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## Recycling warrior seldom rests from mission

By Jake Dorsey  
Northwest Guardian

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Shelia Martin is a fighter.

Each weekday she's at the Environmental Operations Branch of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, she's fighting to get people to recycle as much as they can.

She briefs civilian workers and service members about proper recycling, documents the effects of container misuse, and maps out just the right place to put new containers to maximize their use and increase waste diversion.

Martin, a 41-year-old mother of three, said most of the civilians and military members she talks to are well intentioned. They just need a nudge in the right direction.

"Most people want to do the right thing," she said in her cubicle, surrounded by recycling memos, bins and photos of her family, including her husband, an Army veteran. "You just have to provide them with the right tools."

Those others, however, toss the credit back at Martin.

"Ms. Martin was the catalyst to really change how we operate," said Sgt. Major Ronald Hussung at the Northwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility at JBLM. "We went from zero waste diversion to approximately 90 percent waste diversion from April to now."

Martin said she doesn't do anything special, but she does have two tools she relies on.

"I spend all my time working," she said. "I spend my days guilting people into (recycling)."

She admitted she hasn't taken a vacation day in more than a year, when JBLM signed the new waste contract with LeMay Inc.

All the time she puts into the job has paid off, said branch chief Kenneth Smith. He said he handles about a dozen Interactive Customer Evaluation comments about Martin each month, praising her convincing presentations and hard work to make recycling as easy as possible on base.

"It's the Shelia Factor," Smith said. "She's got that kind of personality that can work both sides of the street."

Martin has been with the EOB for about a decade, rising from working the front counter to become the recycling outreach coordinator. She also manages the more than 1,000 recycling containers on base, and works as a quasi-trash cop alongside illegal dumping investigator Greg Mason.

"If I ever lose her, I'd have to hire three people," said James Lee, manager of the Qualified Recycling Program at JBLM.

Paired with her focus on maximum waste diversion into recycling, into generating zero waste across the base, makes Martin very valuable.

Martin doesn't seem to think about that value much. As she shows photos of trash dumpsters on base overflowing with recyclable material, she just growls.

"We'll never get to Net Zero if people keep throwing everything away."



Jake Dorsey/Northwest Guardian  
Shelia Martin, left, speaks with David Radcliffe about JBLM recycling programs during the tree lighting event Dec. 2 at the Chapel Support Center at McChord Field.

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