Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan

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Schools, organizations team up with Youth AOB-ICR class

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Whenever someone reports to Commander Feet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) they are required to attend an Area Orientation Brief and a brief on Intercultural Relations (AOB-ICR).

The briefs can be informative and help get the newly reported military member or civilian employee acquainted with their new surroundings.

However, what about the youth of the community? Who informs them of the unique experiences they might expect while in Japan?

CFAY Morale, Welfare and Recreation Division, Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), Nile C. Kinnick High School (KHS) and Yokosuka Middle School (YMS), that's who.

The organizations team up to hold monthly Youth AOB-ICR classes for high school and middle school students.

Usually held during the second week of each month, the Youth AOB-ICR class help make students more comfortable in their new surroundings.

"When you come to a new place, one of the things that can really depress you is that 'unknown' factor. So, when they hear things from another kid's perspective, then they are a little happier about where they are," said Regional School Liaison Officer Ruth Russell, who is one of the Youth AOB-ICR coordinators.

"Also, it helps them make new friends and connect," Russell added. "One of the key things, when kids are coming into new installations, new schools, is they need to connect somewhere, somehow within the first two weeks or so, That is so important for them to meet someone who they have something in common with."

Regional School Liaison Officer Ruth Russell, prepares students for a "face-to-face" activity during a Youth AOB-ICR class March 12. Representatives from various organizations on base provide briefs during the class informing students about programs on base, such as youth sports and special youth events, and talk about the basics of Japanese culture.

Representatives from different base agencies speak at the briefs to inform students about programs such as youth sports, special youth events, and the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

They also address specific youth-oriented questions and bring in members of the KHS Student-to-Student, and YMS Dragon Corps, which are groups of veteran students who act as ambassadors to new students.

"Youth have different questions than adults do when they come to a new place," said Russell. "So they get to meet students who are their peers and find out what those kids do."

Additionally, they instruct the students about the local area and the basics of Japanese culture.

"I learned to never stick your chopsticks into your rice [as a means of holding them], because it signifies that you had a relative pass away," said Kevin Xavier Velasquez Rodriguez, who is a YMS student and attended the class.

The briefs usually last two days and are followed up with a field trip of some sort, such as going to Kamakura or Yokohama.

Those interested in attending Youth AOB-ICR can register with their school registrar, or contact FFSC at 243-8512.

Readiness Summit shares vital topics with Yokosuka Sailors

Story and photo by MCSN Mike Mulcare, Navy Public Affairs Support Element Japan

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka hosted a Personal Readiness Summit April 7 - 9 to discuss crucial facts and important programs with forward-deployed Sailors and leadership.

The summit covered topics including Drug and Alcohol Prevention, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, as well as Physical Fitness Readiness. The tailored training is designed to meet the needs of forward-deployed senior officers, senior enlisted and Sailors who hold key primary and collateral duties.

Bill Moore of Navy Personnel Command delivers alcohol addiction and treatment training to CFAY leaders at the Officer's Club April 7. The brief was part of the Personal Readiness Summit, which discusses many crucial Navy programs such as drug and alcohol prevention, sexual assault prevention and response, and updates in the Navy's physical readiness program.

"The focus of the whole summit is readiness and obtaining the knowledge and information on the different programs the Navy has available for commands to keep their Sailors ready to fight and deploy in good fighting shape," said Dr. Paul Robandt, director of operations at the Navy's Drug Screening Laboratory in San Diego.

Specialized briefs on programs including urinalysis, Command Fitness Leader, Family Advocacy, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, Drugs and Alcohol and Equal Opportunity were presented to local leaders who manage those programs at their respective commands.

"The experts are here from the OPNAV (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations) staff to give the latest and greatest information on many issues," said Senior Chief Cryptologic Technician (Technical) (SW/AW) Michael Bousquet, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan regional drug and alcohol control officer. "With all the information brought out here, leadership can bring it on board at their commands."

The summit educated Sailors about these topics via lectures, first hand experiences and question and answer sessions.

"It's very informative. You learn a lot of things and you have a face to connect with a name," said Chief Electrician's Mate (SW/AW) Leonard Corazo, the command fitness leader (CFL) aboard *USS Stethem* (DDG 63). "You know exactly where to go to, as far as questions and for any updates that are coming to the fleet for CFLs."

Bousquet says this training helps many senior enlisted Sailors, by educating them on summit topics and in turn, helping the forward-deployed junior Sailors who serve under them.

"With the large number of junior Sailors we have, some who have never been away from home, these types of forums allow us to provide information especially about drug and alcohol programs to the commands who can then apply it to junior Sailors," said Bousquet.

INSIDE

Motorcycle Rodeo riders improve skills, have fun

Motorcyclists from across Kanagawa prefecture gathered at Yokohama North Dock April 10, to practice motorcycle safety at the 2010 Motorcycle Rodeo.

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Odyssey of the Mind tournament unlocks students' imagination

More than 150 elementary students from two DoDD Schools in Japan, met at The Sullivans Elementary School to compete in an 'Odyssey of the Mind' tournament April 3.

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