

Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

Message from the Principal

The 2009-2010 school year is off to a great start at PJHS! We want to welcome all the new students and families who have joined us this year. We currently have 399 students enrolled at PJHS. We have 50 staff members at the Junior High which includes Teachers, Teacher assistants, Cooks, Custodians, Dean of Students, Nurse, School Resource Officer, Secretaries, and School Counselor. This will be my 5th year as principal at PJHS, my 12th year as a principal and my 30th year working in District #429.

I am very excited about the year ahead! For the second consecutive year our school made Adequate Yearly Progress based on the ISAT test scores! I am extremely proud of the dedication and hard work of our teachers and students who made this happen. We have made many changes over the past four years to achieve this goal!

We continue to offer as many co-taught classes as possible based on our staffing. Your student may be in a class this year with two teachers or a teacher and an assistant. Our goal is to include students with

an IEP in the regular classroom with the support of a Special Education Teacher or Assistant for as many classes as possible. We have found that all students benefit from this teaching model. We know that co-teaching played a great role in the success of our students on the ISAT tests. You will be receiving individual student test results at Parent Teacher Conferences in October.

Please note that your student received a blue and white assignment notebook one of the first days of school. We encourage your student to use the assignment book at school for all subjects. Students also received the PJHS Handbook one of the first days of school. The handbook was reviewed in the Literature classes. Students were directed to take the handbook home to their parents. The handbook will also be posted on our web page.

To keep informed about school events and important information, please visit our District website at



October 2009

www.pontiac429.org. On the top there is a tab for the Junior High. Also at the top on the left there is a place to SIGN UP FOR NEWS UPDATES. If you would like to receive notices from school on your email please sign up there. If you signed up last year, you do not need to sign up again.

We encourage your participation in your student's education at PJHS. Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. Please feel free to contact us about any questions or concerns at 842-4343. Email is a great way to stay in touch with school. My email is donzejud@p429.k12.il.us. I look forward to working with you and your student at PJHS this school year!

Mrs. Judy Donze

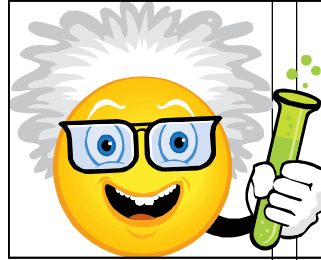
Upcoming October Dates

- **Fri. 9th**– No School-Teacher Institute
- **Mon. 12th**–No School-Columbus Day
- **Tues. 13th**–Picture Retakes
- **Wed. 14th**– Sports Booster Meeting-6:00 PM in Commons
- **Thurs. 15th**– Board Meeting-7:00 PM at Central School
- **Fri. 16th**–End of 1st 9 weeks
- **Tues. 20th**– 11:15 Dismissal-Parent-Teacher Conferences 1-7PM
- **Wed. 21st**– Full Attendance Day
- **Thurs. 22nd**–11:15 Dismissal-Parent-Teacher Conferences 1-7PM
- **Fri. 23rd**–No School
- **Mon 26th-Fri 30th**–Red Ribbon Week

6th Grade Science News

Our young scientists have been busy in the 6th grade lab. We have been learning about the three main areas of science: Life, Earth, and Physical. We have focused on Life science and the many scientists that work in this field. After researching on the computer, our students learned about many scientists that they had never heard about. They were surprised to find out that there is such a job as a weed scientist. Learning the Scientific Method has been a main focus in order to conduct experiments. Our latest experiment tested the hypothesis that sponge creatures would emerge faster in hot water rather than in cold. Learning the metric system is our next goal and challenge. We will practice measuring in meters, grams, liters, and Celsius. We will not be converting

these measurements, but will become more familiar with each metric unit and their sizes. Our final experiment will be measuring how much a Gummy bear will change after being soaked in water. We will measure its length in millimeters, mass in grams, and figure its volume in liters before and after the experiment. The students will then use their graphing skills to graph the results on a bar, or line graph.



This year will be focused on learning

basic science skills to make the transition to 7th and 8th grade science an easy one for our students.

Please check Teacher Ease for announcements and to keep up on your student's grades. With any questions, please email me. It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to meet the new sixth graders. They are all unique and special!

Shari Van Hovel

What's Happening in Sixth Grade Social Studies?

We are well under way to the start of a very positive year in the subject of Social Studies. Most scientists believe that humans have walked earth for at least two million years. Objects made by ancient people have been uncovered all over the world. Some of the earliest examples of art were found in cave paintings. One of the first cities was discovered at Catal Huyuk, Turkey. As we continue our journey of early cultures, students will realize how people of the Old Stone Age developed technologies to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves. Through the study of the New Stone Age students will learn how agriculture let people settle in communities and develop civilizations. Let's explore and learn!



Thank you for your support as we continue on this journey through sixth grade!

Please remember that your child should be using the student planner to write down all assignments.

Mrs. Mehlberg
Social Studies

Art Club

Due to budget constraints, art club will be meeting 3 out of 4 Tuesdays each month split into 7th and 8th grade one week and 6th grade on the alternating week. The art club calendar is on the web site and copies are available on the art room door. 7th and 8th grade members are currently working on air dry clay insects with tooling foil wings. 6th grade members are working on watercolor leaf paintings. Both groups will be working on posters and door signs for Red Ribbon Week in October.



Dean's Notes

Office referrals are at one third of the amount they were last year at this time. That means fewer students are getting into trouble and are receiving more classroom instruction. **Keep up the good work!**

Positive Behavior Support and Intervention (PBIS) is off to a great start. Students and staff together are buying into the program and the results are impressive. Students who demonstrate appropriate expectations are rewarded with P-Town bucks. These can be turned in and we have random drawings. Winners of these drawings can win items ranging from free sports passes to local business gift cards. At the end of the quarter there will be a school wide celebration for all students who have not had an office referral. During the celebration larger scale items will be drawn. We are currently in the process of asking for sponsors to help fund our PBIS program. We also take monetary donations from anyone who would like to support this worthwhile program. All sponsors will be recognized at a later time. To learn more about our PBIS program log onto our website at www.pontiac429.org and click on the junior high tab.

Please know that anytime students have a problem with other students or anything else they can always feel free to come in and see me. My door is always open. Remember that bullying is unfair and one-sided. It is when someone keeps hurting, threatening, frightening, or leaving someone out on purpose. Please do not be a bystander. Report this behavior to an adult and/or fill out a bullying referral report in the office.

Also, students are required by law to be in regular attendance at school. Parents please call the office by 9:00 a.m. at (815) 842-4343. After a student has been absent for 15% of the total school year due to illness, they may be required to provide a physicians notice. Students who are unexcused to school will be turned into the Livingston County Truancy Review Board.

Mr. DeLong

Red Ribbon Week Activities...

District #429 students will celebrate Red Ribbon Week Monday, October 26 – Friday, October 30. The theme for the week is “It’s a Treat to be Drug Free”. Each day students and staff will be encouraged to participate in a different activity. Monday is “Life is a HOLE lot better drug free” and we will dress in rainbow colors. Tuesday is “Don’t Let Drugs Twist Your Mind” and we will all wear Red. Wednesday the theme is “Smartees Say NO to Drugs” and that will be dress up day. Thursday is “Roll to a Drug Free Beat”. This will be crazy hair day. Friday we end the week with “It’s a Treat to be Drug Free”. This will be Orange and Black Day.



Students in the district will receive a Red Ribbon Week pencil and book mark which is provided from the Drug Free Safe Schools Grant. The Pontiac Police Department will provide every student in the school district with a plastic Trick or Treat bag. All schools will be participating in the United Way Penny Campaign again this year.

6th Grade Language Arts

We have been very busy so far this year. We have gotten off to a good start covering several different components of Language Arts. Our classes just wrapped up our Sentence Unit and are about to begin the world of Nouns. In Spelling, we have been covering a new unit each week. On Wednesdays, we



also write an entry in our personal journals. We are finding it easier and easier to get our thoughts down on paper. We keep all of our graded work in our Language Arts folders so we can share it with our parents. Ask your students to share their work with you.

Mrs. Dunlap



Character Counts

Pillars to live by:
CARING
RESPECT
FAIRNESS
CITIZENSHIP
RESPONSIBILITY
TRUSTWORTHINESS

Wild World of Sports



Girls Basketball

We are happy to announce the following girls made this years basketball teams.

<p><u>7th grade team</u> Taylor Bounds Jamie Carter Jordyn Comincioli Katie Dixon Hannah Dunlap Miranda Fitzsimmons Molly Kipfer Grace Lyons Bailey Sartoris Jennifer Stone Makayla Thoman Jordyn Tilley Molli White Hannah Schertz (manager)</p>		<p><u>8th grade team</u> Adrienne Brockett Alex Brown Haley Fairfield Jessie Finkenbinder Arian Hamilton Haley Kosik Brianna Mueller Kati Rasmussen Rachel Schoon Rachael True Kelsey Wahlsberg Kadi Wells</p>
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Congratulations to both teams on winning their first game of the season. We welcome everyone to come and see a game this year and enjoy the excitement.

Boys Basketball

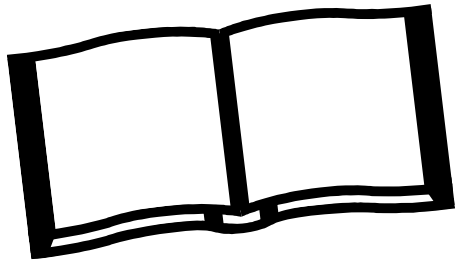
Tryouts for the 7th and 8th grade boy's basketball team will begin on Monday Oct. 20th. Any 6th, 7th, or 8th grade boy wanting to tryout for the 7th or 8th grade boy's team must have a current sports physical on file. If you do not have a current sports physical on file, you will not be able to participate in tryouts. If a 6th grader tries out and makes the 7th grade team, he will not be able to be a part of the 5th and 6th grade basketball team. It is one, or the other. Specific times of the tryouts will be given out at a later date. The students that make the team will order team shoes after tryouts. Please do not buy any new shoes for tryouts. We will all get the same. If you have any questions, please contact Coach Fenton or Coach Lawrence at the Jr. High, 842-4343.

Great Season

Girls softball and boys baseball have wrapped up their seasons but not before the boys had a strong regional showing winning their first game and then falling short by a single run to the top ranked team. We look for great things next season. Boys and girls cross country team is having a top notch season. Several students have received medals at invitational meets. The 8th grade boys placed 5th at Olympia and 3rd at El Paso-Gridley invitational.

Cheerleading

Cheerleading tryouts were held on September 29th and the following girls will be leading our cheers all season. Congratulations to: Kayla Brockett, Tiffany Burgess, Jennifer Castillo, Alexis Feddern, Sabrina France, Samantha Gibson, Hallie Hilsabeck, Kayla Kohlmeier, Jamie Lind, Taylor Lind, Rebecca Merlino, Alyssa Nestor, Briana Salinas, Ashley Sechrest, and Kennedy Vilt.



BOOK FAIR

This is a great way to connect with your kids by reading your favorite books. Please join us at the Pontiac Junior High Book Fair on

October 20 & 22, 2009
1 p.m. – 7 p.m.



All purchases help support the Pontiac Junior High Library.



Student Council News

Student Council is off to a great start this year. We have had many interested students come to our meetings. We are not electing officers this year, and we welcome all students to attend any of our meetings.

The Student Council has decided the Homecoming Week Dress-Up Theme Days. Homecoming Week is Monday, October 5th – Thursday, October 8th. The Dress-Up Theme Days are: Monday – Pajamas Day/Get Up and Go Day (You may wear slippers to school if you bring tennis shoes for PE!), Tuesday – Hippie Day, Wednesday – Twin Day, and Thursday – Orange and Blue Day.

We have been busy making signs to promote Homecoming Week, and we are in the process of helping to plan Red Ribbon Week. We have brainstormed some fundraising ideas and will be working in the community this year.

Stay tuned for more exciting Student Council news! Also, feel free to listen to the announcements and come to our next meeting!

Welcome to District #429 and PJHS... Mr. Adam Lawrence – Physical Education

Welcome to PJHS... Mrs. Laura Kerrins – 8th grade Literature

BUILDERS CLUB NEWS

Builders Club had their first meeting this month and welcomed many new members. We are so glad to see this interest in our students. At our meeting, nominations were made for our new officers for the year. Students voted by secret ballot and elected the following officers:

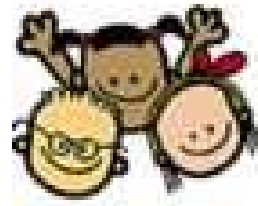
Brett Dunlap - President
Adam Shelton - Vice-President
Olivia Bammann - Secretary
Andrew Beckman - Treasurer

On September 16th, twenty-six members met at Asta Care for

our first monthly BINGO. Our students had fun and also were a big help to many of the residents. BINGO is always held the third Wednesday of the month from 7-8 p.m. Next month's BINGO will be on October 21st.

Builders Club is a service organization that helps build strong leaders. It is not too late to become a Builders Club member. Just listen in announcements for our next meeting which will be held during the second week of October. Hope to see you there!

News from the School Counselor:



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and inform you about some of the services I can provide. My name is Marci Hunt, and I am the School Counselor for Pontiac Junior High School (PJHS). A school counselor/social worker wears many hats, but the most important is providing students and families with many different services to promote and support students' academic and social/emotional well being to assist the student in reaching his/her full potential. As a school counselor at PJHS, I will be offering school-based services to those students who demonstrate emotional, behavioral, or social problems that negatively impact his/her academic success. I will work as a member of the educational team with administrators, teachers, staff members, parents, and area agencies to provide comprehensive services that best meet the needs of each individual student. As part of the educational team, I will be providing: individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, teaching classroom-based prevention programs, consultation with staff, linkage to outside agencies, participation on intervention teams, and participation on various building and district committees. Please feel free to call or email me with any question or concerns you may have regarding your child.

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to assist in your child's educational success.

Marci Hunt
School Counselor, MA, QMHP, LCPC
815-842-4343
huntmar@p429.k12.il.us

8th Grade Fundraising

The 8th graders have been selling orange cinchbags again this year to raise money for their trip to Great America. We still have a few left if anyone is interested in purchasing a bag. They are \$10 each. They are of good quality and large enough that many students are using them as book bags or P.E. bags for carting their clothes back and forth each week. In October, we will be selling orange water bottles (same design as the bags) for \$5.00 each. Once again, the students will earn money towards their trip. Basketball players will no longer be sharing team bottles; this is a good opportunity to purchase individual bottles to use during the games. The bottles will make great stocking stuffers for Christmas! See one of the 8th graders or 8th grade teachers if you are interested. Thanks for your support!

PJHS School Spirit



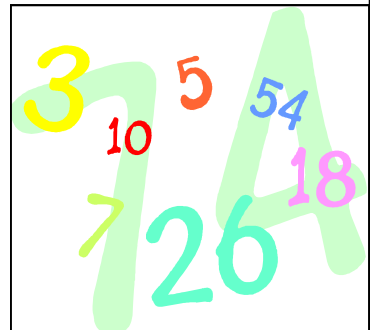
New items are being added to the 8th grade sponsored School Spirit clothing order forms. Revised forms will be available in the PJHS main office soon. These items make great birthday and Christmas gifts for students!

6th Grade Literature

Students completed Collection 1 this week and are beginning Collection 2. Collection 1 focused on using the plot outline to see the connections between events in a story. We read the stories "Dragon, Dragon," "Just Once," and "All Summer in a Day". We also read two nonfiction selections about towns in the future and Venus. Collection 2 will focus on the characters of our stories. Students will determine how authors provide traits about the characters and how the character traits influence the events that occur in the story. The first story we read in Collection 2 is "The Bracelet" which is historical fiction based on the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

6th Grade Mathematics

6th-graders have been reviewing decimals and place value, as well as basic adding subtracting, multiplying and dividing of whole numbers and decimals. We will begin working with fractions and mixed numbers this week. We start every class period with 10 mental math questions to keep students on their toes and thinking logically about math. We have an excellent group of 6th graders this year; I am very happy with their work ethic and behavior. It has been a great start to the school year.



From the school nurse...

Now that fall has started and the onset of flu season has begun (especially the concern of H1N1- formerly called swine flu), we would like to give some reminders on safe practices:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. [Alcohol-based hand cleaners](#) are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

If you are sick with flu-like illness, [CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

*adapted from U.S. Centers for Disease Control

The federal government is currently working on a vaccine for the H1N1 influenza virus and is expected to be available in mid-October. The CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health are recommending that children between 6 months and 18 years of age receive the vaccinations for both seasonal flu and the H1N1 influenza virus. We encourage you to speak with your child's physician or local health department about where you may obtain these vaccinations.

Also, please remember that a physical is required from your child's physician for anyone entering Sixth grade, any student who just moved to Illinois, or any child wishing to participate in sports at school. Immunizations must be current as well. The deadline for this is October 15th according to our state guidelines. I look forward to caring for your child. Please feel free to call me for any medical questions or concerns: 842-4343.

Rachel Lee RN
School Nurse



When calling your child in absent

When your child is absent from school, we ask that you call the school office to notify us your child will not be attending school. When your child is ill, we are also asking you to notify us if your child has fever of 100 degrees F (or over), along with coughing and/or a sore throat. We are doing this as a screen for influenza. This is due to a request from both the CDC and our local health department. Please be aware that one of the nurses employed by Dist 429, may also be calling to check the status of your child.

If your child has been diagnosed with the seasonal or H1N1 flu, please keep your child home for a minimum of 24 hours after the fever has resolved (without the use of Tylenol or Motrin) or as directed by your physician.

When your child goes home from school

If your child has been sent home ill from school, we recommend that they stay home for the remainder of the school day. A check-list for determining if they should return tomorrow morning is:

- your child should be fever-free (without Tylenol or Motrin),
- free of vomiting or diarrhea and is able to tolerate breakfast,
- has completed any doctor or health department recommended home isolation,
- any rash is gone or has been seen by a physician and your child is released to return to school,
- and generally feels like being alert and learning in class.

*As we start into the school year, please prepare now for having your child home. If your child becomes ill with influenza, a probable home stay of 4-5 days will not be unusual. We know that keeping a child (or children) home can be disruptive to work and activity schedules, so thank you for your attention and cooperation in this manner.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov or www.flu.gov



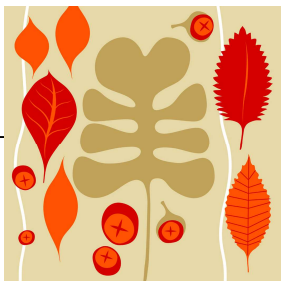
7th Grade Greetings

Math

We are working with fractions at this time. They are adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. Your child will need to show their work on problems and use the calculator for checking. We do have assignments almost every night. I do give a lot of class time to work on them. I am pleased to say they all have passed the perfect square test. You can ask them to tell them to you. The next chapter is on integers and rational numbers. Happy Counting:)
Mrs. Wasson

Science Update:

We've had many interesting activities taking place so far this year. While learning about proteins, we made cheese from milk and lemon juice. Later we swabbed down many high traffic areas and used the samples to cultivate bacteria in Petri dishes. The students were amazed by how much bacteria can be found on desks, keyboards, door handles, and more. This was a good reminder to students about washing hands often! We're ending the month by working on leaf collections. Thank you for helping your student gather leaves over the past few weeks. We will be working to identify the common and scientific names for the trees from which the leaves came. The students will then create leaf posters to present all of their information. Be sure to stop in sometime to see the posters on display!



Social Studies News:

Do you know the difference between Renewable and Nonrenewable Resources? The 7th graders will begin a unit covering resources, population and culture. As we study these important concepts, please ask your student what they have learned. Some important dates while we study these concepts are: October 7th quiz on vocabulary for Chapter 3 and Wednesday, October 14th test on Chapter 3! Make sure your student is prepared for these important dates. Thanks so much! :)

From the desk of Miss Rapp

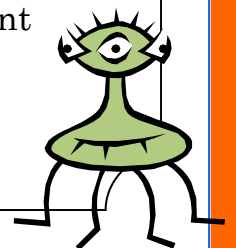
In **English** we are starting to work on nouns. The students had been working on sentences and diagramming them. They have done a great job at taking notes in English. We will be working on a Patriotic Essay for the VFW in October. This year's theme is "When Is The Right Time To Honor Our Military Heroes?"

In spelling we continue to have our weekly spelling units. I hope everyone has a great month and you all enjoy the lovely weather!

Thank you, Miss Rapp, 7th Grade Language Arts



In **literature** classes, students will be busy creating comic books for Monsters are due on Maple Street, a teleplay by Rod Serling. The teleplay depicts an alien invasion on an ordinary street in the 1950's. A moral of the selection is "Don't be your own worst enemy." After reading the teleplay and watching the "Twilight Zone" episode, students will illustrate and provide captions for their interpretation of the events. Books will be on display during parent teacher conferences.



8th Grade News

The eighth graders are beginning to settle in! For many, they are finding that this year is the year that they will have to become organized and create new study habits as they prepare for high school. Parents please encourage your students to talk about what they are doing in each classroom. Be sure to ask them about their assignments, projects, and tests each day. Remind them to ask questions when they don't understand something. Most of all, ask to see their work. We want them to be proud of the work they accomplish each day. We expect them to try to do their best on each assignment. 8th graders need to take responsibility for their own work. It is our goal to be supportive and guide them to become successful students. 8th grade year may be more work than they are used to, but it can be a fun year with many new activities and experiences if we all work together.

Social Studies and language arts have combined forces to work on summarizing skills. The social studies classes also have been researching Indian tribes and are now presenting their power points. Language arts classes are writing narratives, learning about verbs, and sentence patterns. Literature classes are working on comparing and contrasting stories. In science they are learning about rocks! Math has been reviewing skills and beginning to learn new concepts such as multiplying and dividing integers, and in Algebra, they are working on scale factors. Hopefully, this gives you and your child something to talk about each day! October will bring many new concepts to learn.

Cindy Renzelman

Parent Volunteer Procedure

We want to thank all of the parents and guardians who have signed up through PTO to volunteer in our schools. The response was fantastic!

We take the safety of our students very seriously. In order to provide the highest level of safety for all of our students, our district procedure for any volunteer now requires you to complete a background check before you volunteer at school. There is no cost to the parent volunteer to complete this background check. Volunteering at school includes but is not limited to: assisting in a classroom for a party, project, or working with individual or small groups of students, supervising a trip or supervising a dance.

If you have already completed a background check for District #429 at any of our schools, and the background check was cleared, your name will be on our approved list and you may volunteer at any time. You do not need to repeat the background check yearly.

If you have never completed a background check for District #429, there are a couple of ways you can do this. You may pick up a background check card at any school office or the district office and take it to the Pontiac Police Department. They will complete the fingerprinting and you can return the card to the District Office located at Central School or to your child's school office.

The other option is to contact our School District Resource Officer Shawna Gilliam at 815-842-4343. You can schedule an appointment with her to complete your fingerprinting in her office at PJHS. She has cards available.

If you are unsure if you have completed the background check or if you have any other questions, please contact your child's school.

Pontiac Jr. High School Sports/Music Boosters Fall 2009 Fundraiser

PJHS is excited to present our Fall 2009 fundraiser featuring MR Z's food products and Otis Spunkmeyer cookies.

The sale goes until Monday October 5th
This is a prepay fundraiser and items will be delivered on Wednesday November 11th.

If you have any questions please contact Donna Kipfer 842-4161

Or

Jan Leverton 844-3927

Thank you for your support.

Pontiac Jr. High School
600 Morrow St
Pontiac, Illinois 61764
Phone: 815-842-4343
Fax: 815-844-6230
On the web
www.pontiac429.org



From Your Resource Officer, Shawna Gilliam

Children's Halloween Safety Tips for Trick-or-Treating

Ghost, ghouls and monsters aren't the only things to be afraid of on Halloween. Accidents and mishaps increase dramatically when children trick-or-treat.

To avoid the many dangers children face while trick or treating, use common sense. Be aware of potential Halloween hazards and take precautions to eliminate them. Consider heading for an indoor Halloween party and bypass any chaos or danger.

Trick-or-Treating Tips:

- Carry a flashlight with fresh batteries after dark.
- Carry along a cell phone if possible.
- Always trick or treat in groups, accompanied by an adult.
- Follow a curfew and take a watch with you.
- Stay on the sidewalks and out of the streets and cross at intersections.
- Walk. No running.
- Watch out for open flames in jack-o-Lanterns.
- Trick or treat in familiar neighborhoods.
- Only visit well lit houses. Don't stop at dark houses.
- Don't enter any houses unless you know the people.
- Don't approach unfamiliar pets or animals.
- Don't cut across yards and stay out of back yards.
- Always watch for cars backing up or turning.
- Never accept rides from strangers.
- Respect other people and their property.
- Be polite and say "thank you."
- Don't eat any candy until it's inspected for tampering.
- Small children should not be allowed hard candy they may choke on.
- Report any suspicious or criminal activity to an adult or the police.
- Consider having a party instead of Trick or Treating.

City of Pontiac has set Trick or Treating hours from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Sat., October 31st.