

Wellness accented during Halloween fest

ALTHOUGH IT carried a Halloween theme, it also provided an opportunity for youngsters to have fun in a hospital setting.

Costumes, pumpkins, games, balloons, snacks, safety tips and free pictures with the Great Pumpkin underscored the first Botsford Hospital Halloween Party for preschoolers, elementary-age children and their parents Sunday afternoon.

"We'd been hearing how much of a need there was for community parties instead of trick-or-treating," said Sheila Stefes, Botsford's health promotion and development director. "We felt the hospital, in many ways, was a logical place for such a party."

Party workers stressed "staying healthy and practicing food nutrition in light of the rising expenses associated with health care," added Stefes, who coordinated the funfest with Botsford's Barb Zeiser, executive assistant to the president, and Peg Relgher, vice president for planning.

Because Botsford offers several wellness programs and services for the community, party-goers "were able to make an association with wellness and health and the hospital, which is increasingly becoming a place to learn about being healthy, not only a place to go when sick."

THE PARTY, held in Botsford's Administration and Education Center, was an unqualified success, organizers said.

More than 5,500 people — from a 1-month-old to grandparents, and from Wyandotte to Union Lake — turned out. Witches, goblins and ghosts were everywhere. At one point, the line stretched nearly to Grand River. Party workers included hospital employees, hospital volunteers and friends.

More than 40 local businesses and organizations pitched in by donating not only toys, decorations, gifts and cash, but also non-candy treats like school supplies, recipes for strawberry-yogurt popicles and crunchy granola bars, safety-oriented coloring books, potted plants, film and balloons. A mine passed out toothbrushes, a clown safety stickers.

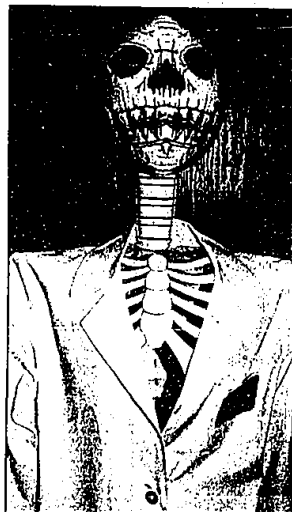
"It was a combined community effort to provide a safe alternative environment to Halloween night trick-or-treating," Stefes said.

Besides trick-or-treating, the fare included scary stories, a puppet show, a magic show and a witches walk.

The Farmington Hills Police Department and the Farmington Department of Public Safety staged stranger danger and holiday safety programs.

There also were party games, where every participant got a prize.

APPOINTMENTS ALSO were made for parents



This balloon man was dressed for the occasion during Sunday's fun fair.

wanting to rent infant or toddler car seats.

"The Oakland County Health Department just donated 500 more to us," Stefes said. "Call our Department of Health Promotion and Development at 471-8090 to make an appointment."

During the 30-minute car-seat orientation, "you'll learn about child restraint devices, the importance of car safety, installation of car seats, car seat safety and traveling tips," Stefes said.

The party wasn't just for the community. Two contests were geared only for Botsford employee families: pumpkin decorating and count the pumpkin seeds.



Livonia resident Joyce Cutsy — who, as a clown, helped entertain during the Halloween party — and her 5-year-old son Geoffrey show off their costumes.



Halloween party helpers included (from left) Mary Kors, line Smith of Clawson, Debbie Wozniak of Wixom and of Farmington Hills, Jean Blodgett of Farmington, Caro- Margo Gorchow of Troy.

Farmington Y hosting a Halloween Howl

The Farmington YMCA will host a Halloween Howl for children ages 5-10 5:30-8 p.m. today. The Y is at 28100 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills.

The fare will include trick-or-treating, a pumpkin carving contest, movies, a costume contest, a flashlight hunt and refreshments. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Other event coordinators are the Farmington Community Center, the Farmington Community Library and the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation.



AT RIGHT: Melissa Mayin, 4, of Farmington Hills enjoys the refreshments available under the tent outside Botsford Hospital's Administration & Education Center near the end of a three-hour Halloween party Sunday afternoon. Her mom, Kathy, coaxes Melissa to give a smile for the camera.

Staff photos
by
Bob Sklar

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