Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Military Child celebration brings families together, honors sacrifice

Story and photo by Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) celebrated the Month of the Military Child (MOMC) by providing families a chance to get out and enjoy a variety of youth-oriented activities outside the Robert I. Purdy Fitness Center April 3.

More than 3,500 residents joined the festivities during the event.

"We try to be big here in Yokosuka and just give the kids and families here in our community a big day that honors them," said Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Teen and Youth Programs Coordinator Lee Leach.

"The families of service members have to deal with things that other families don't really have to deal with, Leach said. "The service member makes sacrifices and so do the families, so we recognize that by having this celebration."

Children make their way to the top of the rock climbing wall during the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Month of the Military Child celebration outside the Robert I. Purdy Fitness Center April 3. More than 3,500 residents took part in the festivities during the event. The Month of the Military Child is celebrated every April to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

The day included live music, group fitness activities, a petting zoo, carnival games and more. The day also featured a free health assessment, an underwater egg hunt, a jump rope and hula-hoop competition, a youth skateboarding competition and the Fit Family Fun 3K Walk.

Chief Information Systems Technician Dale Harris thought the event was a great way for him to get some "quality time" in with his family.

"I like to come do this stuff with the kids and have fun with them," said Harris. "My daughter loves it. She's six years old; she enjoys running around seeing a lot of her friends and the events they have here."

MOMC was created by former Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger in 1986 to call attention to the important role children play in the military community. According to www.defense.gov, there are currently 1.7 million American children and youth under 18 with a parent serving in the military and about 900,000 with one or both parents deployed multiple times.

MOMC is an opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

Although the official celebration may be over, MWR still has plenty of opportunities for kids and families to enjoy MOMC all month long.

For more information, log on to the MWR Web site at www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka/mwr or pick up a copy of the latest edition of the Focus Magazine.

Royal Thai Navy ships visit Yokosuka, cadets interact, exchange culture with U.S. Navy Sailors

By MCSN Mike Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Royal Thai Navy frigates *HTMS Taksin* (FF 442) and *HTMS Chaophiraya* (FF 455) moored at Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) for a scheduled port visit April 2, bringing with them an exchange of culture between the United States and Thailand.

Royal Thai navy cadets embarked in the ships, used the visit as an opportunity to interact with their American counterparts by offering shipboard tours and competing in a friendly game of soccer.

"It's a privilege and an honor to be able to come aboard and interact with them," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW) Chartida Kraikoom, of Hacienda Heights, Calif., a former Thailand native who serves as a U.S. Navy Sailor. "Being an American Sailor and having the opportunity to come aboard a Thai ship doesn't happen everyday."

While American and Thai Sailors come from diverse backgrounds and cultures, according to Kraikoom, both navies have similarities when it comes to getting the job done.

"The way they run things on the ship is a little bit different because of the culture, but as far as seamanship or professionalism, it's the same," said Kraikoom.

During their first full day in Yokosuka, Royal Thai navy sailors were invited to a friendly soccer match with *USS Cowpens* (CG 63) Sailors.

"I'm very happy that we were offered the opportunity to play soccer with some of the U.S. Navy Sailors," said 1st Cadet Kiitsada Yai. "It was a very exciting game and I hope to participate again if we happen to come back."

The hour-long game ended 3-2 in favor of the Royal Thai navy guests.

"I'm happy we could make them feel comfortable in our environment and welcome them with a sport that they enjoy playing," said Fire Controlman Seaman Chris Powell, of Port Angeles, Wash.

Yokosuka is just one of several scheduled Western Pacific port calls for the Royal Thai Naval Cadet Training Unit 2010. During the 75-day mission, crews from both ships seek to broaden international perspectives and strengthen good relationships with countries they visit.

(Right) GSEC Florizel O'Hara, from Philadelphia, evades a Royal Thai Navy cadet during a soccer game at Berkey Field on board CFAY April 3. *HTMS Taksin* (FF 422) and *HTMS Chaophraya* (FF 455), assigned to the Royal Thai Naval Cadet Training Unit 2010 visited Yokosuka during the 75-day mission.

U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Charles Oki

INSIDE

Presidential Volunteer Service award honors selflessness

CFAY thanked its volunteers in the C-2 auditorium by awarding 41 youth sports coaches with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award April 2.

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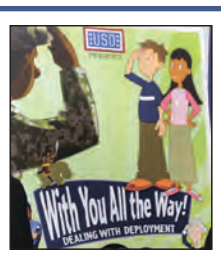

New DVD helps military children deal with deployment

New DVD "*With You All the Way*," a joint effort by the DoD, USO and Trevor Romain Co., was created to help school-age military children cope with a parent's deployment.

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