Tokyo Stock Exchange offers unique learning experience

Story and photo by Joe Schmitt, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Command Financial Counselors (CFC) along with other CFC's from the area took an informative tour of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) to learn about financial markets and operations June 29.

The tour was scheduled by CFAY Fleet and Family Support Center.

"They showed us how trading develops and how it's controlled," said Fleet and Family Support Center Financial Counselor Michael Spiltener, who coordinated the tour. "They showed us the Tokyo Stock Price Index (TOPIX) and the Nikkei 225 so, they really gave us an insight into how markets work."

The tour started with a video that gave an overview on how stock markets work in general and then moved into how the Tokyo Stock Exchange is like other markets and how it is different.

AZ1 Zelina York, a Command Financial Counselor (CFC), looks in on the "glass cylinder" that houses the computers and workers who monitor the trading in the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE). York was part of a Fleet and Family Support Center tour to the (TSE) to teach CFC's how stock exchanges and markets work.

"I didn't know how the whole thing worked here in Japan," said Aviation Maintenance Administration 1st Class Zelina York. "I thought everything was done with a bunch of people trading on the floor and it can look confusing. We found out that here it is all done with computers and that was very enlightening."

The rest of the tour was guided by TSE staff who took the attendees through and showed them the "glass cylinder" that houses the computers and workers who monitor the trading. Around the top of the cylinder is a circling display that showed the changes in stock prices.

"That was cool," said York. "As trading increases the words move faster. It just shows you how fast things can change."

York serves in "Patriot's Landing", where Sailors who will be stationed on *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) go to get ready to join the ship's crew. She said the new information will help her teach investment opportunities to service members that are transitioning to Japan.

"We can see the stock exchange on TV but until you are there, it is hard to really understand how it works," said York. "Now, with this knowledge I know I'll be able to help people when they have questions about investing."

The counselors on the tour usually talk to Sailors and community members in Yokosuka that are interested in investing in companies through the New York Stock Exchange but these counselors might have to advise people on how to invest in Japanese markets.

"We do get people who are interested in how they can buy foreign stocks. They want to know what does it entail, how can they get involved, how they can buy foreign stocks. So, after the tour today, the counselors now have that information and they can go back and share it with the service members."

CFAY complex of schools receives Exemplary Partnership Award

By MC2(SW/AW) John Smolinski, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) and its complex of schools of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Japan district were presented the 2011 Pete Taylor Exemplary Partnership of Excellence Award at the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) conference in Nashville, Tenn. June 22.

Retired Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal and retired Lt. Gen. Peter Taylor presented the award to Walter Wilhoit, Sullivans Elementary School principal and Ruth Russell, Navy Region Japan School liaison officer.

MCEC awarded CFAY's complex of schools of the DoDEA Japan district for their partnership that exists between CFAY and the CFAY complex of schools which creates a concept of an umbrella that provides support for the district.

"An umbrella will shelter you anywhere," said Russell. "But only if you open it. Our community as a whole works to keep that umbrella opened for our kids providing that portable shelter as they arrive, while they are here, and as they leave our community."

(Left) Michelle Foust receives a 2011 Pete Taylor Exemplary Partnership of Excellence Award from Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Pete Taylor, while Walter Wilhoit and Ruth Russell receive their award from Gen. (Ret.) Stanley McChrystal at the 2011 Military Child Education Coalition Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

Photo courtesy of Ruth Russell

The programs offered by the schools that provide the support of the umbrella is Smooth Moves, providing transition support, Partnerships in Education providing academic support, Homefront Heroes, providing deployment support and Yokosuka Kazoku providing Yokosuka families logistical support.

"As their parents move about the world serving our nation these children serve too," said Russell. "The average military child transitions schools six to nine times from the time they start kindergarten to the time they graduate high school. We owe them all the support we can provide."

According to the MCEC's website, the award was established in 2004 to encourage and promote the outstanding partnerships that exist between military installations and school districts.

It's designed to foster the sharing of lessons learned and to recognize that "goodness starts at the local level."

"This past year has been racked with multiple challenges that would sideline any other school district and community," said Capt. David A. Owen, CFAY commanding officer. "In Japan, we are meeting those challenges. I am proud of this team that supports our children through thick and thin."

Faculty, administrators, commands, parents, Sailors and numerous base agencies work in concert to help our children.

"Receiving this award means we are on the right track in supporting our children," said Russell. "That doesn't mean there isn't more work to do, but the CFAY community is up to the task. We will continue to provide the shelter as needed to our children who are truly some of the most resilient kids around. They are the real heroes here."