

Single Marines and sailors get their fun fix

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Contributing Writer

It's easy for single Marines and sailors to fall into the trap of never leaving the barracks room and becoming "barrack rats." Many wonder how service members could live in Hawaii for free and never step outside the gates to see the beauty of the islands.

Fortunately, Karley Peterson, the Single Marine and Sailor Program coordinator, has made it her goal to introduce to the island unaccompanied service members of Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

"Basically we're an outlet for the single, E-5 and below to come and relax, as well as get away for a bit," Peterson said. "Without these recreational or volunteer events, I feel that they would be sitting in their rooms with nowhere to go. It provides a means to get off base and experience the island."

Providing entertainment and volunteer programs are the tip of the iceberg. The SMSP provides support to the base's mission by raising morale and welfare for Marines and sailors.



Lance Cpl. Jacob D. Barber | Hawaii Marine

Marines and sailors attend a free barbecue put together by the Single Marine and Sailor Program in the courtyard near Kahuna's Community Ballroom, Wednesday. A surplus of food was offered and many prizes were given out amongst those who attended.

"I feel like this is a way to raise spirits and keep people a little more sane in a sense," said Peterson. "We've been pretty successful so far. We have had a lot of participation and we're

getting rid of the programs that people aren't interested in."

Peterson added there's no shortage of events for sailors and Marines to take part in.

"We go to places like Podium Raceway, where we've taken 30 people quarterly, for free," Peterson said. "We do paintballing [and] surf lessons, which are a big thing."

Peterson said they also go on monthly hikes, fish and visit the Polynesian Cultural Center, just to name a few of the many activities the Marines and sailors are interested in.

For Peterson, the SMSP is a service that works hard to give back to those who fight and defend the nation.

"I love doing this," Peterson said. "I feel like it's an opportunity to give back to everyone that fights for us, fights for our country. It gives you a greater appreciation when someone comes up to you and shakes your hand and tells you that they appreciate all that you do for them. It's more gratifying than I've ever felt. I've done a lot of event coordinating and this is where I felt I most appreciated it. That's the coolest part of this job. I love meeting all of the different personalities and people, everyone has something to offer."

For more information call the JMSP at 254-7593 or visit <http://www.mccshawaii.com/sm&sp.shtml>.