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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Putnam County Agencies offer Halloween Safety Tips

October 16, 2013—Costumes, candy and dunking for apples...it's Halloween time again, and a good time to review some safety rules. The Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County, along with the County Executive's Office and the Health Department, offer advice on precautions for trick-or-treating.

"If you have young children below the age of 12, accompanying them is vital to their safety," explains Marla Behler, Program Coordinator for the CAC, "and with younger children, under 5 years, parents should pay particular attention to remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys."

"All trick-or-treaters should bring the candy home for closer inspection," advises County Executive MaryEllen Odell, a mother herself. "Avoid entering strangers' houses, no matter how friendly they may seem. We live in a safe county, but it never hurts to be cautious."

Older children may want to go with groups of friends, but setting ground rules is important. These can include: what time to be home, bringing candy home and avoiding homemade treats, and staying in a group. Providing kids with a full meal before trick-or-treating helps keep them from snacking on candy before returning home. Carefully inspect all candy for unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes or tears in wrappers and discard anything that looks suspicious.

Here are some additional trick-or-treat safety tips for kids:

- Check labels on costumes and buy only flame retardant or flame resistant costumes.

- Swords, knives, and similar costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible.
- Pre-test makeup according to label directions.
- Wear makeup and hats rather than masks that can obscure vision.
- Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags increase visibility to drivers and carry a flashlight.
- Use established crosswalks and sidewalks wherever possible. Walk on the far edge of the road facing traffic if necessary.

Home safety tips for adults:

- Consider using a flashlight or glow stick instead of a candle to light your pumpkin. If you do use a candle, a votive candle is safest.
- Candlelit pumpkins should be placed on a sturdy table, away from curtains and other flammable objects, and should never be left unattended.
- Clear front entrance ways and remove anything a child could trip over (garden hoses, toys, bikes and lawn decorations, etc.).
- Check outdoor lights and replace burned out bulbs.
- Wet leaves should be swept from sidewalks and steps.
- Restrain pets so they do not inadvertently jump on or bite a trick-or-treater.

With a few safety precautions, everyone can have fun and enjoy Halloween!

Sources:

www.cdc.gov (Center for Disease Control); www.aap.org (American Academy of Pediatrics); www.fda.gov; www.safekids.org

Visit our Putnam County website at <http://www.putnamcountyny.com> and under “Departments” select Child Advocacy Center. Or visit our social media site on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/putnamcac>

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