Green Heroes®

WASTE-FREE PARTY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

"A child born in a wealthy country is likely to consume, waste, and pollute more in his lifetime than 50 children born in developing nations. Our energy-burning lifestyles are pushing our planet to the point of no return. It is dawning on us at last that the life of our world is as vulnerable as the children we raise."
-George Carey-

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PARTIES OFTEN GENERATE WASTE

There's no denying that birthday parties often generate massive amounts of waste. Consider the environmental costs of producing, distributing and disposing of all that plastic, paper, cardboard and food, just for one day in a small child's life.

The good news is that this relatively recent phenomenon can easily be reversed. By planning ahead and following a few simple steps, it's possible to reduce birthday party excess and waste quite dramatically. If we also involve children in making decisions about their special event, we can encourage them to think about the impacts of of their choices on others and on our fragile natural world, setting them on the path to a more sustainable future.

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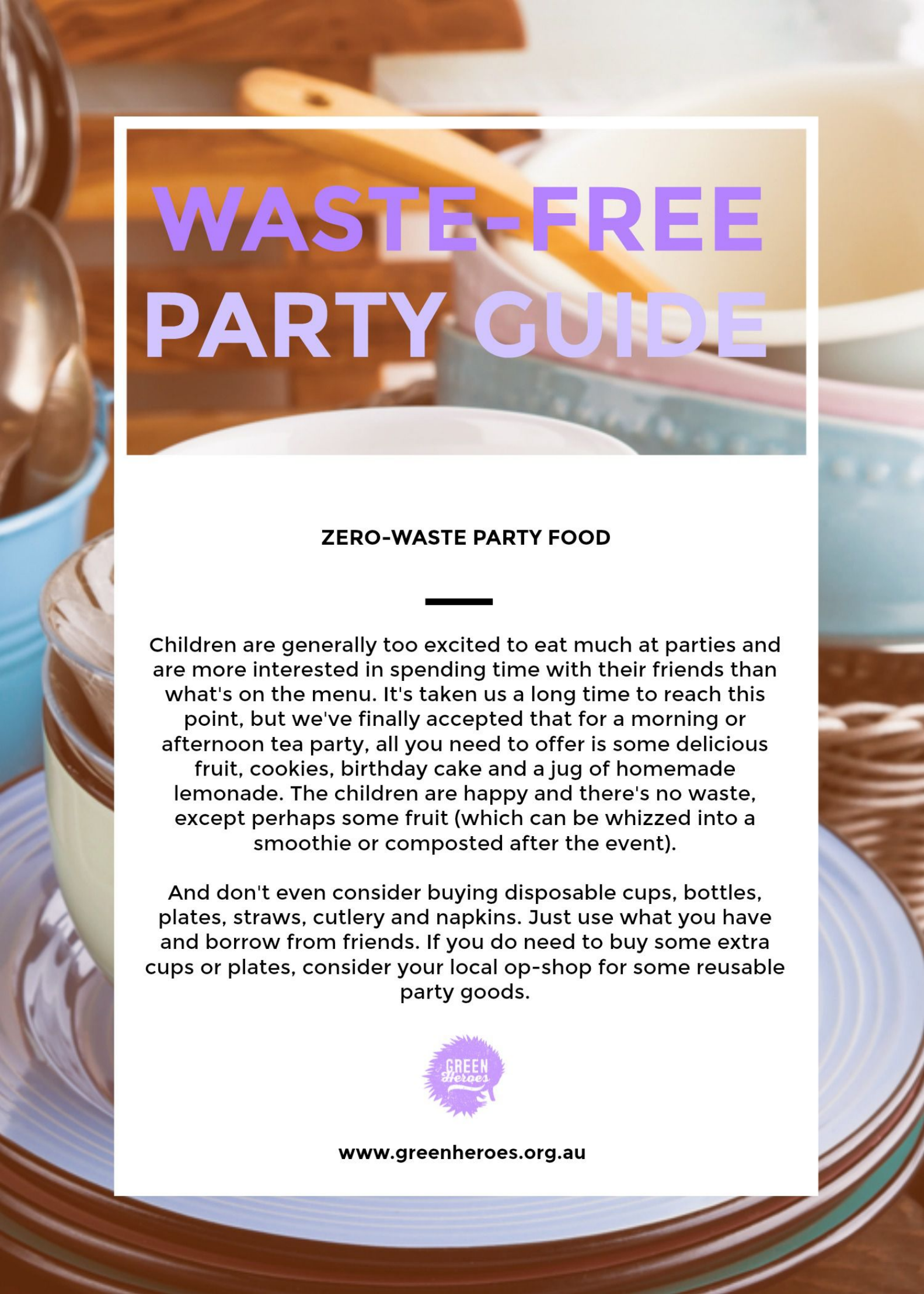
PAPER-FREE INVITATIONS

Paper and card are made from living, breathing trees that clean the air, cool the earth and provide habitat for wildlife. A simple text or email to guests giving details of the party is all you need to send, and the trees love them! Alternatively, you can create fabulous personalised e-invitations for the event through websites such as Paperless Post and Evite, or email us if you wish to use one of the Green Heroes templates for your upcoming Party With a Purpose.



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ZERO-WASTE PARTY FOOD

Children are generally too excited to eat much at parties and are more interested in spending time with their friends than what's on the menu. It's taken us a long time to reach this point, but we've finally accepted that for a morning or afternoon tea party, all you need to offer is some delicious fruit, cookies, birthday cake and a jug of homemade lemonade. The children are happy and there's no waste, except perhaps some fruit (which can be whizzed into a smoothie or composted after the event).

And don't even consider buying disposable cups, bottles, plates, straws, cutlery and napkins. Just use what you have and borrow from friends. If you do need to buy some extra cups or plates, consider your local op-shop for some reusable party goods.

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GIFTS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

If a child chooses to celebrate his/her birthday with just a few close friends, it's lovely and appropriate for them to receive a small number of carefully chosen presents. To minimise waste, guests can be asked to bring gifts unwrapped or in a reusable bag.

A child who is fortunate enough to have a large birthday celebration, surrounded by well-wishers, really doesn't need to be inundated with expensive gifts involving stacks of wrapping paper and plastic packaging. There are literally thousands of charities that rely on donations to continue their important work. Encouraging children to connect with a cause and experience the power of making a difference is more valuable than any gift.

Green Heroes is working in partnership with various wildife rescue organisations, including Australian Seabird Rescue, to provide education about the impacts of human activity on animals. Our turtle adoption program makes it easy for children to help endangered marine turtles by asking their friends to donate to Ballina Byron Sea Turtle Hospital instead of receiving a birthday gift. In recognition the child receives a turtle-tastic T-shirt, a thank you letter from a turtle currently in care and an invitation to the turtle's release.

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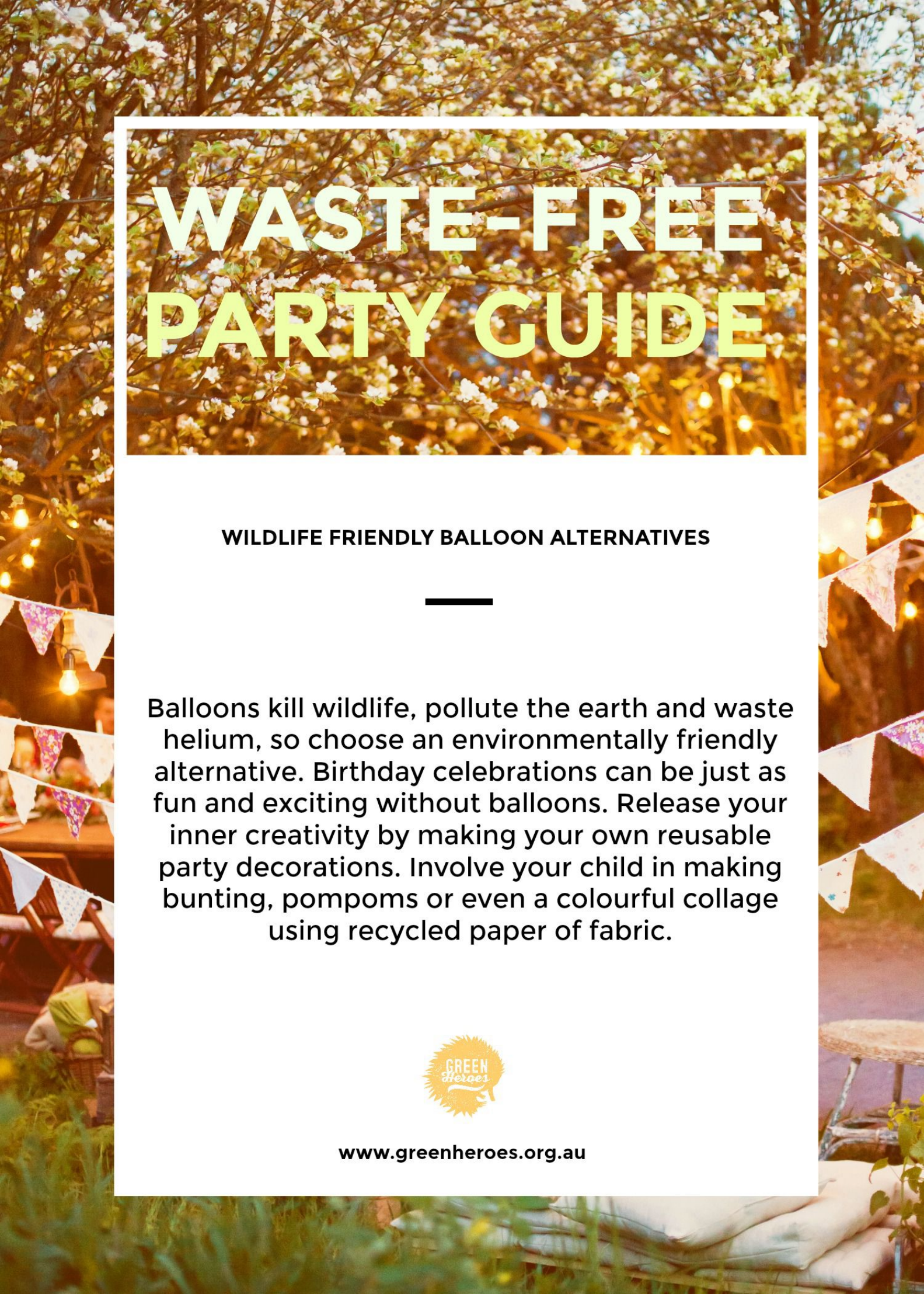

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WILDLIFE FRIENDLY BALLOON ALTERNATIVES

Balloons kill wildlife, pollute the earth and waste helium, so choose an environmentally friendly alternative. Birthday celebrations can be just as fun and exciting without balloons. Release your inner creativity by making your own reusable party decorations. Involve your child in making bunting, pompoms or even a colourful collage using recycled paper of fabric.

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SUSTAINABLE PARTY BAGS

Most parents dislike the small plastic bags filled with lollies and cheap toys that children bring home from birthday parties. Although it's not necesary to have party bags, many hosts like to give a small token of appreciation to guests for helping their child celebrate their birthday. Party bags can also be a useful way of persuading small people to leave at the end of the event!!

Some alternative party bag ideas are:

Recycled brown paper bags (can be decorated by children as a party game, before being filled with goods).

Fabric Bags. Simply cut a circle of fabric, fill it and tie at the top with twine or string.

Healthier and waste-free snack ideas could include dried fruits and nuts (bought in bulk), home made cookies, popcorn or baked goods, crafts to make, crystals, origami, and many others.

Visit the Green Heroes shop for other party bag alternatives.

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