"*Freaks come out at night*" for USNH Yokosuka Haunted Hospital

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

U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka opened the doors of their Haunted Hospital to the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) base community for the third-straight year Oct. 28, with a resounding turnout of people, both young and old.

More than 150 people were already standing in line a good 30 minutes before the 5 p.m. opening of the USNH Yokosuka First Class Petty Officer Association (FCPOA)-sponsored one-day event. According to FCPOA member and event co-coordinator Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Keegan Marcantel, this year's event had the best turnout since its inaugural year.

"The first year we saw approximately 900 people take the haunted tour," Marcantel said. "The second year we saw approximately 500 people. The decrease in visitors was largely due to the event being held in November because of a typhoon during the Halloween weekend. We haven't crunched the numbers for this year yet, but it looks like more than 1,000 people came through our doors."

According to Marcantel, with limited options for older children and adults for haunted attractions on board the base, the Haunted Hospital gives the CFAY community a fun safe night of Halloween scares.

"It's a guided tour through building E-18, our medical warehouse, which is spooky enough on its own," Marcantel said. "Once the actors are in place, the lights turned off and the special effects running, the Haunted Hospital is actually pretty scary."

Although the event is primarily used as a fund-raiser to offset costs of the USNH Yokosuka holiday party each year, it is a way for hospital staff and its private organizations such as the FCPOA to give back to the community.

"We want all our brothers and sisters in the armed services as well as their families across the Kanto plain to know that we are thinking of them," Marcantel said. "The Haunted Hospital is a fun way to get the community together and have a good time."

Aside from the large turnout of people who attended the event, the number of volunteers from the hospital and the amount of preparation involved was equally impressive.

"There are so many personnel involved," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Trevor Thompson, who is an FCPOA member who also helped coordinate the event. "The event is always sponsored by one of the USNH Yokosuka private associations however; volunteers from every association, group and department in the hospital come out and contribute someway. We couldn't do this without all of the people volunteering their time and talents or donating supplies."

Hospitalman Recruit Jennifer Hwang, a "patient" at the USNH Yokosuka Haunted Hospital, watches a "gripping" drama on TV while waiting to be seen by a "doctor." USNH Yokosuka opened the doors of their Haunted Hospital to the CFAY community Oct. 28, with a resounding turnout of people, both young and old.

According to USNH Yokosuka Public Affairs Officer Rich McManus, the lessons learned from the previous years have helped in making the event better for the next year.

"The event has grown and become more popular every year," McManus said. "Every year we do this we learn a few things to make it bigger and better for the next year. Although there is a tremendous amount of work involved in this one-day, four-hour event, because of the success of this one, we may consider extending it longer next year."

FFSC hosts open house for Military Family Appreciation Month

Photo and story by
MC2 (SW/AW) John Smolinski,
CFAY Public Affairs

Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Yokosuka onboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) celebrated military family appreciation month with an open house Nov. 3 at their office located in the Community Readiness Center.

The staff at FFSC is focused on assisting military and eligible military SOFA sponsored civilian personnel and their families with the challenges of prolonged family separations, single service member isolation and frequent relocation.

"In honor of Military Family Appreciation Month, we wanted to provide an opportunity for the entire community to come into our offices and see first hand all the services that we offer here at fleet and family," said Trasi Watson, education and life specialist at FFSC and the open house event coordinator.

The services offered at FFSC are divided into three coordinated support divisions: deployment readiness, career support and retention, and crisis response.

Each division provides specialized professional information and assistance to military commands, service members, US Civilians, and family members.

"We offer various services like information and referral service that provides items like maps, directions to local attractions, translation services and the area orientation brief. We also have working family life support which provides life skills workshops, employment related workshops, transition workshops for those who are retiring or separating from the military and even veterans affairs."

Lorelie Aquino from Fleet and Family Services Center interacts with participants during the Military Family Appreciation Month open house in the Community Readiness Center Nov. 3. November 2011 has been proclaimed by President Barack Obama as Military Family Month to celebrate the exceptional service, strength and sacrifice of military families.

The open house had representatives from all the various departments of FFSC plus representatives from Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) and United Service Organizations who donated prizes that were given away throughout the day.

Recently, FFSC has updated their website to make it easier to access current information and upcoming events.

"The main purpose of our website is information," said Lorelie Aquino, information and referral specialist at FFSC. "We are catering to those not only here but service members from all over the world who will be coming to Japan. Whether you are in Italy and transferring here or your coming from the States, you need to get in touch with us."

FFSC has provided many ways of getting in contact with them either by phone locally or from outside Japan, by email through their website or even on Facebook. Visit their website for more information. http://www.cnic.navy.mil/Yokosuka/FleetAndFamilyReadiness/SupportServices/index.htm

"If you have any questions about anything in Yokosuka, we are your point people," said Watson. "So even if you don't know where to go, come to us, email us and if we are not the right place, we will direct you on where you need to go."

For more information about Yokosuka FFCS and its services call 243-3372.