**A COAT OF BRAVERY**
By Sharon Lee Raguzzi

Halloween. As a kid, I wasn't crazy about this holiday. Sure, I loved the end result – loads of candy - but, oh, the process I had to go through to get there! Back then we didn’t’ have store-bought costumes, and although my mother had many talents, whipping up ghosts and goblins on a sewing g machine was not one of them. And I never understood we said “trick or treat.” What trick could I ever have performed if the home owner hadn’t wanted to give me a treat?

Treat or treating after school was okay, but once I became old enough to go out with the big kids, I felt those butterflies hatching. The big kids ranged from twelve to seventeen. Their booty bags held some candy but mainly stored eggs for mischief making. That was a change for me, and not one I was at all comfortable with. The dark, damp, cold nights thrilled many of my pals, but I was a little intimidated by the whole thing. I just wanted to run to the houses I knew, feel my bag getting heavy and then head home – with an occasional stop at an unfamiliar but friendly looking house where I might land just one more Hershey-with-almonds bar.

My point: Even though there was an element of fear, pushing for just one more treat kept me in the doorbell-ringing loop a bit longer. It may seem sensible trying to avoid unpleasant or intimidating processes. But I wonder about the good outcomes we may be denying ourselves. How many of us let the dislike or fear of a process stop us in our tracks, preventing us from enjoying the end result?

If a major deterrent keeping us from accomplishing our goals is fear of the unknown, we can gain valuable insights from the Halloween-costume theme. When children dress up as Spiderman or Superman, they start flexing their muscles, jumping from tops of bunk beds – in general, acting in a way they would not have dared to before donning the tights. But the truth is they always possessed the ability to do more adventurous things. They just never knew it. The costumes give them a coat of bravery.

Each of us possesses the ability to accomplish the Winning Outcomes we dream of. Maybe if we take on the persona of an individual who we thing could easily reach that goal, we’d have more of a chance of getting through the process. I often use Helen Keller as my role model. She must have had fears about accomplishing things, but she didn’t let them rule her destiny.

We all have the ability to achieve what we want. It’s our own self-belief systems that either keep us in the house handing out the treat or place us in the running for the reward. Don’t let your mind trick you into standing on the sidelines applauding others as they achieve their dream. There are enough treats for every one of us.

What are you waiting for?

Grandma’s Pumpkin Muffins

PointsPlus Value- 4
Prep time: 18 min
Cook time: 25 min
Other time: 0 min
Serves: 12

Nothing says fall like the spice trinity of pumpkin, nutmeg and cloves.

Ingredients:
1 spray(s) cooking spray
2 cup(s) all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp baking powder
1 tsp table salt
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp ground cloves
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground nutmeg
2/3 cup(s) unsweetened applesauce
1 cup(s) canned pumpkin
2/3 cup(s) sugar
1/2 cup(s) fat free egg substitute
2/3 cup(s) fat free skim milk

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400ºF. Coat a 12-hole muffin tin with cooking spray. Line with cupcake wrappers if desired.

Combine flour, baking powder, salt , baking soda, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg in a large bowl.

Combine applesauce, pumpkin, sugar, egg substitute and milk in a medium bowl; mix thoroughly with a wooden spoon.

Add applesauce mixture to flour mixture and mix until completely incorporated.

Pour batter into muffin tins so each hole is about 2/3 full.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until a tester inserted in the center of a muffin
comes out clean. Yields 1 muffin per serving.

Notes

We use both cooking spray and muffin wrappers to prevent any batter from sticking to the top of the pan but you can use a nonstick pan instead, if you prefer.