

Brodeur creates buzz over bulbs

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By Eric Marin

On the ice, [Martin Brodeur](#) is known for making incredible saves. Thursday in Newark, he helped spread the word about an important cause: saving energy.

Brodeur was a guest speaker at Project Porchlight's "Salute to Success," which celebrated the program's distribution of more than one million compact fluorescent light bulbs to New Jersey residents. In two years, the program reached more than 300 communities in the Garden State, saving New Jersey residents an estimated \$78 million on their electricity bills.

The event featured live music, a raffle for a Devils jersey autographed by Brodeur, displays with energy-saving tips, and free giveaways of compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs. The program's slogan – "Simple actions matter" – makes perfect sense to Brodeur.

"Just one little thing can make a big difference in the environment and saving energy," Brodeur said. "And by the same token, it saves you a little bit of money, also."

Project Porchlight is an initiative of One Change, a not-for-profit organization that promotes "smart choices that protect the environment." What began five years ago as a grassroots movement handing out CFL bulbs in Ottawa quickly spread throughout Canada and eventually reached the United States. So far, New Jersey represents its biggest point of outreach in the U.S. Up next is California, where Project Porchlight hopes for similar success over the next three years.

"This is a celebration – a milestone. We've reached a million homes," said Stuart Hickox, President and Founder of One Change. "The campaign has started to wind down a little bit, so it's kind of like a, 'Hooray for us.' We've got a celebrity [in Brodeur] who's willing to lend his star power to the cause and generate a little extra buzz."

The genesis of One Change stemmed from one simple idea.

"If every household in America changed one light bulb – just one – from an old-fashioned incandescent to a compact fluorescent, it would be like taking 800,000 cars off the road in the reduction in pollution," Hickox explained. "So I said to my wife, 'How hard can it be to get people to do that, to change one light bulb?' That's the basis of all the work that we do. We're trying to mobilize community groups and organizations to be the carriers of that simple message.

"Every one of us has the power to make a simple change, and we've discovered that if you can get someone to do something as simple as changing a light bulb, they're much more likely to feel that they can do other stuff, the more complicated things."

Brodeur, the Devils' goaltender and the NHL's all-time wins leader doesn't just talk the talk when it comes to switching to CFL bulbs. It's a change he's started to make in his own home.

"Most of them are [CFLs] just because of this, but it's definitely a work in progress," Brodeur said. "It's new to everybody. I think it's about making the effort. Nobody is asking to change overnight. If you do make some small changes in your lifestyle, it'll make a difference."

A CFL bulb uses about 75 percent less energy than an incandescent bulb, according to the Project Porchlight web site. It also lasts up to 10 times longer and can save \$30 or more in energy costs over the life of the bulb.

"You just look at the money saved throughout this year, and the homes and the people that have been impacted by it – it's tremendous," Brodeur said. "A lot of it is volunteer work, people believing in the cause, and you have to give them a lot of credit."

The NHL's wins leader in 2009-10 with 45, Brodeur kidded about reducing energy consumption during Devils games: keeping pucks out of the net means less use of the goal light.

"Saving goes both ways," Brodeur said. "That's what I try to do – save as many pucks as I can. If I do that, then I'm saving energy. I put it out to the fans to try to do the same in their own lives."

His appearance was an important part of Thursday's festivities.

"I think it gives the project considerable legs, number one, and number two, it shows that all of us have to be concerned with saving energy," said Joseph Fiordaliso, Commissioner of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, a Project Porchlight partner. "With him demonstrating his support, he's saying to everyone, 'Hey guys, working together, we can make America energy self-sufficient.'"

The live music and a stand serving up free Italian ices lured a lunchtime crowd to Military Park, a Newark landmark originally laid out in 1667. New Jersey's largest city, Newark became the Devils' new home in 2007.

"Newark is the hub of New Jersey," Fiordaliso said. "It's a city that we see every day making tremendous strides. It demonstrates that all of us – urban and suburban – have to work together to reduce energy consumption."

Even with everything it's already accomplished, One Change isn't about to pull the plug on its energy initiatives. Plans are already in the works for campaigns promoting fuel efficiency and water conservation, both of which are expected to begin this year.

For more information, visit onechange.org.



Brodeur turns a crank to light a bulb at one of the event's energy displays. [VIEW GALLERY](#)