

Hospital uses Halloween to promote health

Botsford General Hospital is high on offering a healthful alternative to the traditional Halloween fare of door-to-door begging and sugar-coated treats.

Thousands of others apparently share that high. About 4,000 people — from toddlers to grandparents and from Westland to Royal Oak — attended

the Farmington Hills hospital's second annual Halloween party for preschoolers and elementary-age children Oct. 28.

The Halloween theme was everywhere. But the accent was on promoting health and providing a chance for youngsters to have fun in a hospital setting.

"We're here to promote the hospital as a place of wellness, not only as a place to go when you're sick," said Bev Weiss, Botsford's personnel operations manager and the Halloween party coordinator.

Party workers include hospital employees and volunteers as well as friends.

THE SPOTLIGHT was on clever costumes, free pictures with the Great Pumpkin, games with prizes for everyone and nutritious snacks. Witches, goblins and ghosts — and orange and black decorations — were everywhere. A mime roamed the halls to cheer frightened faces. A clown accentuated the wellness theme by passing out toothbrushes.

Special attractions included the Haunted Pass, the Punch and Judy Puppet Show and the Farmington Community Library-sponsored Scary Tales. Non-candy treats distributed along Trick or Treat Lane included rulers, pencils, erasers and combs.

The Farmington Hills Police Department and the Farmington Department of Public Safety staged Stranger Danger and holiday safety presentations featuring filmstrips, puppet shows and coloring books.

The Botsford Amateur Radio Club detailed the role of ham radio operators when disasters strike.

Amid the rush of party-goers, who started lining up 45 minutes before the doors to Botsford's Administration and Education Center swung open, Weiss expressed her elation.

"We're here to promote the hospital as a place of wellness, not only as a place to go when you're sick."

— Bev Weiss
party coordinator

"Everyone seems to be having a fabulous time. That's what counts," she said.

ABOUT 115 businesses, organizations and individuals contributed toys, gifts or cash. Little Caesar served up pizza for everyone. Domino's Pizza donated Witches Pizza prizes. K mart also donated prizes for games.

Even visitors from last year sent checks for this year's party. The excitement and appreciation that's involved is truly something to see," Weiss said.

Botsford took the occasion to spotlight several of its services, particularly its wellness pamphlets that deal with such topics as stress management, diabetes, heart care, baby-sitting, childbirth and car seat rentals.

Parents seemed as delighted with the party as their children.

"I just thought it was nice not to have to go door to door yet be able to enjoy the spirit of Halloween," said Deborah Chambers of Farmington Hills, with Bryan, 3, and Lori, 7 months, at her side.

"Giving ribbons to so many of the kids in costume was an especially good idea," added Ruth Czok of Redford Township, with Christopher, 10, and Rachel, 8, in tow.



photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Margaret Bylica of Southfield feeds her daughter, Leslie, 3, pizza from Little Caesar's.



Lorraine Decker (right) of Sterling Heights takes a photo of her grandson, Bryan, 17 months. Trying to provoke a smile from Bryan is his 11-year-old sister, Rejeanna Decker of Troy.

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