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## **Group's focus is on families**

By Bridget Nash, Staff Writer

WOODWARD — Residents concerned about health of families and children in the area have organized.

Woodward Area Coalition is a combination of three groups, the members of which — recognizing many similar goals — decided to collaborate their efforts.

“We are a group of people that are made from the Woodward area, and we are interested in the health of children and families,” said Karen Harrison, coalition member. “Not only physical health but mental health, as well.”

Woodward Area Coalition sponsors three large annual events each year and also works on other projects in the Woodward area.

### They've got the Power

One of the annual events held by the coalition is Girl Power, a yearly event for fifth- and sixth-grade girls. During Girl Power, participants attend fun-filled, hands-on workshops designed to help boost self-esteem, create awareness about healthy eating and make friends. There also are craft-type projects, games and snacks.

### Weighing in on matters

Woodward Area Coalition also holds a walking contest called Walk This Weigh. Those who enter the contest keep track of minutes walked during a certain period of time. This event helps promote a healthy lifestyle. There are prizes for the top walkers.

### All's fair in fun, games

One of the largest events held by Woodward Area Coalition is Family Fun Fair.

During the family oriented event, various businesses in the community sponsor activity booths.

“It's just a way for families to get out and have fun together,” said Harrison.

Family Fun Fair is full of concessions, information booths and free games for the children.

### Into the Darkness

This year Woodward Area Coalition also worked hard on the Crystal Darkness, meth-amphetamine awareness program.

The statewide program centered around a television documentary concerning the dangers of meth use and its current prevalence in Oklahoma.

### Getting involved

Harrison said the coalition has about 25 regular members and partners of the coalition, including The Lighthouse, Area Prevention Resource Center, Western Plains Youth and Family Services, Woodward County Health Department, Office of Juvenile Affairs, Head Start, Woodward Public Schools, Oklahoma State University Extension Office, Northwest Center for Behavioral Health, Department of Human Service, Parents Who Care, Northwest C.A.R.E., Systems of Care, Local Citizens, Oklahoma Commission of Children and Youth and Oklahoma Federation of Families.

Anyone in the Woodward area is invited to attend Woodward Area Coalition's monthly meetings which are noon the third Thursday at High Plains Technology Center in room 200.