FREMONT -- Three individuals and one organization were honored Friday morning at the American Red Cross of Sandusky County's first Everyday Hero Awards Breakfast.

Executive Director John Bailey said he was very pleased with the event, which he hopes will grow for years to come.

"There is a lot of good going on in the community under the radar," Bailey said. "A lot of those people don't always get their pictures in the paper or get awards for what they do."

The Everyday Hero awards were presented in four community service categories: education, health care, volunteerism and public safety.

The Sandusky County Ice and Water Safety Committee, created after the drowning deaths of three boys in January 2010, was presented the public safety award by Sandusky County American Red Cross Board of Directors Chairman and County Judge John Kolesar.

The committee, represented by several community members and emergency personnel, was recognized for its efforts to post warning signs along the river, to buy lifesaving equipment and to bring interactive ice and water safety classes to every elementary school student in the county.
"I felt quite honored to be a part of the water and ice safety committee and honored to be chosen by the American Red Cross for this award," Sandusky County Sheriff Kyle Overmyer said. "It was a team effort on the committee, and hopefully that team effort will save a child's life here in Sandusky County."

Overmyer said the group is working on grant applications to fund further ice and water safety initiatives, such as offering programs to neighboring counties.

Tracy Lytle, a sixth-grade teacher at Lutz Elementary School, was presented with the education award after being nominated by one of her students, who praised Lytle for effectively explaining complicated concepts and treating her students like part of her family.

Lesley King, a physical therapy assistant with Fremont Memorial Health System, was awarded the health care award for compassionately caring for patients and starting a support group for people with Parkinson's disease.

Lonnie Burke was recognized with the volunteerism award for his frequent work for veterans, Habitat for Humanity, the county soup kitchen and for organizing a hot dog lunch last year to raise money for cancer research.

Bailey also played a video presentation about American Red Cross Services to Armed Forces, detailing how the organization brings emergency family messages to soldiers, visits wounded soldiers at hospitals and sometimes provides financial assistance to soldiers and their families. The organization plans to highlight a different area of its focus every year, Bailey said.

Sponsors for the organization's first award breakfast included Keller-Ochs-Koch-Mason Funeral Home and Memorial Health Care System.
Bailey said he hopes the awards breakfast grows in nominations and attendance as steadily as Seneca County's annual event, which began about six years ago.

"I am very pleased with the attendance and response this year," he said. "Hopefully it will grow."
Recipients of the Sandusky County American Red Cross Everyday Hero awards included the county's Ice and Water Safety Committee, teacher Tracy Lytle, physical therapist Lesley King and volunteer Lonnie Burke. The Sandusky County American Red Cross Everyday Hero award for public safety was presented to members of the county's Ice and Water Safety Committee Friday morning at Crystal Arbors in Fremont. / PHOTOS BY MARK TOWER/NEWS-MESSENGER