



HOME FOR CHILDREN

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Halloween Candy Exchange Program Promotes Health and Charity

Rhinebeck, NY – The Great Halloween Candy Exchange Program, now in its second year, is co-sponsored by the American Wellness Care, Astor Early Childhood Programs, Children's Medical Group, Dutchess County Department of Health, Dutchess County YMCA, Literacy Connections of Dutchess County, and Telefax, Inc. These partners are working together to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity, to help children develop a love for reading, and to engender acts of altruism by encouraging children to donate their Halloween candy.

On November 1, 2007, children donated 3,303 pounds of their Halloween candy to benefit U.S. troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan – almost tripling the amount collected last year. In return, for every one pound of candy donated at one of the designated drop-off sites, they received a free, age appropriate new book or family fun pass to the Dutchess County YMCA.

"We are so pleased to have participated in this effort that both profiles support for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the need for spending time reading with our children," says Joseph F. Heavey, FACHE, Chief Executive Officer, The Children's Medical Group.

And, Margaret Pfaff, Executive Director, Literacy Connections, said, "We are heartened by the response from the community to this project, both in terms of generosity and healthy choices. There is nothing better to us than to see books being valued more than candy!"

"As a county we see this project as helping to raise awareness of the childhood obesity issue and ways in which people can make healthier substitutions for candy indulgences. This was truly a collaborative effort. The co-sponsors all pulled together to donate books, YMCA passes, publicity, and shipping of the candy, says Lenore Strocchia-Rivera, Ph. D., Clinical Director, Astor Early Childhood Programs.

With the commitment of the co-sponsors to increase awareness of these key issues, the The Great Halloween Candy Exchange Program will continue to thrive to impact many lives in the community and overseas. Letters received from the troops expressing their "thanks" is indicative of this.

The response this year to this program has been overwhelming. If you have friends and family members serving in Iraq or Afghanistan, and would like them included in their mailing of boxes filled with sweets and support, please send their names and addresses to Telefax, 1075 Route 82, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533. Any monetary donations would also be appreciated to help with the shipping costs.