

# Healthy Woman program a success, officials say

By **LYNDEL MOODY**

Features Writer

With a full year under its belt, Healthy Woman's coordinator said the community-wide program designed to provide health information and resources to women has received an overwhelming response.

"The response from our community — the women in our community — has been incredible," said Kim Howell, Scenic Mountain Medical Center marketing director/Healthy Woman coordinator.

"We had a goal for 2009 of 300 members. We thought that would be terrific. We have nearly 700 members if that gives you an idea. We've been overwhelmed by the response.

"Our advisory council works very hard to come up with programs to appeal to folks," Howell said. "We've been thrilled by the turnout from the community. We struggled



Howell

to find space to use to accommodate the number of guests who attended our nine programs last year."

More than 250 participants packed the health fair and dinner held at Dora Roberts Community Center Thursday to kick start year two of the program. Dr. Pat Love, a licensed marriage and family therapist and nationally-known speaker, gave a "edutainment" talk based on gender science titled "How to Tell a Man From a Woman."

"My boss, Troy Tompkins,

who works for Prudential, advised me that this would be a good deal for me to come to," said 23-year-old Annessa Lerma, who attended the health fair. "Nowadays we have so many problems, it's good to know about these things and be aware of health issues, especially at my age."

Also attending was Joann Trevino, whose daughter Trisha Hobdy is a charter member of the Healthy Women's Advisory Council.

"I was going to come last year and just didn't make

it," Trevino said. "I made a point of coming this year. It's awesome."

The aim of Healthy Woman, sponsored by Scenic Mountain Medical Center, is to provide programs, information and networking to area women to help in making informed decisions about their health.

"Women are the primary healthcare decision makers, and we hope that with our program they will learn some tidbit, some information —

maybe not even from our program but someone sitting next to them at our program — that will help them with some struggle they are having with a health issue," Howell said. "One of our members at our Teal Toes event in September, which is our ovarian cancer awareness event, ... stood up at the end, and she said 'Ladies learn the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer, and if you're

friend says I'm feeling this, this and this you tell her to get to the doctor. My good friend had been complaining of these symptoms for three years, and by the time she got diagnosed, it was inoperable and she is probably going to pass.'"

"That was very meaningful to me because it was something we all needed to hear," Howell said. "All of us in that room need to know the signs, so if someone we know came to us complaining about those symptoms we could say it's probably nothing but it sounds like signs of ovar-

ian cancer, so go to your doctor and get that checked out. Don't let it go. That is very important because we don't. We're brave and go on, but we don't want to lose anyone else to things that are preventable, especially like ovarian cancer."

Howell said 10 events are set this year for the program and encourages community support. Information can be found by going [www.smmccares.com](http://www.smmccares.com) or by calling Howell at 268-4842.

"Our Web site is the place we send our members to register

for each event so we know how many are planning to attend, and you can see the details of each event," she said. "We send two e-mails a month. One is a newsletter that gives timely information and health tips and Web sites to go visit for more information. It's just a front and back newsletter and is mailed to folks who don't e-mail. We also send a reminder about that month's event with a link in it back to the Web site to register."