Housing Welcome Center name change to reflect new focus

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Effective Jan. 1, 2011, the Yokosuka Housing Welcome Center will change its name to Yokosuka Housing Services Center. The name change is a result of a Navywide initiative by Commander Navy Installations Command to improve housing referral services.

"Across the Navy, wherever people go, they are going to start seeing that [improvement]. How that is going to impact us is, it will beef up referral services," said Housing Personnel Support Manager Dan Rourke. "We have turned our focus more to referral services, which is primarily what we do now overseas."

Although the name is changing, the same services that are currently being provided will remain. Additionally, housing will increase the availability of information to customers concerning housing options at their next duty stations.

The housing office has already begun making it easier for incoming Sailors to learn about the housing process and what to expect when moving into an off-base residence by working with the public affairs office to create short, informative video clips that are posted on YouTube at www.youtube.com/dutyinjapan, which has informational videos on everything from getting to Yokosuka from Yokota (if you arrive via AMC flight), on-base housing information, using the train system, to finding a place to live in town.

One service that will be implemented that will be a big help to incoming Sailors, civilians and their family members is the Department of Defense Automated Housing Referral Network (AHRN). AHRN is an online tool that is a free, self-service website for both local property managers and incoming military members. It will also provide house hunting capabilities 24 hours-a-day from anywhere in the world, eliminating the need for communications to be restricted to only housing office hours.

As the internet and e-mail has become the major avenue of communication, the Yokosuka Housing Services Center will take a good look at their website for ways to increase and improve the information available to all customers. They also encourage customers to provide feedback, both positive and negative, to help them continue to meet and exceed customer expectations.

Ed Guida speaks with Referral Specialist Yumi Hunt at the CFAY Housing Office Dec. 1. The Housing Center is changing its name Jan. 1 to Yokosuka Housing Services Center. The new name is a reflection of a CNIC initiative to improve housing referral services around the world.

We're looking at ways to improve what we're doing," said Rourke. "I envision within a couple of years it'll be a lot easier for somebody arriving and will relieve some of the stress [of finding a home to rent]."

Men's health finds new partner in old friend; the mustache

By Ben Avey, USNH Yokosuka Public Affairs

Sailors from U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka joined the global "Movember" movement this past month to raise awareness about men's health in a uniquely male way; they grew a mustache.

According to the Movember Foundation website, "Movember" which combines the words November and mustache to form its name, is a campaign that challenges men to change their appearance and the face of men's health by growing a mustache in the month of November.

Since its humble founding at an Australian bar in 2003, the campaign has grown into a worldwide phenomenon raising $42 million dollars in 2009 for Movember global beneficiary partners that include well know organizations like the Prostate Cancer Foundation and Livestrong Foundation.

However, locally, it's all about awareness.

"From what I read, this started as a way to educate men about men's health issues so that's what I thought we could do here at the hospital," said USNH Yokosuka Lt. Josh Miller who helped recruit participants. "It wasn't about money for us, it was about using the mustache to spark a conversation and plant a seed about men's health."

While Japan is not listed by the Movember Foundation among the countries currently participating in the campaign, local Sailors hope to change that in coming years and join the ranks of the United States, United Kingdom, Spain, South Africa and others who are involved.

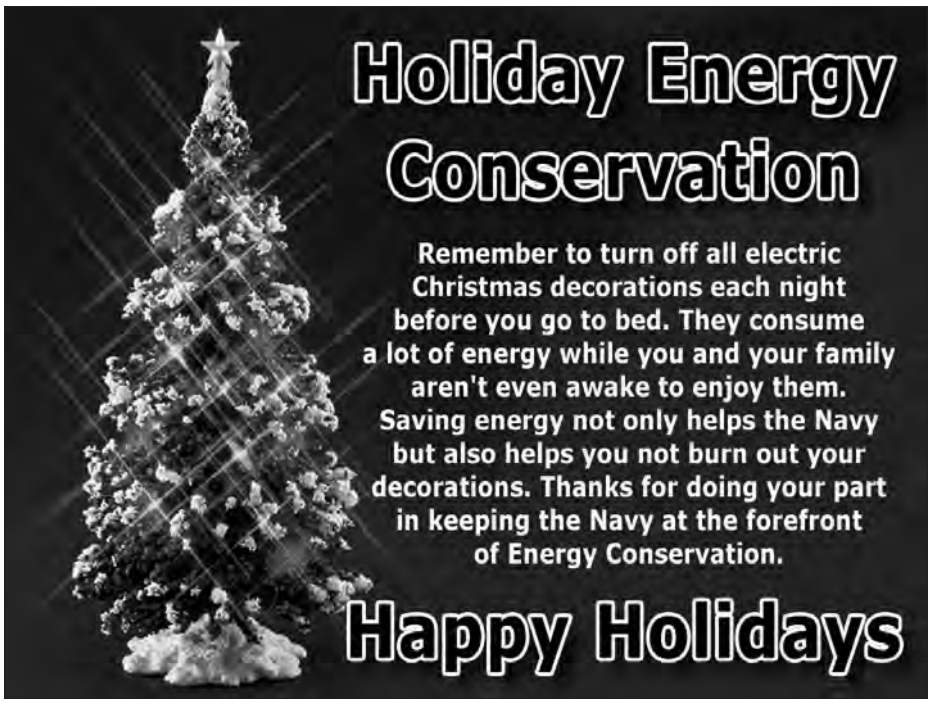
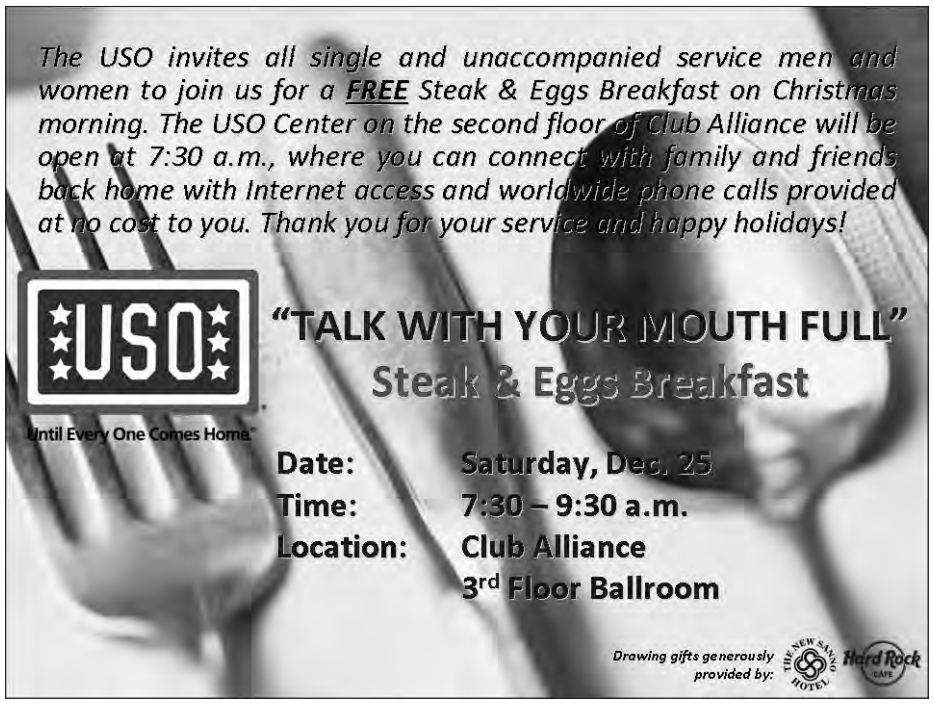
USNH Yokosuka Sailors showcase their mustache's in front of the hospital on the final day of "Movember," a month-long campaign to raise awareness for men's health issues by growing a mustache.

Photo by Tom Watanabe

"It was a first for me but I'll definitely do it again next year," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Earl Davis. "We laid a good foundation this year, a lot of our shipmates know why we did it and next year they can join us and put Yokosuka on the Movember map."

Taking the program to the next level, participants are already discussing how to maximize the effectiveness of the awareness program.

"We are thinking about making cards next year with men's health information that we can pass out," said Miller. "Ask about my mustache, you get a card. Compliment my mustache, you get a card."

While participants may resemble Tom Selleck or Burt Renolds, Sailors took extra care to stay within Navy regulations. All mustaches were kept trimmed, in good order and did not extend beyond the edge of the mouth.

"The mustache is a Navy tradition and we're helping to start a new tradition for men's health," said Miller. "So keep it within [Navy regulations] and let the world know why you're growing it. It's a win-win situation!"