

## Green Halloween®

### Tips for your community center event

Does your community center celebrate Halloween? If so, we can help to give your party a healthy, green twist while keeping all of the F-U-N.

**What is Green Halloween?** Green Halloween is a non-profit, grassroots community initiative to create healthier and more Earth-friendly holidays, starting with Halloween. Green Halloween began in 2007 in the Seattle area and in 2008 went nation-wide.

**What is your definition of “green”?** When making choices for your community center for food, activities, prizes, etc. going green means considering:

“Is the choice...”

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

You don’t have to check them all off your list – choosing just one is a great start.

**Won’t it cost more?** No. In many cases, the cost is equivalent or less than what you’ve paid for candy, décor and other items for this event in year’s past.

**Won’t the kids be upset?** Green Halloween participated in numerous Halloween events last year and came face to face with thousands of children. We asked them what they would think if someone gave them one of the alternative goodies we had on our display instead of regular candy. After seeing the alternatives, *not one single child of any age* said they would rather have candy. Not one. Keep kids feeling good about being healthy by modeling a positive attitude. 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. One idea is to hand out 50% candy and 50% something else. Or just give away less than you did last year. You may have lots of other ideas as well.

## **Some ideas for your community center's event include:**

### **FOOD**

- Choose healthy or healthy-er options when available
- Look for local foods (like apples and pumpkins) – some of which may be donated
- If possible, consider products that contain organically grown ingredients
- Think whole & colorful. What can you serve that is made from orange, black and green foods?
- If your site permits, toss ALL food scraps and leftovers in the yard waste/compost bin instead of in the trash.
- Don't use disposables (cups, plates, etc.) – try to find something reusable, or ask people to bring their own place setting. Make teams and see who can bring more (they get a prize).
- Do not offer bottled water. Have a filter there instead.
- Make sure that all drink containers are recycled.
- Plan for only enough food/drink as you need.

### **ACTIVITIES**

- Teens and 'tweens can learn to make wallets, purses and bracelets 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.
- Have a homemade face paint station.
- Make leaf rubbing art
- Make “treat & treasure” bags from recycled goods or old pillow cases.
- Make some Halloween décor or gift items for people at a retirement community or for a local farmer.
- Make a bean-bag toss game out of recycled boxes.
- Have a Halloween-themed obstacle course – the person has to put on one piece of a costume at each station.
- For little ones – have a pumpkin pass game, or do “witches limbo.”
- Have an eco-themes costume contest.
- Make a haunted house or one of those carnival cut-outs where the kids stick their heads through (and you can take a picture) - out of only recycled materials.

### **GOODIES**

- Give less than you gave last year (i.e. one instead of handfuls)
- Look at Green Halloween's list of treats and treasures and choose what will work for you: <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.

## DÉCOR

- Reuse décor from last year.
- Commit not to buying anything new.
- Consider using mostly décor from nature – pumpkins, gourds, apples, hay, etc.
- Hit up a thrift store and see what you can find there.
- Make Halloween themed banners and other décor items from recycled, reused or repurposed materials.
- Reuse everything you've used this year, next year.

## WASTE & CLEANING

- Compost all food scraps and natural décor items. Even candy (unwrapped) can be composted or put in the yard waste bin. Pizza boxes and other food contaminated paper/ cardboard items may also be composted/ included in yard waste.
- Recycle anything that can be: aluminum cans, water bottles, cups, food containers, etc.
- Use healthier cleaning supplies – vinegar and water works wonders!

## 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>).

## 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 photos and send us your stories, we'd love to feature you and your kids on our website.

## Have more questions?

Contact Corey Colwell-Lipson  
Green Halloween's founder & Director  
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Hundreds of additional ideas can be found at: [www.GreenHalloween.org](http://www.GreenHalloween.org)