

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam Merging MWR



As NB Pearl Harbor and Hickam AFB, Hawaii, come together as Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) professionals from the Navy and Air Force are leading by example, working together to create a great support network of high quality MWR programs and facilities for service members and their families.

“For the most part the joint basing process has been pretty smooth for us,” says Frank Faria, JB9/MWR director, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. “For MWR or what we call JB9, we have been doing pretty well in being able to merge the two.”

“When it comes to joint basing from both the MWR and Air Force Services perspective, we’ve always done the same thing,” adds Tom Moriarty, Navy Region Hawaii MWR director. “We service the customer and we run the same types of programs, but just package them a little differently. From our standpoint it has

been pretty smooth because our processes, although different, strive for the same results in the end.”

Moriarty points out that although MWR staff members were a little apprehensive because of change, they have embraced the process and are moving forward.

“Eventually, Frank and I believe that we are going to be a single better entity than we were as individual entities, which is better for Air Force, Navy and all the other services that we are supporting here,” says Moriarty.

“Our vision is the same,” adds Faria, “and Tom and I have been working well together. We decided last year when we all got together as a joint base that it is important that we share the same vision and that we are committed to making it happen.”

JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam has come together under one vision, putting the service members and their families first above all else.

“We talk about it all the time – MWR is probably one of the more important benefits that the military gets,” says Moriarty. “And if we add in child care and youth services, we are here to support both the active duty and their families. If we are not there for them, then it makes it harder for them to be able to concentrate on the task at hand. So we think it is important that we provide a high-quality, top-notch program. I try to instill in our



PHOTOS BY JARED NAKAYAMA, ART DIRECTOR, FFR MARKETING

staff that we are a multi-million dollar organization providing a service that – when you look at the results of the surveys – is one of the keys to their retention. MWR is an important program, and our goal is to provide a world class organization with excellent customer service.”

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam has completed many MWR facility improvements in the areas of fitness, sports, recreation and libraries as well as child and youth.

On the Makalapa Compound itself, there have been some key renovations. In 2009, the Makalapa Fitness Center underwent an \$800,000 renovation project, doubling its size, and providing more space for cardio equipment from Life Fitness and Precor, new selectorized weight equipment from Life Fitness, large TVs with Cardio Theater, and an area for stretching and group exercise.

“People that were there before appreciate the expanded space, which allowed us to add a lot more equipment, especially the selectorized weights, because we don’t have personnel in there at all times,” says Moriarty. “All of the pieces in the selectorized circuit hit every major muscle group and we’ve got Life Fitness elliptical machines that are approved by the Navy for PRT use.”

He points out that people who work on the Makalapa compound “are really happy,” because they don’t have to fight traffic and find parking to go work out during the day.

Adjacent to the newly expanded Makalapa fitness center, Makalapa Field — a great picnic area that is popular with families — benefited from a beautification project. The family



friendly area has a cabana, a small softball field and will soon be getting two ADA playgrounds as part of Commander, Navy Installations Command’s (CNIC’s) initiative to provide more handicapped accessible playgrounds to Navy bases in need.

A \$20,000 renovation was also completed at the West Loch fitness center, including the addition of a variety of new cardio and selectorized pieces of equipment. “This facility is a significant distance from the main base but we have a small contingent of active duty who work there so it provides a place to stay fit in such a remote location,” Moriarty points out.

Additional fitness center space, including group exercise space, was created at another remote location using a fabric tension structure, at an approximate cost of \$115,000.

On the Pearl Harbor side, a new fitness center is in progress and should be open in FY2012. The \$24 million, MILCON-funded facility will include cardio and strength training areas, group exercise rooms and multipurpose volleyball and basketball rooms.

On the Hickam side, the fitness center is undergoing a \$7.2 million phase 1 renovation, which includes new locker rooms, showers, office space and racquetball courts. Plans are to reopen the facility in July.

“This will be a great facility when it opens,” says Moriarty. “We’ve been very lucky to get significant funding earmarked for these fitness projects. Lisa Sexauer and all of the folks at CNIC have been very good at fighting to get the money from OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] earmarked for these projects. We were lucky to get a MILCON-funded fitness center, so the more money that we can spend to improve our existing facilities, the better off we are going to be.”

Funding is also secured to install artificial turf at fields at both Pearl Harbor and at another facility at Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF).

At Pearl Harbor, new lights were installed at two ball fields (Ward and Millican Field), and a \$1.2 million refurbishment of a running track and football field at Hickam.



The new fields on both the Navy and Air Force side provide the ideal playing surfaces for a comprehensive, well rounded sports program that is active year-round.

“Team sports are well attended,” notes Faria. “We have them on both sides and have integrated our sports so that Air Force and Navy Sports are now one.”

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

With such an idyllic locale, the outdoor recreation program is active 365 days a year.

“We’ve got some unique stuff here that I haven’t seen at other places,” notes Moriarty. “We’ve got an outdoor recreation area filled with kayaks, surfboards and paddleboards. We have so many opportunities for snorkeling, hiking, camping and biking — so many outdoor activities available. It is important to be able to provide the specific equipment they need, and trips and instruction, and that is where we are focusing our program right now.”

“People love taking advantage of the great outdoors and come out in droves,” adds Faria. “Ships come and visit and we will take trailers of kayaks out. We just had the USS Abraham Lincoln here and we organized a lot of outdoor trips and activities for them while they were here, bringing the adventure to them. We also run a lot of instructional programs, like Learn to Surf and the newest thing now — paddle boarding — which we do a lot of classes for to get people out there and trying it.”

Over the past year new outdoor recreation equipment has been added in an effort to keep the program vibrant and strong.

“Similar to what is being done in fitness, the staff at CNIC has been fighting for more funding for outdoor recreation,” says Moriarty. “We have gotten grants for outdoor recreation, the liberty program, and Navy General Librarian Nellie Moffet has been outstanding at securing funds.”

“We were able to replenish a lot of the outdoor recreation equipment as a result of these grants from CNIC,” adds Faria. “We got kayaks, surfboards, paddleboards, for example, which the Air Force also benefited from.”

In addition, 10 new cottages were constructed down at PMRF, as well as a renovation of softball fields there as well.

Another significant project that has benefited outdoor recreation is the opening of the new Fleet Store in November, a project that included a new Information, Tickets and Tours (ITT) office and Outdoor Adventure Center (equipment rental store).

“The project was completed in conjunction with NEX,” notes Moriarty. “The Fleet Store is a great new NAF-constructed facility, and we offer any type of outdoor equipment rental item one would need — surfboards, camping, water sports — as well as travel tickets to all of the events and activities available here in Hawaii.”

“It is another great outdoor recreation outlet for us,” adds



Faria. “Hickam also renovated a building and turned it into an ITT and equipment rental place, so we have two fairly new facilities to help us meet the new demands of this joint base.”

Moriarty points out that a lot of the equipment offered “is essential because it is not the kind of stuff that service members are going to bring with them when they come here, meaning they are not going to buy this stuff, so they are looking to MWR to have the services available to rent it.”

For purchasing outdoor recreation equipment, the base typically works with GSA and AFNAFPO contractors, including Belson Outdoors, Gopher Sports, MMI, Jungle Jumps and Adventure Hardwire.

“It is easier when we deal with GSA or AFNAFPO,” says Moriarty. “We rotate our vendors to make it fair and equitable for all the vendors but there are some companies that are more well known in certain areas.”

Although the base does not have a paintball field, paintball trips to nearby facilities are planned regularly.

In addition to two beaches, the joint base has seven swimming pools, including a baby pool. Popular programs include flick and float, cardboard boat races and pumpkin plunge, to name a few. A spray park is located within a privatized housing area on base, providing a great place to take the young ones during the hot summer months.

Outdoor recreation also supports the Wounded Warrior programs, and provides some outdoor recreational activities for them, and coordinates programs with Tripler Medical

Center as well.

“We’ve gotten some additional funding from CNIC to buy specialized adaptive equipment, such as beach-accessible wheelchairs,” notes Moriarty. “We’ve also sent staff members from both sides to the mainland for Inclusive Recreation Training at Penn State University.”

FAMILY FOCUS

For military families who call the joint base home, there are a number of specific programs and facilities tailored to their needs.

“We have so many programs for family and youth,” says Moriarty. “For all of the holiday seasons and school breaks, we bring in Camp Adventure to run different camps. Our outdoor recreation folks are very good at partnering with our youth program, and we run youth sailing programs and swim lessons. We work with the home school families to help provide resources so families can provide physical education.”

The base also offers specialty camps throughout the summer, including sports camps in cheerleading, baseball and golf. Educational classes are also offered, such as Learn How to Bowl, which provides a free bowling ball for those who participate.

“April is the month of the military child and the whole month is just packed with activities that we have planned for families and youth,” says Moriarty.

In the area of new support facilities for families, the base broke ground on two new Child Development Centers (CDCs). At an approximate cost of \$20 million each, the CDCs will add a combined total of 608 new child care spaces.

“These will be great because it will eliminate quite a bit of the waiting list that we have,” Faria explains. “We have a

third CDC opening as well on base, which will expand child care spaces at that CDC by 72.”

Moriarty points out that Child and Youth Program Administrator Bobbie Asado “is awesome and works really hard to provide some great programs that focus on the kids.”

MWR also partners with the Fleet and Family Readiness Center and Warfighter and Family Services (WFS) to provide programs for families of those who are deployed, which is critically important.

“We work with them to help bring some services to families,” says Moriarty. “They work with the families to market this and we open the movie theater up and provide free movies and a hot dog, popcorn and a drink, for example. We also did a bowling night. We give them a great night of relaxation and fun.”

MWR also supports WFS Operation Hele-On, which lets children get an idea through a mock deployment what their parents do when they get deployed.

All of these great facilities and programs would not be what they are if not for the hard work and dedication of MWR staff members.

“We can build everything that we want to build but if we don’t have the friendly staff and inviting workers that people are excited to go work with then they won’t come,” notes Moriarty. “So we have been really working to improve our customer service and our look. We instituted a uniform policy for all the employees so customers know who our employees are and they all wear name tags now, and we are running everyone through Star Service customer service training and harping on the fact that we need to provide a high quality of customer service.”

—GRF