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The First Day of CFAY Schools

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CFAY Public Affairs/John Sullivan, MWR Yokosuka



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Boys/Girls Are Back to School: The First Day of School

Story by Garrett Nicholas Cole, CFAY Public Affairs

As the first day of school rang in at Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) base, over 2900 students were met with excitement and anticipation as they made their way to classrooms across four separate schools.

CFAY is the largest U.S. Naval installation in the western Pacific, with a dense population of over 26,000 service members, dependents, and civilians across 568 acres located 40 miles south of Tokyo at the entrance to Tokyo Bay. The first week of school for students, parents, and educators can feel like major undertaking to navigate while stationed overseas in such a densely populated area, especially when they are new and familiarizing themselves with not only the school but the local area.

CFAY schools are part of the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Pacific East District. The installation offers a high school, middle school, and two elementary schools each with their own unique challenges. Nile C. Kinnick High School and Yokosuka Middle School are made up of over 1300 students from Main Base Housing, Ikego Family Housing Area, and off base residences. The Sullivans School serves over 1200 pre-k through 5th grade students while Ikego Elementary serves an additional 400 elementary students.

Kinnick High School's principal, Kira Hurst, highlighted the unique challenges of their campus, which is spread across borrowed buildings on the base. "Challenges for the first day of school are getting all the kids to the right classes and making sure that everybody's out to help kids get where they need to go. Especially helping the new students because we're not a typical high school campus," she said.

Hurst also emphasized the school's long-standing

tradition, describing Kinnick as a "legacy school." She said, "At Kinnick, we have staff who have been here a long time, they're invested in their community." Hurst cited many of the staff who had a significant amount of time on staff at the high school.

"The week before school starts, teachers are informed of the expectations from headquarters, the district, and my expectations. There are layered levels of training and standards. We hit on this year's new programs and areas focus on," Hurst explained, a sentiment echoed by The Sullivans School principal, Dwayne Jefferson.

Jefferson also shared the enthusiasm felt by students at The Sullivans. "They really enjoyed the first day of school, they had a good time getting to know their teachers and their peers. You could see they feel safe, they feel valued, and they feel like they're going to have a great learning experience here throughout the year. I'm excited about the school year and the great things that are to come," he said.

Both schools hold traditions that align their students with the expectations and heritage of their institutions. Kinnick makes it a point to teach students the fight song and their alma mater, while Jefferson is looking forward to reintroducing families back into the school for events like family fun nights.

CFAY Chief Staff Officer, Cmdr. Lida Cooper, welcomed students at The Sullivans School and performed the time-honored tradition of ringing the first school bell to start the new school year. Capt. Les Sobol, Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, also stopped by Ikego Elementary to greet students and carry out the bell ringing at Ikego Elementary for the first time; an event that Ikego principal, Mary Fisk, hopes to continue in coming years.

Fisk shared her enthusiasm for their students and the adventure ahead of them, "I am so excited just to have

my Fireflies back in the building and just seeing their faces. I can't wait to watch them grow and learn this year. I know they are going to accomplish great things, just by looking at the academic program laid out for them along with their displayed social and emotional behaviors. They're sure to skyrocket from here, continually improving through the year."

During his opening remarks while welcoming back Ikego Elementary students, Sobol, shared his confidence in the students, staff, and community, "We have a group of professionals that really care about our children and their education, and that's so important. Our children

deserve the very best, and they have it here. I'm excited for what we're all going to learn, and I'm very grateful to be here to conduct the bell-ringing ceremony for the first time here in Ikego, but I assure you that it won't be the last. I think it's important to show our children just how much we care about their education."

With well-established programs, devoted staff, robust attendance, and an exciting year ahead, the schools at CFAY are off to a promising start, rooted in tradition, community, and a strong focus on education.

For more than 75 years, CFAY has provided, maintained, and operated base facilities and services in support of the U.S. 7th Fleet's forward deployed naval forces, tenant commands, and thousands of military and civilian personnel and their families.

Out and About



Navy Exchange Yokosuka, Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka and the base community welcomed Mamma's Pasta in the Main Street Food Court Wednesday, Aug. 23. The eatery offered samples to visitors as it joins Popeyes, Subway, Seattle's Best Coffee, Cinnabon and Panda Express in the base food court. (Photos by MC2 Conner Houghtaling, CFAY Public Affairs)

BREAKING THE
ICE
WITH THE CO
C-2 BUILDING AUGUST 31 12:30 PM

Coffee Time
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Do you have questions for the CFAY Security Officer?
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