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Stand for Children

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About 1,000 people gathered Thursday morning on Western Kentucky University's South Lawn for the 11th annual Stand For Children Day.

The Community Education event brings together children and community organizations and businesses to celebrate children, said Debbie Wade-Jordan, executive director of Community Education.

"These are our future lawyers and doctors," she said. "We want to make sure they have a good start."

The event was the idea of the organization's advisory council, Wade-Jordan said. She said the event started off as a small event at WKU and has grown each year.

"There's always children," she said. "This day is a fun, safe day for them that's free."

About 50 agencies - nonprofit and for-profit - promoted services they make available to children in the area. The event also included entertainment, prizes, games, such as a bean bag toss, and face painting.

"I like all the activities here," said Amber Tucker, 7.

A theme generally accompanies Stand for Children Day. This year's theme was about wanting children to "Bee Amazing," and the activities and information disseminated catered to that theme.

Music blasted from speakers as children from Bowling Green Parks and Recreation, the Housing Authority of Bowling Green and Community Education summer camps went from table to table, gathering information and goodies from vendors such as the ALIVE Center, Warren County Schools and American Bank & Trust - a sponsor of the event.

"We support Community Education, and we're happy to be a part of this," said Meshawn Conner of American Bank & Trust. "We need to do everything we can to let (children) know they're loved and safe."

While they got time to play around, they also got a chance to do an on-site scavenger hunt - finding book covers hidden at each of the booths - and dance the cha-cha slide - a staple at the event.

Anne Grubbs, enrichment and volunteer coordinator for Community Education, said this year more families were present - like Bowling Green resident Michelle Hosteter. Hosteter was there with her two sons - Drew, 5, and Jacob, 8, - her mother, a cousin and her sister-in-law.

"This is a great way to promote awareness of what is in the community," said Hosteter, who gathered information on drugs and keeping the environment green. "Kids don't understand it, but this is also a great way from them to learn without knowing it. We've enjoyed this."

Hosteter's sentiments were echoed by her son, Jacob, who said he liked the activities and the scavenger hunt.

"This is fun," he said.