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Township gives residents earth-friendly lightbulbs

Local volunteers and township officials banded together recently to shed a little light in Manalapan - one compact fluorescent light bulb at a time.

About 65 residents delivered 1,050 free CFL bulbs to township homes Oct. 25 during the Manalapan Bulb Blitz. Hosted by the township Environmental Commission, the giveaway touted the benefits of using CFL bulbs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions created by coal-generated electricity.

"If we all (switch to CFL technology), it saves energy and our planet and stuff, and that's something we can feel good about," said 10-year-old volunteer Kiana Stockwell, who helped deliver about 50 bulbs in her neighborhood. "It'll make a difference."

The local effort was part of the larger Project Porchlight, an international environmental campaign funded in New Jersey by the state Board of Public Utilities.

The MEC wanted to bring the program to Manalapan to continue to grow the effort and the benefits for the environment, said Jenine Tankoos, commission vice chairwoman.

"Manalapan Environmental Commission's motto is 'You make a difference'," said Tankoos, a former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency specialist. "If every house in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with a CFL bulb, it would be as if we took 800,000 cars off American roads."

The inaugural episode of MEC's "Green Matters in Manalapan," an environmental show hosted by Tankoos, also was shot during the Blitz. Tankoos said the show, which will air on local cable channel 77 by early 2010, will focus on the benefits of CFL bulbs.

Those benefits are plenty, according to Project Porchlight volunteer coordinator Vicky Allen. CFLs use about 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs, last up to 10 times longer and can help residents save \$30 or more in energy costs over the life of each bulb, Allen said. "Old-fashioned," incandescent bulbs waste 75 percent of the electricity they consume as heat, Allen said.

"We're just trying to get the word out that simple actions matter," Allen said. ""We're hoping people will say, 'Hey, that was really easy. What else can I do in my environment that will impact the world as a whole?'"
