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## [www.operationcashforcandy.com](http://www.operationcashforcandy.com)

## Headline: Local Businesses and Health Professionals are Taking Halloween Candy Away from Kids - and Giving it to our Troops!

The Sixth annual "Operation Cash for Candy" is underway! An expanding group of area health professionals along with Numerica Credit Union have joined together again to take candy away from children this Halloween! It sounds harsh but it's for a great cause - sending a message of health and saying thank you to military troops who keep our world safe.

It may be odd to see local health professionals buying leftover candy for $1.00 a pound, but "it's for a noble cause" says event organizer Dr. Lee Ostler, a Richland dentist. "It's important to send the right messages and have fun doing it," notes Ostler. "Plus it gives us another way to say thank you to our soldiers. And the kids actually have a blast doing this. When they come in and weigh their candy, they pocket the money and write a thank you note or draw a picture to send to the troops," says Ostler.

As to how the event came to the Mid-Columbia, Dr. Ostler, who is the past-president of the American Academy for Oral Systemic Health says that a fellow board member started this in his Mid-west hometown and its now been adapted for our area. Most importantly, he believes it gives health professionals and parents an opportunity to talk about health and the dangers of candy and poor nutrition.

Mindi Irvine, a physical therapist at Oasis Physical Therapy says that "too much sugar in the diet can lead to a long list of health problems, including being overweight, inactivity, diabetes and a host of problems as they grow into adults."

Dr. James Collette of Dentistry for Kids in Kennewick states that with sugar consumption rising each year we need to help our children understand the dangers of too much and too frequent candy eating. "We used to see apples and oranges in Trick-or-Treat bags, but due to safety reasons, not so much anymore. Somehow we need to get out a healthier message".

With Benton and Franklin counties being home to some of the highest tooth decay rates in the state, Dr. Brent Gill with Columbia Basin Pediatric Dentistry says that "it's important for people to understand that sugar is the fuel that feeds bacteria which makes acids which cause tooth decay."

Dr. Michel Breier, a Richland dentist believes that Operation Cash for Candy will get some extra candy off the streets and help send a message that moderation and good oral hygiene are important for oral health."

Columbia Basin Oral Surgeons Tyson Teeples and Ryan Toponce note that excess candy and bad eating habits have negative health consequences for the mouth and the body. "Candy and poor nutrition show up as obesity, crooked teeth and mal-aligned jaw bones", notes Dr. Toponce. Dr. Teeples adds that "this project sends an important message to parents and children that too much candy isn't healthy".

Dr. Steve Hanson, a Kennewick endodontist believes that Halloween "provides a unique opportunity to understand the real health effects of candy and poor brushing, and to emphasize why good oral hygiene is so important."

Dr. Loren Anderson, a Kennewick dentist points out that parents can use this project to help children learn the importance of controlled access to cavity-causing candy. He also says that "paying a buck per pound should take some of the sting out of taking the candy away from the kids".

Many local health professionals have served in the military and are thrilled to be part of a project that says thank you to the troops and at the same time does something positive for kid's health.

"Operation Cash for Candy" has teamed up with Tri-City based "Operation Thank You", sponsored by a local veterans group who works to build patriotism and support the military. "Operation Thank You" accepts donated supplies and sends care packages to soldiers. The Cash-for-Candy idea is a big hit with local veterans who appreciate what it's like to receive care packages and thank-you notes. Plus they point out that donated candy is used in intelligence operations to build relationships with "locals" to get information about enemy operations in dangerous areas.

Drop off locations and more information about "Operation Cash for Candy" and its participants is available at: www.OperationCashForCandy.com.