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Exchange Club is 'Top Club' in District

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NEWBURYPORT — On the wings of a successful "Field of Honor" program and an eight-member jump in membership, the Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport was selected for the Past President's "Top Club" banner at the New England District Exchange Club Education Conference in Plymouth on Nov. 6. The club now displays the banner for the next year.

As part of the celebration on receiving the banner, the club also honored Richie Eaton of the Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank at its Nov. 16 meeting with a plaque of appreciation for the bank's \$2,500 sponsorship of the program — a field of 400 American flags on the Bartlet Mall over the Sept. 11 weekend to honor those who died as well as those who have served as fire, police, EMTs or members of the military. The club will again sponsor the program next September on the 10th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, and the bank has again pledged a \$2,500 sponsorship.

"We thank you for having the faith and confidence in our first effort," event chairman Kathleen Bailey said while presenting the plaque. "You were our first and largest corporate event sponsor. We could not have carried this off without your support. We

present you with this plaque in honor of your generosity and support — and with our deepest gratitude. Again, we can't thank you enough."

With the Exchange Club's focus on the prevention of child abuse, the largest donation from the "Field of Honor" proceeds went to the Michael B. Christensen Family Support Center in Lawrence, which works to break the cycle of violence against children throughout the Merrimack Valley, including Newburyport. A check for \$1,500 was presented to the center at the Education Conference. In addition, funds also went to the local Kids As Peacemakers peace mural program and the club scholarship fund.

In addition to the "Field of Honor," the Exchange Club also places teddy bears and coloring supplies in local police cruisers for use with children in distress at accident scenes or in domestic disputes, administers the KAP Peace Mural program, sponsors a Pioneer League baseball team, presents two college scholarships, conducts the "Kids' Day in the Park" during Yankee Homecoming, brings a patriotic sing-along to local nursing homes on the club's National Day of Service, rings the bell for the Salvation Army, serves a holiday dinner for the St. Vincent de Paul Society meal program and throws holiday parties for the Dare Family Services home for teenage mothers and for a home for mentally challenged adults in Amesbury.

"This is like frosting on the cake," President Ben Iacono said of the "Top Club" award. "This is the culmination of a great year. All of our members are to be commended. We have been recognized in the community, and now we are the toast of the New England District."

The club meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m. at the Starboard Galley, 55 Water St., Newburyport.



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