Serving Yokosuka for 50 years

Seahawk 海鷹 Umitaka

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Mikoshi Parade brings Japanese culture to heart of CFAY

Story and photo by Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

Cheering and dancing, 74 local community groups comprised of approximately 9,000 people from throughout Yokosuka paraded through the city streets and on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) during the 33rd Annual Yokosuka *Mikoshi* Parade Oct. 19.

The parade, which has been coming on board CFAY for the past 16 years, is a cultural staple of the community and is well known for being the largest *Mikoshi* parade in the region according to celebration participant, Yokosuka Mayor Yuto Yoshida.

"This *Mikoshi* Parade is the largest such event in Kanagawa Prefecture and is of special fame for featuring an open house by CFAY," said Yoshida. "I believe this opportunity for our friends on the U.S. naval base to experience Japanese culture up close will surely facilitate friendship between citizens of the U.S. and Japan."

CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed shared Yoshida's feelings on the importance of this cultural event for the community while delivering a speech to parade spectators and participants in both English and Japanese.

"As Ambassadors of the United States and Japan, it is our responsibility to preserve the best parts of our culture and exchange them with each other," said Weed. "The *Mikoshi* Festival brings the Japan experience to life and creates memories that will last a lifetime."

Volunteers from Yokosuka Base hoist the CFAY *Mikoshi* prior to entering the 33rd Annual Yokosuka *Mikoshi* Parade Oct. 19. In total, 74 different community groups entered a *Mikoshi* or *Dashi* into the annual event which brings thousands of spectators on board CFAY to watch the parade and share in Japanese and American culture.

As has been tradition for a number of years, CFAY Morale Welfare and Recreation International Program Office solicited volunteers from various commands to don traditional *Happi* coats and carry a CFAY sponsored *Mikoshi* in the parade. According to CFAY Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Mathew Abel who volunteered with his co-workers to carry the *Mikoshi*, it was a big hit with Japanese spectators.

"They keep taking pictures with us," said Abel. "They seem to really enjoy seeing us participate in their culture. Everyone is smiling and having a good time."

For U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Roger Luca, volunteering to carry the *Mikoshi* is an experience he won't soon forget.

"You never get this experience in the U.S.," said Luca. "I have a lot of stories to bring back home."

In total, 48 *Mikoshi* and 26 *Dashi* were entered into the parade. A *Mikoshi* is a portable *Shinto* shrine that resembles a miniature building, with pillars, a veranda and railing while a *Dashi* is a wheeled cart that holds musicians playing *Taiko* drums, flutes and traditional festival music.

Nearly 19,000 people came on board CFAY for the festival that, in addition to the *Mikoshi* and *Dashi*, included Japanese and American food, live music and performances by Japanese acrobats. The parade began near Yokosuka-Chuo Train Station, proceeding down *Chuo Oodori*, commonly known as "Blue Street," before parading to an on base conclusion near Main Street USA.

Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas kicks off on board CFAY

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

The Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas (CFC-O) kicked off the 2009 season on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) at a special event held at the commissary red brick area Oct. 4.

Chief Quartermaster (SW) Henry Harris, Yokosuka CFC-O community area project organizer, organized a kick-off event which enabled CFAY residents to take time from shopping in the Navy Exchange or commissary and kick a soccer ball at numbers representing the CFC-O local goal of $298,325, to earn prizes while learning about the campaign.

"We had a kicking contest trying to get people to come out and see what our goal is, it was our target for the kicking contest," said Harris. "We wanted to get people involved in with the CFC. The campaign starts Oct. 5 and goes for nine weeks."

The CFC-O offers more than 2,000 charities to choose from, including many national and international causes as well as Family Support and Youth Programs that benefit the quality of life programs on board Yokosuka Base.

"There's something for everybody; so, it's your opportunity and your choice to make a difference for those in need," said CFC-O Pacific Region Coordinator Kitty Malcolm. "Every little bit helps, whether you can give $1, $5 or $10, the combination of all of us giving just a little bit makes a huge difference worldwide."

Cael Bowen helps kick off the 2009 Combined Federal Campaign-Overseas by kicking a soccer ball towards the Yokosuka campaign goal numbers in the red brick area in front of the Yokosuka commissary Oct. 4.

Photo by Ben Avey

The campaign has proven popular with service members, Department of Defense (DoD) civilians and family members raising more than $15.8 million for people in need in 2008. The campaign is so popular because it allows the individual charities to forgo the usual soliciting methods that tend to encroach upon family time in the evenings by putting all of their information in one, well-documented brochure. In recent years the campaign has also become even more user friendly by allowing donations to be made by credit card in addition to giving cash, a check or through a payroll deduction.

The CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 300 campaigns throughout the country and internationally to help to raise millions of dollars every year. Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

Contact your local CFC-O representative or visit the Web site www.cfcoverseas.org for more information.