

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- MON., OCT. 19, 2015

THRIFT STORES DO BRISK BUSINESS AT HALLOWEEN

Contact: Kay Hwangbo  
PR Consultant to St. Vincent de Paul of Los Angeles  
c) (323) 228-5733

Los Angeles County residents want to enjoy Halloween this year. They just don't want to pay an arm and a leg, to buy an extra arm and a leg.

So say area thrift stores, which are seeing the eighth year in a row of brisk Halloween sales. The secondhand-clothing industry is counter-cyclical, so if it is doing well, the regular economy may still be shaking off its cobwebs.

October is the biggest sales month of the year for secondhand stores, which is why Halloween is known as thrift stores' "Christmas."

Jessica Cruz, 31, plans to take her two toddlers to a Spirit Halloween store to come up with ideas for costumes. But she plans to buy their costumes at St. Vincent de Paul thrift store near downtown Los Angeles. St. Vincent's also has a store in Long Beach.

"I'm not going to spend a lot of money on something that they'll wear just once," said the food-service worker, who lives near downtown L.A.

Cruz is one of many local residents who will be shopping secondhand stores this Halloween season. St. Vincent de Paul thrift store in downtown L.A. recorded a 9-percent increase in Halloween sales between 2007 and 2013, store manager Jorge(cq) Menjivar(cq) said. Since 2013, the store has mostly sustained its sales level, Menjivar reported.

Out of the Closet thrift store in West Hollywood saw a 4-percent increase in Halloween revenues between 2007 and 2012, according to store manager Steven(cq) Davis. Although business went down between 2012 and 2014, sales so far indicate that this Halloween will be a "really good" sales month, he said. Out of the Closet has eight stores in Los Angeles County, including one in Long Beach.

Goodwill thrift store on North Altadena Drive in Pasadena marked a 10-percent increase in overall business between 2010 and 2012, according to Esther Walton, former store manager. Revenues maintained their high levels between 2012 and 2014, she said.

"In the past five years, people who normally wouldn't shop with Goodwill, found it to be a smart way to shop," Walton said.

Thrift stores have attracted customers by offering not only low prices, but also an opportunity for creativity.

(- more -)

“I would much rather go to a thrift store and create something, than walk into a Halloween party and see three people wearing the same French-maid costume that I am,” said Alison “Cat” Slater, 48, an image consultant who lives near downtown L.A.

“Why make a dress when I can buy it for six bucks?” said Slater, who likes crafting. “I can walk into a thrift store and find one that fits, which is the right color. Then, I can distress it. I can glue leaves and flowers on it, and be a fairy.”

If you assemble your Great Pumpkin costume from certain secondhand stores, you will be helping vulnerable people. For example, St. Vincent’s thrift stores benefit low-income people, Goodwill stores assist unemployed people, and Out of the Closet thrift stores help HIV/AIDS patients.

L.A. County is a Halloween mecca, with the largest Fright Night celebration in the world (West Hollywood), world-class costume designers, and ever-childish adults.

St. Vincent’s thrift store in Long Beach has about 90 Halloween costumes, priced at \$13 and below. The Los Angeles store has 400 used costumes in a special Halloween section. At the Los Angeles store only, costume prices are 50 percent off on Tuesday, and during the entire week before Halloween.

“If you don’t have \$10 to \$12 for a costume, you have the option--one week before Halloween-- to get one for \$4 to \$6,” store manager Menjivar said.

Cruz, the downtown L.A. mother, says she understands why thrift stores are hopping this Halloween.

“Things have been tough,” Cruz said. During the past eight years, her work hours were gradually cut from 40 hours a week to 24 hours a week. Prices seem to be going up, she said. She manages a food stand at the Los Angeles Zoo, and her husband, Rick Delgado, 40, is a zoo shuttle-driver.

Davis, the Out of the Closet store manager, said, “There has definitely been a difference in how the recovery has affected people. Some have benefited, and some have not.”

“The ‘recovery’ is not even,” he sniffed.

-----  
**St. Vincent de Paul thrift stores.** 2750 E. Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach. Los Angeles store: 210 N. Ave. 21. [svdpla.org](http://svdpla.org)

**Goodwill thrift stores.** Eighty stores throughout Southern California. [goodwillsocal.org](http://goodwillsocal.org). Online store: [shopgoodwill.com](http://shopgoodwill.com)

**Out of the Closet thrift stores.** 3500 E Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach. Seven other locations in L.A. County. [outofthecloset.org](http://outofthecloset.org)