



## NLSO Pacific earns Bar Association's highest military award

By Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

Naval Legal Service Office (NLSO) Pacific was presented with the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel (LAMP) Distinguished Service Award by Navy Judge Advocate General Vice Adm. Bruce MacDonald at a recent ceremony aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY).

"Everybody was very proud to have received this award and they earned it," said NLSO Pacific Commanding Officer Capt. Greg Belanger. "We've pushed them pretty hard over the past couple of years and we got some very good results."

NLSO Pacific, which is headquartered aboard CFAY and has offices in Yokosuka, Sasebo, Pearl Harbor and Guam, won the servicewide award for innovative and exceptional legal assistance programming which is responsive to an evolving legal environment.

"This was a full team effort. Without the participation of everyone, doing their job at a steady stream across every program in Navy Legal Services Office Pacific, at every office, this award would not have been possible," Belanger said.

Among the many successful programs operated by NLSO Pacific, a couple of standouts caught the attention of the LAMP committee and helped bring the award to the command.

They included the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, which teaches Sailors how to become self reliant when completing their taxes and the development of financial relief training program which

In addition to VITA and NLSO Pacific's innovative training program, NLSO Pacific is also unique in the fact that it provides legal services overseas to Sailors of the forward-deployed naval forces. Unlike many legal offices in the continental United States, oftentimes, they are the only legal resource available to Sailors and their families.

This has created a legal office that runs the breadth of legal practice to include criminal defense, domestic relations, immigration, finance and more, but remains true to the human needs of the Sailors they serve.

"We relieve the Sailor of their individual issues and burdens and we put them into our 'rucksack' and carry on with it, so they can go on and perform their duties in the fleet," Belanger said.

And now, NLSO Pacific will bear the weight of more than just Sailors in the Far East, it must work to remain a leader in the military legal community.

"People will be looking to us and our programs to go to the next level with whatever services they're providing in other offices in every service," said Belanger.

Belanger is positive NLSO Pacific will continue to provide the exceptional service that has brought the Distinguished Service Award to Yokosuka.

"We have world class attorneys; they do wonderful things everyday for the Sailors in the fleet," Belanger said.



Navy Legal Service Office Pacific's Yokosuka office joins Navy Judge Advocate General Vice Adm. Bruce MacDonald and NLSO Pacific Commanding Officer Capt. Greg Belanger for a photo after being presented with the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel Distinguished Service Award. NLSO Pacific was selected for the servicewide award for their exceptional legal assistance programming which is responsive to an evolving legal environment.

Photo courtesy of NLSO Pacific

includes instruction on consumer law, credit, foreclosures and relief programs that has become a template for a worldwide Department of Defense pilot program.

## Spouses club contributes \$53,000 to local organizations

Story and photo by Ben Avey, CFAY Public Affairs

Staff members from Takusan Treasures and Second Hand Rose joined members of the Yokosuka Officers Spouses Club (YOSC) to present approximately \$53,000 in charitable donations to local organizations aboard Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) April 29.

Gathering at the home of Commander 7th Fleet Vice Adm. John M. Bird, YOSC board members, who operate the two shops, entertained representatives from 42 different organizations before presenting individual financial contributions to each.

YOSC Charity Allocation Committee Chairperson Mindy Flores said that in addition to presenting the organizations with financial contributions, the reception served as an opportunity to thank the organizations for the work they do.

"We are thankful for their services, because they are providing such meaningful services to our family members," said Flores. "We feel so privileged that we can give back to our community."

A variety of organizations on and off base benefited from the funding, including, Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS), Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Toys for Tots, Chapel of Hope, Kobo Cottage and many more. Organizations in need of help are encouraged to ask YOSC for support.

"We generate funds or volunteer services for any organizations that would like our assistance," said Flores.

The Education and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), which is a

collection of specialized service providers from the U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka who work with DoDDS students, was one of those organizations that requested assistance.

Medical Services Corps Lt. Peter Arroyo, who is a doctor of Occupational Therapy and works for EDIS, said their donation will enable them to build a climbing gym at

The Sullivans School treatment facility. The climbing gym will help students with developmental disabilities improve their gross motor, fine motor and cognitive skills. In addition, it gives students a great example of how a community can unite to help one another.

"The generosity and philanthropy of this group really makes you proud," said Arroyo. "The benefits that society receives from these groups are incalculable. It's not just dollars and cents, it's changes in the lives of children and community members that will last a lifetime."

The majority of the money YOSC contributes is raised from the proceeds of the two non-profit shops, Takusan Treasures and Second Hand Rose, which the YOSC board of directors oversees. Other YOSC events held throughout the year add to the charity coffers.

Both shops have a paid staff to ensure continuity in service and good business practices but rely heavily on volunteers in order to maximize charitable contributions.

Takusan Treasures is a boutique style shop located in Thew Gym which specializes in unique giftware from throughout the Far East. Second Hand Rose is located above the car rental office near the Autoport and is styled after an everyday American thrift store which offers a variety of items at affordable prices.



(Left) Yokosuka Officer Spouses Club (YOSC) member Elizabeth Goodwin presents a charitable contribution to Boy Scout Troop 33 Scout Master Kim McCann during a reception April 29. The Boy Scouts were one of 42 organizations that received approximately \$53,000 in charitable contributions from YOSC this year.