

Enjoying a Day in the Park

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Promoting foster care and child abuse prevention, the second annual Day in the Park event was held Saturday at Greenbrook Park.

With 94 children in state custody, foster care parents are desperately needed in DeKalb County as the number is not enough to meet the need. Lisa Cripps of the Drug Coalition says the reason for the high rate of children who are removed from their homes is drug and alcohol abuse.

"About 85 percent of all removals are for a drug or alcohol issue involving the parents," she said during the Saturday event.

The addiction issues, Cripps noted also lend themselves to a higher rate of child abuse. Last year there were just under 1,000 child abuse referrals made in DeKalb

County alone. The number is dwarfed by the over 150,000 cases reported state-wide last year.

Given the staggering statistics, a number of agencies were represented at the park event, all available for information as families enjoyed the day of entertainment on a beautiful Saturday. The agencies included Camelot, Omni, DCS, the DeKalb Prevent Coalition, the county's school health coordinator, the Tennessee Department of Health, Head start and the U.T. Extension office. The Smith Connection from "The Spot" in Carthage sang at the event.

The head start group from LBJ&C was there, hoping to sign up children 3-5 years old who are from low-income families. They offer a full-day program to help children grow educationally as they prepare for school. They also offer free health and dental care to the children as well as healthy meals.



Lisa Cripps of the Drug Coalition addresses the crowd.



Brayden Shehane tries his hand at jump rope while enjoying the day at Greenbrook Park.

Duane Sherrill photos

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