

Groups coming together to help, celebrate quitting tobacco

A number of area groups will be ready to help those looking to quit smoking this Friday, which marks the annual Great American Smokeout.

The Great American Smokeout is an annual event each November sponsored by the American Cancer Society. The day encourages smokers and smokeless tobacco users to take the first steps toward quitting for good.

In Carter County, people will have a chance to celebrate the smokeout at the Wilson City Part at 3:30 p.m. Friday. A number of fun games, activities and a meal is part of the celebration, along with resources for those looking to quit. Those participating in the event include the Boys and Girls Clubs of Carter County, and the Carter County Turning Point Tobacco and Physical Activity/Nutrition coalitions. There is no admission charge to attend.

The community of Wilson was selected to host the event because Wilson is a Certified Healthy Oklahoma Community and winner of one of two Community Incentive Grants awarded in the state.

For the meal, participants can expect to enjoy a smoked turkey, along with other healthy food choices. Super C Grocery in Wilson is donating a turkey to be given as a door prize. Bottled water and additional food items are being donated by coalition members and community partners.

“We want our ‘Smoke Turkey, Not Tobacco’ event to build on the Great American Smokeout message of ‘quit for a day, quit for life,’” said Dr. Lee White, tobacco coalition member. “We also want to celebrate the city of Wilson for setting the standard in Carter County in wellness initiatives as evidenced by its being awarded the Certified Healthy Oklahoma Community Incentive Grant.”

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. In Oklahoma, smoking alone kills more than 6,200 adults each year and leaves tens of thousands suffering from diseases caused by smoking or secondhand smoke.

“The Great American Smokeout is a great way to stop smoking or dipping, even for one day, to make a fresh start,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust. “You can talk with your doctor, call or register online with the helpline, make a plan and go for it, for yourself, your family and friends, and your pocketbook.”

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is ready to help Oklahoma tobacco users begin their journey towards a healthier life during the Great American Smokeout. Specially trained quit coaches provide non-judgmental support for tobacco users and help them build personalized quit plans based on the best research available. Free quit coaching and free patches, gum or lozenges are available for all callers who qualify.

“Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do for your health, and yet one of the hardest things to do in life,” said Sister Carolyn Stoutz, tobacco coalition chairperson. “Once you make the decision to quit, you’ll feel better,



Laura Eastes/The Ardmoreite
Boys and Girls Club member and Students Working Against Tobacco team member Ashley Sorrels participates in a relay race at the Wilson Community Park Saturday as part of a celebration for World No Tobacco Day in May. Boys and Girls Club members will participate in the Great American Smokeout Friday at the Wilson park.

you'll have more money in your pocket and, most importantly, you will have more time to spend with loved ones.”

To connect with professional quit coaches from the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline call 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit www.OKhelpline.com.