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Muskogee organizations earn state's 'Certified Healthy' designation

Moving to Muskogee six years ago was tough on the waistline.

Living for more than a decade in the Washington, D.C., area, my family often walked to the grocery store, walked to the subway, and walked the dog three times a day. Nutritious food was readily available. Healthy choices were easy to make, even if we didn't always choose to make them.

Then we moved back to the land of chicken fried steak, where fried green beans are more prevalent than pedestrians.

We packed on extra pounds almost as quickly as we scarfed down chili dogs. Then, we scurried to buy bigger fat pants.

Our experience isn't unique. When it comes to healthy living, place matters. Options matter. Policy and community support for active, healthy lifestyles matter.

No one organization can make a community healthier. But working together, we can create an environment that better supports people to eat better, move more and be tobacco free.

This Thursday, 35 Muskogee organizations will be honored for doing just that. They earned the state's 2011 "Certified Healthy" designation for helping to make our community a healthier place to live, learn, work and play.

The Certified Healthy Oklahoma program is a collaborative effort of the Oklahoma State Department of Health, the Oklahoma Academy, the State Chamber and the Oklahoma Turning Point Council. The program awards certifications in one of five categories: certified healthy business, school, community, campus and restaurant.

Within each category, organizations earn the excellence, merit or basic certification, based on their policies, practices, resources and commitment to support physical activity, healthy eating and being tobacco-free.

For 2010, eight Muskogee organizations earned Certified Healthy status. For 2011, that number jumped to 35.

"Our goal was to try to double the number of certified healthy organizations in Muskogee this year," said Dr. James Baker, chairman of the Muskogee Wellness Initiative. "Instead we reached 35, so we are loving that."

All 14 schools within the Muskogee Public Schools district earned the Certified Healthy School designation, including six that earned the excellence rating.

Indian Capital Technology Center's Muskogee Campus earned the Certified Healthy Campus designation.

My Place BBQ is one of only five restaurants from across the state to earn the 2011 Certified Healthy Restaurant designation.

Muskogee Community Hospital is one of 20 local "Certified Healthy Businesses" and one of three to earn an excellence rating for its efforts to promote and support employee health.

“The vision of this hospital is to provide better health care for the community, so it’s a natural fit to start with the employees,” said Steve Thames, Muskogee Community Hospital administrator.

By creating environments that support healthy eating, physical fitness or being tobacco-free, these 35 Muskogee organizations are shaping a future in which healthy choices can also be easy choices.

“The community stepped up this year to make wellness count,” Dr. Baker said. “To receive the excellence rating next year, organizations will need to be tobacco-free, as well. Any businesses, schools or groups interested in being designated ‘certified healthy’ for 2012 can contact the Muskogee Wellness Initiative and we can help.”

Applications for the 2012 Certified Healthy program will be available online in August. If you would like assistance in earning the Certified Healthy designation, email me at lisa@muskogeewellness.org.

For more information about the Certified Healthy Oklahoma program, visit <http://www.okturningpoint.org/chp/chp.html>.

Congratulations to the 35 local businesses and school recognized as “certified healthy” in the state.

Waistlines throughout the city tank you for your commitment to make Muskogee a healthier place to live, work, learn and play.

Lisa Wade Raasch coordinates the city of Muskogee Wellness Initiative (MWI) and directs the Eastern Oklahoma Health Care Coalition. For more information, connect with MWI on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MuskogeeWellness or visit www.MuskogeeWellness.org.

Business

Excellence Rating	Merit Rating	Basic Rating
Muskogee Community Hospital	Acme Manufacturing	Cardiology Clinic of Muskogee
Muskogee County Health Department	City of Muskogee	Edward Jones Investments— Muskogee
Empower Change, Inc.	Healthcare Solutions Group	First National Bank of Muskogee
	Miller Chiropractic Clinic, PLLC	Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce
	Muskogee County EMS	KB Enterprises
	The Third Rock Adventure, Inc.	Muskogee Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine, Inc.
	Yaffee Iron & Metal	Neighbors Building Neighborhoods
		R&D MedTech
		The Quapaw Company

School

Excellence Rating

Merit Rating

Basic Rating

Benjamin Franklin Science Academy

Alice Robertson Jr. High

Creek Elementary

Cherokee Elementary

Irving Elementary

Grant Foreman Elementary

Muskogee High School

Harris Jobe Elementary

Sadler Elementary

Muskogee Early Childhood Center

Whittier Elementary

Pershing Elementary

Rougher Alternative Academy

Tony Goetz Elementary

Campus

Indian Capital Technology Center,
Muskogee Campus

Restaurant

My Place BBQ