

America Recycles Day returns to NIEHS

By Mallikarjuna Metukuri

NIEHS celebrated its second annual [America Recycles Day \(ARD\)](http://americarecyclesday.org/)

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Nov. 14, collecting shoes, items for pets, eyeglasses, and cell phones donated by Institute employees.

The program at NIEHS is coordinated by Sustainability Analyst Trisha Castranio, Hazardous Waste Manager Paul Johnson, and Environmental Compliance Officer Bill Steinmetz, who are involved in the highly successful NIEHS [environmental stewardship program](#). ARD allows employees to extend to their personal lives the same environmentally responsible practices they perform at work.

"America Recycles Day is a great opportunity for employees to clean out their closets, drawers, and attics," said Castranio, "and to help the environment and reach out to people in need at the same time."

Sponsored by private and public entities and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ARD was established in 2009 by the national nonprofit Keep America Beautiful. ARD is the only nationally recognized event dedicated to encouraging Americans to recycle and to buy recycled products.

Highlighting the benefits of recycling and helping the economy

According to Castranio, ARD at NIEHS empowers employees to help reduce toxins going into the environment and extend the lives of products that could be reused by others. The event also raises awareness of the importance of working toward environmental sustainability at home, as well as at work.

This year, ARD collected and distributed blankets, towels, leashes, bowls, beds, and toys to animal rescue efforts, and used eyeglasses to [OneSight](http://www.lenscrafters.com/onesight).

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who distributes them to those in need. Cellphones were donated to [Cellphones for Soldiers](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/),

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new and lightly worn shoes to [Soles4Souls](http://soles4souls.org/),

(<http://soles4souls.org/>)

and old sneakers to the Converse [ReUSE A SHOE](http://play.converse.com/blog/2011/04/07/reuse-a-shoe/)

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program.

Linked Video

[Watch a video about the Souls4Souls shoe distribution program \(01:47\)](#)

ARD - one piece of a vigorous environmental stewardship initiative

Honored as a Green Champion in 2010 for its environmental stewardship, NIEHS oversees a comprehensive program as part of its Health and Safety Branch that recycles laboratory and office waste, construction demolition material, and cafeteria waste. Each year, the amount of material saved from the landfill continues to grow, with a 32 percent increase from 2011 to 2012 when NIEHS recycled an impressive 653 tons of paper, wood, plastics, glass, cooking oil, and electronics.

The Institute also supports an aggressive water and electricity conservation program, as well as an alternative transportation effort (see 2011 [Sustainability Report](#)).

(http://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/stewardship/2011_niehs_sustainability_report_508.pdf)

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From left, NIEHS environmental stewardship staff Johnson, Steinmetz, and Castranio, who leads the ARD initiative, showed off the results of their collection efforts. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

America Recycles Day highlights the benefits of recycling

According to organizers of the national ARD, recycling helps to conserve natural resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. EPA estimates that recycling one ton of aluminum cans saves the energy equivalent of 36 barrels of oil or 1,655 gallons of gasoline.

Recycling also reduces costs to businesses and creates jobs. The American recycling and reuse industry is a \$200 billion dollar enterprise that includes more than 50,000 recycling and reuse establishments, employs more than one million people, and generates an annual payroll of approximately \$37 billion.

In 2007, the amount of energy saved from recycling aluminum and steel cans, plastic PET and glass containers, newsprint, and corrugated packaging was equivalent to:

- The amount of electricity consumed by 17.8 million Americans in one year.
- 29 percent of nuclear electricity generation in the U.S. in one year.
- 7.9 percent of U.S. electricity generation from fossil fuels in one year.
- 11 percent of the energy produced by coal-fired power plants in the U.S.
- The energy supplied from 2.7 percent of imported barrels of crude oil into the U.S.
- The amount of gasoline used in almost 11 million passenger automobiles in one year.

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