Commitment

By Chaplain John Swanson

"To have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; and I promise to be faithful to you, forsaking all others, until death do us part." - Book of Common Prayer

Have you ever pondered commitment? I love talking to couples about commitment. Many young couples think commitment means they will never be attracted to another. That definition is sure to set you up for disappointment. The reality is the grass sometimes does look greener on the other side of the fence. However, it's just as hard to mow.

A great definition of commitment I heard was coined by Scott Stanley. Stanley is at the University of Denver and is one of the founders of the PREP program for couples. PREP stands for "Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program." Many of the Navy's Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation, better known as CREDO, marriage weekends and our local marriage enrichment workshops utilize PREP tools. Stanley defines commitment this way: "Commitment means saying 'no' to all the other choices."

Stanley concludes there will always be other choices. There may be times when we are even attracted to those other choices. But commitment means saying no to the other choices.

Interestingly, the popular idea of soul mates can contribute to our restlessness. If you really believe that a person is your soul mate and that there is no one else in the entire world with whom you can be truly happy, what happens when you meet someone you are attracted to, whether emotionally or romantically?

Suddenly, commitment may be called into question. "Maybe my partner really isn't my soul mate… Maybe I made a mistake... All we do is argue… I don't feel the romance anymore… Maybe I married the wrong person." So goes the rationalization. The popular belief in soul mates is a romantic notion, but it can also lead one to question one's choice, especially when there is a lot of disagreement and conflict in the marriage. If there is only one person in the entire universe who can truly fulfill me and make me happy, and I find myself unhappy, then maybe I'm not with the right person. And so the search goes on.

A healthier and more realistic view is that there are probably many people with whom we can be happy. One of the statements I always express to young couples to think about before marriage is, "My partner is the only person with whom I can have a happy marriage." Almost all couples agree with the statement. Really? Out of the six billion people on the planet, this is the only person with whom you can truly be happy? That's pretty unrealistic. There are probably many people with whom we can have a happy marriage.

Commitment is making a decision about one person and then saying no to all the other choices. Commitment is a conscious decision about one person knowing there are other choices in the world. Commitment should never be simply based on feelings. Feelings change from day-to-day and are unpredictable. Romance and feelings of love may come and go.

Most marriages typically go through seasons. Commitment endures winter and waits for spring. It should never be grounded on how I "feel" about someone on any given day. Commitment is a conscious decision and choice to care for and love your mate each and every day, in spite of how you may feel.

I encourage you to attend one of the marriage enrichment workshops offered here and make an investment in your marriage. Workshops on the five love languages and communication-conflict resolution are available, as is marriage counseling through our chaplains and the Fleet and Family Support Center. Contact the Chapel of Hope at 243-6773 for more information.

CFAY prepares with Typhoon Ready-Reliant Gale exercise

By Andre Colomas,
CFAY Training and Readiness

Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) completed the exercise Typhoon Ready-Reliant Gale 2010, a combined USFJ-CNFJ exercise designed to prepare naval installations throughout the Japan region for the upcoming annual typhoon season.

The exercise, which ran from April 19 to 23, flexed the ability of CFAY to interact with its 83 tenant commands in the implementation of typhoon conditions of readiness as a simulated storm impacted the installation.

Other participants in the exercise included Naval Air Facilities Atsugi and Misawa, Fleet Activities Sasebo and Okinawa and Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia.

Using various notification systems to include simple telephone calls, computer generated desktop announcements, text announcement postings on channel 15 and the CFAY official Web site, www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka and verbal announcements using the base's public address system "Giant Voice," the CFAY Emergency Operations Center and the CFAY Public Affairs Office warned ship and shore base personnel and their family members of an approaching storm. This provided all activities with an opportunity to review their internal typhoon readiness procedures and exercise the steps necessary to keep their facilities, personnel and families safe.

Every major CFAY organization was involved in the exercise. Fire and Security Department personnel teamed-up to respond to a simulated building collapse which allowed them to rehearse Incident Command Post and Entry Control Point procedures.

U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka staff took advantage of the exercise to conduct a mass casualty drill using personnel from the Transient Personnel Unit as actors while the Family Assistance Center was activated.

"Yokosuka is better prepared for this year's typhoon season for having conducted this exercise," said CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed. "Looking at how the weather has been acting up lately, it feels like we are already in typhoon season."

USNH Yokosuka Emergency Response Team (ERT) members place a cervical collar on a simulated patient to brace his neck after the ERT responded to a simulated building collapse as part of a mass casualty drill during the CFAY Typhoon Ready-Reliant Gale exercise. The exercise, which ran from April 19 to 23, flexed the ability of CFAY to interact with its 83 tenant commands in the implementation of typhoon conditions of readiness as a simulated storm impacted the installation.

Photo by Richard McManus

Kinnick School student selected as Regional Youth of the Year

By Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Recently, Nile C. Kinnick High School student Andrew Brenyo was selected as the Boys and Girls Club of America (BGCA) Regional Youth of the Year (YOY) and presented a plaque for his accomplishment during the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Month of the Military Child celebration.

"It is an honor to represent organizations that have done so much for me," said Brenyo. "The Boys and Girls Club of America and the Yokosuka Teen Center have provided me and many other youth with many great opportunities. It is also great to have a place to go to that feels like home. I know I am always welcome at the teen center. I always feel comfortable being there."

The YOY program aims to develop BGCA members who are well-groomed, speak clearly, and are knowledgeable spokespersons for their club and community.

According the BGCA Web site, since 1947, the YOY program, which is nationally sponsored by the Reader's Digest Foundation, has recognized outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and BGCA, academic excellence and personal challenges and obstacles they have overcome.

"Andrew, to me, is the definition of a perfect Youth of the Year candidate for several reasons," said CFAY Morale Welfare and Recreation Division Teen and Youth Program Coordinator Lee Leach. "He has proven to be a leader among his peers."

According to Leach, Brenyo has spent several hours providing service to the local community and has enriched the lives of those around him with his musical talent.

"My whole family likes to get involved in the community," said Brenyo. "So, I am following their example. I also like the idea that I can use my music to help various charities and to support a variety of diverse base events."

In addition to Brenyo and his family working together in the community, they work together at home as well.

"I have a special needs sister so it takes more work and patience," Brenyo said. "My family works as a team and I need to do my part to support them."

Andrew has been an active member of the CFAY Youth Club for several years, participating in a variety of programs and taking advantage of mentorship and opportunities provided to him through the club.

"One person who works in the Teen Center that I talk to a lot and get advice from is Mike Gordan, Brenyo said. "One of the people I work with musically is Paul Ergus. Paul helps me not only with music but with life in general."

According to the BGCA Web site, in addition to receiving an engraved plaque, each Regional Youth of the Year receives a $10,000 scholarship.

For more information about BGCA, visit their Web site www.bgca.org/.