



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Oklahoma**

## Unique Activities Planned at Sixth Annual Back to School Bash

Jul. 28, 2014

**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma and KaBOOM! to unveil innovative playground equipment, Imagination Playground; Oklahoma Caring Foundation to present new Caring Van to Comanche County Health Department, serving children of southwest Oklahoma**

**Lawton, OK** — Unveilings of two new health oriented projects are planned at the sixth annual Back to School Bash in Lawton. School aged youth can receive a backpack filled with back to school essentials, free lunch, and take part in other activities with families and community partners. Two exclusive unveilings are also planned at the community sponsored event in coordination with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma, Comanche County Health Department, Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, KaBOOM! and the Oklahoma Caring Foundation.

The Back to School Bash will take place on Saturday, Aug. 9 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Museum of the Great Plains located at 601 N.W. Ferris Ave. The unveilings will take place at 10:30 a.m. by the Historical Outdoor Fort. The short ceremony is expected to last until approximately 10:45 a.m. with media and photo opportunities.

### Back to School Bash

The 6th Annual City of Lawton's Back to School Bash is a community sponsored event where school aged youth registered can receive a backpack filled with back to school essentials. The event will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will also be food, vendors, and many fun activities for the kids. Pre-registration for the 6th Annual Back to School Bash will be August 4–7 to receive a backpack. However registration is not required to attend the event. Tickets can be picked up at the:

- Comanche Nation Prevention and Recovery
- Comanche County Health Department
- Lawton Family YMCA

### Imagination Playground Unveiling

Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma will unveil their new innovative playground equipment, Imagination Playground™ in a Cart. Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, a community coalition focusing on decreasing childhood obesity and creating an active community, was awarded the Imagination Playground courtesy of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma and KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to promoting balanced and active play opportunities for all kids. The project is part of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma's "Healthy Kids, Healthy Families" program — an initiative designed to improve the health and wellness of children through community investments.

Imagination Playground allows children to design their own course of play with giant foam blocks, mats, wagons, fabric and crates. Imagination Playground is a breakthrough play space concept designed by architect David Rockwell to encourage child-directed, unstructured free play, allowing children to play, dream, build and explore endless possibilities.

Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma will travel with the Imagination Playground to area schools, offering children an opportunity to be active and explore their creativity by creating different play landscapes.

**Children attending the Back to School Bash will have the opportunity to play with Imagination Playground and start imagining!**

## Oklahoma Caring Foundation Unveiling

The Oklahoma Caring Foundation will present a new Caring Van to the Comanche County Health Department. The Southwest Caring Van will be housed at Comanche County Health Department, but will be serving 10 southwestern counties. The Health Department was recently selected to operate the new co-branded van, which will serve southwest Oklahoma by delivering immunizations to children and adolescents to protect them from dangerous illnesses, at no cost to their families.

The Oklahoma Caring Van program is uniquely designed to eliminate barriers such as inconvenient clinic hours, long wait times, transportation and cost, which commonly prevent children from receiving on-time, age-appropriate immunizations in traditional health care settings. Per state requirements, all Oklahoma children are required to be current on their immunizations prior to child care or school entry, and the Caring Vans help families meet those requirements. Additionally, each child's immunization records are entered into the Oklahoma State Immunization Information System, where they remain portable.

The new Caring Van will be coordinated by the Comanche County Health Department and staffed by registered nurses. It will visit child care facilities, schools and community events in the area. The Caring Van will be the sixth one operating in Oklahoma. Currently, four Caring Vans serve the greater Tulsa and Oklahoma City regions; one Caring Van is operated by the Choctaw Nation, serving children in Southeastern Oklahoma. The Comanche County Caring Van will help increase the geographic scope of the Oklahoma Caring Van program by reaching children who are not regularly served by another Caring Van.

Since the Caring Van program began in 1999, nearly 240,000 lifesaving immunizations have been delivered, proudly contributing to Oklahoma's immunization efforts.

**Attendees at the Back to School Bash will have the opportunity to tour a Caring Van and learn about upcoming clinics in the area.**

"A healthier future for Oklahoma begins with our children," said Ted Haynes, president of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma and board chairman of the Oklahoma Caring Foundation. "We are proud to partner with the Comanche County Health Department and Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, as well as KaBOOM!, to bring these two unique opportunities to the greater Lawton area."