

Lake Stevens National Night Out better than ever

Hundreds learn the importance of keeping community safe and healthy

BY PAM STEVENS | MANAGING EDITOR

Dancing, singing, water fights and more is what brought over 2,500 Lake Stevens residents to the streets of downtown Lake Stevens last Tuesday, August 2, but folks walked away with a lot more than great entertainment experiences and free food.

The over 50 vendor booths at the 2011 National Night Out Against Crime event offered loads of important information to keep our families safe and healthy.

"That count of 54 vendors does not include the behind the scenes vendors that provided so much to the event and had no booth there," Kathleen Friend, Director of the Lake Stevens Family Center said. "Among those contributors were DJ Bob Justice, Sound Karaoke and Light, Bounce House Washington, Foster Press, Hawkeye's Pub who provided 800 hot dogs and buns, Aquafest that provided cases and cases of water, and those that donated items for the silent auction to support the LSFC Back to School Project for children in need of assistance."

Each year Friend and her staff and Advisory Board at the Lake Stevens Family Center take on this huge project to bring awareness to

those living within our community. Adding fun, food and festive entertainment options have made the event what it is today.

"The purpose of National Night Out is to increase personal and community Crime Prevention Awareness. Research has indicated that communities in which residents feel more connected to their community are more likely to have less crime because people feel a greater ownership of the community as a whole; this is true for youth as well as adults," Friend explained. "When we know our first responders (either by name or by face) and recognize other people that live around us, we have a greater propensity to communicate with one another, look out for each other and work together."

The Lake Stevens Family Center has two primary goals: To build families for a stronger community and to build community for stronger Families.

"National Night Out is but one of the ways that we can engage the many facets of our community to work together, and toward achieving those goals by providing opportunities to meet your neighbors, first responders and elected officials while receiving information on resources to stabilize and



Vendors at National Night Out took time to show kids how to stay safe on land and on water.

Photo by Pam Stevens

sustain the safety and well-being of your family," Friend explained.

It is an important event for communities and those who participate and volunteer each year recognize its importance.

"The best representation of the importance of the type of community building that events like NNO have was exemplified by Snohom-

ish County Search and Rescue," Friend said. "Monday there was a tragedy in our county that necessitated their exhaustive work of being able to recover the body of a young person that drowned in the Stillaguamish River. It was not until late Tuesday afternoon that their efforts were realized, and yet they found National Night Out to be a

priority; so much so, that upon finishing recovery efforts they came directly to North Cove Park to be part of our National Night Out Against Crime celebration."

National Night Out is always celebrated on the first Tuesday in August, within thousands of communities in all 50 States and on Military Bases worldwide.