Former Japan PM helps foster friendship through basketball

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Members of the Yokosuka Seahawks basketball team squared off with the Kanagawa High School All Stars for a friendly game in the James D. Kelly Fleet Recreation Center gymnasium here Sept. 18.

Though the game was competitive, it was more about friendship than anything.

"I look forward to this game, [further blooming] the relationship between Japan and the United States and for many more years, flourish the alliance here in Japan," said Kanagawa Basketball Association President Katsumi Abe, in his remarks prior to the opening tip-off.

According to Japan Basketball Association President Tarō Asō, a similar event was held about four months ago, in Kawasaki, between all-star football players from Kanagawa high schools and local Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

"It was very exciting," said Asō, who also served as the 59th prime minister of Japan from 2008-2009. "After the match, I thought, if [holding this type of event] for American football, why not basketball?"

In addition to the basketball associations presidents, other high profile attendees included Yokosuka City Mayor Yuto Yoshida, Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. David Owen, and U.S. Embassy Japan Political Officer Andrew Ou.

"On behalf of the association, I would like to give sincere appreciation for your kind participation for this event," Asō continued, as he addressed the crowd attendees. "I thought these kinds of events, not just with basketball, but with many other sports, will help our mutual understanding between you… and the citizens of Yokosuka. I do hope this kind of event will be a first step to help harmonize the mutual understanding."

The game started out with intense, energetic play from both teams, and though the visiting team left all they had on the court, the Seahawks walked away with the victory, winning the game 81-78.

Yokosuka Seahawks Team Captain Shavar Reynolds attempts a shot, with Kanagawa High School All Stars defenders in his face, during a friendly basketball game held here in the James D. Kelly Fleet Recreation Center gymnasium Sept. 18.

However, the sprit of competition didn't end there. After the game, the teams headed to the Yokosuka base Bowling Center where the local team treated the visitors to some friendly bowling.

NEX looks for a few good men, women ahead of holiday rush

By Dan Bowen, CFAY Public Affairs

The Navy Exchange (NEX) here held a job fair Sept. 15 filling a variety of positions in time for their busiest time of year, the Thanksgiving through Christmas holiday season.

Primarily looking for front-line sales associates and stockers, the job fair enables job seekers the chance to apply, interview and be selected for a position in one fell swoop.

"We want to do a job fair, particularly for the holidays, where we can actually conduct the interviews and have the managers that are looking for folks do the interviews and make some selections that day," said NEX Japan District Operations Manager Rusti Rausch. "Most of our positions that we bring in during the holidays are entry level, but occasionally we'll have supervisory level positions when we're moving out of the permanent change of station season, when we have specialized positions that we need to fill."

According to Rausch, the NEX isn't necessarily seeking a particular skill set when hiring for many of their positions; they are looking for individuals who display a proper respect and appreciation of the NEX mission.

"We want to make sure that we hire the right person for the right job," said Rausch. "[Applicants] need to understand who we serve and what our mission is and that's to make sure that we provide the best shopping experience to our customers."

Vanessa Boateng-Mitchell, a military spouse, has been here in Yokosuka for 18 months attending school and thought that the fair was a good opportunity for her. "My son was hired here today by the Navy Exchange and he told me they had some jobs available, so I decided to come by."

Residents such as Boateng-Mitchell are often a great fit for the NEX as they know what they expect from employees when they shop at the store.

"You're a customer too. It matters to you if we have toothpaste on the shelf, it matters to you if we're able to resolve the problem that you bring to us," said Rausch. "And I tell you, we have top-notch customer service training that is really teaching our associates what it means to go that extra mile to ensure that we make that shopping experience memorable and pleasurable."

Individuals selected for positions with the NEX will be in good company. The NEX has 16,000 civilian associates worldwide who enjoy a challenging and rewarding work environment. Moreover, the NEX offers attractive benefits packages that include medical, dental and life insurance, retirement, a 401K plan, paid holidays, vacation, sick leave and more.

The Navy Exchange System, with headquarters in Virginia Beach, VA, is a $2 billion plus retail division of the U.S. Navy, operating more than 100 shopping complexes and 42 Navy Lodges around the world.

DoD kicks off annual Combined Federal Campaign fund drive

By Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service

Editor's note: The 2010 Combined Federal Campaign - Overseas (CFC-O) begins Oct. 4 and runs through Dec. 15. For more information about CFC-O, contact the Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka CFC-O Coordinator AW1 Trevor Godwin at 243-5770, your command unit coordinator or visit the website www.cfcoverseas.org.

The Defense Department's 2010 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) kicked off in Washington, D.C., Sept. 20, offering federal civilians and military members the opportunity to contribute to any of the more than 4,000 pre-screened charities.

Deputy Defense Secretary William J. Lynn III launched the annual CFC drive in the Pentagon Library Conference Center, addressing gathered representatives of more than 20 Defense Department services, components and agencies.

"Your leadership has helped this department exceed its contribution goals year after year," Lynn said. "I've returned today to ask all of you to do it again – not only to reach a new and higher target, but also to continue expanding the number of employees who choose to participate."

Lynn invoked President Barack Obama in noting that CFC charities feed families who have lost their homes, help wounded service members and their families, foster education and provide emergency supplies to disaster victims.

"Precisely because it may be harder to contribute this year, it is so vital that we continue to give. President Obama said that America's success depends on the ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart – and the Combined Federal Campaign enables us to do just that," Lynn said.

Army Brig. Gen. R. Mark Brown, a military representative to the National Capital Area CFC, also spoke as part of the kickoff event. He challenged Defense Department employees to treat CFC as "part of our mission."

"Your gifts will serve the needy, comfort the ill, search for cures, protect the environment and reach out to help in countless other ways," said Brown.

"Sometimes, our battlefield... is not the sands of Iraq or the mountains of Afghanistan. Sometimes, that battlefield is the unemployment line, the food line, and the rehab room," added Brown. "We cannot accept defeat in these causes any more than we can accept defeat on the battlefield when we are sent to fight."

The department's 2010 CFC campaign will continue through Dec. 15.

Since 1971, CFC has been the sole authorized workplace charitable campaign for the federal service. CFC administrators and volunteers reach potential donors through more than 200 local organizations, and givers may contribute via cash, check or payroll deduction. Pledge forms are available through local coordinators and online at regional CFC websites.

Charities wishing to participate in CFC must complete an annual application process. Organizations may apply to be listed as local, national or international charities depending on their area of service. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which oversees the program, maintains strict eligibility and public accountability criteria that all participating CFC charities must meet.

According to OPM figures, 2009 CFC pledges totaled nearly $282.6 million, a 2.7 percent increase during the previous year. The campaign has garnered more than $6 billion in charitable contributions since its inception in 1961.

Navy outlines 2010 CFC goals

By MC3 Shannon Burns, DMA Public Affairs

Senior Navy leadership outlined individual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) goals for Navy organizations across the fleet during a Sept. 23 ceremony at the Pentagon Center Courtyard in Arlington, Va.

Under Secretary of the Navy Robert Work described CFC donation goals to Navy leaders from 16 organizations, including Naval Information Operations Command, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center and United States Marine Corps Headquarters.

He presented representatives from each organization with a small board denoting Department of the Navy (DoN) CFC goals during the ceremony. Work also explained how funds raised through CFC have a nationwide impact.

"This is worth doing," said Work. "It impacts Sailors, Wounded Warriors and communities throughout the United States."

See ***CFC GOALS***, pg. 9