

October 7, 2024  
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For Immediate Release

### It's Halloween Costume Making Time!

Fall is a beautiful time of year. The leaves are turning, the weather is cooling down and Halloween is coming. When I think of October, I immediately start thinking of Halloween costumes. I think about dressing up as a child, helping my kids with costumes and handing out candy and seeing all the kids. I loved dressing up as a kid. Who am I kidding, I still like dressing up. It's just fun to put on some fun outfit and bring smiles to the trick or treaters that come to my house.

When I was a child, my sister and I would just throw a costume together. We didn't go out and buy costumes, we just used what we had at home. This was always a lot of fun. As a mother, I encouraged my kids to use their imaginations when it came to their Halloween costumes. They would come up with a costume idea and then we would go through the house to see what we could put together. I'll admit my ability to sew came in pretty handy. Over the years, our costume tote would grow and grow. We had capes, wings, headbands with ears and many other costume necessities. Our daughter was inventive and tried new things each year, but our son rotated through the same three costumes over and over. He started as a cowboy (imagine that) and then was a rodeo clown. To change that up a bit, he added a mustache and went as a "scary" cowboy. Huge apology to my mustached husband but it's not my fault that the "bad" cowboy always had a mustache in the old westerns. I really do miss those years but with a new grandchild this year, I see costumes on the horizon once again.

As someone that grew up in the country, we never had trick or treaters come to our house. When you live in town though, you must be ready for little goblins and ghosts. That means loading up on candy or other little trinkets. I really need to share that one year I decided to hand out toothbrushes. My own children and husband were outraged. They gave me a hard time for weeks leading up to the big

night. They were sure the kids would egg our house. I'll tell you though, when that first trick or treater excitedly asked if he got to pick his own color and then ran across my yard yelling, "they have toothbrushes and you get to pick your own color", I was so happy I stuck to my guns.

As a parent, you want to make sure that your kids say Thank You to those neighbors for helping to make trick or treating fun. When our kids were very young, I read an article about a mom that had her kids hand out little thank you notes to the homes they trick or treated. I thought it was a great way to combine gratitude and crafting. I implemented that new tradition in our family that year. It was just a small way to say thanks to our neighbors for staying up and handing out candy.

When you live in a small town, the amount of candy gathered can be excessive. As a way of trying to lessen the amount of candy my kids received, I tried to limit the kids to only going to the number of houses they made thank you notes for. That backfired quickly due to having very generous neighbors. One year our son made only seven thank you notes, seven. After visiting only seven houses, his Halloween pail was full. Our little notes were unconventional, but it was fun to see them making them and handing them out. Year after year, I would hear a neighbor say, "I can remove your note from last year and put this one up now." I loved that they kept them from year to year. Such a simple little craft really did leave an impact.

Although Halloween is a one night only event, the lasting memories of childhood Halloweens will still be there. If you struggle with what to do with those costumes once Halloween is over, your County Fair may actually have classes for some of these items. Send your 4-H'er with a camera to document their fun night. 4-H members can submit photos of themselves or their friends in their costumes in Photography classes. They can also submit information on their costume under Theatre Arts classes. Reach out to your local Extension Office to see what your County Fair has for classes that line up with your Halloween costumes. You might be surprised to find another place to showcase their work. For now, enjoy those trips around the neighborhood reminding them to look both ways and to say "Thank

You” at every house. Thanks to all those handing out candy and helping make it a fun night for the trick or treaters in your neighborhood. Maybe give toothbrushes a try! Happy Halloween!

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