

## Light bulb campaign hopes to shine the light on energy savings

Sunday, July 19, 2009

Last updated: Sunday July 19, 2009, 5:27 PM

BY SHAWN BOBURG

NorthJersey.com  
STAFF WRITER

1 Comment   



MICHAEL KARAS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

[Buy this photo](#)

Teaneck resident James Hendricks looks at a light bulb given to him by (center) Sophia Moseley and (left) Vanessa Soto as part of Project Porchlight.

Volunteers carrying bright green bags filled with helix-shaped light bulbs fanned out across Teaneck on Sunday as part of a state-funded campaign to give away 1 million energy-efficient bulbs to New Jersey residents by the end of the year.

For most homeowners, Project Porchlight's door-to-door pitch was appealing: Take a free bulb. Replace a traditional bulb. Reduce your energy consumption. Help the environment. Save money.

"Absolutely, I'll start using them if they last five to seven years," Antonette Galluzzo said after answering her door to volunteer Grege Morris, who told her the compact fluorescent bulb would also reduce her energy bill by about \$30 over the bulb's life span.

### Project Porchlight

To volunteer or for more information, visit the group's [Web site](#) or call (973) 226-5020.

About 20 volunteers — recruited from schools, churches, and other community organizations — went through a brief training session Sunday morning before setting out on assigned routes. Each volunteer had 50 bulbs, one for each household on their route. If no one was home, volunteers left a box with a bulb hanging from the door handle.

The event was one of many Project Porchlight is planning in North Jersey in the coming months as it works toward its goal of giving away 1 million bulbs. The nonprofit, which relies on volunteers but gets funding from the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities and New Jersey's Clean Energy Program, has given out about 450,000 bulbs so far, said Communications Coordinator Charisse Tyus.

If every American household replaced one incandescent bulb with the more efficient compact fluorescent bulb, the reduction in pollution would be equivalent to taking 800,000 cars off the roads, according to the group. By the end of the year, Project Porchlight estimates it will have given away 3 million bulbs nationwide since 2005, one million of those in New Jersey.

Tyus said that the small segment of residents who refuse the free bulbs are usually concerned about their mercury content. But the group says the amount of mercury is very small — 4 milligrams, about 125 times less than old thermometers — and that it remains inside the bulb unless it breaks.

"We try to address any concerns and give them all the information available to us," Tyus said. "We have a long way to go to making people understand the value of switching to these bulbs, but when you engage people and talk to them, they start to listen."

Compact fluorescent bulbs are normally priced at between \$3 and \$7 per bulb, but state subsidies have pushed the cost to consumers as low as 99 cents, Tyus said. Only the bulbs with the Energy Star logo meet the federal government's efficiency guidelines, she said.

E-mail: [boburg@northjersey.com](mailto:boburg@northjersey.com)