fire suppression system the facility cannot be used for child and youth programs, which is why this portion of the project is so critical.

Q: Will there be swim lessons offered this summer?

A: Yes. MWR has contracted with Camp Adventure again this summer for instructors to teach lessons. Due to delays in getting the contract in place and the current shortages with our own staff, the number of lessons offered may be reduced slightly.

Q: How will summer camp and swim lesson registration take place?

A: Summer camp and swim lesson registration will take place June 4 at Purdy Fitness Center. A lottery system will be used for this year's camp registration. We will hand out lottery numbers between 7:30 and 8 a.m. Customers that show up after 8 a.m. will be given a number in the order they arrive and will not be eligible for the lottery slots. Lottery numbers will be drawn starting at 8 a.m. to determine order of registration. There is no need to arrive before 7:30 a.m.

Q: Why aren't there any Group "X" classes in Ikego?

A: We have Yoga classes already scheduled and are working on getting Zumba sometime this summer. The latest information on Group "X" classes is available at http://mwryokosuka.wordpress.com/ in the Fitness section. With that said, it's been difficult to find instructors that want to teach in Ikego. We will continue to try and offer incentives to instructors but there are some things folks can help us with. If you are interested in a particular class, contact Brent Grubb at 241-3077. If there is strong interest in a class, it helps attract instructors. MWR is also holding a certification course for Personal Training and Group Exercise instructors in September. Anyone interested in becoming an MWR instructor should contact Brent Grubb. We also have a weekly Fitness newsletter which includes information on weekly fitness events and Group "X" classes. Contact Donna Carter at Donna.Carter@fe.navy.mil to sign up.

Q: Why can't we make campground reservations in Ikego?

A: Our Outdoor Recreation program uses a reservation software that is being set-up in Ikego at the MWR office. We anticipate this being done in the next couple of weeks. We will notify the OIC office for inclusion in his newsletter once this is in place and staff is trained. This information will also be available at http://mwryokosuka.wordpress.com.

Q: Can something be done about the dust that blows off of the dirt ball field in Ikego?

A: This has always been a challenge in regards to dust. We attempt to keep the field watered at least daily, but this must be done manually as there is no irrigation system installed in these fields. During sunny days in the summer, there is no way to keep this field damp enough to keep the dust from blowing. With that said, we keep the dirt mix with a high percentage of clay, so this mitigates some of the issue. We will try to increase the frequency during the upcoming months. However, during the hotter periods, you'd literally have to spray continuously to keep it damp or saturate to such an extent that it would becoming muddy and unplayable.

Q: Is the MWR Focus Magazine still being published?

A: Yes, but only a digital version in .PDF format. This can easily be downloaded at http://mwryokosuka.wordpress.com/ Informational. With the recent migration of the CFAY CNIC website to a new format, MWR is unable to publish some of our marketing in the same format as on the old site. We've developed a blog at http://mwryokosuka.wordpress.com/ which is our main web-based marketing system. For the latest information, please use this link.

Q: A housing tower or housing block Captains Program would be great for disseminating information during emergencies. Could we get something like this?

A: The Ikego OIC Office is currently working on a plan.

Contact Ikego Housing Detachment Officer in Charge Chief Master-at-Arms Parnell Cross at 246-8042, if you have other questions or concerns that you would like addressed or for more information.