‘Fit 4 Life’ helps teach children to make healthy decisions

Story and photo by MCSA Jordan T. Buttolph, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka’s (CFAY) Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Navy Fitness program is currently conducting its children’s summer fitness and nutrition camp, ‘Fit 4 Life’, at the Purdy Fitness Center and the Community Readiness Center.

Fit 4 Life is a nine-week summer physical fitness and nutrition education program designed to provide kids with the knowledge and skills needed to lead a healthier, more physically active and nutritious lifestyle.

“Our number one priority is the active duty Sailor and that includes their families,” said Brent Grubb, the MWR fitness director for Navy Fitness. “Fit 4 Life is a fitness and nutrition program aimed at teaching kids good exercise and eating habits to keep as they grow into adults.”

Fit 4 Life benefits the CFAY community by promoting healthier Sailors through having healthier children.

“I think having a program like this through the Navy, even though it is benefiting the kids directly, it benefits their parents as well,” said Chad Shelton, fitness intern for Navy Fitness. “I think Fit 4 Life is going to make the Navy stronger as a whole, the more healthy lifestyles there are the healthier the organization will be.”

Fit 4 Life teaches children healthy eating habits and physical fitness through many activities.

“We have them doing all sorts of activities, from picking out and making a healthy snack to kickball and fitness obstacle courses,” Shelton said. “We want to teach kids how to live their lives to the fullest while being healthy.”

The program encourages children to exercise and stay active with their parents.

“We give the kids homework every night in which they have to go home and get their parents active with them by going on a walk or a run,” said Grubb. “We are really trying to encourage kids to go home and be active with members of their family.”

This is the second year the Fit 4 Life program has been held, and CFAY’s MWR Navy Fitness hopes to spread the program to more regional Navy commands.

For more information, please contact the Navy Fitness office at 241-4486 or the 3rd floor of the James D. Kelly Fleet Recreation building.

Chad Shelton, a fitness intern Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka’s Morale, Welfare and Recreation Navy Fitness program, prepares a healthy snack for children attending the summer camp ‘Fit 4 Life’ at CFAY’s Community Readiness Center June 21. The summer camp is a physical fitness and nutrition education program designed to provide kids with the knowledge and skills needed to lead a healthier, physically active and nutritious lifestyle.

The challenge: Reduce speeding-related fatalities

From CFAY Traffic Safety Office

Speed is involved in about one out of three fatal crashes, according to NHTSA. It is the third leading contributing factor to traffic crashes. But while injuries and fatalities due to other dangerous behaviors, such as driving while impaired and not wearing seatbelts, have been significantly reduced, speeding is still a challenge.

Surveys find that although people name speeding as a threat to their safety when other drivers around them are speeding, the majority say they also speed when driving. There are many reasons why people speed. According to Focus on Safety: A Practical Guide to Automated Traffic Enforcement, drivers speed because:

- They’re in a hurry.
- They’re inattentive to their driving.
- They don’t take traffic laws seriously; they don’t think the laws apply to them.
- They don’t view their driving behavior as dangerous.
- They don’t expect to get caught.
- Some or all of the above.

Speeding results in:

- Lives lost – over 13,000 each year.
- Work zone crashes and fatalities – speed was a factor in 27 percent of fatal crashes in construction and maintenance zones in 2005.
- Unsafe school zones – compliance with lower speed limits is poor.
- Economic costs -- speed-related crashes cost society over $40 billion annually, according to NHTSA. Every minute “gained” by speeding to a destination costs U.S. society over $76,000.

Speeding is often one of several risky factors in fatal crashes, because alcohol-impaired drivers are more likely to speed, and speeding drivers are less likely to wear seat belts. Alcohol, lack of seat belts and speeding can add up to a deadly combination.

People often think of highways as a major factor for speeding fatalities, perhaps because speeds are highest on highways. But the vast majority of speeding-related fatalities happen on roads that are not interstate highways. NHTSA’s 2006 fatality data shows that 47 percent of speed-related fatalities occurred on roads posted at 50 mph or less, and more than 20 percent occurred on roads posted at 35 mph or less. Locally, Route 16 has posted speeds at 40 and 50 kph; however, speeds in excess of 80 kph are common and dangerous. The worst part is that we are the biggest offenders for speeding.

Challenges to Change:

Speeding is a habitual driver behavior. Although drivers name speeding as dangerous to their safety, most still speed.

Educational campaigns alone have not effectively reduced crashes. Speed management is often not a priority backed by political will. Speed limits that are not set for the road environment and traffic conditions tend to not be respected by drivers. Law enforcement has many competing enforcement challenges. Speed enforcement can be lower priority, and lax enforcement is noticed by drivers and reflected in their behavior.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of effective strategies to reduce speeding-related crashes, and the above challenges make attention to these strategies, necessary and very important.