

# COMMUNITY

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## Saline dentist, patients raise research funds

By Art Aisner  
Special Writer

Dozens of Saline-area children gave up parts, and in some cases all, of their Halloween candy this year so that kids with diabetes may enjoy Halloween for years to come.

After a monthlong collection, staff at the Woodland Family Dentistry, located at 510 N. Ann Arbor St., said they accumulated roughly 100 pounds worth of cavity-creating sweets during the fourth annual Halloween Candy Buy-Back Fundraiser.

The collection began Nov. 1, and brought in a steady stream of participants.

For the third straight year, they collected nearly 100 pounds of wrapped candy, said office manager Debby Schneider.

Dr. Jennifer McFinton pledged to donate \$10 per pound of candy brought into the office to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund.

That translates to \$1,000 toward research that could one day identify the cause of juvenile diabetes and how to possibly cure it, she said.

"Saline is really sweet!" said McFinton, who started the program three years ago as a way to honor children who can't have the typical Halloween experience, as far as candy is concerned, because of health conditions.

It's a situation she knows first-hand since her daughter, Lucy, 7, has Type 1 juvenile diabetes. The autoimmune disease impacts roughly one out of every 400 to 600 children nationwide, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Millions of children like Lucy require constant blood-sugar monitoring, strict dietary rules, and treatments that include regular shots and medications.

Since regular exercise and physical fitness is a major component of managing diabetes, McFinton said that she also believes the program teaches youngsters the value of making healthy choices. Not only when it comes to food, but how dental hygiene can impact overall health.

To help spread the message, organizers decided that every child under the age of 18 who



brought in their Halloween haul during the month received day passes to either the Saline Family Recreation Center or the Jungle Java location in Ann Arbor.

That made it an easier decision for Cheryl Brill's children, Conrad, 11, and Aidan, 8, to separate with their Halloween candy.

"I believe that we need to become more conscience of healthy choices and this program is an excellent way for children to balance food treats, like candy, with fun treats, like a trip to the Saline Rec Center," Brill said.

"Although not diabetic, my children are at risk for a hospital trip after eating Halloween candy because both have a life-threatening allergy to peanuts and tree nuts."

For more information about the program, visit the Woodland Family Dentistry on-line at [www.woodlandfamilydentistry.com](http://www.woodlandfamilydentistry.com). For more information about juvenile diabetes, visit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International at [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org).

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Photos courtesy of Woodland Family Dentistry

**Austin & Allison Gilghrist delivered a box of candy for the annual buy-back program.**



Conrad (left) and Aidan Brill, ages 11 and 8, donated some of their Halloween candy in return for Rec. Center passes.



7-year-old Lucy McFinton, who has Type I Diabetes, received a Webkinz and Jungle Java pass.