

Woman To Give Out Letters To "Obese" Trick Or Treaters **News**

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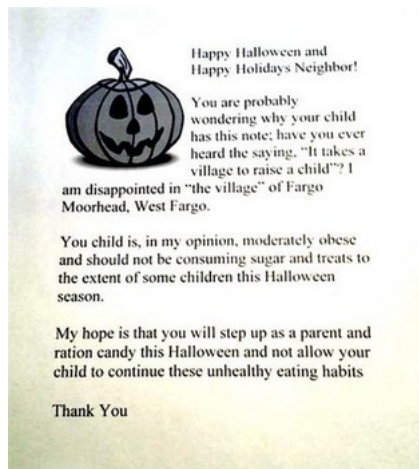
A Fargo, North Dakota woman says she will give trick-or-treaters that she deems "moderately obese" a letter instead of candy this Halloween.



"I just want to send a message to the parents of kids that are really overweight. ... I think it's just really irresponsible of parents to send them out looking for free candy just 'cause all the other kids are doing it," the woman said in an interview. She wouldn't identify herself.

The letter states: "You child is, in my opinion, moderately obese and should not be consuming sugar and treats to the extent of some children this Halloween season."

It continues: "My hope is that you will step up as a parent and ration candy this Halloween and not allow your child to continue these unhealthy eating habits."



North Dakota State University assistant professor of clinical psychology Katie Gordon said that the letter could be more emotionally damaging than helpful.

"It's just that kind of thing that for some kids, if they're vulnerable, might trigger major problems," Gordon said. "Even if a child is overweight, they might be very healthy because of what they eat and how they exercise. It's ineffective anyway because it's not likely to help the kid."

David Smith, a cardiologist in Doylestown, Pa., says that he thinks the woman is doing a public service.

"I think it's a tough-love letter," Smith. "Eating disorders are a problem but the magnitude of that risk just pales in comparison to obesity. Obesity in the last decade has taken over smoking as the leading health problem we face today."

"Giving candy to an obese child is like giving a cigarette to a person with emphysema," Smith says.
"It is giving a drink to an alcoholic. It is giving heroin to a drug addict."