



“Star Warriors” Become “Star Encouragers” to Children at Local Orphanage



CDR Jeff Zimmerman with a young child

In early April, the “Star Warriors” of VAQ-209 deployed on a military assignment but found time on a Saturday for another important mission that brought love and encouragement to a local orphanage in Kudamatsu, Japan. Sixty members of the Navy Reserve EA-6B Prowler squadron took advantage of MCCS’ Single Marine Program trip in hopes that they

could spend some quality time with the children and provide encouragement to them. In addition to lunch, the day’s activities included playing catch, jumping rope, blowing bubbles, and sharing chocolate bars with the children, who ranged in age from one to eight. However, the most popular event was serving as human jungle gyms to the energetic youngsters who crawled on and played with the Sailors throughout their visit. Clearly, human interaction was the primary order of the day.

“These kids thrive with some basic human touch and affection, and it made me extremely happy to be with them,” said LCDR Bret Shockney.

By day’s end, the “Star Warriors” realized that these types of events reward you tenfold compared to the effort you put in. “Young kids are the same everywhere – just great! Over the course of the day, they became more of an encouragement to us than we were to them,” said Chief Petty Officer Michael Farrell.

According to Farrell, “The children taught us that no matter how tough things might seem, there is always something to be happy and excited about.”

That fact was evident in the orphanage all day long. Bright smiles and laughs were the primary sights and sounds throughout the day. The children’s faces revealed nothing but joy and the spirit of determination. On that day, both Sailors and children became friends and learned that no matter how different languages or cultures may be, deep down we’re all the same. As the “Star Warriors” prepared to leave the orphanage, they were suddenly gripped with the reality that this might be the last time they actually see the children, and realized that it was a mission that would never be fully completed. AO2 Jackson Varner echoed their personal thoughts when she said, “We walked in as strangers, but are now walking out with a fresh perspective on life and a new set of friends.”

Navy Reservist a White House Fellow

LCDR Samrat S. Khichi, USN, is a member of the 2004-2005 Class of White House Fellows, one of our country’s most prestigious programs for leadership and public service. He is also a member of the Naval Reserve Association. LCDR Khichi is currently assigned to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the 2004-2005 Fellowship year. His selection as a White House Fellow speaks highly of his experience as a U.S. Navy Reservist where he serves as Lieutenant Commander, Office of Naval Intelligence in the U.S. Navy Reserve. Below is LCDR Khichi’s biography:



Samrat S. Khichi, 36, previously served as an Associate in the Mergers and Acquisitions practice group at the international law firm of McDermott Will & Emery. He specialized in uncontested and hostile domestic and cross-border acquisitions and business combinations. He also serves as a Lieutenant Commander, Office of Naval Intelligence in the U.S. Navy Reserve. Prior to McDermott, Khichi was an Associate in the Mergers and Acquisitions practice group at Shearman & Sterling. Khichi also served as

General Counsel for a software company that was a maker of privacy technology. Before practicing law, Khichi served as a Strategic Intelligence Group Supervisor at the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). In less than three years, he was named Deputy Director of HIDTA and was responsible for implementing several HIDTA initiatives including the Regional Intelligence Center. Prior to HIDTA, Khichi was an active duty U.S. Army officer assigned to 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery, where he served as Firing Battery Executive Officer, Company Fire Support Officer, and Battalion Adjutant. He was awarded the Army Achievement Medal (six oak leaf clusters), Army Commendation Medal, and Humanitarian Service Medal and was a Commandant’s List Graduate from U.S. Army Artillery School and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Airborne School. He volunteers for Scenarios USA, a nonprofit that gives voice to high school students through the medium of film and was mentor for high school students through the Student Sponsor Partnership. Khichi received a B.S. from Georgetown University, where he was a Distinguished Military Graduate, and a J.D., *cum laude*, Dean’s List, and *Order of the Coif* from Fordham University Law School.

This article was submitted for publication by Janet Slaughter Eissenstat, Director, President’s Commission on White House Fellowships. This program was created by former President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 to attract exceptional young professionals with demonstrated ability to serve for one year as paid assistants to senior White House staff and Cabinet members. In addition to their government service, the White House Fellows take part in a yearlong education program designed to broaden their knowledge of leadership, policy formulation, current affairs, and public service.