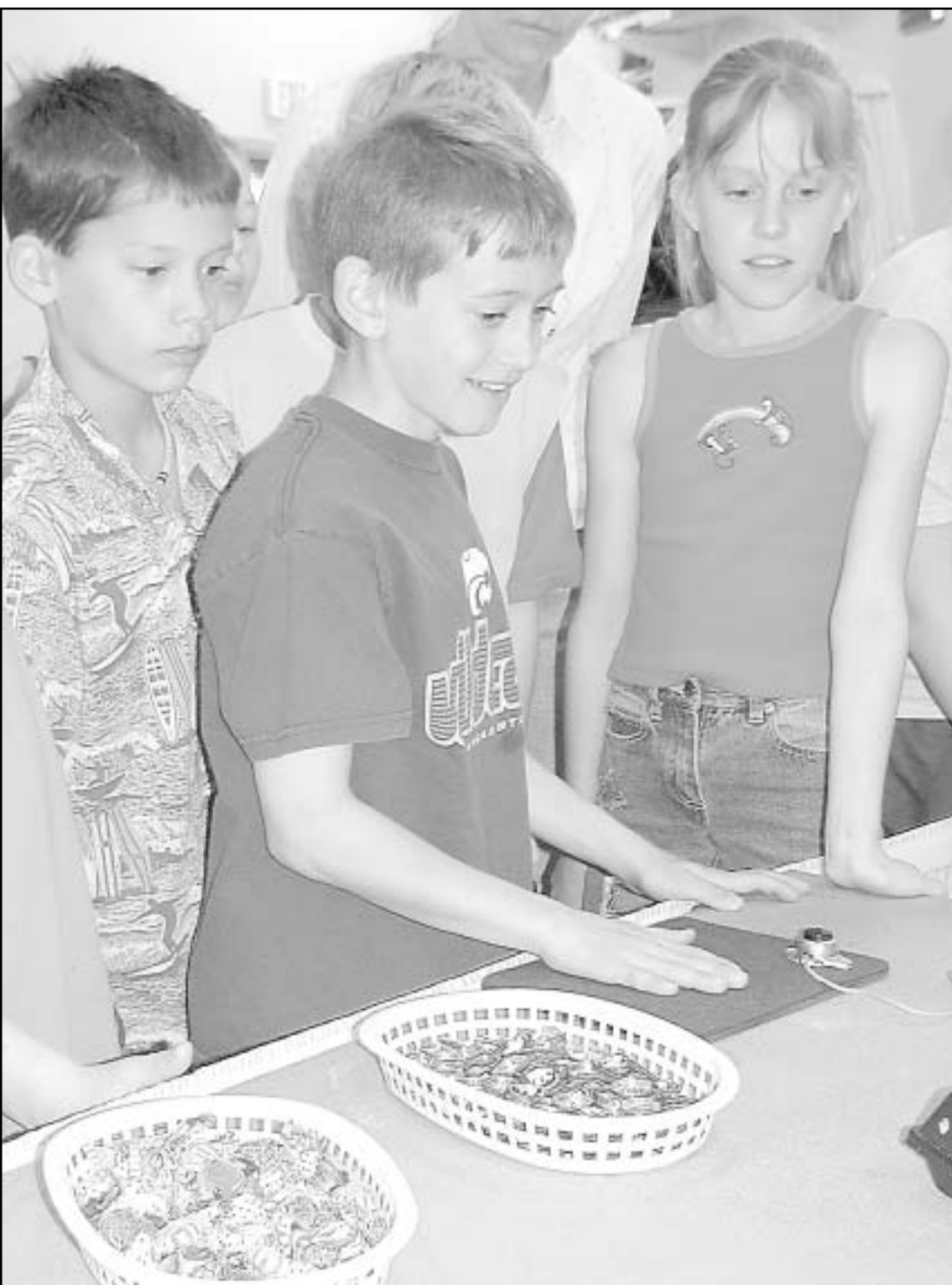




AT THE HEALTH FAIR on Friday, Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy hooked up Colby Larson to the cardiac monitor and checked his vitals. Pomeroy brought Decatur County's newest ambulance to the fair and gave tours.



FOURTH GRADERS Ryan Bishop, Brent Juenemann and Amanda Marshall (above) stopped to check out the Decatur County Extension Service booth on farm safety and reaction times. Karli Fredrickson (right) got her eyes checked.

Kids, adults gather for annual health fair

The sound of the helicopter blades could be heard cutting through the air before the machine came into sight.

It was just before 11 a.m., and the fourth graders from Oberlin Elementary School were checking out one of the Decatur County fire trucks when they heard the sound. It was an air ambulance from Kearney, Neb., used to transport patients more quickly than a ground ambulance.

The grass outside The Gateway had been sprayed with water so the helicopter could land near the parking lot. Once it was on the ground, the blades stopped spinning and the crew got out so they could answer questions and give a tour of the equipment.

The helicopter had made a special trip from Kearney for the sixth annual Decatur County Health Fair sponsored by the county health department.

Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said this is only the third time out of the six years of the fair that the helicopter has actually been able to land and stay for the scheduled hour and half.

Other years, she said, the weather has been bad and they haven't been



AN AIR AMBULANCE HELICOPTER from Kearney, Neb., landed in the grass next to the parking lot at The Gateway just before 11 a.m.

able to fly or the crew received an emergency call before getting here.

Inside The Gateway, 25 booths had been set up for the fair. The crowd received information on everything from healthy eating (five servings of fruits and vegetables a day) to getting their eyes checked.

Ms. Gamblin said she thought kids really liked the booth from the YMCA in McCook. The women at the booth taught them aerobic steps.

Ms. Gamblin said they had about

200 pass in and out of The Gateway. She said it was probably the smallest crowd they have ever had, but the weather was really nice.

People who had booths and had been at the fair before were hoping for a bigger crowd. First timers said they thought it went well.

The administrator said they plan on doing the fair again next year, but may cut it by an hour. After lunch, she said, it seemed to get a little slower.



Story and photos by Kimberly Brandt