

Resource event brings crowd to Bandy Park

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Citizens flocked to Bandy Park, where information on everything from housing to mental health was available at a resource event Monday.

“Everyone is excited to give the community some resources, so people will be knowledgeable,” said Ayanna Thomas of Lee-Russell Council of Governments. “People get to educate themselves or potential caregivers can. Whether people use the information now or later, they will get resources and be able to interact with people from different agencies.”

Gloria Reese was one of the many people who attended the event. A family member told her about the resources and organizations featured.

“I’m just moving, and I need a lot of help,” she said. “This event means people have a good heart. They are looking out for those who are struggling. They’re trying to get people’s attention if they need help.”

Booths were lined up under the benched area of Bandy Park. Organizations such as the United Way, A Family Resource Center, East Alabama Mental Health and more were in attendance.

“A lot of times when people have a need, they don’t know where to go,” said Becky Benton, United Way executive director. “We have the 2-1-1 services that gives people information on social services in the community. I’m pleasantly surprised to see this many people out this afternoon.”

Some people don’t even know where to turn for basic necessities like food, shelter and clothes, said Lester Holstick, president of Ole Reliable Transport, LLC. The mental health portion of the event, in particular, stood out to him.

“When some think of mental health, they think people have to be crazy, but they [East Alabama Mental Health] have so much to offer for women raising children, anger management and other programs. We’re trying to make progress, and in doing so some of these programs can advance lives. I’m sure this won’t be the last event.”



Bandy Park

Nell Finley of A Family Resource Center speaks to citizens about services at the agency Monday at a resource event at Bandy Park.

The mental health center's booth received many visitors, said prevention specialist Jason Flowers. He said he set up a booth to educate people on substance and alcohol abuse, and underage drinking.

"Things went great," he said. "It's a great turnout, and the community is very aware. They've been participating as well."