

Montecito Bank & Trust

Grants \$35,000 to Ten Local Nonprofit Organizations

By **JEANETTE CASILLAS** / CASA

IN CELEBRATION OF THEIR 35TH OPENING DAY ANNIVERSARY, Montecito Bank & Trust (MB&T) presented ten local nonprofits with grants that totaled \$35,000 last week at their downtown branch on State Street.

“Welcome and thank you for joining us as we proudly celebrate our 35th anniversary of providing our customers with world class service and flexible banking solutions,” shared Janet Garufis, President and CEO of MB&T as she welcomed a room full of bank associates and representatives of the nonprofits. “Few organizations celebrate milestones by giving away money, but we want to mark our 35th anniversary as a community bank in Santa Barbara by giving back \$35,000.”

Annually since 1993, bank associates have nominated their favorite nonprofit organizations to the voting list and then lobbied their colleagues for votes. Each associate receives ten votes and unlike the annual Community Dividends® awards, Towbes and MB&T executives do not get to cast a vote. Towbes learned of the winners just a few days prior to the reception. “The bank supports nonprofits and to have the organizations chosen by the bank employees makes it very special,” shared Michael Towbes, founder and chairman of MB&T.

When MB&T opened on March 17th, 1975, it operated out of trailers on Coast Village Road in Montecito for two years.



Michael Towbes, founder and chairman of Montecito Bank & Trust and **Janet Garufis**, President and CEO of the bank

Towbes shared that in order to entice new customers, the bank offered a free checking account for life. “Something that has become more like a life insurance policy, because no one has died,” Towbes said jokingly. Today MB&T has nine branch locations serving local communities that span both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

The organizations chosen as the 2010 Anniversary Grants recipients included Angels Foster Care of Santa Barbara, Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP), C.A.R.E.4Paws, Channel

Islands YMCA, Court Appointed Special Advocates of SB County (CASA), Dog Adoption & Welfare Group (DAWG), Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, Santa Barbara Foresters/Hugs for Cubs, Parkinson Association of SB, and Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation.

Each organization was introduced by a bank associate explaining why they were deserving of the award. The recipients received a check and a dvd promotional video about their own organization to help raise awareness and

assist with fundraising efforts. The videos were provided by MB&T’s corporate partner, Cox Cable, who underwrote the production of each.

To top off the evening, it was announced that MB&T had selected the Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation as the

main beneficiary of this year’s Santa Barbara Triathlon to be held August 27th through 29th.

For more information visit www.montecito.com.



Lisa Wright and **Whitney Alessandri**, The Dog Adoption & Welfare Group (D.A.W.G.); **Carlos Abitia** and **Isabelle Gullö Abitia**, C.A.R.E. 4 Paws co-founders and **Tina Kudron**, Montecito Bank & Trust



Kitty Bell, MB&T with **Marjorie Palonen** and **Craig Palonen**, Parkinson Association of Santa Barbara



Drew Wakefield, SB Foresters/Hugs for Cubs; **Dan Browne**, MB&T; **Janet Garufis**; **Dave Pintard**, SB Foresters/Hugs for Cubs; and **Michael Towbes**



Lynn Karlson, Executive Director Channel Islands YMCA receives grant from **Michael Towbes**



John Leonard, SB Daily Sound; **Ellen Dameron**, Angels Foster Care of Santa Barbara; **Bob Grissom**, Cox Communications



Eliane Martin, Animal Shelter Assistance Program (ASAP); **Michael Towbes**; **Kaitlyn Stewart**, (ASAP)