



## **Library to provide information, support for special moms**

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

In today's families, mothers are often a child's main caregiver, and while that alone many times proves to be a difficult task, providing for a child with disability makes the job even harder.

This Saturday, a Garden City non-profit agency will have a free mini-conference at Liberal's Memorial Library to provide mothers, grandmothers and foster mothers information and resources on the many supports and opportunities available to them.

"It's a non-profit agency that works with families who have children that have disabilities," Families Together Inc.'s Teresa Beaudry said. "We've been in the state for 35 years, and our Garden City office covers all of Western Kansas."

Saturday's event will run from 1 to 2 p.m. and is called "Mothers Matter Too" and was made available from a grant, Beaudry said.

"It's for mothers, grandmothers or foster moms that moms are the main caregivers for their children who have disabilities," she said. "This is an opportunity to network. We're going to do some stuff about stress relief and provide some information for them about the resources that are available, including financial, disability, just all kinds of resources."

Beaudry said Families Together puts on other events throughout the year.

"This one, we received a special grant for, so it's geared toward that," she said of Saturday's event. "We have other events where we have statewide conferences, workshops. Somebody from Liberal could call and say, 'We need to learn about special ed law.' We can schedule a workshop. They can contact us. We have workshops on special ed law, stress, advocacy, how to deal with medical staff. We can do that for parents or educators."

Beaudry said this means Families Together works with both parents and school systems.

"A lot of times, parents and schools, for some reason, don't communicate well, so we've had to

step in and work between them,” she said.

Beaudry said the funding for the Garden City agency comes from federal and state grants.

“We have smaller grants that we get from the different communities, but we get most of our funding from federal grants,” she said. “It’s through the Department of Education.”

Beaudry said donations can be made to Families Together, and what the agency doesn’t get from grants is received mostly from those donations.

“We do have a fundraiser once a year,” she said. “We have an event in Garden City, but that only raises a very small part of what we need.”

Another possibility for funding for Families Together is Finney County’s United Way, but Beaudry said the agency is not part of that funding puzzle yet.

“We have looked into it, but we’re very short staffed,” she said. “We just don’t have the personnel to do that.”

At Saturday’s event, moms will have the opportunity to learn ways to cope with stress, network with other mothers and learn what benefits are available and how they work to provide for their child’s special needs.

A resource bag will be provided filled with tools to help them through the stressful challenges of everyday life.

Those wanting to attend “Mothers Matter Too” must register to attend. Registration can be done by calling the Garden City Families Together office at 620-276-6364 or 888-820-6364 or by

**Children with disabilities all agree Mothers matter**

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e-mail at [gardencity@families togetherinc.org](mailto:gardencity@families togetherinc.org). No child care will be provided.