



The Woodward News ONLINE

Published: January 11, 2009 08:24 am

Crystal Darkness watch parties set

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Several groups and agencies throughout Northwest Oklahoma will be sponsoring watch parties during Tuesday's statewide broadcast of the Crystal Darkness documentary, which focuses on methamphetamine abuse.

There will be three watch parties in Woodward alone, including a special one at Woodward High School for students only, according to Woodward High School Counselor Mary Brenner.

However, the other two watch parties, which will be held at High Plains Technology Center and Living Word Fellowship, are both open to the public.

"We would just welcome everybody to come," said Eric Cox, pastor at Living Word Fellowship.

Cox noted that the more who participate in the watch parties, the better because "we need everybody's help in overcoming this (methamphetamine use)."

"Meth is something that has really hurt families and really hurt our community," Cox said.

But there may be a lot of people out there who don't really understand the extent of the problem, said Amber Ham, with the Woodward Area Coalition, which is sponsoring the watch party at the technology center.

The watch parties, though, "make it a lot easier to realize how much it affects our community," Ham said, noting they provide an opportunity for community members to share their experiences with each other.

By hearing from other people within the community about how methamphetamine has affected their families, she said that more citizens can understand that "meth really is a problem and not just a documentary on television."

"It helps sink in that there is a problem in Oklahoma," Ham said.

But more than revealing the realities of the methamphetamine problems in our area, Ham said that the watch parties also provide "a great way to get involved" and help battle those problems.

"The best way to get things done is to bring people together," she said, noting that is the main purpose behind the watch parties.

After viewing the 30-minute documentary, watch party attendees will have the opportunity to participate in discussions "where we can bounce ideas around for our community" to help address local issues with the drug's use, she said.

Initial publicity about the Crystal Darkness campaign has already generated some ideas, Ham said.

For example, following a meeting held last month to help make preparations for the upcoming event, she said that a number of people approached her expressing "a need for a support group for meth users and their families."

The hope is that discussion following Tuesday night's broadcast will identify more needs like this, Ham said.

There will also be "some discussion and dialogue about what we've seen and what we can do to address the issue" following the viewing at the watch party at Living Word Fellowship, Cox said.

If you would like to attend either watch party, simply stop by High Plains Technology Center or Living Word Fellowship Tuesday evening. The Crystal Darkness documentary will be aired on all state public television stations beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Other area watch parties are listed on www.crystaldarknessoklahoma.org along with other information about the campaign. To access the watch party list, simply click on the tab titled "Find a Watch Party."

The website's list includes one watch party at the First Christian Church in Laverne that will be sponsored by the Harper County Turning Point Council and one at the Northwest Technology Center in Fairview, sponsored by the Major County Youth Task Force.