Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Vol. LXIII, No. 11 www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka March 23, 2012

Kinnick students create video game with safety in mind

Story and photo by Jeffrey C. Doepp, CFAY Public Affairs

Students from the Nile C. Kinnick High School computer gaming technology class have developed a school bus safety training tool specifically designed for a target audience of school students; a video game.

According to Kinnick teacher Robert Tiffany, who teaches computer gaming technology class I and II, digital imaging and digital animation, the idea for the subject matter of the video game project came from a response to a basewide request.

Nomar Arridondo works on the character graphics of the school bus safety video game project during the computer gaming technology class at Nile C. Kinnick High School March 7. Arridondo along with Michael Sexstella, David Ault and Adrian Kirts, creators of the game, hope this medium will provide school students an educational and enjoyable alternative to the standup lecture-Powerpoint slide presentation training currently used.

"I put an 'APB' (all-points bulletin) out to all staff and faculty of all three schools on base," said Tiffany. "The school bus safety folks from the base replied."

Many of the students from the computer gaming technology classes have co-created one of their games with a client from outside the school; primarily teachers. According to Tiffany, one aspect of the computer gaming technology class is to give the students some 'real world' experiences.

"A group of students wanted to create a video game for school bus safety that they felt would be more interesting to their target audience – students," Tiffany said. "The project has several purposes, but first and foremost the students are learning a very broad-spectrum trade. Game development is much more than just creating games."

For David Ault, Adrian Kirts, Nomar Arridondo and Michael Sexstella, the four students responsible for creating the video game, the project is a class assignment that provides a real world atmosphere for gaming students to work in that teaches them about deadlines, expectations and client meetings. But for the Yokosuka base community, particularly all school students, it is a unique tool that could make learning about school bus safety fun.

"The game provides an alternative to the current stand up lecture or PowerPoint presentation in a language and medium students are familiar with," Tiffany said. "It could also be something that could be put online to ensure everyone understands school bus safety."

Ault, who is from Michigan City, Ind., and who has been in Japan just a little more than eight months, is responsible for the logic bricks or physics part of the game.

"I make things move and scenes change," Ault said. "I got involved with this project because it seemed like it would be fun to work on."

Arredondo, who has been in Japan for approximately four years and is originally from Palm Springs, Calif., has an equally important role in the game project.

"My role is to design the characters and introduce new ideas to make the game better," Arredondo said. "The game is still being worked on with the addition of many amazing features."

Tiffany and his students involved in the project agree that the game would be both fun to play and helpful in teaching school bus safety to all students and adults.

"By the time the students are done, we should be able to have the game available for online play, and for computer and mobile devices, phones in particular," Tiffany said.

Japan Women's Association visits CFAY

Japan Women's Association members visit Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka to give a string of 7,000 origami cranes to CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen to show appreciation for "Operation Tomadachi," which helped people affected by the disasters that hit Japan March 16, 2011.

Photo by Yuji Kawabe

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Disaster preparedness is everyone's responsibility

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) is urging all personnel to review their emergency family action plan, update family emergency kits

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Tomodachi Bowl honors hard work of two nations

CFAY hosted the Tomodachi Bowl, a football game between American and Japanese high school students at Berkey Field March 18.

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