

Don't be surprised if 4,000 goblins show up for Halloween in the Village

By KC Cowan
The Southwest Portland Post

If you have an aversion to ghosts, goblins and the occasional Pokémon critter, you might want to avoid Multnomah Village on Oct. 31. If, however, you love to see youngsters dressed up as their favorite "alter-ego," by all means come on down and join the fun.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Halloween in the Village, a merchant-sponsored event that brings thousands of kids and families to "trick-or-treat" in the local businesses.

Jason Lensch, co-owner of Switch Shoes and president of the Multnomah Village Business Association, is chair of the event. The annual candy-grab was begun by his wife, Jen Robinson, and Luke Huffstutter, owner of Anastasia Salon. It's grown every year.

"It started the first year about 500," said Lensch. "And each year it's grown a couple hundred or more. Last

year, it was the wettest day of the year, and we still had 3,500 kids show up."

Families need to check in at Starbucks Coffee (34th and Capitol Highway) to get a map of who is participating, but they won't find many stores that aren't getting into the Halloween spirit.

"This year, all the businesses that have retail store fronts along Capitol Hwy. are taking part," Lensch explained. "About 120 in all, from the west end of the village where the bridge starts, all the way up to Canby Street on the other end of the village."

"Riversgate Church at the far east end of the village has an indoor play area set up with activities. Last year they did cotton candy."

And the last stop is, fittingly, at the dentist's office. Dr. Lisa Jensen and her team at Multnomah Village Dental Care (7717 SW 34th Ave) have a special treat for everyone—toothbrushes, perhaps?

Halloween in the Village is popular with families of young children, because the Southwest community can be a challenging place for trick-or-treaters.

"The area is not well lit, and there are not a lot of sidewalks, and it's hilly," Lensch said. "So it really makes it easier for parents to bring their children down to the village."

The event also takes place during daylight hours from 3:30–5:30 p.m. And volunteers help make sure the village streets are safe for youngsters.

Lensch arranged for volunteer Portland Police Cadets to divert traffic



(Photo by anjanette via Flickr creative commons)

through the village so everyone can walk without danger. So, all in all, it's great for families. They can satisfy their children's desire for Halloween candy in a couple of hours, then go home to have dinner.

There are other fun events, too. You can have your photo taken at Neighborhood House. The \$5 fee is a fundraiser for the program. They're also holding a food drive, so parents are encouraged to bring a can of food to help their neighbors.

With 4,000 children expected to flow in and out of businesses, merchants need to stock up with a lot of goodies. It's not inexpensive, but Lensch said

everyone is happy to do it.

"It's part of the responsibility of being a small-business owner, to be in connection with the community. They're the ones who shop local and support you, so it's a small fee to show our appreciation."

Lensch said business owners talk about the event for weeks afterwards. "It's such a cool atmosphere with the kids, to have so many in costume in one concentrated area. It's a fun time."

For more information on Halloween in the Village, visit www.MultnomahVillage.org, or the business association's Facebook page.

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