SRF-JRMC、三浦しらとり園にクリスマスの喜びを届ける

文・写真：安達慶一、CFAY広報課

12月7日、横須賀艦船修理廠及び日本地区造修統括本部（SRF-JRMC）の60名以上の日米従業員が神奈川県知的障害者施設「三浦しらとり園」(横須賀市長沢)を訪問。園生たちに一足早いクリスマスをプレゼントした。

「SRF-JRMCが皆さんとクリスマスパーティーをするのは今日で48回目です。私にとっては2回目ですが他の従業員一同楽しみにしている慣例行事の一つです」と話したのはSRF-JRMC司令官のスティーブン・スタンシー大佐。

この行事は日本人従業員で構成される親睦会と米軍人・軍属のボランティアらによって1963年から例年欠かすことなく行われている。

SRF-JRMCとしらとり園の交流は、しらとり園が「長沢学園」としてオープンしたばかりの1963年4月にSRFの海軍士官と日本人従業員数名が園を慰問したことに始まった。それ以来、SRF-JRMC従業員はしらとり園の職員と園入居者にとって『希望の光』であり続けていると職員は言う。

しらとり園園長の小野田正幸氏はスタンシー大佐、SRF-JRMC親睦会会長である青木洋（ひろし）氏をはじめとするSRF-JRMCのスタッフへの心から感謝を表しこう続けた。「当園を代表して皆様にお礼を申し上げます。SRF-JRMCの皆さんをいつでも歓迎します。ケーキを軍人や家族に直接食べさせてもらったり、素晴らしい選曲の演奏を楽しむしらとり園生の歓声を聞き見して職員も大変喜んでいます。我われの友好関係を永遠に続くと願っています。」

クリスマスパーティーでは、サンタは空母プログラム部のゲーリー・クラークさんが演じた。

我われは共有する瞬間を大事にしなければなりません。短いですが、その中で愛情と楽しみを表し、手と心をつなぎ命という授かりものことを呼び起こすことができます。それに行うことにより我われも同様な恩恵を受けます。受けることより与えることがより祝福されるのです。」

様々な寄贈品もさることながら三浦しらとり園生にとり最大のクリスマスプレゼントは、「スイング・スターズ」のバンド演奏に合わせて５人の女性の着ぐるみを含め、SRF-JRMCのボランティアが歌うクリスマスソングと彼らが園生の手をとって一緒に踊るダンスかもしれない。

軍属の１人で老人ホームや知的障害施設で奉仕の経験を持つでキャサリン・ナカヤマさんは親戚に知的障害者がおり、身障者に手を差し伸べることを楽しみにしていると話し、こう続けた。「米海軍の現役で日本に赴任の際に、いくつかの養護施設で行われたイベントを支援して来ました。日米での相違は表情であり、そのほかは皆おなじです。」

着ぐるみの１人である草野知恵子さんが話すには、しらとり園とクリスマスパーティーに何度か訪れその際、園生には尊敬の念で一杯である。「クリスマスパーティーで園生と居る時がとても大好きです。園生と楽しむ間、施設職員がリラックスし微笑むのを見るのが私のクリスマスプレゼント。多くのボランティアの皆さんに会えて、とてもしやわせです。来年もしらとり園で多くのイベントを願います。しらとり園への訪問を実現させてくれた上司や同僚に感謝します。」

Miura Shiratori-en residents look forward to receiving Christmas gifts from Santa Claus while members of the staff and faculty look on.
三浦しらとり園の職員が見守る中、サンタから贈り物の順番を待つ園生たち。

SRF-JRMC士気、福祉、娯楽(MWR)会計担当するCTT1(SW)マイケル・シャフルさんによると、SRF-JRMC親睦会の呼びかけや米軍人、軍属の協力により、1年を通じて部隊内外の様々な組織やグループからクリスマスパーティーを含む三浦しらとり園が必要とする備品の購入の為の募金が行なわれた。今回は450,000円ほどの寄付が寄せられた。

「期待と幸せに満ちた皆さんの顔を見て心暖まりました。SRF-JRMC従業員とその家族に代わり、来年も皆さんが健康で幸福で平和で実り多き年になるようお祈りいたします」とスタンシー大佐はスピーチを締めくくった。

クリスマスパーティーの閉会として、しらとり園の家族会会長を務める平藤定見氏がしらとり園に対する支援と多大な貢献に感謝の念を述べ、こう締めくくった。「毎年の園生の為にこの素晴らしいクリスマスパーティーをもたらしてくれる皆さんの思いやりに心から謝意を申し上げます。皆さんから頂いた多くのプレゼントは園生が施設における日々の生活や行動を励まします。特にスイングスターズとスタンシー大佐のトランペットの演奏は魅了するミュージックでした。」

SRF-JRMC shares holiday spirit with Miura Shiratori-en

Story and photos by Keiichi Adachi, CFAY Public Affairs

More than 60 representatives of U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center (SRF-JRMC) brought holiday joy to mentally and physically challenged students and residents of the Miura Shiratori-en in Nagasawa, Yokosuka City Dec. 7.

"Today is the 48th time that SRF-JRMC has visited Miura Shiratori-en during the Christmas season. This is my second opportunity to enjoy a wonderful Christmas party with you," said SRF-JRMC Commanding Officer Capt. Steven Stancy at the start of his speech. "We always look forward with great anticipation to this annual event."

The visit was a joint volunteer effort by the SRF-JRMC Friendly Society of Master Labor Contract (MLC) Japanese employees and by SRF-JRMC U.S. civilian and military personnel. Without fail, SRF-JRMC personnel have coordinated and conducted this holiday visit since 1963.

The relationship between SRF-JRMC and Shiratori-en dates back to April 1963, when a handful of U.S. Navy personnel and Japanese employees "adopted" the precursor of Shiratori-en, Nagasawa Gakuen, which was established as a home for mentally challenged children. Since then, SRF-JRMC employees have been a "loving light to the staff and residents" according to a Shiratori-en official.

Shiratori-en residents and employees, and members of SRF-JRMC join together to enjoy and share the sprit of the holiday season while the Swing Stars band played music.
スイング・スターズが演奏する中、しらとり園の園生と職員、SRF-JRMCの従業員が集りホリデーシーズンの精神を楽しんだ。

Miura Shiratori-en Director Masayuki Onoda said that he is most appreciative of Capt. Stancy, the staff of SRF-JRMC and Hiroshi Aoki, the president of the SRF-JRMC Friendly Society. "On behalf of the people who live and use our facility, we really welcome SRF-JRMC and we are delighted to hear the happy voices of the Shiratori-en residents while they are eating the ice cream and cake provided and served by SRF-JRMC military and civilian employees and their family members and the presents that we received. I would like to say our relationship will keep going forever," Aoki said.

Gary Clark of SRF-JRMC Code 112 (the Aircraft Carrier Program Department), volunteered to serve as Santa Claus during the Christmas party. "We must cherish the moments, however brief, where we can express love and joy. Where we can all join hands and hearts and bring the gift of life to others," he said. "In doing so, we receive the same gift in return. It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The most pleasant gift for the children, however, may have been getting the chance to dance hand-in-hand with the SRF-JRMC members including five female volunteers who dressed up as cartoon-characters and danced to cheerful holiday music, played by the SRF-JRMC "Swing Stars" band.

Katheryn Nakayama, one of the civilian members, whom is use to performing at homes for the aged and facilities for the mentally challenged, said she has relatives who are physically and emotionally challenged, so she enjoys helping those that can't help themselves and providing for those who are in need of a helping hand. "When I was in the Navy and stationed in Japan, I also assisted with special events at some of the local orphanages. The only difference between the U.S. and Japan were the faces; otherwise the cause was the same," she said.

Chieko Kusano, dressed as one of the cartoon characters, said that she has visited Shiratori-en and its Christmas party several times, and that she has all the respect for those in need. "I loved every moment I was with the residents at the party," Kusano said. "To see them smile is my Christmas present as was helping the employees relax while we took care of the residents. I was very happy to see so many volunteers. I hope we get as many for next year for all our events at the Shiratori-en. I really thank my supervisor and coworkers for letting me visit Shratori-en."

SRF-JRMC Friendly Society President Hiroshi Aoki, Miura Shiratori-en Director Masayuki Onoda, SRF-JRMC Commanding Officer Capt. Steven Stancy and a Shiratori-en resident take part in a cake-cutting ceremony during the Christmas celebration.
クリスマスパーティーの中、青木洋SRF-JRMC親睦会会長、三浦しらとり園園長の小野田正幸氏、SRF-JRMC司令官スティーブン・スタンシー大佐と園児によるケーキカットが行われた。

Cryptologgic Technician Tecnical (SW) 1st Class Michael Schafle, who serves as the SRF-JRMC Morale, Welfare and Recreation treasurer, said that the command's U.S. Navy, U.S. civilian and Japanese employees worked very hard all year to raise money to support the event and to provide financial support for things needed by the facility. SRF-JRMC donated 450,000 yen (more than $4,500) to Shiratori-en this year.

Stancy concluded his speech with the words, "It is heart warming to see the anticipation and happiness in all your faces. On behalf of all SRF-JRMC employees and their families, we wish you good health, happiness, prosperity and peace, now and in the coming year," said Stancy as he concluded his speech.

During the closing of the event, Chairman of the Shiratori-en Family Council Sadami Hirafuji, thanked everyone for their support and outstanding contributions to Shiratori-en. "I sincerely express my gratitude for your kindness with this wonderful Christmas party for our children every year, and the many presents you provide that help our children's daily lives and activities, and especially for the wonderful music by the Swing Stars and Capt. Stancy's trumpet performance!"