



[Click Here for Forecast](#)

- Home Page
- Weather
- Today's Front Page
- Local News
- News From AP
- Obituaries
- Sports
- Business
- Tempo
- Entertainment
- Outdoors
- Classifieds
- Place a Classified
- Subscriptions
- JCPress Photo Store
- Local Information
- Not-for-Profit
- Places of Worship
- Reader Survey
- Deadlines & Policies
- Site Help
- Contact Us

Local News

Story published: 4/30/2006 • [Print Story](#) • [E-mail Story to a Friend](#) • [Back to Home Page](#)

Come on, get healthy - Freedom Hall event kicks off Up and At 'Em initiative



Participants line up to register for the 10,000-step challenge. (Dave Boyd / Johnson City Press)

By Rex Barber
Press Staff Writer
rbarber@johnsoncitypress.com

Johnson Citians should be well on their way to a healthier, happier lifestyle today.

Saturday kicked off the Up and At 'Em initiative, a campaign to promote healthy living by Johnson City residents.

The event, which took place at Freedom Hall Civic Center from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., offered children and adults advice, support, education and programs aimed at down-sizing the waistlines of the city's obese population.

The pattern for a healthy lifestyle is set during childhood. To help children develop that pattern, Laura Matney, physical education teacher

advertisement

Are you ready for a Break?

BARTER BREAKAWAY

With an approved auto loan, you will receive a FREE getaway package that includes Accommodations for one evening at the Martha Washington Inn, a pair of Barter Theatre tickets and breakfast for two.

NEW & USED AUTO LOAN RATES AS LOW AS **5.00%**

Flexible terms
Easy application

Visit our new location at **181 Marketplace Blvd.** (Across from Lowe's, Next to Carrabba's in Johnson City)

[CLICK HERE](#)



Johnson City Federal Credit Union
Smart Move!

(423) 282-0671
(800) 228-4738

johnsoncityfcu.org

at Woodland Elementary School, was on hand to demonstrate several different physical activities like golf and tennis, and also an educational game about how the heart works.

The equipment for the activities and games were bought by Mountain States Health Alliance and are continually cycled in and out of 45 schools throughout the region.

“A child’s lifestyle is pretty much established by the time they’re 8 years old,” Matney said.

Because of that, children need to be inundated with fitness and health facts, but the problem is there is only a limited amount of time that can be used in school for physical education.

“I think our biggest problem is most children are getting PE 60 minutes a week,” Matney said. “That’s pretty much the norm in Johnson City.”

One way today’s youth get some much needed exercise is through a video game called “Dance Dance Revolution.”

A player stands on a platform with a motion sensor floor. A screen in front of them flashes dance moves, which the participant must replicate. It provides an intense workout.

Several DDR machines were at Freedom Hall Saturday and youths were taking full advantage of them.

Janie Ponder, president of the student government association for the 8-9 campus, said the physical activity DDR offers is a great way to work out and have fun.

“The 8-9 SGA is sponsoring the DDR activity, which will promote healthy activity in the teenage crowd,” Ponder said. “This is something that’s really popular among our age group.”

Regardless of your skill in DDR, the health benefits it offers are obvious, said SGA member Will Benedetto.

“I’m not really good at it,” he said. “I think its a good way for kids to get active.”

Some activities adults could get into as well as children were offered in the booth area, which also housed the stage where Ryan Kelly, a contestant on NBC’s “The Biggest Loser” gave a speech about how she struggled with weight problems.

One of the programs for weight loss and healthy living was Walk Across Tennessee, organized by the UT Extension office in Washington County as part of the Tennessee Shapes Up program.

Olson’s Black Belt Academy also was on hand. Glenn Olson, the Johnson City academy’s instructor is also a certified Safety N.E.T. Kids instructor.

Safety N.E.T. Kids is a national (and international) program aimed at making kids less likely targets for sexual abuse and bullying. The program is slated to begin dealing with childhood obesity and how to prevent it, Olson said.

“Our system is really unique ... ,” Olson said. “Kids go through this training and then when they finish, they go home with a DVD (of the program). It’s something that any kid can do, and it’s something they’ll remember.”

Olson said the obesity program will follow the same formula.

The martial arts Olson teaches are not required for losing weight, he said. It will obviously help, but there is much more to it than just what he teaches.

“Martial arts is just one of the pieces of the puzzle they can use to stay active,” he said. “The main things we want to teach them are the fundamentals of fitness. It’s (the program) just a unique way to encourage kids to be healthy, and in a fun way.”

© 2001-06 Johnson City Press and Associated Press All Rights Reserved
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Got news? Send tips to newsroom@johnsoncitypress.com.

For problems with the Web site, please contact the Webmaster at webmaster@johnsoncitypress.com.

For all other inquiries, please consult our [Contact Us](#) page for department listings.

Johnson City Press
204 W.Main St.
Johnson City, Tennessee 37605
423.929.3111

[Home Page](#) | [Local News](#) | [News From AP](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Tempo](#) | [Entertainment](#)
[Outdoors](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Subscriptions](#) | [Local Information](#)

[Back to Top](#)