

Hundreds show up for annual Lampasas Health Fest

By CLAY WHITTINGTON
Staff Writer

Despite changing locations for the first time in more than 11 years, the Lampasas Health Fest was as popular as ever. Normally held at the Lampasas Middle School, the 16th annual event relocated without a hitch to Hanna Springs Intermediate School, where more than 250 people came through the cafeteria doors to visit the wide array of booths brought together by sponsor Rollins Brook Community Hospital.

The success of the event could prompt a permanent change in venue, according to Metroplex Wellness Coordinator Lindsey Peplinski.

"Because of things they have been doing over there [at LMS], we had to move it here," Ms. Peplinski said. "But it is a bigger location,

and I think it worked out better. We'll probably continue to do it here."

In all, 31 vendors from Lampasas, Killeen and Austin set up shop inside the school's cafeteria for the three-hour event. The most popular attraction — for adults, that is — was the free health screening station offered by Metroplex Health System.

Participants were measured, weighed and had their fingers pricked in order to obtain a complete health synopsis consisting of glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure levels, plus a body mass analysis.

For some who stood in line over an hour to take the tests, the booth was perhaps a little too popular. That sentiment was echoed by surrounding vendors such as local chiropractor Ira May, whose station was right next door.

"I think [the Health Fest] is

definitely a good way to get the word out. I wish I had a little better location because when people have all their tests done, they kind of bypass me," May said. "They think I'm part of that, and they just go right on past."

Even with the occasional overlooking, May said he plans to return next year to the Health Fest.

Another highly visited booth was manned by the Lampasas Police Department. The trio of Patrolman John Arellano, Officer Steve Sheldon and Sgt. Charles Montgomery issued personalized Kiddo Cards that contain emergency contact information, a photo, a thumb print and the child's basic physical characteristics.

While parents and other adults spent their time perusing the various vendor booths for information, the children in

attendance were drawn primarily to the face-painting station, snow cone machine and the tiger-shaped bounce house.

One local father of four-year-old twins said he was surprised at the balance of interests for all ages.

"We came out here to entertain the kids but, at the same time, we didn't realize they were doing so many things that really helped out the people in the community," he said. "It really worked out well for the kids because they had a blast."

"We had a really wonderful time."

That response is exactly what Metroplex officials hoped to achieve.

"We put on the event for the community, to educate them and make them aware of different health issues, and let them know what kind of organizations are in the community that they can go to," Ms. Peplinski said.



PHOTOS BY CLAY WHITTINGTON
Linda McGehee of Lampasas has her height measured by John Foster, a hospital volunteer from Killeen.



Haley Wheeler's son, Cale, had his face decorated by Darlene Olarte of RBCH.



April Thomas registers her boys Connor, Jason and John for Kiddo Cards.



Sarah Adams holds 6-month-old son Kade Landry while LISD School Resource Office Steve Sheldon, left, and Patrolman John Arellano fingerprint the infant for a Kiddo Card.

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