



HALLOWEEN SAFETY

By Master Eric Alders

Every year children look forward to Halloween as it's one of the most exciting holiday's of the year. Even as a parent now with twin girls I get excited by Halloween. I think it helps bring our youth out and especially when you have children it allows you to relive the excitement through them.

We get to dress up, go to Halloween parties, events, some of us get to dress up at school or work and everyone gets to be a little extra silly and enjoy some candy. Think about it, what other day of the year can you walk up to a complete stranger's house, ring their doorbell, get a warm and pleasant greeting and get some free candy? Although, not the healthiest of holidays it has become engrained in our culture and is here to stay.

There are several issues of safety that come into consideration during this Halloween Season. One

factor is the infamous "Mischief Night" and the other of course is the actual day that we go out to Trick and Treat.

For Mischief night, make sure that you keep your home well lit and just be on extra guard in your neighborhood. If you are going to be away ask a neighbor that you trust to keep an eye on your home for you. If there is a group of "troublemakers" outside of your home, don't go out of your way to confront them just because they may be younger and smaller than you. Always leave this to the professionals and that's the Police Department. Children and teens of all sizes can be very dangerous, especially when surrounded by their peers as they feel the pressure to bring as much mischief as possible. They can be carrying weapons and/or can use their numbers to attack and bring down someone much larger and stronger than them. Remember, use common sense, maintain your alertness level, keep your property well lit and report any unwanted behavior to the police department.

For "Trick or Treating" a lot of children are taught to watch as they cross the street, not to enter a stranger's house and not to eat any candy until Mom and Dad can sort through for their safety. However there are some points that we must also take into consideration.

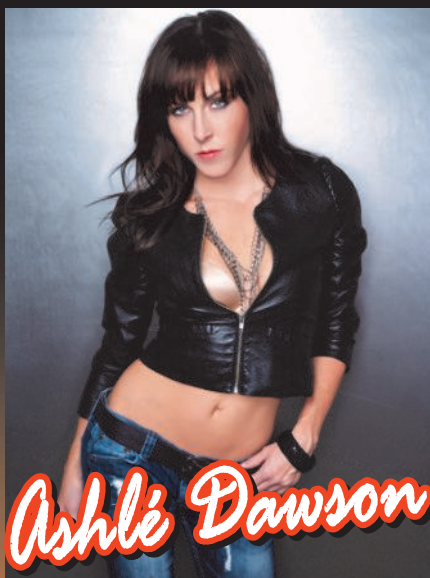
Make sure that if you have younger children that you travel with them. Not only can you enjoy watching your children enjoy the holiday but you can also educate them while you're walking around to the hidden dangers that they may not be aware of.

If you have a teen that is going out with a group of friends, make sure you have an exact route that

they will be traveling and whom they will be traveling with. This will allow for a quick search if you need to find them and you may also be able to reach out to other parents of teens in the group.

A big point a lot of parents miss is to talk about bullies during Halloween. Remember there will be a mix of children, teens and adults walking around some without supervision. It is important that your child understands to keep away from older groups of children, to travel in groups (never separate) and to have a plan in advance to respond to such a situation. For example, you can role play with them a "Bully Situation" and ask them to respond by pulling out their cell phone and calling 911, or going to a house to ask a nearby adult for assistance and if possible to reflect upon their martial arts training for more guidance. If they are not already enrolled getting your child, teen or yourself in a martial arts program that offers a mix of multiple martial arts (Stand up, takedowns and Grappling) will be an extra feeling of safety that they can handle themselves on their own more than the average person.

The key for any situation is to make sure that you sit down with your children and explain to them the possible dangers that trick or treating brings. Make sure you set an exact time for them to return to home and/or check in with you. Even though you think that they understand you, always ask them to repeat your instructions and rules back to you. A lot can be lost in translation and when they are forced to repeat it back to you then you are assured that they understand you completely. In general, make sure to review attached Top Ten Safety Tips for Halloween on page 17 and have an open and honest dialog with your loved ones so that they are prepared to be safe and have fun this Halloween season.



Ashlé Dawson

11 years ago, Ashlé Dawson, already an established performer started a dancing job at Great Adventure in the Fright Fest stage production Dead Man's Party. Today, not only is Ashlé the choreographer of the show, but she's come a long way since the early days at Six Flags and enjoys a career that takes her around the world, sharing her love of dance and music with others. Her most notable performance came when she was in the final four in Season 1 of the FOX television show "So You Think You Can Dance".

In September, Dawson wrapped up filming in John Leguizamo's new movie, "Fugly" in which she worked as a choreographer assistant and will be featured in an upcoming episode of MTV's "Made". She also performed in American Idol Gives Back, America's Got Talent, Lifetime's Salsa in the City and the Latin Grammy Awards. Her dancing has also led her to performances in music videos by Beanie Man, Don Omar and Prince Royce's cover of "Stand by Me" and Mansour.

Ashlé's list of live performance credits includes being the Dance Captain for Alice Cooper's Brutal Planet, Cirque Du Soliel "Mosaic", Mickey Rooney's Christmas and as a Dance Assistant for Andre 3000 for Cartoon Network among a very long list of featured accomplishments.

After spending the past 5 years living in Hollywood working with FOX, MTV, Style Network, VH1, NBC and ABC, Ashlé's work has brought her back to New York City. During that time she came back to New Jersey each season just to work on Dead Man's Party, which she has choreographed for the past 7 years.

In her upcoming episode of MTV's "MADE", Ashlé travels to St. Louis to help turn an ordinary teenage girl into a Latin ballroom dancer in just four weeks. In the meantime, you can check out Ashlé's work right here in Jackson each weekend in Dead Man's Party, one of the hottest Halloween music and dance shows in the U.S. To learn more about Ashlé, visit www.ashledawsondance.com.

