HALLOWEEN PARTY TO BE THROWN FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Party allows special needs students to have Halloween fun in a safe place

PATERSON – Children’s safety is always a concern on Halloween, and it is an even greater concern for children who have special needs. That is why parents of special needs children have, for the first time, joined together to throw a party for Paterson Public Schools’ students who have special needs on Thursday, October 31, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

“The whole point of special education is to enable students to participate in opportunities as fully as possible. That includes the opportunity to participate in Halloween fun,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer. “This party is just one example of how parents can help their children. We intend to keep everyone’s spirits high on Halloween.”

The party is being thrown by Strength 2 Stand Up, a Paterson advocacy group of parents of special needs children founded by Raquel Soto.

“A lot of special needs children cannot go out and Trick or Treat on Halloween,” said Soto, who has two special needs children, one who attends Paterson Public Schools. “My vision was to have a safe place where special needs children could go with their parents to celebrate Halloween.”

Soto said that admission to the party will be free to children with special needs and their parents. She expressed her gratitude to Superintendent Shafer and Chief Special Education Officer Cheryl D. Coy for their help in making the party possible. Soto also expressed her gratitude to the parents and local businesses who donated food, decorations and other items for the party.

All of the decorations were provided by Soto and three other parents: Hannah Tennin, Martha Asencios and Andrea Camilo. The food was donated by Checkers and the parents.

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