

Volunteer Bergenfield tutor honored with award

Shirley McDougald, a volunteer tutor who teaches English as a Second Language in the [Bergenfield](#) Library program, has received a 2012 Volunteer of the Year Award from Project Literacy of [Bergen County](#) at its annual literacy awards ceremony.

Shirley McDougald, center, a volunteer at the Bergenfield Library, is honored as Volunteer of the Year at Project Literacy's 24th annual awards ceremony. With her, from left, are Jim Black, chairman, Bergen County Workforce Investment Board; Emmy Bledsoe, co-founder, Project Literacy; Jon Leibowitz, chairman, Federal Trade Commission; and Ben Focarino, vice president, Project Literacy.

McDougald, a [Bergenfield](#) resident, runs a popular weekly evening conversation and reading group, and also works one on one with an adult student.

She was recognized for her dedication and innovative approach to teaching English to adult, foreign-born residents.

McDougald devotes an average of almost 20 hours per month to that work.

A year and one-half ago, her work with one woman resulted in that student achieving an Excellent Progress in English award from the [Bergenfield](#) Literacy Volunteers program.

Among some of the "sparkplug," innovative activities for which McDougald was cited were:

- * Viewing and linking films about the triumphs of real people to discussions of the challenges they faced and to current events.
- * Reaching out to engage some student family members to assist with English, even to inclusion in some sessions.
- * Inspiring a training session that brought together the learners and tutors from the [Bergenfield](#) and [Englewood](#) libraries to hear a panel discussion about learning English as a Second Language.
- * Researching and recommending a set of multi-level English readers by contemporary Irish authors that have proved very popular with her class and others.

The award ceremony took place at the Hekemian Conference Center at [Hackensack](#) University Medical Center.

Of the many awards bestowed at that time, night, McDougald was one of only three individuals to receive a Volunteer of the Year honor.

McDougald has been a [Bergenfield](#) Literacy Volunteer for the past three and one-half years.

Prior to retirement, she was a core counselor, grief recovery specialist.

She now devotes a lot of her time to serving her church and adult students in the ESL program.

