

Highlander: Bill Sims

By Aleesha Johnson

Bill Sims is the current president of the Lake Highlands Exchange Club. LHEC members invest many resources, from sponsoring breakfasts and greeting returning troops at DFW airport, to buying reading glasses, hearing aids, and other items for families in need in the community. The LHEC also provides financial support for the Dallas Child Abuse Prevention Center in conjunction with the club's mission to help prevent child abuse.

— *Aleesha Johnson*



Staff photo: Allison Slomowitz
Exchange Club president Bill Sims

How long have you lived in Lake Highlands? My wife and I have lived in Lake Highlands essentially all our married lives, some 27 years. We like the “feel” of the community and the small-town atmosphere. Even though you won't find Lake Highlands, Texas, on a map, it exists in the hearts of the people in our community.

How did you become involved with the Exchange Club? I have been a member of our club since about 2000, and the main reason I joined was to plug into what was happening in the schools my kids attended. My wife was involved in the PTA and other areas, but the LHEC was comprised mostly of men, and a number of them had kids who were peers of my children. The LHEC supports Lake Highlands-area schools, so it was a great fit.

What role does the LHEC play in the community? We sponsor a number of front-of-mind projects around the neighborhood, including giving and administering scholarships to graduating seniors in amounts exceeding \$100,000. We have supported Lake Highlands North Recreation Center improvements for the spray park, new pavilion, and the new walking trail. We recognize an outstanding local police officer,

a local firefighter, and an unsung community hero on a quarterly basis, and just this year we sponsored the first Teen Job Fair to help local youth find summer employment.

What LHEC event is most meaningful to you? I have a special place in my heart for our annual auction — our largest fundraiser. Having been the chair of this event in 2006, I got to know a lot about what it takes to pull off something that large. One new thing this year, of which I think I am most proud, is the military poster. This poster has 54 currently serving members or service academy students from the area. The response to this poster was overwhelming and very humbling to me.

How do you inspire others to become involved in the community? My focus for this year as president of the LHEC has been to get our members involved and make a difference in the lives of others in our community. The joy you receive when you give of yourself for the good of others cannot be explained; it's the proverbial paradox that has to be experienced. With the help of my great board, we've tried to expand our membership with this theme and focus.