

Office Manager Costumes for Charity

Students and staff across our sites wore Halloween costumes to school this Wednesday, and for most of us Halloween is the biggest dress up day of the year. But Jill Wells, the office manager for Alameda High School's Counseling Department, gets dressed almost every weekend, and she does it for a cause.

Through an international costuming organization called "[Rebel Legion](#)," Wells and a group of co-volunteers dress up as Star Wars characters and do community service. Wells, who plays Princess Leia (and bears an uncanny resemblance to the character), belongs to the local "Endor Base" chapter. In the last year alone, the group has visited a woman's shelter and the UCSF Benioff Hospitals in Oakland and San Francisco, and they have participated in the Autism Walk, the Relay for Life, and National Reading Month. They have also raised money for a victim of a shooting and for local schools, and this weekend they will attend a Star Wars Ball in Martinez, as well as the San Jose Sharks game for their Star Wars Night.



Wells got involved with the organization after Carrie Fisher (who played Princess Leia) died in December, 2016. "I found myself looking for people to share my feelings with about the impact Fisher made on me when I was young, with Princess Leia, and into adulthood, with her writing and strong voice championing ending the stigma surrounding mental illness," Wells says. "I discovered these costume clubs, and in them a way to express myself not only in the embodiment of a role which has been an inspiration to so many, but also the opportunity to give back and affect the world for the better."



Lightsabers for Leia

Sometimes Wells goes a step further. Last month, for instance, in honor of Carrie Fisher's birthday (she would have been 62 this year), Wells helped publicize a worldwide tribute to Fisher and her Leia character. Over the course of a week, she helped coordinated "Lightsabers for Leia" events in San

Francisco, Hollywood, and New York, and received and helped curate photographs, videos, and tributes from all across the United States, Italy, Portugal, Russia, and the U.K. (You can see those photos on the “Saber Maidens” Facebook and Instagram accounts.)

“These women are great new friends who tell one another what is great about each other, truthfully, regularly, and genuinely,” Wells says of the other “Leia’s” she has met through Rebel Legion. “It is part of our language. We all lift each other up and it is completely sincere. I am honored to represent Carrie Fisher’s most famous self-rescuing princess and dedicated to bringing courage to young women in future generations.”