



Community Action Solutions

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Great Plains Improvement Foundation Promotes Youth Fitness During Lawton 'Open Streets' Event

Great Plains Improvement Foundation (GPIF) participated in an "Open Streets" event sponsored by the Southwest Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition and the City of Lawton.

"Our agency created and participated in the 4-Square game," said GPIF Director of Operations Sheryl White.

More than 40 organizations and businesses were represented in the event that was well attended by community residents. The Open Streets event was held in downtown Lawton in front of a shopping mall.

There were different zones of activities. There were no charges for participants in the games, fitness programs and crafts.

"This is a great way for the agency to establish a solid partnership and market the programs," White added.

The agency's game was featured on the local television news.

Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Long term physical inactivity can increase risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, asthma, and arthritis, according to the CDC.

Nationwide, according to the CDC, about 17% (or 12.7 million) children and adolescents aged 2-19 years had obesity.

Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma has taken a comprehensive approach to reaching children where they live, learn and play. It employs strategies to involve a wide range of local institutions, community groups and private citizens, as well as health professionals, schools and governmental agencies to improve



GPIF staff participating were, from left, Jane Torres, Sheryl White, Clarissa Channel, Catoya Mitchell, Felicia Rhodes, Reta Osbourne, and Keith Huggins (not pictured).



Great Plains staff joins some children in a game of 4-Square at the Open Streets event.



conditions that encourage and support healthy living, according to the organization's website (www.lawtonfitkids.org).

Regular physical activity in childhood improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduce anxiety and stress, increases self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels, according to the CDC.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that young people aged 6-17 years participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.