Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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USO, Sesame Street team up, entertain CFAY families

By Dan Bowen,
CFAY Public Affairs

Elmo, the Cookie Monster and a host of other characters from the perennially popular children's TV show "Sesame Street" put on a performance for the CFAY community at the Benny Decker Theater Jan. 21.

In addition to the free handouts "*Talk, Listen, Connect!*" DVDs and a twirling lights toy, audience members were also treated to a number of songs and dances performed by the "Sesame Street" cast. Kids in the audience sang along with the some of the more popular songs such as "Somebody Come and Play" and "C is for Cookie" and the entire crowd was thrilled to be able to approach the stage to interact and shake hands with their favorite characters.

Members of the audience storm the stage to shake hands with Elmo, Cookie Monster and other characters during the "Sesame Street" live show at the Benny Decker Theater Jan. 21.

Photo by Dan Bowen

"It was awesome," said Gabrielle Morrison, a preschooler who attended the show with her mother. "It was cool because I saw Elmo."

According to Gabrielle's mother Alysia, it was also great for her and many of the other parents in the audience who were able to take their children to the show. "It was great. I grew up watching "Sesame Street" so seeing Cookie Monster was a treat for me," said Morrison. "It's great to have the USO (United Services Organization) sponsor shows like these because it helps keep your family strong and together and it gives you chance to come out with your family and enjoy a show like this, especially "Sesame Street", an educational show."

The USO and "Sesame Street" teamed up back in 2008 with the help of Vee Corporation to bring the show to U.S. military installations all over the world. And for all concerned the show has been a resounding success.

Tour Company Manager, Glen Taylor, has been overwhelmed with the response the show has received throughout the tour. "It's been amazing, since we started this project back in 2008; the response has been pretty amazing. I don't think "Sesame Street" or the USO were ready for how big it was going to get. Each base we go to, it seems to get bigger and bigger. The kids love it; obviously, that's why we are here," said Taylor.

Parents and children from the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka community watch a live production of "The Sesame Street Experience" at the Benny Decker Theater Jan. 21. The tour, which was created in 2008 with the cooperation of the United Service Organizations, is geared toward helping children of military families cope with deployments.

U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Gabriel S. Weber

"It's not just about the kids though, the performers, organizers and volunteers involved in bringing this show around the world have found the entire experience very gratifying. According to Taylor, compared to putting on regular shows for paying customers, touring with the USO is an entirely different, and better, experience. "I would say that working with the USO is 100 times more rewarding," said Taylor. "What we are doing here is bringing joy and happiness to all these kids who go through so much having parents in the military, as far as being deployed, coming back injured, that sort of thing; so, this holds a special place in everyone's heart."

Also contributing to the success of the show were all of the volunteers who supported the USO mission. According to USO Japan, Country Director Juliet Domingo the volunteers play a significant role in everything the USO does in the community.

"We are always looking for volunteers to help out with special events such as this as well as in the centers. Anyone who wants to come out, they don't necessarily have to always be at the centers, but at events like this, it always makes the show, program or event run much more smoothly if we have a big turnout with volunteers," said Domingo.

Domingo also stressed how important feedback from attendees will prove to be in order to get more shows to come to CFAY, and if necessary, get the "Sesame Street" cast to come back soon for those who were unable to make the show.

"Good, bad or ugly, I'm always looking for feedback and the best way to do that is through ICE (Interactive Customer Evaluation) comments," said Domingo. "To be able to get it in writing, and forward [the comments] to our corporate office, it's one thing when they hear it from me, it's something totally different when they're actually hearing it from our customers."

For questions about upcoming events or for those who wish to volunteer for USO events in Yokosuka, contact Vernichel Tharps at 241-4894.

FBI alerts potential donors about Haitian earthquake relief Internet fraud

By Federal Bureau of Investigation

The FBI reminds Internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of the recent earthquake in Haiti to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests.

Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions purportedly for a charitable organization and, or a good cause.

Therefore, before making a donation of any kind, consumers should adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

• Do not respond to any unsolicited incoming spam e-mails, including clicking links contained within those messages.

• Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as surviving victims or officials asking for donations via e-mail or social networking sites.

• Verify the legitimacy of nonprofit organizations by utilizing various Internet-based resources that may assist in confirming the group's existence and its nonprofit status rather than following a purported link to the site.

• Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files because the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.

• Make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.

• Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions: Providing such information may compromise your identity and make you vulnerable to identity theft.

Anyone who has received an e-mail referencing the above information or anyone who may have been a victim of this or a similar incident should notify the Internet Crime Complaint Center by visiting their Web site at www.ic3.gov.

INSIDE

Links to advancement material to be offered on NKO

Sailors preparing for advancement exams are getting a new tool to make their quest easier: NKO will begin offering links to advancement bibliography material.

Pg. 4

MWR Fit 4 Fun program teaches youths about fitness, health

CFAY Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department Youth Sports kicked off its winter Fit 4 Fun program at the George I. Purdy Fitness Center Jan. 20.

Pg. 8