

NSA Norfolk participates in Sewells Point Elementary School Career Day

By Katisha Draughn, Naval Support Activity Norfolk Public Affairs

“Ooohh, I know the answer! Please pick me! I know what I want to be when I get older!”

These were a few of the chants that Capt. Charles Melcher, Commanding Officer at Naval Support Activity Norfolk (NSA) heard as he interacted with students at Sewells Point Elementary School during their Career Day, April 15.

“I think it was important for me to come to the school because a lot of the students have parents in the military,” said Melcher.

At Sewells Point Elementary School, approximately 90 percent of the 660 students have a parent in the military. And many of these students have a parent that is currently deployed.

To celebrate Career Day, the school encouraged the students to wear a uniform/costume representing a career that they were interested in. Melcher began each session by guessing what career the students were role-playing. This ignited lots of laughter and chatter from the children who were dressed in various career professions such as Sailors, athletes, entertainers, models and medical experts.

Melcher also quizzed the students on their Navy knowledge by asking questions about the difference between a boat and a ship, what “USS” and “USNS” stands for before a ship name and the names of different ships. He discussed what he does as the Commanding Officer of NSA and emphasized the importance of doing well in school.

“Getting an education and doing well in school is very important and will take you very far in life,” he said.

Melcher also referenced some visual display boards which contained photos of ships, submarines and aircraft carriers, during his presentation. Master-At-Arms 1st Class Michael Curti also attended the Career Day with Melcher and talked to the students about what he does as a Navy law enforcement officer.

“I think it was important for us to show our support for the local schools and get out into the community to talk to the students about the Navy,” said Curti.

While Melcher and Curti interacted with the students, down the hall, Dr. Allison Foster, NSA School Liaison Officer, read the book, "The Kissing Hand," to the students. This is a story about a raccoon (Chester) who is afraid to go to school and seeks reassurance from his mother before he attends his very first day of school. Chester's mother gave him a kissing hand so he would always know she loved him very much.

"So many of the students at Sewells Point are military kids and have experienced multiple deployments and changes in their young lives," said Foster. "I wanted to teach them a way to stay connected no matter how far apart you and your family are."

As Foster read the book, she morphed into the characters and read through each page with much personality and enthusiasm.

"The classes were unbelievably attentive and wanted to be assured that the kiss really did run up Chester's arm and jump right into his heart," she said. "I hope the students went home and gave each of their parents a 'kissing hand.'"

In addition to Melcher and Foster, some other professions that were represented at the Career Day were a Navy Fire Inspector, Fleet and Family Support Center Transition Specialist, Director of Communications with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office and a Navy Meteorologist.

Melcher said he enjoyed the opportunity to interact with the students and inform them of the importance of receiving an education.

"My parents were educated and they insisted that I do the same," said Melcher. "Anything we can do to encourage kids to do well in school is definitely worth doing."