KOTOBUKI cont. from page 1

"We were told that due to limited funds, they would be unable to do anymore meals until the next year," said Ruiz. He continued, "We asked roughly how much it would cost to host another event."

The *Curtis Wilbur* FCPOA and CPO Mess met to develop a plan to raise enough funds to host another meal at the shelter. The FCPOA hosted a lunch Barbeque on the pier for *Curtis Wilbur* Sailors and the CPO Mess served pulled pork sandwiches on another day. They advertised the fundraisers throughout the ship in the weeks prior and generated enough income from the generous *Curtis Wilbur* crew to support a return to the Kotobuki Worker's Welfare Association.

Once fundraising was complete, *Curtis Wilbur* Community Service Coordinator Hull Technician 1st Class (SW) Gregory Otteson worked with Komatsu to coordinate the meal with the shelter.

"This is the first time that the volunteer Sailors purchased the food which is something the shelter and the community really appreciated," said Komatsu.

Negishi Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) provided drinks while the ship personnel provided cooking, transportation, and serving.

The night before, three members of the *Curtis Wilbur* FCOA purchased food and commenced preparations. Culinary Specialist 1st Class (SW) Nicholas made arrangements for four additional Sailors to cook the spaghetti and bread at Yokosuka Base Galley at five o'clock in the morning since the ship's galley was unavailable due to maintenance.

Otteson and the other cooks placed the food in insulated containers and drove to the Negishi MWR building. The remaining members of the *Curtis Wilbur* FCPOA and CPO Mess left Yokosuka in a bus to meet up with the cooks, MWR workers, and *Curtis Wilbur* family members. The caravan of vehicles left and drove to Kannai District in Yokohoma including the *Curtis Wilbur* Commanding Officer Cmdr. Joseph Femino.

"This was truly a varsity level community relations project as the First Class Petty Officers of *Curtis Wilbur* identified a need in both the community and funding to support and meet it," said Femino. "Incorporating fund raising to support this day's food service demonstrated true support to the community and going the extra distance for our Sailors to provide value to the community."

According to Otteson, upon arrival, the line of people extended past the shelter.

"It was a very long line that must have been more than 150 people on our arrival," Otteson said.

Curtis Wilbur Sailors wasted no time in setting up and began serving within 15 minutes after arrival despite the challenge of finding cover from the rain. The volunteers served food for more than 90 minutes allowing many of the homeless to go through the line twice.

"The food was hot and we served it until it was all gone," said Otteson. "My family is from Japan so participating and organizing events for the local community is a way for me to give back."

Sailors were able to meet and talk with many of the 300 Japanese in attendance.

"They were very gracious, extremely thankful, and you could just tell that what we were doing made them happy, which was a great feeling for us," said Ruiz.

According to Otteson, while *Curtis Wilbur* remains in port, the crew is will look for more volunteer opportunities and ways to serve their local community.

***USS Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54) Sailors serve food to local homeless people at an event hosted by the Kotobuki Worker's Welfare Association shelter in Kotbuki-cho, Yokohama Japan Sept. 18.**