

SSISD Health Advisory Council making a difference

Written by From Staff Reports
Tuesday, 06 May 2014 13:43

This year, nearly 200 individuals received health screenings thanks to the efforts of Sulphur Springs Independent School District's School Health Advisory Council. More than 200 staff received flu shots and at least that many received information and participated in a health fair this year.

According to data provided by Jeff Sant, 138 SSISD staff members received sonogram screenings offered by Lone Star Surgery and Vein Center in conjunction with SHAC. Sixty women took advantage of the availability of mammograms from East Texas Medical Center's mobile center and had the health screening. More than 200 staff members received flu shots provided at work by Cody Drug.

While in the past, the district has been able to offer a mobile dentist for some students, that service was not available this year due to changes in the Medicaid program. However, Sant and Sulphur Springs High School nurse Mary Lou Foster noted there are two dentists in town who do accept Medicaid; the SHAC hopes to be able to offer services again through them in the future.

SHAC took a different approach this year to get the people in the community more involved with the program. In the past, they'd held meetings during certain months of the year with a different professional from the community featured to talk about various health topics. While the council met five times this school year, SHAC reached out to various health-related businesses and agencies in the community to offer a health fair.

Called "Family Fun and Fitness Night," the Feb. 27 health fair boasted more than 25 booths from a variety of local health-related groups and agencies including businesses, physicians, Hopkins County Memorial Hospital and Emergency Medical Services and state agencies offering a wide variety of health information and some screenings. About 200 people attended.

The event also included a bounce house for kids to enjoy and donated door prizes such as soccer balls, trial memberships to two fitness centers, footballs, courtesy lab workups, bike helmets and a car seat. The grand prize was a donated elliptical machine.

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“For our first attempt, we feel it was a huge success and brought visibility to our district and credibility to our SHAC,” SHAC noted in a report prepared and presented to SSISD trustees at a recent board meeting.

Sant and Foster noted that SHAC would like to be able to offer another health fair at a future date, that everything is “on track to do it again,” just not necessarily within the next year.

While this year’s co-chairs were Jeff Sant and SSISD physical education teacher Suzy Rost, Assistant Superintendent Randy Reed noted the program’s development also been largely in part due to Foster, who is retiring at the end of the school year. “Mary Lou has been a big part of the council’s early beginnings. She pretty much put the organization together,” Reed to the board. “Thank you for your years not only as nurse but to the community and programs.”

Later during that same board meeting, SSISD trustees approved the list of individuals recommended to serve on the SHAC during the 2014-15 school year. The panel, Foster noted, will include the new SSSS nurse and must be composed of more than 50 percent parents.

A few members of the committee serve dual roles, as parents as well as in a professional capacity, including Dr. Laura Kosub, parent and physician; Kimberly Williams, speech therapist and parent; Tammy Carrell as SSSS athletic trainer and parent. Williams also was elected by the SHAC to serve along side Sant, a parent representative, as co-chair next year. Other parents reps on the council include Tenny Tanton, Traci Haire, Heath Anderson, Carol Palmer, Amanda Olyer and Susan Moonery.

Serving as student representatives on the council will be Taylor Harden, who will be a junior, and Will Sant, who will be a senior.

Other district personnel serving on the council will include Shanna Romero, a school nurse; LeeAnne Frazier, middle school physical education teacher; Debra Gardner, school nurse; Josh Neill, middle school athletic trainer; Ricki Elliott and Veronica Arnold, food service directors; and Jennifer Carter, high school nurse. Assistant Superintendents Randy Reed and Betty Lawson will serve as ex-officio members. Romero was also elected by the council to serve as the group’s secretary next year.

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Finishing out the SHAC will be Johanna Hicks, Texas AgriLife Extension Service family and consumer sciences agent, and Sylvia Millsap, Texas Department of State Health Services rep.

School districts were required by Senate Bill 283 to have a school health group that meets a minimum of five times a years, has a least five members, has a parent serving as chair or co-chair, reports at least once annually to the school board about the SHAC's activities and recommendations, and to recommend "indicators for evaluating effectiveness of Coordinated School Health programs."

More information about Sulphur Springs' SHAC can be found under the "For Parents" menu across the top of the www.ssisd.net home page. Select "Health Information" then "School Health Advisory Council."