Fire Safety Poster Contest promotes awareness for children

Story and photo by Mark Elrod, CFAY Public Affairs

Commander U.S. Naval Forces Japan (CNFJ) Regional Fire Department held a ceremony to present awards to the winners of its annual Fire Safety Poster Contest at The Sullivans Elementary School on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Nov 19.

The contest, which has been held for more than 18 years, usually starts in September and culminates with an awards ceremony in October of each year. "Stay Fire-Smart. Don't get burned," was the theme for this year's contest.

"We presented it to the children and asked them to provide us with a good poster of what they wanted to identify as our theme for this year and that's what you see on the posters," said CNFJ Fire Prevention Chief George Salcedo.

The contest produced two gold and two silver medal winners along with many honorable mentions as well. The gold medal winners were Christopher Turk and Kayla McCallum. The silver medal winners were Christopher Gonzales and Sharene Vilacorta.

"It was so difficult to choose [the winners] because all the submissions were so good," said Salcedo. "We made the selections during the first week of October."

Even though the contest encourages the artistic side of children, the intent of the contest is to educate children about fire safety.

"The real purpose of the poster contest is to get all the children and families involved into creating their own ideas of what fire prevention is all about," said Salcedo. "The contest is really significant because it presents the children's' ideas of what they can do to enhance fire safety within their homes."

The children's poster entries focused on preventing fires and preventing burns by stressing the importance of "Stop, Drop and Roll," and staying away from stoves, matches and lighters.

(Left) CNFJ Fire Prevention Chief George Salcedo, Sparky the Fire Dog, CNFJ Deputy Fire Chief Bill Casey, CFAY Commanding Officer Capt. Daniel Weed, The Sullivans Elementary School Principal Willette Hornes-Barnes, CFAY Command Master Chief Gregory Vidaurri and CFAY McDonald's Assistant Manager Daisuke Hoshino, pose for a group photo with the CNFJ Fire Safety Poster Contest gold and silver award winners Sharene Vilacorta, Christopher Turk, Kayla McCallum and Christopher Gonzales during an awards ceremony at The Sullivans School Nov. 19.

CNFJ Regional Fire Department holds training throughout the year to emphasize fire safety awareness by performing fire inspections, fire drills and giving lectures to students.

"The real importance of fire prevention is to ensure that everyone remains safe, whether it's at home, at school or at play, and how to identify dangers and how to react if they are in a fire," Salcedo said.

Just like service members in the military prepare for emergency situations, families can also prepare for possible disasters.

"Practice your fire drills and your fire escape plans and know how to report a fire," said Salcedo.

The holiday season presents unique hazards that could pose a potential fire threat such as the combination of lights on Christmas trees that could dry out, presents wrapped in paper and kerosene heaters. Salcedo hopes that people will be aware of these potential dangers and take steps to avoid them during the holidays.

"Enjoy yourself during the holidays and during your time here at CFAY, just do it safely and prevent fires," he said.

Yokosuka MWR hosts annual Captain's Cup Turkey Trot 5K Run

Story and photo by Kazuyuki Takagi, CFAY Public Affairs

Nearly 200 base personnel and family members participated in the annual MWR Captain's Cup Turkey Trot 5K Run held on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Nov. 20.

"Every year we do a Turkey Trot 5K Run during the Thanksgiving season," said Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center (MWR) Fitness Director Brent Grubb. "This is an opportunity for people on base to come out and enjoy the weather, and try to win some prizes."

The runners were separated into groups of male and female, and then broken up into several age categories; 18 and under, 19 through 29, 30 through 39 and over 40. There was also a category for runners with strollers as well as an overall male and overall female category.

After the runners finished stretching, they stood by for the start of the race. Upon hearing the starting siren at 11:30 a.m., MWR Event Coordinator Thomas Frazer, who was dressed as a turkey, led the runners for the first 200 meters. Then all the participants continued running for five kilometers through Berkey Field, along the seaside area, and up the hill by the Navy Exchange before returning to the starting line.

Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist (SW/AW) Mike Raney of Navy Public Affairs Support Element, Japan, took first place when he crossed the finish line at 19 minutes, 7 seconds.

MCCS(SW/AW) Mike Raney, wearing number 425, sets his watch and joins the nearly 200 other CFAY base personnel and family members take off at the start of the MWR Captain's Cup Turkey Trot 5K Run held Nov. 20. Raney took first place with a finish time of 19 minutes, 7 seconds.

Raney has been running since he was in junior high school, back in the mid 1980s. "My fastest 5K time is just under 15 minutes. But that was in 1988 when I was in high school," Raney said. "Nowadays, if I can run it in under 17 minutes, I'm pretty happy. "I enjoy running. This is a nice community event, and its fun."

The top three winners of each category received a large, medium-size or small turkey as a prize. All the participants received a free T-shirt for their participation in the event.

Anyone who is interested in participating in any upcoming MWR sponsored events can visit the Web site www.cnic.navy.mil/yokosuka/mwr or their popular social network page Facebook for more information.

"We post the results from all of our events, and also post announcements about all our upcoming events on Facebook," Grubb said. "If you're on Facebook, just search for Navy fitness Yokosuka, and you can follow us on Facebook. We will also post pictures after each of the events."

For more information on MWR fitness events, contact MWR Fitness Director Brent Grubb at 241-3077.