CFAY honors MWR Youth Sports Program volunteers

By Paul Long, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) honored 33 military and civilian youth sports volunteer coaches at the 4th Annual Presidential Service Award Ceremony July 29.

The awardees were recognized for the number of hours and teams coached during the 2010 calendar year, according to Tammie Kaman, MWR youth sports coordinator at Ikego.

"We have 20 Bronze Level award winners and five Silver Award winners," she said.

Bronze Level award winners volunteered between 100 to 249 hours and Silver level awardees contributed between 250 and 499 hours coaching.

According to Kaman, the entire youth sports program is operated by volunteer coaches except for a small MWR staff that handles administrative and management work.

"I coached baseball, basketball, flag football, and soccer," said Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Robert Duker, who received a Silver award. "Kids are the future. It's always good to give back to the kids."

According to Duker, flag football was his favorite sport to coach but he had the most the fun coaching soccer.

Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Nikki Greil initially volunteered to spend more time with her son and she also coached volleyball last season. The team was comprised of girls who never played organized volleyball before. "We ended up winning every game of the season. It was a big accomplishment," Greil said.

All CFAY housing detachments have youth sports offices and offer the same programs and training programs available for people who are interested in volunteering to coach youth sports, but have no experience.

It's the volunteers that help to make the program a success.

"We thank our volunteers very much, we know that it's not the easiest job to be a volunteer and to take the kids out every week, and work with them," said Kaman. "We just appreciate everything that they give to the community here."

CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. David Owens presents BM2 Chad Bedillion of Naval Munitions Command East Asia Division Detachment Yokosuka, a Bronze Presidential Volunteer Service Award Jul 29. Bedillion volunteered over 100 hours as a youth sports coach in MWR's Youth Sports Program.

Navy clarifies revisions to Post-9/11 G.I. Bill policy

By MC1 (AW) LaTunya Howard,
Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – The Navy released revisions to the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill policy Aug. 4, providing Sailors, veterans and their families updated information on their educational benefit options.

"When the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill came about, it was a tremendous undertaking and an opportunity for Congress to reward our service members and veterans for their service to this country," said Ann Hunter, Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, Training & Education voluntary service chief. "As our policy-makers reviewed the program, they realized there were individual groups, who have also served, that were omitted and that implementation could be made easier."

The new policy, announced in Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 235/11, adds benefits explanations and introduces new changes. Hunter outlined the following major changes:

• All public school in-state tuition and fees are covered.

• Annual tuition has been capped at $17,500 for private and foreign schools.

• Tuition payment tiers now apply to active duty personnel.

• The post-9/11 G.I. Bill will now only pay the net cost for tuition and fees – that is, it will only pay what scholarships, grants and loans do not cover.

• Housing stipends will not be paid during semester breaks.

• Monthly living stipend will be paid based on rate of pursuit.

• Entrance exam fees may now be reimbursed.

• Active duty members and spouses can receive book and supply stipend entitlements.

• Non-degree programs, on-the-job training, apprenticeship training, flight programs and correspondence training are now eligible for benefits.

Most of the changes took effect Aug.1, prior to the beginning of the fall term.

"One of the big things that affect our active duty members is that prior to this new bill, members could receive 100 percent of their tuition and fees paid for as long as they have 90 days of qualifying active duty time," Hunter said. "The new bill prorates the payment based on the member's qualifying time." Hunter also explained that active duty members will, like veterans, receive tiered benefits, from 40 to 100 percent. Another significant change will be how the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill deals with other scholarships and loans. Previously, the G.I. Bill issued set amounts based on tuition and fees. The benefit will now pay only net costs after scholarships, grants and loans are applied.

"Net-bill-payer [policy] applies to Sailors when they use tuition assistance (TA). This is referred to as 'Top Up.' TA pays first and the GI Bill picks up the difference," Hunter explained. "Sailors don't normally get scholarships or loans, so the greatest impact on this policy change will be to veterans, drilling reservists, and dependents, including dependents of active duty military."

According to Hunter, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) made this policy change to keep those who used the benefit from pocketing extra funds and to save money.

"The change was not meant to push veterans and dependents away from grants and loans," Hunter said. "Those who select the more expensive schools may have to get a grant or loan to cover the full costs of the tuition and fees. For example, if the student wants to attend a private school and the tuition is $25,000 annually, the VA will only pay $17,500. The student might want to get a loan for $7,500. The loan would pay first and the VA would cover the rest."

Additionally, for those students whose private school or foreign school tuition exceeds the $17,500 limit, the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program (Yellow Ribbon Program) is available. The program is a provision of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008. This program allows institutions of higher learning (degree granting institutions) in the United States to voluntarily enter into an agreement with VA to fund tuition expenses that exceed the established caps. The institution can contribute up to 50 percent of those expenses and VA will match the same amount as the institution. This service is available to veterans eligible for 100 percent entitlement and may be available to some children transferees entitled to 100 percent benefits. The Yellow Ribbon program may also be used to cover additional costs for attendance at public schools if the student is paying out-of-state tuition and fees. Members should verify whether the school of choice is a Yellow Ribbon school.

According to Hunter, under the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, qualified Sailors may elect to transfer all or a portion of their benefits to a spouse or child enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment System. For transferability, Sailors must have served at least six years in the Armed Forces and agree to serve an additional four years, in most cases.

NAVADMIN 203/09 identified exceptions to the additional four-year service obligation, which includes Sailors currently eligible for retirement within four years of the Post 9/11 GI Bill start date.

More information on these changes can be viewed on the Post 9/11 GI Bill website at http://www.gibill.va.gov/benefits/post_911_gibill/Post911_changes.html. Sailors can enroll in the Post 9/11 GI Bill at the Veteran's Administration website, https://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp and sign up for transferability of benefits at www.dmdc.osd.mil/TEB/. Sailors should ensure their service obligation is reflected in their Electronic Service Record at https://nsips.nmci.navy.mil/. To read the NAVADMIN or find more information, visit the NPC website at www.npc.navy.mil, or call the NPC Customer Service Center at 1-866-U-ASK-NPC.