CFAY community goes green during Earth Day friendship exchange

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

In the morning chill, local volunteers came together to help clean up Commander Feet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) during an Earth Day event Feb. 6.

"We've got an Earth Day today, which is a basewide clean up day," said CFAY Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Special Activities Manager and International Programs Director John Saito. "We have off base volunteers come on base to clean the base along with the base people. Today, we had 90 volunteers total. So, it's a real good turnout."

(Left) GM2 (SW) Nicholas Heidingsfelder, GM2 (SW) Tanya Lovejoy and GM2 (SW) Diana Antwi of NMC Uraga, pick up trash in Kosano Park on board CFAY during an MWR International Programs sponsored Earth Day event Feb. 6. CFAY MWR holds Earth Day events three to four times a year to help beatify the base and promote intercultural relations.

Earth Day is actually observed April 22. However, the CFAY MWR Division, International Programs Department, holds Earth Day events three to four times a year, according to Saito.

Although, during Earth Day events, volunteers help clean up the base by picking up trash, the events are meant to serve as more than just a working party.

"The real purpose of [CFAY] Earth Day is to create friendship between the U.S. and Japan community," said Saito. "So they all, local volunteers and the U.S. volunteers, get together and enjoy cleaning and enjoy a barbeque afterward."

"I feel it really brings us together with our [Japanese] counter parts and volunteers," said Gunner's Mate 2nd Class (SW) Nicholas Heidingsfelder, from Navy Munitions Command Uraga. "I've been taking part in the Earth Days for about a year now, every time they come around, any time I can get out and help the community, help clean up the base a little bit."

Prior to the start of the event, volunteers met on base in Kosano Park and then broke up into groups and patrolled the base from the waterfront to Berkey Field scanning for and picking up trash along the way.

One large group of Japanese volunteers had two volunteers leading their group, one of which, was carrying the flag of the United States with them.

After the volunteers finished their rounds, they all returned to Kosano Park and sat down for a meal that included hot dogs and chicken soup.

Although there were 90 volunteers for the event, Saito feels that a bigger turn out could make the experience even better.

"The more people, the more fun and the more friends they can make through this event," said Saito.

"I definitely would encourage everybody to come out," Heidingsfelder said. "The more people we can get to come out, the bigger the word gets out about people helping to keep this place clean."

The Chief says:

"Did you know the khaki uniform originated in 1845 in India where British soldiers soaked white uniforms in mud, coffee and curry powder to better blend in with the landscape?

"Khaki uniforms made their debut in the U.S. Navy in 1912 when they were worn by naval aviators, and later adopted for submarines in 1931.

"In 1941, the U.S. Navy approved khaki uniforms for on-station wear by senior officers, and soon after the Dec. 7 attack on Pearl Harbor, chiefs and officers were authorized to wear the khaki uniform ashore while on liberty.

"If you didn't know, now you know." – MCC(SW/AW) Eric Hannah, CFAY Public Affairs

Ikego kids get up close, personal at annual MWR Touch-a-Truck

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) hosted their second annual Touch-a-Truck event on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Ikego Housing Detachment Feb. 5.

The event gave kids the chance to explore, climb on and learn about some of the vehicles they see everyday on the base.

The kids were able to get a grip on the functions and controls of a variety of vehicles, from high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles, ambulances, and fire trucks to cherry pickers, riding mowers and bulldozers.

For Carol Emerson and her son, Kent, who have lived in Zushi since last summer, the event was a great way to enjoy a base event close to home.

"It was really nice, especially to have something in Ikego… it's just easier to get out here," said Emerson. "It was really hands-on for [preschoolers], so it was really good."

Tommie Daniels, Ikego MWR community activities manager, has organized the event the past two years and has been very pleased with the reaction by residents.

"Police cars, motorcycles, trucks and tractors, we have a lot of neat equipment on the base here at Ikego and when you look around Yokosuka Base, you see a lot of neat things," said Daniels. "I thought it would be great if the kids had the opportunity to get up close and touch and learn a little bit about the [vehicles]."

According to Daniels, he just wanted to do something that would enable children to have a good time while learning something about the community they live in.

Ikego MWR hosts several events throughout the year. Upcoming events include the "Kids & Family Magic Show" March 20 at the Ikego Gymnasium Sprung Structure and the "Peter Cottontail" relay race April 4. For more information on upcoming events, contact the Ikego MWR office at 246-8071 or 046-806-8071.

Ikego first opened in 1996. More than 200 acres of land on board Ikego is used for U.S. Navy housing. Located approximately 12 kilometers from Yokosuka Naval Base, the Ikego Detachment is one of two housing areas. The other is the Negishi Housing Detachment located in nearby Yokohama.

Kent Emerson climbs down from the driver's seat of his favorite vehicle of the day, a "cherry picker" truck, while a couple of his friends look on during the second annual Touch-a-Truck event on board the CFAY Ikego Housing Detachment Feb. 5.