

Eco-Tip for October 28, 2018

Two Tips for Halloween: Reused costumes and recycling pumpkins

By David Goldstein, Ventura County Public Works Agency, IWMD

Because Halloween falls on Wednesday this week, many Halloween parties took place yesterday, the Saturday night before Halloween. If you bought a costume for that event, but you do not plan to store it for future years or wear it on Wednesday, get it to a thrift store today. Three days is just enough time for thrift stores to process donations and put them on racks for last minute shoppers on Wednesday.

Whether you want to donate a costume or pick one up for Wednesday, check out the costume exchange at the Camarillo Family YMCA (3111 Village at the Park Drive, Camarillo). As a fund raiser, Camarillo YMCA staff host a successful Halloween costume exchange in their large lobby all this month, charging just \$10 per costume and \$1 for accessories such as masks, hats, and magic wands. They have costumes and accessories for all ages, and anyone donating a costume receives a \$10 voucher valid for YMCA programs such as sports, swimming lessons, or even membership, according to Elizabeth Alvarez, Member Engagement Specialist. They are open today until 5 PM, and weekdays until 9 PM.

Of course, homemade costumes are another last-minute solution, and you can reuse items you already own. The Good Housekeeping website recently featured a collection of images showing several ideas for these types of costumes on their web site, mostly relying on clever word play.

If you have a graduation gown, tape on pictures of cookies, and you are a “smart cookie.” A Hawaiian shirt, plus a lei, plus boxing gloves? Hawaiian punch. If you wear medals and carry bread, you are a “bread winner.”

With just a little waste and a small expenditure, a similar option is to transform a discarded shirt into a costume with just a few words. Iron-on letters are available at stores such as Michael’s Crafts (with stores in Ventura, Camarillo and Moorpark) for just \$10. One clever woman ironed “Go ceiling” and “Ceilings are #1” on her shirt. What was she? A ceiling fan.

Another classic last-minute, low waste costume can be made from a collection of “Hello my name is” tags. Fill them all out with different names, stick them all over yourself. Wear a mask. You are an identity thief.

One more waste tip for Halloween: Pumpkins, including seeds, can be recycled in your curbside yard waste cart. This is the single yearly exception to the general rule against food in yard waste carts. However, put pumpkins in your garbage cart if you have attached self-adhesive plastic rhinestones, glue-gunned beads, studs, rivets or other unnatural decorations. No one wants Halloween pumpkin bling contaminating the compost of their spring flower beds.