

Bikers revved up about humanitarian award

By Terry Edelmann
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It's not often that motorcycle clubs get humanitarian awards.

But the Crown Royal's Motorcycle Club was honored earlier this month because of its service to young people.

The club, founded in 1975 and located at 215 Alsobrook in Meacham Park, was one of three honorees at this year's Club 44 dinner April 1 at Vianney High School.

Club 44 is based in Kirkwood, and each year members recognize groups and individuals that make a contribution to society, said Sister Helen Santamaria, principal of Nerinx Hall High School and a board member for Club 44.

MEACHAM PARK

Members of the Club Royal were well aware of the bad image of motorcycle clubs and decided to take on some community activities, said club treasurer Arvel Parker.

"We sponsor baseball and football teams, we give out baskets at Christmas time and we have annual Easter egg hunts," Parker said.

The extra activities weren't just for show, he said.

"We're very dedicated to helping kids," Parker said.

"When we were young there was always someone to help us, someone who had something for us to do. It was Joe Cole (founder of Club 44). Now we help kids find things to do."

The club finances the charities with one big fund-raiser each year.

"The first weekend in June we hold a barbecue here at our club, we have a dance at the UAW Hall in north St. Louis and then we



John Ashcroft presents a plaque to members of the Crown Royal's Motorcycle Club at Club 44's annual dinner and awards ceremony. Club members are, from left, Wendel Bibbs, Ron Jackson, Arvel Parker and Lee Brown.

sponsor a big motorcycle race. We get motorcyclists from all over the country," Parker said.

Though members don't give riding lessons, they do emphasize safety when taking children for rides or when they see youths riding recklessly.

"When kids get motorcycles, they think speed is the important thing. That's not

right. Safety is the main thing, not speed," Parker said.

Other award winners at the Club 44 dinner were the St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Peter's Church, 243 W. Argonne, and the Rev. Eugene Fields, a Methodist minister from Meacham Park who has served as assistant superintendent of schools in Kansas City, Mo.