

No tricks, just treats in Butler-Tarkington this Halloween

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By Alexis Price

BUTLER UNIVERSITY

Butler-Tarkington promoted safety solutions for trick-or-treaters this Halloween in light of recent homicides and other crimes in the area.

Three local organizations hosted Halloween events this year and invited Butler-Tarkington residents. The Martin Luther King Community Center hosted an event Friday, Oct. 30, while the two churches held trunk-or-treats on Oct. 25.

Elisa Deer, the director of children's education at [Meridian Street United Methodist Church](#), said this was the ninth year the church has hosted the event. She said the congregation donates candy, and people volunteer and decorate their vehicles. However, Deer said it is not all about the candy.

"At my station, we gave out big glow sticks—safety glow sticks that kids could use, which kind of looked like lightsabers because I was Yoda," she said. "So, if they go trick-or-treating, we encourage them to use those."

She said this is one way the event promoted safety this year. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, fire department, and emergency medical services handed out glow bracelets to provide a level of safety for trick-or-treaters.

Deer said she predicted a fair amount of trick-or-treating in the neighborhood.

"The neighborhood up at this point is pretty stable," she said. "When you get down below 42nd Street it becomes a little less stable."

One of the safety concerns, she said, is that it is difficult to figure out who welcomes trick-or-treaters and who does not.

In an email statement, Allison Luthe—the managing director at the [Martin Luther King Community Center](#)—also said this creates safety concerns. Since there are many abandoned houses and a lack of street lights in the southern part of the neighborhood, she said these Halloween events are safe alternatives to trick-or-treating.

This was the first year the community center hosted a Halloween event. Luthe said it was a way to show partnership between the center and neighborhood groups, while offering children a safe place to get candy.

Susanne Hinson-Rieger—director of Lifespan Religious Education at [Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis](#)—said this was the first year the church invited the whole neighborhood to its trunk-or-treat.

"It's a fun event for families of the church," she said. "We thought it would be fun for the families of the neighborhood too. So, we thought we would include them—especially with of the gun violence in this immediate area lately."

She said the trunk-or-treat event was not initially created because of public safety concerns.

"I don't know if it necessarily promotes safe trick-or-treating, but it is definitely a safe alternative," Hinson-Rieger said.

Deer said events like these give parents more options.

"If you have little kids who really, really want to trick-or-treat but you are uncomfortable, trunk-or-treat is an alternative," Deer said. "Obviously there are things that are happening in Butler-Tarkington and in the city that could make you take pause about going out after dark with your kids. It's not totally the reason why we do it, but I'm glad we have it."

Jamie Hinson-Rieger, the worship leader at Unitarian Universal, said wearing bright clothing is key to staying safe.

"Don't wear black clothing," he said. "We saw a lot of that in the neighborhood. It's like the invisible toddler Halloween costume."

If someone does choose to wear dark clothing, he said they should wear reflective tape or laser shoe laces.

According to Indianapolis' incident mapper, [M.A.P.S.](#), there were three reported events on Halloween this year. There were two incidents of offense against a person, and one act of burglary.

This year, trick-or-treating hours were from 6-9 p.m. Only one of these incidents—an offense against a person—occurred during these hours.

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