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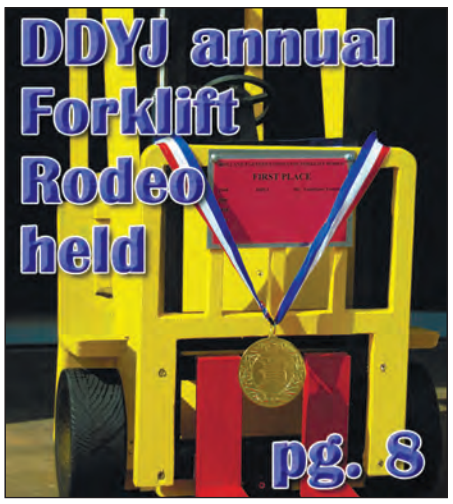

Red Ribbon Week unites community against substance abuse

Photo and story by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Nile C. Kinnick High School (KHS) students, teachers and administrators joined communities around the nation in observing Red Ribbon Week, a week set aside to present a united front against illicit drug use and substance abuse Oct. 23 -31.

Students Towards Overall Peace (STOP), a KHS club whose mission is the prevention of abuse in any form, planned and conducted all of the activities during the week which culminated with a Red Ribbon Week celebration assembly in the KHS gym Oct. 30.

"This whole week, everything, from Monday to [Friday] was planned and thought up by the STOP kids," said Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Service (ASACS) counselor Alice Ginkens. "They truly do not want to see any of their peers sacrifice [their lives] for any drug or alcohol reasons."

Everyday of Red Ribbon Week at KHS had a drug-prevention theme and worked to drive home the dangers of abuse. The theme for Monday was "Ask me what happened" and STOP students painted their faces white and were silent all day at school. Tuesday was, "Turn my back to Alcohol and Drugs," and encouraged students to wear their clothes backwards. STOP students had sandwich boards with alcohol and drug information and handed out handmade red ribbons and "goodies." On Wednesday students dressed as fighters to show their support for the "fight against alcohol and drugs." Students were encouraged to dress in clothing as bright as their futures without alcohol and drugs on Thursday. Friday featured a sea of red as students dressed in their school colors in support of the day's theme, "red not dead."

Students take a "Teens Against Underage Drinking and Drugs" pledge during the Red Ribbon Week Celebration Assembly in the Kinnick High School (KHS) gym Oct. 30. The assembly featured performances and remarks by members of Students Towards Overall Peace (STOP), a KHS club opposed to drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.

The STOP students showed true courage and compassion for their peers by standing in front of their fellow students and speaking the truth, although it may not be viewed as being the "cool" thing to do. "These kids standing in front of you, you can say whatever you want, but you can't touch them," said STOP President Ren Sarmiento while addressing the student assembly in the gym. "They are so passionate about what they are doing."

During the Red Ribbon Week assembly on Friday, members of STOP performed short skits and interacted with their peers to drive home the dangers of alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse. The assembly finished with a number of students coming forward to take the "Teens Against Underage Drinking and Drugs" pledge. Students participating in the pledge have promised to not only reject the use of drugs, but to show their commitment by taking part in a voluntary, random urinalysis program.

For more information about the ASACS program or the STOP club, contact Alice Ginkens at 243-3515 or go to the STOP Web Site at www.ready-set-stop.webs.com.

USS George Washington makes historic port call to Hong Kong

By MC2(SW) John J. Mike, *USS George Washington* Public Affairs

USS George Washington (GW) (CVN 73) anchored out in Victoria Harbor Oct. 29, as the ship made the first port call to Hong Kong in its 17-year history.

Sailors man the rails on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* (CVN 73) as the ship enters Kowloon Bay for a port visit to Hong Kong Oct. 29. During the visit, Sailors will conduct 17 different community service projects designed to give something back to their host city during their visit.

U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Marcos Vazquez

Joining the more than 5,000 *GW* and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5 Sailors in the visit, are the crews of the guided-missile cruiser *USS Cowpens* (CG 63), forward-deployed out of Yokosuka, Japan, the guided-missile destroyer *USS O'Kane* (DDG 77) and the guided-missile frigate *USS Crommelin* (FFG 37), homeported at Naval Station Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

"Visiting Hong Kong is a big deal for *GW*," said *GW* Operations Officer Cmdr. Anthony Calandra. "As the Navy's only permanently forward-deployed aircraft carrier, this port call helps us foster relations with China, which will help us work together to maintain maritime security in the region."

Renowned for its "East meets West" atmosphere and culture, Calandra said *GW* Sailors will have a memorable visit to Hong Kong.

"Our Sailors are going to meet some great people, see some great sights and enjoy some of the best cuisine and shopping available in this part of the world," said Calandra.

While in Hong Kong, *GW* and its escort ships will give back to their hosts by sending 300 Sailors to participate in 17 community service projects.

"These projects provide a great opportunity for our Sailors to exercise community spirit in multiple benevolent acts, which benefit the local community," said Cmdr. Dennis Young, *GW* command chaplain.

"Hong Kong and China are strategic partners with the U.S. and by getting involved with their communities, we create a spirit of goodwill between our countries," Young said.

As part of the projects, Sailors will do painting at the Hong Kong Society for the Blind, pack rice at a food bank and visit kindergartners at a local school.

Young said the outpouring of interest in community service projects speaks to the integrity of all Sailors and that their service is pivotal in building trust in the Pacific region.

Commanded by Capt. David A. Lausman, the carrier is the flagship of the *George Washington* Carrier Strike Group, Commanded by Rear Adm. Kevin M. Donegan.