



## Action kit for teachers

Halloween is a holiday overflowing with unhealthy traditions that can impact the lives of young people – in the short and long terms, not to mention our planet. But the holiday is also overflowing with opportunities for healthy, eco-fabulous fun. It just takes a little creativity and some thinking “outside the conventional candy box.”

If your school is planning a Halloween or harvest celebration, giving it a healthy twist is easy. And we’re here to help. This toolkit contains some “spooktacular” ideas that are simple, affordable, educational and enjoyable for all.

Topics included in the toolkit:

- Tips & tricks for your school’s event
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### Tips & tricks for your school’s event:

#### FOOD

- Whenever possible, choose real, whole & organic foods.
- Feature foods that come (naturally) in orange, black and, of course, green. Olive spiders anyone?
- Make ‘jack-o-lantern’ oranges or ‘goblin’ sweet potatoes using toothpicks and raisins, cranberries, pepper strips or other items for the faces.
- Make pizzas, shish-ka-bobs and salads from Halloween colored foods.
- Make pumpkin smoothies, pumpkin seed cookies and other pumpkin-based foods.

## GOODIES

- Give one treat at each station (i.e. one instead of handfuls).
- Look at Green Halloween's list of treats and treasures and choose what will work for your event: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=treats>
- Plan ahead. If you order on line, you may save money and be able to find healthy and eco-wise choices, but be sure to allow enough time for shipping.
- Ask for free product donations. Contact companies with healthy treats and green treasures to see if they will donate product or supply them to you at cost.

## ACTIVITIES

- Get moving
  - Have a costume obstacle course – each student has to put on one piece of a costume at each station.
  - Bring out the “Adam’s Family” music and have a “witches limbo” contest.
  - Make Halloween-themed carnival cut-outs where the kids stick their heads through (and you can take a picture) or toss bean bags – made out of recycled materials such as boxes and saved for next year.
  - Have a Halloween hula-hoop contest.
- Get creative
  - Students can learn to make wallets, belts, picture frames, bracelets and purses from candy wrappers (search the internet for “candy wrapper purse” for ideas).
  - Make Halloween art/ décor only from recycled goods or things found in nature. Have a contest if you like.
  - Create a homemade face paint station. (For instructions see [www.GreenHalloween.org](http://www.GreenHalloween.org))
  - Make “treat & treasure” bags from recycled goods (clothes, napkins, sheets) or old pillow cases.
  - Have an eco-themed costume contest.
  - Make a haunted house from reclaimed or pre-owned materials.
  - Write songs, poems, a rap, etc. about being healthy and green on Halloween.
- Get giving
  - Make some Halloween décor or gift items for people at a retirement community or for a local farmer.
  - Check out UNICEF so your kids can collect pennies for children around the world.

**POST-HALLOWEEN HEALTHY HINT:** After Halloween, host a candy swap. Invite each student to trade in at least 2 pounds of loot for a bag of healthy and healthier goodies. When the swap is done, weigh the candy. (Compost it if possible.) See if you can collect more the next year, or compete with other area schools.

## Think GREEN!

Being healthy is great for kids *and* for the planet but there are many other ways to ensure that your celebration is sustainable. Whether with food, décor or activities, going green will save money, time and resources while modeling for kids how to make conservation fun.

- Feature locally grown foods (you'll likely be able to have some donated if you just ask).

- Reuse décor every year.
- Avoid disposables (cups, plates, etc.) – try to find reusables, or ask children to bring their own place settings.
- Do not offer bottled water. Provide filtered tap water instead.
- Make sure that all drink containers are recycled.
- Plan for only the amount of food/drink as you need.
- Consider using mostly décor from nature – pumpkins, gourds, apples, hay, etc. or make Halloween themed banners and other décor items from recycled, reused or repurposed materials that can be used for many years.
- Plan a “zero-waste” event by ensuring that everything included can be: consumed, recycled, reused or composted. Learning opportunity: calculate how much waste was saved from a landfill and what impact continuing to do so would make over time.
- Compost all food scraps and natural décor items. Even candy (unwrapped) can be composted or put in the yard waste bin. Check to see if pizza boxes and other food contaminated paper/cardboard items can be composted/ included in yard waste containers in your area.
- Recycle anything that can be: aluminum cans, water bottles, cups, food containers, etc. (Have recycle and compost bins clearly marked! Another opportunity for kids’ participation. Divide into groups and have them decorate the bins.)

#### More information

- Host a Green Halloween party: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=host>
- Money saving ideas: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=savegreen>
- Information for kids: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=kids>
- Companies who *may* be able to provide you with free or low-priced goodies (tell them you are hosting a Green Halloween community event: LARABAR, ClifBar, or some of the organic candy companies listed on our site: <http://greenhalloween.org/content.php?page=treats#candy>.)

#### Opportunities for learning

At every turn, Green Halloween provides opportunities for learning. How do refined sugars affect the body? How much exercise would it take to burn off the average ten pound bag of Halloween candy? How and why do healthy trends get started? Why is organic candy a healthier and greener option? What is lead, how does it affect the body and what does it have to do with costumes?

Areas of learning include:

- Math
- Social studies
- Biology
- Ecology
- Art
- And more!

## Green Halloween FAQs

**What is Green Halloween?** Green Halloween is a not-for-profit, grassroots, community initiative to create healthier and more Earth-friendly holidays, starting with Halloween.

**What is your definition of “green”?** Healthy kids cannot be raised on an unhealthy planet. What we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves (and vice versa). When making choices for your event’s food, activities, prizes, etc. going green means considering:

1. Healthy people – Including the people who make, grow or sell the products we consume or use. Also healthy for us and our families. Healthy treats and treasures fall under this category.
2. Healthy planet – Includes making choices that have the least impact on the Earth during the lifespan (beginning to end) of that choice or product.
3. Healthy community – Including making choices and supporting businesses whose business practices and products support the well being of communities such as via Fair Trade practices.

**Hint:** You don’t have to check all three areas off your to-do list – choosing one is a great place to start. However, often times, a single choice will hit more than one aspect. Organic foods, for example, are better for the farmers who grow them and the people who eat them as well as for the planet because with this type of farming, soil and groundwater are protected.

### **Why go green at all?**

- This generation of kids has a life expectancy that is shorter than ours.
- One in three children born today will develop diabetes.
- One-third of America’s children are overweight; 17% are considered obese.
- The EPA considers that 60% of all herbicides, 90% of all fungicides and 30% of all insecticides found in non-organically grown foods are carcinogenic.
- Over 6,000 synthetic chemicals are used in the processed-food industry.
- A 2004 study found that children’s behavior measurably improved after a one week diet without preservatives and artificial colors and dramatically worsened on the weeks they were given preservatives and artificial colors.
- Coco beans used for chocolate that are grown in full sun (as opposed to shade) are susceptible to disease and therefore require heavy doses of toxic pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.
- Store-bought costumes, makeup and accessories may contain phthalates, lead and other toxins.

**Won’t going green cost more?** No. In many cases, the cost is equivalent. Sometimes thinking green will even save money.

**Won’t the students be upset?** We’ve asked thousands of kids – from toddlers to teens- what they would think if someone gave them one of the alternative goodies we suggest instead of regular candy. After seeing the alternatives, *not one single child of any age* said they would prefer conventional candy. Not one. Keep kids feeling good about being healthy by modeling a positive attitude and giving them unique options. *If you’re excited about it – they will be too.*

***Is there a happy medium?*** Sure! Going healthy and green can happen in leaps and bounds or in baby steps. Either way, when changes are made for the better, they always count. It doesn't have to be all or nothing.

### **Like what you see? Feel inspired?**

We can't wait to see what you come up with! Let us know if you plan on taking healthy & green steps this year during your Halloween event and we can post your event on our calendar. Also, be sure to take videos and photos and send us your stories, we'd love to feature you and your students on our website.

### **Have more questions?**

Contact:

Corey Colwell-Lipson

Green Halloween Director and co-author of the book, *Celebrate Green! Creating Eco-Savvy Holidays, Celebrations and Traditions for the Whole Family*

[Corey@CelebrateGreen.net](mailto:Corey@CelebrateGreen.net)

**Hundreds of additional ideas can be found at: [www.GreenHalloween.org](http://www.GreenHalloween.org) and [www.CelebrateGreen.net](http://www.CelebrateGreen.net)**

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