

Thursday, May 19th, 2011

Love County Receives Nutrition and Fitness Grant

The Love County Community Coalition (LCCC) has been awarded a “Fit Communities” grant to bring healthy food and physical activity opportunities to local communities.

The award, \$90,000, will be shared with Fit Communities partner, the Tishomingo Development Team (TDT).

It will cover a 15-month period, starting July 1, for assessing the local nutrition and fitness efforts and capabilities of each county and making plans for new opportunities.

With success in the start-up period, the Fit Communities partners can apply for four years of additional funding of at least \$100,000 each year to implement the local plan.

The funding agency is the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust. A total of 15 coalitions serving 21 counties are receiving the first-ever nutrition and fitness funding of the Trust.

The lead agency will be the health department.

Mendy Spohn, administrator, conferred with members of LCCC and TDT to develop the grant.

The purpose of the grant is to work with schools, communities, workplaces, and businesses to promote healthier diets and increased physical activity for better health.

Poor nutrition, sedentary lifestyles, and tobacco use are major health risks and they affect a disproportionate number of Oklahomans. Spohn noted that two-thirds of Oklahomans are overweight or obese. Among states, Oklahoma ranks at the bottom in the consumption of fruits and vegetables and 45th in physical activity.

In the end, the Fit Communities should be able to show that people are eating better and moving more to stave off or cope with diabetes, heart and lung disease, and related disabilities.

The Love County Community Coalition named fitness classes, enhanced walking trails, farmers’ market, local farmers to supply fresh fruits and vegetables to schools, industry wellness programs, home, community, and school gardens, outdoor day camps for children, and nutrition education as possible goals.

Even without the grant, members of the coalition’s health and fitness committee have begun activities.

Notable among them are Stacy Redwine’s fitness and running classes in Marietta, Thom Maier’s summer playground for children of Love County, featuring play and instruction in sports at Falconhead, and Homeland Grocery’s “guiding Stars” labeling that leads shoppers to high nutrition, low calorie foods.

Other members of the local committee are Kathy Speaks, Kent Watson, Jennifer Brackett, Eyvonna Lemons, Betty Sue Tow, Scott Chaney, Michelle Porter, Carolyn Lancaster, Lois Carter, Barbara Selby, Michelle Taylor, Kelly Epperson, Randy Webb, Kent Foster, Dottie Gwin, Bub Peery, Barbara Sessions, Don Sessions, Jill Miller, Janie Pennington.

Also Dr. Emilie Stahler, Jack Kapella, Nic McMillin, Dustin Scott, Lindy Kirby, Rodd Davis, Robert Lee, Richard Barker, Connie Barker, Frank Durand, Cheryl Durand, Jan Garcia, Judy Marshall, John Marshall, Mandy Marshall, Cindy Clampet, Gwynn Busby, Sara Metcalf, Toni O’Brien, Brenda Short, Linda Russell, Don Shugart, Tonja Mayo, Ginger Mitchell, Missy Hendsbee, David Herron, Leslie Charistian, Kelly Hartman, Heather McMahan, and Sissy Burge.

O’Brien, Redwine, John Marshall, and Barbara Sessions have accepted positions representing LCCC on the Fit Communities consortium with four members from TDT.

The consortium will hire a community program coordinator to help the two counties implement the grant.

The two counties partnered in the grant in order to meet the minimum 15,000 population to apply. They already were partners in a tobacco control and prevention initiative.

Details of the grant will be discussed at noon Monday, June 6, at the Love County library during the regular monthly meeting of the Love County Community Coalition.