



Some of the proud graduates with their volunteer teachers.

# WAM Ebeye training an all round success

Two new 23-foot outrigger canoes were built and three others rebuilt by a group of 25 young men who trained under master canoe builder Manto Samuel on Ebeye Island.

The group graduated earlier this month in a ceremony on Ebeye recognizing the Ebeye young men for their accomplishments — not only for learning to build canoes, but also for their improvements in English and math, as well as general life skills that the Waan Aelon in Majel (Canoes of the Marshall Islands) program emphasizes for all its trainees.

The group worked for six months and not a single one of the 25 trainees dropped out — an indication of the interest and enthusiasm the group had for the training program.

It was funded by the RMI National Training Council and the Single State Agency,

## Two new canoes, plus three rebuilt

which is part of the Ministry of Finance.

“This is the first time in a long while that canoes have been built by regular people on Ebeye,” said WAM Executive Director Alson Kelen in reference to canoes that have been built over the years by iroij on Ebeye. This point was remarked on by a number of speakers at the graduation ceremony held at Mon LaMike’s.

The Ebeye training — WAM’s first six-month training there — generated strong interest from USAKA workers, with six Americans volunteering their time to teach English, math and other academic skills to the young men — as well as practice role playing job interviews to prepare

them for job hunting after the graduation.

Kelen was delighted with the interest of the Americans who brought important skills to the training to improve the group’s academic skill levels. “A couple of the (Kwajalein-based) teachers offered to volunteer for the next two years,” said Kelen. “They are continuing to help and I’m very happy with this.”

WAM aims to launch a second six-month training program on Ebeye early in 2013 because of strong interest in the program, Kelen said.

Samuel, who ran the training for WAM, has been a lead trainer with WAM since 1994, said Kelen. “I first met him in Ujae in 1994,”

Kelen said. “He had already built 10 canoes.” He joined WAM shortly thereafter and trained to become a master builder and has led training programs for hundreds of young men and women in the Marshall Islands.

Kelen aid the just-completed Ebeye training was “a true community program for Kwajalein youth” that involved numerous volunteer partners in delivering the training — from traditional leaders and non-government groups to companies like MEC, KAJUR and Steve-dore.



Students from Marshall Islands High School Japanese Language Class, along with their instructor, Tsutomu Kawasaki, sang Christmas songs at the Embassy of Japan earlier this week. The class also participated in the annual Japanese speech contest earlier this year. Charge Fumi-yoshi Kashima spent some time conversing with the class in Japanese. Fumi-yoshi thanked Kawasaki and his Japanese Class for bringing the Christmas spirit to the Embassy.

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