

Walkers weigh in for better health

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About 30 people took, a short walk Saturday to promote better health.

The third annual Walk this Weigh Healthy Foods Cook-Off and Walk attracted a variety of participants, from babies in strollers to senior citizens.

They began their journey at Norris Park near downtown Tahlequah, and wound around the downtown area before winding up at the Northeastern State University Jazz Lab, where about 20 participants provided them with healthy food samples.

“You can walk to use up your calories, and then you can eat some more calories,” someone said as the walk began.

“We’re trying to get healthy,” said Kelly Brotherton. She and daughter Anna walked, while she pushed Kyra and Raya in a stroller.

“We got to the weight management class on Tuesday nights and it’s always more fun if we do it together,” she said.

Civic activist Isabel Baker counted the walk among her many methods of community support.

“I’m a big supporter of Walk this Weigh,” she said. “I think instead of just saying something about it I’d just come down here and walk.”

Baker wasn’t sure exactly what route the walk would take.

“They were saying they’d walk clear to Wal-Mart,” she said, although she doubted it would go that far, and it didn’t.

One participant wore a Cherokee Nation Healthy Nation T-shirt that proclaimed “strong mind strong body.”

Reflecting on the heat of the day, the walkers elected to take the shady side of the street. The journey took them only a few minutes.

“I enjoy walking,” said Maxine Haddock. “I try to walk some every day, and I just enjoy participating in community events.”

State Sen. Jim Wilson, D-Tahlequah, was one of the walkers.

“I’m a great supporter of Walk this Weigh, and I was in on it when it first started,” he said.

Not everyone went on the walk. Several children stayed behind in the park, taking advantage of the playground equipment.

“Be back in a little while,” a parent told them as the group departed.

I think it was great,” said Carol McKiel, one of the event organizers. “We had 16 agencies that offered healthy foods.”

She said Rep. Mike Brown, D-Tahlequah, provided some particularly tasty snacks of oatmeal breakfast bars.

Some of the other snacks were a healthy banana pudding and turkey chili.

There also were bananas on a stick that children could dip into low-calorie chocolate.

McKiel said one emphasis was on trying to get children to eat healthier things, including fruits and vegetables, and the bananas on a stick were one suggestion for getting them to do so.

Participants voted for the organizations with the tastiest healthy foods. Participants included Sequoyah Institute, Dr. Siddique’s Pediatric Office, Rep. Mike Brown, Go Ye Village, Reasor’s Grocery, Shepherd’s Care Hospice of Wagoner, Angela’s Gym for Women, Community Health Coalition Tobacco Prevention Committee, Cox Pharmacy, TOPS, NEOHealth, Cherokee Nation, Cherokee County Health Department, NEOHealth, WW Hastings Indian Medical Center. Winners this year were Go Ye Village, Dr. Siddique’s Pediatrician Office, OSU Extension Service, and Reasor’s Grocery.