Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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CFAY celebrates National African-American History Month

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) community came together to join the nation in celebration of the contributions and legacies of African-Americans at the 2010 African-American-Black History Month ceremony held at the Chapel of Hope Feb. 18.

The event featured guest speakers, jazz and gospel musical performances and a poetry recitation. The theme this year was "The History of Black Economic Empowerment," reminding all Americans how hard African-Americans have fought to overcome inequalities and injustices to achieve financial independence.

"African-American history is an essential thread of the American narrative that traces our nation's enduring struggle to perfect itself," said President Barack Obama in his Feb. 1 proclamation declaring February as National African American History Month. "Each February, we recognize African American-Black History Month as a moment to reflect upon how far we have come as a nation, and what challenges remain."

According to CFAY Emergency Manager Robert James, who served as the guest speaker for the event, looking back and understanding our history is essential if we, as a society, are going to be able to create a future that everyone will enjoy living in. He used his opportunity at the podium to educate those in attendance about his childhood hero, Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Woodson is credited with starting Negro History Week in 1926, which is considered the forerunner to what has become the modern-day national African-American History Month.

Guest speaker Robert Allen James Jr., speaks during the National African American History Month ceremony at the CFAY Chapel of Hope Feb. 18. The event featured guest speakers, music and a poetry recitation.
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Charles Oki

"The thing about Dr. Woodson is that although he doesn't get the exposure of Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks or Harriet Tubman - he should," said James. "I think it's very important. In order for anyone, not just African-Americans, to forge the future, you must know your past."

The celebration not only brought the community together to share in history, it also offered the community a chance to speak to and learn from each other about the different perspectives and experiences that contribute to the greatness of America's multicultural society.

"[It] is an 'in' to start a dialogue," said Legalman 1st Class Tiffany Garfield, who recited the poem, "*Still I Rise*" by Maya Angelou, during the celebration. "I think too many times we are reluctant to ask questions, and then we can become ignorant because we don't ask when the answers are right there for you."

Jewel of the East galley recognized for outstanding food service

Story and photo by MC3 Devon Dow, NPASE Japan

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Matthew C. Perry General Mess, known as the Jewel of the East, received Navywide recognition for its outstanding food service by being named runner-up in the Capt. Edward F. Ney Memorial Award overseas general mess category Feb. 19.

"We are fortunate to be recognized for such an award," said Chief Culinary Specialist (SW) PeterDennis Ramos. "It's a very prestigious award and a lot of factors go into the selection process of determining who the best of the best is. I still believe we are the best in the Pacific, hopefully we will win the next one."

First-place winners, runners-up and honorable mention commands will be recognized in a special ceremony during the Joint Military and International Food Service Executives Association (IFSEA) conference April 17 in Reno, Nev., where Commander Naval Supply Systems Command Rear Adm. Mike Lyden, will present the awards.

Ramos said there will be improvements and upgrades to the galley facility this year; however one constant that makes the Jewel of the East unique and award-winning year after year is its staff and working relationship with the local Japanese community.

"The staff is a huge part of success here," he said. "We have great Sailors and staff members from the Yokosuka community who play a vital role in our achievements as a galley. Our relationship with them is bar none, one of the best in the Navy. We learn a lot from each other, and the Japanese get the experience of learning how a dining facility is operated in the U.S. military."

According to Culinary Specialist 2nd Class (SW) Laurenzie Batiste, the principles of teamwork and cultural exchange resonate amongst Jewel of the East staff members.

"Out of all the commands I have worked at in the Navy this is one of the best," Batiste said. "Everyone does their part in making things run smoothly and effectively here. When we see Sailors from ships on base, which have their own galley, come here to have a meal - that says something to us about our service."

OS2 Kelvin Chen, makes his salad bar selection at the CFAY general mess Feb. 19. The award-winning facility, known as the Jewel of the East, has won 11 consecutive 5-Star awards for excellence.

This is the second year finishing runner-up after winning the first place award in 2008 for the Jewel of the East. The Ney Memorial Award was established in 1958 by the Secretary of the Navy and IFSEA to improve and recognize the quality of food service in the Navy. The awards encourage excellence in Navy food service programs, with the objective of improving the quality of life for our Navy personnel.

INSIDE

Shiloh Sailors COMREL project aids Thai school

***USS Shiloh* (CG 67) Sailors participated in a community service project in Pattaya, Thailand Feb. 16 during a scheduled port visit.**

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Kinnick High School student promoted to rank of eagle scout

Nigal Shah, a sophomore at Kinnick High School and member of Boy Scout Troop 35, was promoted to the rank of eagle scout during an Eagle Court of Honor ceremony Feb. 18.

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