

Sailors rally to slow Lehua Avenue traffic

Story and photo by
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Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs Sailors assigned to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) participated in a sign-waving event along Lehua Avenue in Pearl City, Hawaii, on Aug. 24 to raise awareness about safe driving and the need to reduce speed in a school zone.

Lehua Avenue is a two-lane road that leads to the Pearl City Peninsula military housing. Along the avenue sits the Lehua Elementary School, and cutting through the middle of the avenue is the Pearl Harbor bike path.



Tina Quizon, a local resident and concerned citizen, was initially worried about speeding motorists in the area, and started to rally local residents with signs to raise awareness for drivers.

"There are bikers, families, sports, a lot of active baseball, basketball, tennis; football right now is very big, Quizon said. "It is a community rally. This is about the people keeping everybody safe whether you're a driver, pedestrian, biker, to bring the awareness that we all need to do better in our driving skills and our safety skill." Several Sailors, together with local residents, Honolulu police officers and some Lehua Elementary students, arrived in front of the school at 7 a.m. to hold "slow down" signs shown to passing motorists. Capt. Lawrence Scruggs, JBPHH chief of staff, also participated in the signwaving rally.

"We really do care about the kids and about the community," said Scruggs. "We want to do what's right as a military. We spend a lot of our lives sacrificing for the freedoms of America. This is an opportunity for us to come out here and do something that's immediate and that's good."

Fay Toyama, Lehua Elementary School principal, said she was very grateful for the show of support from the military.

"It has come out to be a much larger community effort, especially on the part of the military to make a difference, to make it safer for all children and all residents," said Toyama who also sees this as a learning opportunity for her students. "In Lehua, we are working on the "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." One of the habits is win-win. It starts off as something negative, and we turn it into a win-win situation where everyone can benefit from this. Another habit is to be proactive. Before an accident happens, we are taking steps so that the community will be safer," she explained.

JBPHH is currently working with the local community, Honolulu Police Department and Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pearl Harbor to look for permanent solutions, to include additional road signs and speed bumps along Lehua Avenue.

"A traffic engineering study is underway," said Scruggs. "Once the study is completed, then we can find out what the recommendations are and the execution plan."

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