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Outdoor Festival Will Return For Third Time

Folks who attended or missed Open Streets in downtown Lawton last year may want to mark their calendars for April 23.

That's when Open Streets Lawton-Fort Sill returns from noon to 6 p.m. on Southwest C Avenue from 2nd to 5th streets.

Open Streets is a free festival with lots of free activities for all ages. Registrations are being taken now for organizations interested in hosting an activity or game during the festival. Registrations are due by March 31.



(COURTESY PHOTO) Participants were active in yoga during Open Streets 2015. Yoga will again be one of the activities available this year during the festival on April 23.

There's no charge for setting up a booth or registration. Community organizations interested in hosting an activity or game can apply and reserve a spot online at <http://goo.gl/forms/zWYm2oZTCp>.

Ashley Green, wellness coordinator for the Comanche County Health Department, said Open Streets creates a sense of community and promotes active lifestyles.

"It focuses not only on health and wellness but also socializing and community building," Green said. "We want attendees to come ready to move. Dress comfortable, bring your yoga mats, bike helmets, scooters, skates and friendly dogs on leashes."

Some of the events already scheduled include a farmers market, food trucks, fitness classes, the Imagination Playground, stress relief activities, pet adoption, mural painting, massages and kids' crafts.

"Open Streets is an international concept that started a few years back in another country," Green said. "The man who came up with them started doing them in America and there have been over 200 documented events throughout the U.S. in different cities."

In 2015, some members of Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma Coalition thought it was a unique idea to bring to Lawton. They took it to the coalition and, after planning and partnering with other community organizations, the first Lawton Open Streets was presented in June 2015.

"We pulled it off and it was a really successful event," Green said. "We wanted to keep that momentum going and we did another one in October (2015). This year we're trying to amp it up a little bit. We want to get adult games and activities so it's more for everyone to do, along with our fitness demos. We have a few more gyms here in town that will be involved, so there will be a little bit more strenuous gym activities that will be out there to do. They'll be able to do some Crossfit boot camp-type training. It'll be fun."

She said organizers are announcing sign-ups for booths and activities now so more organizations can be involved. Each organization provides a game or activity.

"We call them activity sponsors," Green said. "They come out and set up their own games and activities and they run

them. We just make sure they have a spot there. It was fairly easy to get going.”

The only need for bringing your wallet will be food, the farmers market and craft vendors. Some of the downtown businesses are also planning sidewalk sales during Open Streets. Water will be handed out free.