



Happy Halloween! County Nonprofits Give Away Costumes

By Debbie Pheiffer Trunnell, Staff Writer
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Parents spooked by the economic downturn are being given a helping hand this Halloween.

Organizations ranging from the Boys & Girls Club of Redlands to thrift and costume stores in the San Bernardino area have all stepped in to offer discounts on costumes, or in some cases give them away for free.

"It's a financial burden for parents to go out and purchase a costume when they are worried about putting food on the table or working two jobs," said Mark Davis, director of program services for the Boys & Girls Club of Redlands. "We recognize that and we want to help."

U.S. toymaker, JAKKS Pacific Inc., donated 100,000 costumes from the company's Disguise division to boys & girls clubs throughout Southern California, including the club in Redlands.

Davis said they have given out about 450 costumes so far to the youngsters ages 6 to 12 who come to the facility.

Today the club will donate the remaining 100 costumes to children in area communities.

To get the outfits, that range from princess to pirate and Power Ranger looks, people can call the club at (909) 798-4599, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Claudia Beltran, a 10-year-old recipient of a pirate costume, said she can now celebrate Halloween.

"If I had not got a costume here, I might not have had one this year, because mom and dad are trying to save money," she said. "I really like it and it means I can go trick or treating now."

It's not only Southern California parents who are watching what they spend.

According to a Halloween survey completed by the National Retail Federation, the same amount of people plan to celebrate Halloween, but this time around they are looking for good deals or just buying accessories instead of a full costume.

People seeking deals in San Bernardino will find them at Eco Thrift on E Street, which has affordable costumes for everyone from infants to adults.

It is also giving out candy on Friday and Saturday and will reduce prices even more by the end of the week.

The Fun Corner, a long-existing costume store on Base Line Street in San Bernardino, is inviting people to download a 15 percent off coupon for any Halloween costume at Funcorner.com.

"We are all in the same boat in this economic downturn, so we all need to help each other," said Linda Sutherland, the owner of the store.

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