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Students energized about conservation

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October was National Energy Awareness Month at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. To celebrate this year, the JBLM energy program focused on the future generations — the youth.

They held a poster competition for JBLM students from the first to fifth grades with the theme, “Save Energy and Protect our Environment.”

“Bringing energy use awareness to the children spreads to their families and then to their immediate communities,” said Sakhawat Amin, Directorate of Public Works Energy Program

outreach coordinator at JBLM.

Prizes up for grabs included Army and Air Force Exchange gift cards, Sustainable JBLM swag bags and free bowling from the JBLM Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

Several entries were received from various schools on base — the highest response was from Carter Lake Elementary on McChord Field. Cheryl Hendricks, a fourth-grade teacher at Carter Lake and science committee member for Clover Park School District, encouraged her science team to participate.

“(The contest) was a nice segue into the energy curriculum,” Hendricks said. “Fourth graders have a plethora of resources for energy (studies).”

Hendricks’ class used their science reading packets to get ideas, learn the vocabulary and make the schema connections.

“Energy was a great topic for our students,” Hendricks said. “We cover a unit of energy in our fourth-grade science curriculum. So, we just rearranged to cover it in coordination with this Energy Month poster contest.

“Having the poster activity really engaged students and got them to dig deeper in their understanding of what energy is, forms of energy, and spurred ideas for reusable energy. As they shared their posters, they used new vocabulary learned from instruction and their own research.”

The students did experiments in small groups with a battery and light bulbs. Working from the assumption that they all have energy, they made a circle to see if the battery held by one student will power the light bulb held by another student at the far end of the circle.

When it did not, they researched why it didn’t, and in doing so learned about closed and open circuits as well as the vocabulary that goes along with the subject of electricity.

Hendricks’ class searched the internet for sample energy posters and more discussion followed. They asked questions like, “What’s reusable energy?” and “Can we ever run out of geothermal energy?” which led to more independent research.

“Students were very interested in the topic of energy and expressed some concern as they learned about types of energy, consumption of energy, and what that means for them in the next 40 years,” Hendricks said, “(Studying energy) became personal for them and the poster contest was a way to express themselves.”

But it’s not just the children who can learn from this. JBLM’s annual energy bill is \$21 million annually.

More information
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“If we try to reduce unnecessary energy usage — turn the lights off at the end of the day and the thermostat down, that will save a lot of money, which could be used for the (military) mission,” Amin said.

JBLM’s energy program offers an energy conservation class which provides attendees with information on how to be more energy efficient and reduce energy waste.

The next class is scheduled for Tuesday from 10: 30 to 11:30 a.m. at Bldg. 1210 on Lewis Main. For registration, call 253-966-9011.

Earlier this month the JBLM energy program launched a new Energy Waste Hotline, 253-219-2394, which will provide an easy means for people to report day-burners (lights left on during daylight hours), incandescent bulbs, damaged fixtures, steam leaks, nonfunctional thermostats, etc.

This dedicated hotline will provide everyone that uses JBLM facilities with yearround access to improve the installation’s energy conservation program.

To see the posters and to find out how you can help JBLM conserve energy, visit [Facebook.com/SustainableJBLM](https://www.facebook.com/SustainableJBLM). All posters are posted on the JBLM Facebook page and are on display at the Lewis Main Exchange through Friday, and they will be on display at the McChord Field Exchange Monday through Nov. 11.

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