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[News](#)
[Sports](#)
[Weekend](#)
[Community Ledger](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Education](#)
[Transitions](#)
[Health Beat](#)
[Sustainability](#)
[Across DOD](#)
[JBLM](#)

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Extravaganza targets bigger green picture

Marisa Petrich/Northwest Guardian

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It's tough to resist any type of extravaganza, but staying away from one that helps the planet should be practically impossible.

The recent Recycling Extravaganza Nov. 3 at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Lewis Main Exchange was all about teaching people new things while keeping the bigger picture in mind.

"This is kind of to showcase all the things you can recycle," JBLM Sustainability Outreach Coordinator Miriam Villacian said.

The annual event created a quick and easy way for people to come and recycle just about anything all in the same place. Booths were set up to accept all sorts of different items, including a trailer for still-usable things to be donated to charity.

In terms of your classic recyclables, there was little that could be recycled at the event, from paper to compact fluorescent lightbulbs (considered hazardous waste), that can't be recycled on base year-round — which shows quite an evolution.

"When we first started doing these recycling days, a lot of these things were not available here," JBLM Sustainability Advocate Lana Leidner said.

The event also gave visitors the chance to learn not just where they can recycle, but what they can recycle. Most electronic devices, for instance, can be more than just reused. The precious metals in them can be recycled just like anything else.

It was these opportunities to broaden people's recycling horizons that were so important at the Extravaganza, even if you think it's just not possible for one person to make a difference.

"There's only one planet and there's only so many resources on our planet," Leidner said.

"It matters what we all do (to protect it)," she said.

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Charissa Olson, center, sorts through children's books as Ashlynn, 23 months eyes the photographer, Nov. 3, 2011 during the Recycling Extravaganza held at the Exchange on JBLM. Jim Bryant/NW Guardian

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