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A century of Kiwanis

Laconia chapter notes 100th anniversary of club

By ED PIERCE

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LACONIA — A behind-the-scenes organization that does yeoman's work for volunteer causes was at the forefront Wednesday evening as hundreds gathered at the Belknap Mill to celebrate the 100th birthday of Kiwanis, a service club that serves children and the community.

The Laconia Kiwanis Club hosted the special gathering and party, and it drew a bevy of distinguished visitors to say thanks for all the charitable work and hard work Kiwanis members do to help others.

"I'm here tonight like everyone else to celebrate this wonderful group's 100th birthday," said New Hampshire Executive Councilor Joe Kenney. "For this state, it's one of the major civic organizations that provides volunteerism. Things the state can't do, Kiwanis can do."

Kenney mingled with guests and made it a point to meet and say thanks to members of the Laconia High School Key Club, a Ki-



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NEW HAMPSHIRE Executive Councilor Joe Kenney cuts the cake at the Belknap Mill on Wednesday evening during the 100th birthday celebration for Kiwanis. More than 150 guests attended the festivities which recognized the many ways the Laconia Kiwanis Club benefits the community.

wanis high school service club, attending the event.

"I wasn't in Key Club when I was in high school, but it provides a tremendous opportunity for students to contribute to oth-

ers," Kenney said. "It is growing the leaders of tomorrow and volunteers in our community."

Pleasant Street School librari-

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KIWANIS

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an Liz Rosenfeld said Laconia Kiwanis Club volunteers who donate books to students and then make time to stop by the school and read to school children deserve enormous praise.

"The students feel the support of the community through the 'Kiwanis Kares' Program," Rosenfeld said. "I'm confident that thousands of students have benefited from the Kiwanis Club. Your legacy is they will become leaders of volunteers in the community."

Ann Marie of the Central New Hampshire VNA & Hospice, thanked members of the Laconia Kiwanis Club for always being there to lend a hand and for funding essential programs that are making a difference.

She said because of Kiwanis funding, crucial services are provided to children in Belknap County and their families.

"Some of those services include pediatric home care and an immunization program that prevents many major childhood diseases," Marie said.

The Rev. Paula Gile of Got Lunch! Laconia said Kiwanis was there when the organization was founded in 2011 and as the effort grew to serve even more children entering its second year, some Got Lunch! Laconia volunteers worried about how to pay for expanding its services.

"Kiwanis really stepped up and really supports us," Gile said. "Kiwanis organized a St. Patrick's Day dinner dance that helped us raise the money. To have Kiwanis step up and do that meant more than you will ever know."

Kiwanis International was founded in 1915 in Detroit, Michigan, and the following year it became an international organization with the creation of the Kiwanis Club of Hamilton, Ontario.

Each year, Kiwanis members conduct more



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LACONIA HIGH School Key Club President Emilie Maddocks speaks about the significance of the Kiwanis Club during the 100th birthday celebration for Kiwanis at the Belknap Mill on Wednesday evening.

than 150,000 charitable service projects and devote more than 6 million hours of volunteer service while raising \$100 million every year for communities, families and projects.

Laconia Kiwanis Club President John Walker said the local club isn't quite as old as the international Kiwanis organization as it's only 88 years old, but is devoted to helping children and working tirelessly for all residents of the city and beyond.

"Our club is not large, but we have a big impact upon our community," Walker said.

He thanked Hermit Woods Winery for providing a gift basket and winery tour that was raffled off during the festivities, along with an iPad Mini.

Walker also told partygoers that in partnership with Greenlaw's Music, the Laconia Kiwanis Club is now raffling tickets for a LG 55-inch LED smart television.

The raffle drawing for the television will be held March 16, a day before the NCAA men's college basketball tournament will begin, he said.

Television raffle tickets are \$10 each and are available from any Laconia Kiwanis Club member, at Greenlaw's Music or the Belknap Mill.

All proceeds from the raffle will benefit the Kiwanis Charities Fund.