



Westfield

Local Heroes

2019

Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and grants program, designed to shine the spotlight on those people who connect and enrich their local communities across Australia and New Zealand.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities, with the outcome of a public vote determining the three successful 2019 nominees for every Westfield centre. In total, we are recognising 120 Westfield Local Heroes across Australia and New Zealand in 2019.

Westfield
Local Heroes

Each of the affiliated organisations of the Westfield Local Heroes have received a grant to support their work. Westfield will award 120 grants across Australia and New Zealand – totalling \$1.2 million.

We congratulate all the 2019 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make to improving social wellbeing in their local areas.

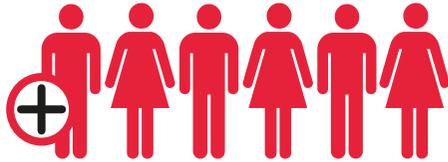
westfield.com.au/local-heroes westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield
Local Heroes

2019 Participation

more than

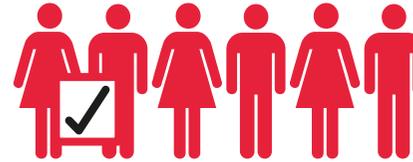
1,000



Nominations

more than

100,000



Community Votes

Community Sentiment

*"It is a wonderful gesture and a **great way to show Westfield cares about their local community.**"*

Westfield Local Heroes Participant

*"**Westfield is in a good position to publicise the work** done by the organisations these people represent, this is done just by the fact that the awards are being held. It is **also a way for the public to contribute to their community** by nominating those they feel have made an impact locally."*

Westfield Local Heroes Participant

*"The Westfield Local Heroes initiative is a truly valuable **community building initiative**. Westfield is a hub that all members of the community gather and is **a great place for community to learn about local services** just through this sharing and promotion initiative. Westfield have generously taken the time to support local community and build community momentum, interest and excitement for such valuable causes."*

Westfield Local Heroes Participant

Centres

New South Wales

Bondi Junction	8
Burwood	14
Chatswood	20
Eastgardens	26
Hornsby	32
Hurstville	38
Kotara	44
Liverpool	50
Miranda	56
Mt Druitt	62
Parramatta	68
Penrith	74
Sydney	80
Tuggerah	86
Warringah Mall	92

ACT

Belconnen	100
Woden	106

Victoria

Airport West	114
Doncaster	120
Fountain Gate	126
Geelong	132
Knox	138
Plenty Valley	144
Southland	150

Queensland

Carindale	158
Chermside	164
Coomera	170
Garden City	176
Helensvale	182
North Lakes	188

South Australia

Marion	196
Tea Tree Plaza	202
West Lakes	208

Western Australia

Carousel	216
Innaloo	222
Whitford City	228

New Zealand

Albany	236
Manukau City	242
Riccarton	248
St Lukes	254





New South Wales

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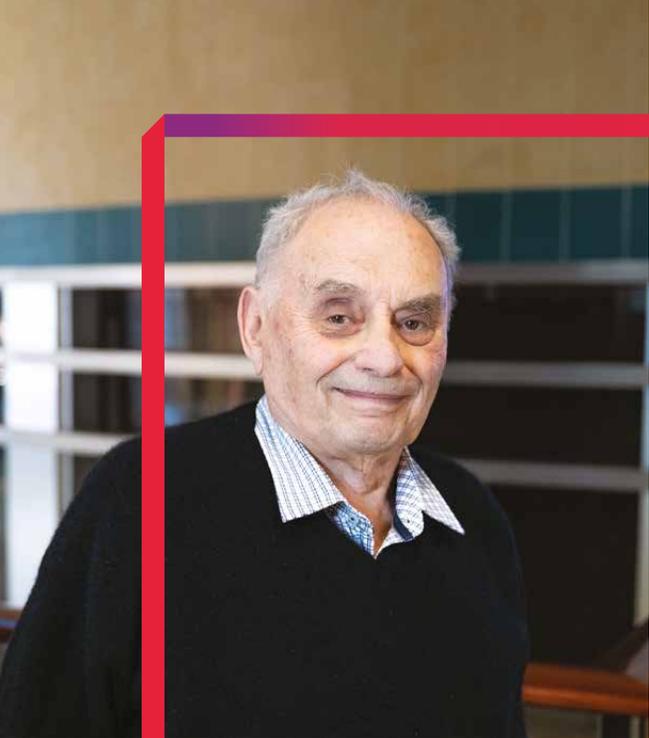
Sydney

Tuggerah

Warringah Mall

Westfield

Bondi Junction
NSW



"I am giving back," says George. "I am a holocaust survivor. My mother looked after me when we were in hiding in Budapest. I have never forgotten that Australia took us in as refugees and gave us a beautiful home."

Holocaust survivor gives back by supporting seniors

George Freund — COA Sydney

Compassionate, Inclusive, Powerhouse

When George Freund's father passed away, it was only natural that he would step in to continue his legacy as a volunteer at COA's popular drop-in centre in Woollahra.

The Jewish cultural centre helps more than 1000 seniors of any religion to live independently. It provides connection through a full program of daily activities and offers the only kosher Meals on Wheels service in Sydney.

George had an immediate impact, taking on a leadership role, recruiting volunteers and starting new programs and services.

Now in his 80s, George is still actively involved in managing the organisation and helping with meals deliveries.

"I am giving back," says George. "I am a holocaust survivor. My mother looked after me when we

were in hiding in Budapest. I have never forgotten that Australia took us in as refugees and gave us a beautiful home.

"Financially, I can't give much. But since I was young, I have always been trying to help society," says George, who has been an enthusiastic volunteer at synagogues, youth and community organisations.

George feels honoured and a little surprised to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"This recognition by the local community is a justification of the work COA does and its importance to people," he says.

"COA is inclusive. All are welcome and eligible for services. Community work is about creating and maintaining communities of friends and family by helping where you are able. It makes me

feel good and brings connection and happiness to those we serve.

"It is a reciprocal cycle of helping and being helped, giving and being given to.

"My work at COA helps create opportunities for seniors in our community to remain connected and socially stimulated," he says.

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COA will use its grant for its Meals on Wheels program, which runs at a loss because nobody is allowed to go hungry regardless of their ability to pay.

"We are a small organisation. This extra funding will be a great help," says George.



"We understand how difficult it can be for parents after receiving a diagnosis. Parents can begin helping their child through therapy but this can create isolation. Next Step is our way of helping parents enrol their child in a normal, fun and inclusive program," says Jose.

Getting a kick out of helping families with special needs

Jose Bello — Next Step Foundation

Dedicated, Generous, Inclusive

As an early childhood educator, Jose Bello knows that having a child with special needs can cause families to disengage from their community and become isolated.

As a former professional footballer, he knows sport brings people together and improves wellbeing.

That's why he took the initiative in 2011 and started Next Step Foundation, a fun soccer skills program for children with autism, down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other medical conditions.

So far, 350 children aged three to eight have benefited from the free program, which many parents refer to as fun therapy. Apart from teaching new physical and cognitive skills, the sessions include physiotherapy exercises, gross motor training and emotional development.

"It's a very personal project," says Jose. "I wanted to combine my passion for football with my passion for working in the community.

"It doesn't just benefit the child; it also allows parents to connect with other parents. They feel protected, secure and accepted."

Jose has found it overwhelming and humbling to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is very exciting. I appreciate the community support and it's been an incredible experience," he says.

But his most gratifying reward comes from witnessing parents' joy as they watch their kids in action. "The gratitude and love they show the coaches and everyone involved fuels us to continue growing this program.

"We understand how difficult it can be for parents after receiving

a diagnosis. Parents can begin helping their child through therapy but this can create isolation. Next Step is our way of helping parents enrol their child in a normal, fun and inclusive program," says Jose.

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The foundation will use its grant to recruit more coaches to expand its reach and invest in much-needed specialist equipment for children with high needs.

"The grant is extremely helpful because we always make the program free," says Jose. No parent has ever paid to access the Next Step program and we rely on community support to run it," says Jose.

Brave young woman launches a cancer movement

Rikki Stern — Cancer Chicks & Pink Hope

Brave, Strong, Resilient

When Rikki Stern was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma at the age of 20, she craved contact with others in her position but could not find community support for women her age.

That inspired her to launch Cancer Chicks, an Australian social media group based on a similar concept in the UK.

Thanks to Rikki's initiative, more than 300 young women use the group to share the highs and lows of their journey.

"These women benefit from group rehabilitation. They have a network that provides comfort and support through shared experience," says Rikki.

Although she is "over the moon" at being named a Westfield Local Hero, Rikki is also touched and grateful for the support.

"It is amazing to know that the community at large are trying to help as much as they can."

The women who use the forum are generally aged 20 to 30 and may have a terminal illness with short prognoses.

"They have experienced major surgeries, invasive treatment, had body parts removed or had pregnancies terminated. Having lost hair, breasts and ovaries, many struggle with their self-identity and body image," says Rikki.

"I am humbled to say that I am now cancer-free, and have been able to create a community of beautiful women who I proudly call my friends," says Rikki.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each

awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Rikki feels strongly that young women with cancer need a break from the confinement of their homes and hospitals as well as an opportunity to be re-empowered and have some enjoyment.

To help with this, Cancer Chicks has teamed up with Pink Hope, an organisation that focuses on the prevention of breast and ovarian cancer. They will use the grant to fund a Girls Getaway to give young women some respite and a chance to connect, share stories and attend workshops.

"We are a small organisation, and without this money we would not have been able to achieve this," says Rikki.

"I am humbled to say that I am now cancer-free, and have been able to create a community of beautiful women who I proudly call my friends," says Rikki.

Your 2019 Finalists

Grant Trebilco

OneWave

Grant Trebilco was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2012 and found it helped to go surfing with his family and mates. One Friday morning, he dressed up in a shirt and tie and went for a surf at Bondi with the aim of starting conversations about mental health. Soon after that the now world-famous OneWave Fluro Fridays were born, with people in bright outfits going for an early-morning surf or swim, or doing yoga on the beach. A highlight of Fluro Fridays is the "anti-bad vibes circle" during which people share stories in a safe environment.

Diana Ucles

PCYC City of Sydney

Senior Constable Diana Ucles joined the NSW police 13 years ago, but it was only after being deployed to the Police Citizens Youth Club in 2015 that she found her true calling. Since then, Diana has been a stable influence and confidant to many young people in the inner-city Woolloomooloo/Darlinghurst area. She says her easy-going nature helps build rapport with the people she is trying to help. "My role is to prevent youth crime by supporting and empowering young offenders and youth at risk through targeted crime prevention programs and case management."

Rachael Natoli

Lokahi Foundation

Rachael Natoli is a domestic abuse survivor who is grateful to her empowering and supportive caseworker for helping her to conquer the stress and difficulty of starting a new life. The experience inspired Rachael to start the Lokahi Foundation, which provides case workers to support women during the process of escaping from domestic abuse. "We provide unlimited support with no time restriction," says Rachael, who understands it can take two or three years for women to begin reclaiming their lives. "Our caseworkers will tailor their service to what each individual woman needs."

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Jose BELLO
Next Step Foundation

Shterny DADON
Australian Jewish Fertility Network

Jen DUGARD
Body Beyond Baby

George FREUND
COA Sydney

Adam HEGEDUS
Educating The Future

James ISLES
headspace Bondi Junction – South
Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Chana KAVKA
NSW Friendship Circle

Russell KING
WAYS Youth & Family

Rachael NATOLI
Lokahi Foundation

Judy RENFORD
Holdsworth Community Ltd

Mo ROSA
Heart Cafe

Harriet SMELT
Make-A-Wish Australia

Rikki STERN
Cancer Chicks Australia

Grant TREBILCO
OneWave

Diana UCLES
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC City of Sydney)

Westfield

Burwood
NSW



"I believe a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity is necessary for social cohesion," says Bassam.

Racist slur inspires teen to give back to community

Bassam Maaliki — Settlement Services International

Determined, Thoughtful, Caring

When Bassam Maaliki was thirteen years old, bigoted bullies at his school accused him of being a terrorist and told him to go back to where he came from.

That and other racist experiences inspired the Australian-born Muslim to campaign for change in his community and at school.

"It motivated me to do more," says Bassam, who is now sixteen and is dedicated to helping refugees and other migrants feel welcome in Australia.

One of the first things he did was join the YMCA Youth Parliament, where young people come together and debate controversial issues. He also speaks at school harmony days and other events and is an Australian Youth Ambassador for Save the Children.

Among Bassam's many innovations is a #uBelong badge and key

that he developed for people to wear in solidarity with refugees, migrants, people who feel alone, those that feel unheard and those who feel helpless.

He also organised a #uBelong flash-mob choir in Sydney, which was an emotional event attended by eight hundred people.

He feels good to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am happy people believe in what I am doing about a real issue," says Bassam, who in 2018 was named Youth Parliament Advocate of the Year and also won the NSW Premier's Youth Medal.

"I believe a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity is necessary for social cohesion," says Bassam.

"My parents have supported and motivated me to do this type of work in the community and

Settlement Services International has helped me to develop my work. I would like to acknowledge the impact they have had on my life," says Bassam, who has raised thousands of dollars for good causes.

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SSI will use the grant awarded in Bassam's honour to expand the #uBelong initiative, including the development of a website and app for young people to interact.

"It will offer resources for young people, including volunteering opportunities and social justice forums," says Bassam.



"Our vision is to not only relieve hunger and poverty. We also encourage people within the community to feel they are supported and not left alone," says Paula, who immigrated to Australia from Lebanon with her family when she was 16.

Cooking up hope and connection for people in need

Paula Nicolas — St Merkorious Charity

Passionate, Caring, Visionary

When Paula Nicolas started cooking meals in her kitchen for six families, she had no idea her good deed would grow into a major charity that distributes thousands of meals a week.

Paula founded St Merkorious Charity in 2013 and provides cooked meals to the disabled, elderly and homeless and also supplies food hampers to people who can cook for themselves but are unable to afford essential items.

The charity also hosts free community meal gatherings in Fairfield and Rhodes, with plans to start one in Burwood.

Paula works five days a week at the charity, supported by volunteers and a small staff. "It makes me feel happy and gives me satisfaction. It makes me feel that I am fulfilling God's work," she says.

"We live in a world where some of us have so much, and others have so little."

Paula feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "What I do is not heroic but is necessary. It is our duty to look after the disadvantaged in our society."

The charity embraces each client on a personal level. "We chat and, most importantly, we listen. We know the stories of each and every client," says Paula.

"Our vision is to not only relieve hunger and poverty. We also encourage people within the community to feel they are supported and not left alone," says Paula, who immigrated to Australia from Lebanon with her family when she was 16.

Paula has received widespread recognition for her work and was

Burwood Citizen of the Year in 2017 and Strathfield Local Woman of the Year in 2018 when she also won the Jesus Cares Contribution and Service Award.

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St Merkorious charity will use its grant to fund thirty-eight thousand meals for the poor, which is a ten-week supply.

"The need is growing every day," says Paula. "The grant will help us to do more and to have a bigger impact."



"It's reassuring when the work you do quietly and privately is recognised by others. I have been fortunate in my life. I have a good family and good friends. Some of the women who come to Stepping Out don't have any of those things."

Helping abuse survivors build their lives from the ground up

Bev Lange — Stepping Out Program

Committed, Dedicated, Confident

When it was time for Bev Lange to move on from her position as General Manager of the Stepping Out Program, she was so committed to the charity that she stayed on as a volunteer.

Stepping Out supports women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse; aiding their recovery and empowering them to achieve independence.

Many survivors have long-term mental illness and social problems and the the Leichhardt-based Stepping Out caseworkers help them access doctors and psychologists and connect them with support agencies that can provide basic needs such as housing.

"It's practical work," says Bev. "We help people build their lives from the ground up."

Bev chairs the fund-raising committee and oversees marketing. She is also a driving force behind a social inclusion group that meets on Fridays.

She says being voted a Westfield local hero is humbling and exciting. "It's reassuring when the work you do quietly and privately is recognised by others. I have been fortunate in my life. I have a good family and good friends. Some of the women who come to Stepping Out don't have any of those things."

She shares an example of a survivor in her sixties who was recently referred for help.

"She was receiving treatment for a serious medical condition and was living in her car. Within a month, we had secured her accommodation and connected her with support services.

Today, she presents a very different picture."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Stepping out will use its grant to extend its social inclusion group.

"Many clients experience extreme social isolation. It will make a tangible difference because it will allow us to broaden our footprint to different areas and help us pay for outings and guest speakers," says Bev, a recipient of the Centenary of Federation Medal.

She has held many high-profile community positions. These include being President of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and a directorship at NSW Council of Social Services.

Your 2019 Finalists

Aracely Barreras

Inner West Community Drug Action Team

Aracely Barreras was raised in poverty in the US; the likes of which, she says, almost guarantees personal and professional failure. She knew the way to succeed was through education, so she completed two degrees and is studying for a post-graduate nursing degree. As she is in Australia on a student visa, Aracely can work only limited hours, all of which she dedicates to improving the lives of at-risk people through the Inner West Community Drug Action Team. One of Aracely's innovations is a website on which community members can self-refer for assessments and services.

Biljana Milosevic

Jannawi Family Centre

Biljana Milosevic knew from a young age that she wanted to be a social worker. Her passion is social justice and, as director of Jannawi Family Centre, she runs two programs aimed at breaking cycles of family violence and abuse. "My greatest achievement is running an effective charity where significant improvements occur in the lives of the people we work with," says Biljana, who is the first person in her family to gain a university degree. She and her team work with culturally diverse families to help them provide a safe, happy and healthy upbringing for their children.

Jackie Walters

Inner West Neighbour Aid

Jackie Walters is committed to helping older people to live independently and stay socially connected to their community. She leads a compassionate team at the Inner West Neighbour Aid charity who provide services such as assisted shopping, exercise classes, day outings, pet care and social visits to more than 300 older people. More than half of the clients live alone, and for many Neighbour Aid is their only link to the outside world. "We help people build friendships and maintain their health and wellbeing, which assists in reducing loneliness, depression and anxiety," says Jackie.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Aracely BARRERAS

Inner West Community
Drug Action Team

John BRODIE

New South Wales Justices
Association Inc

Julie CORKERY

Make-A-Wish Australia

Yinxia HU

Australian Cultural and
Commerce Association

John HUGHES

Children's Tumour Foundation

Bev LANGE

Stepping Out Program

Bassam MAALIKI

Settlement Services International (SSI)

Vivienne MARTIN

Olivetree Women's Network
and Connect Marrickville

Milad MELHEM

Nissan Patrol 4WD Club
of NSW and ACT Inc

Biljana MILOSEVIC

Jannawi Family Centre

Paula NICOLAS

St. Merkorious Charity

Wendy SCHMID

Embroiderers' Guild NSW Inc

Jackie WALTERS

Inner West Neighbour Aid Inc

Jodie WILSON

Russell Lea Women's Soccer Club

Faryal ZEHRA

Little Helpers on the Run

Westfield

Chatswood
NSW

Business executive helps men build resilience

Bryan Coleman — The Banksia Project

Passionate, Selfless, Dedicated

Business executive Bryan Coleman knows through experience that many men suffer mental illness in silence, not knowing how to speak about their anguish or how to seek help.

That's why he and other volunteers set up the Banksia Project, a preventative organisation that provides a free, safe and supportive peer environment in which men can speak about their stress, anxiety and depression before they hit a crisis point.

"We aim to educate and provide skills that will empower an individual to manage their mental health and build resilience, on a general day-to-day basis," says Bryan.

He says being voted as a Westfield Local Hero is a special experience. "It means so much to have the

community recognise how important making mental health a priority for men is."

The program operates in both metropolitan and rural areas and has reached thousands of men since it was launched. It offers two primary interventions: Garden Rooms and Growth Rooms.

Garden Rooms offer inspiring talks by business leaders and others who have overcome adversity. Growth Rooms provide a safe facilitator-led space for small groups of men to come together once a month to discuss their challenges and triumphs.

The project provides modules designed by clinical professionals which explain practical skills men can use to improve their health and wellness. This covers exercise, diet, hygiene, sleep, meditation, cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness.

Bryan and his colleagues chose the Banksia as a symbol because it is native to Australia, and Indigenous people used its sweet nectar for essential energy to survive. The Banksia has also withstood the ravages of bushfires, re-growing and thriving on scorched earth.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. The project will use its grant to train sixty additional facilitators, who will lead thirty Growth Rooms and support an additional three-hundred men a month.

"Our growth rooms are designed so they can safely run in perpetuity. Mates supporting mates is at the heart of what we do," says Bryan.

"We aim to educate and provide skills that will empower an individual to manage their mental health and build resilience, on a general day-to-day basis," says Bryan.



"I have had a passion to work with at-risk youth since finishing high school. I am extremely passionate about improving the chances that our young people have, and I hope to impact as many young lives as possible."

Young volunteer helps give girls a chance in life

Eliza Wilson — Streetwork

Devoted, Open-hearted, Energised

At twenty-four years old, Eliza Wilson has already devoted much of her life to helping others.

Eliza has worked on Streetwork's Kickstart program which supports up to fifteen vulnerable young women or girls at anytime.

Some are as young as eleven, and the oldest are eighteen. Eliza works one-on-one with each to achieve the goals they have chosen for themselves.

These could be to improve their mental health, improve school attendance or performance, overcome substance abuse, reduce their risk of homelessness or increase their engagement in social activities.

Eliza also acts as a support person at school or if one of the young women has to attend court.

She is excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It puts the

name of Streetwork out there into the community and shows appreciation for the work we do," she says.

"It also makes these kids proud and takes the shame away from getting help."

"Our program is completely voluntary, which means the young person chooses to meet with us," says Eliza, who has a Behavioural Science degree and is studying for a postgraduate diploma in Relationship and Family Therapy.

"I have had a passion to work with at-risk youth since finishing high school. I am extremely passionate about improving the chances that our young people have, and I hope to impact as many young lives as possible."

When Eliza is not working or studying, she spends much of her time volunteering at charities,

including working as a suicide crisis telephone counsellor at Lifeline or helping out at dog shelters.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. The grant will help Streetwork launch its long-planned eight-week PRIDE Empowerment program for at-risk young people. It will fund mentors, fitness instructors and food.

"We can go into schools around the Chatswood area and work with at-risk youth on a weekly activity, whether it be sports or other self-esteem activities," says Eliza. "The money means we can finally put this program in place."



She is "incredibly humbled" that her local community voted her a Westfield Local Hero. "It feels really rewarding as I have worked for a couple of years to provide this support for families. I'm really thankful and appreciate that so many people voted for me."

Giving food and comfort to parents of sick babies

Michelle Barry — Life's Little Treasures Foundation

Passionate, Empathetic, Tireless

Driven by a deep sense of caring, former nurse Michelle Barry has found a way to provide much-needed support to families with sick or premature babies at the Royal Northshore Hospital in Sydney.

These families can spend many months in hospital with their babies, with only bread and a vending machine available to them within the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

So Michelle created a donation-led breakfast and snack food table, the Brekkie Bar, at which families can help themselves to easily accessible nutritious and treat foods.

She is delighted that the Brekkie Bar has also become a comforting gathering place and facilitates peer support for exhausted and overwhelmed families. Many

visitors to the Brekkie Bar find comfort in simply sitting in silence together.

"Parents share their experiences, celebrate milestones and lend an ear," says Michelle.

She is "incredibly humbled" that her local community voted her a Westfield Local Hero. "It feels really rewarding as I have worked for a couple of years to provide this support for families. I'm really thankful and appreciate that so many people voted for me."

The Brekkie Bar is part of a program called NICU Food From The Heart run by the Life's Little Treasures Foundation, which is dedicated to supporting parents of premature and sick babies.

Despite a time-consuming job and a family of her own, Michelle spends numerous hours a week working on the program and

she collects food from various locations to stock the Brekkie Bar.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. The Life's Little Treasures Foundation will use its grant to fund the Brekkie Bar for a further six months, covering the cost of food, parking, a casual staff member, insurance and administration.

"One of the great aspects of the program is to create a social environment with food to bring people together. That's the unexpected benefit of the Brekkie Bar," says Michelle.

"The dream will be to open more breakfast bars in NICUs across Australia."

Your 2019 Finalists

Lisa Graham

Taldumande Youth Services

When Lisa Graham joined Taldumande Youth Services as CEO in 2012, it looked after 13 homeless young people and employed seven staff. Now, on any night, Taldumande has 65 people aged 12–21 in residence, employs dozens of staff and has a dedicated team of volunteers. It operates three fully supervised and two semi-independent accommodation programs as well as community housing programs that help young people move from homelessness and family breakdown to independence and stability. "The purpose is to accommodate and support young people and help them to reconnect with their families where appropriate," says Lisa.

Nikki Davis

Enlighten Education

Nikki Davis has made her mark as a dancer, dancing teacher, model and magazine editor, but it was her work as a Lifeline counsellor that inspired her to explore a new interest in counselling and psychotherapy. She is making a positive difference as a senior presenter for Enlighten Education's Walk the Talk program for Women's Community Shelters. Nikki is an outstanding role model and visits high schools to speak about respectful relationships, gender equality and being a community change-maker. Students are then encouraged to adopt their local Women's' Community Shelter as a year-long community project.

Kylie Macdonald

Ku-ring-gai Youth Development Service

Despite her high-pressure job as a leader of a stock broking firm, Kylie Macdonald makes time to give back to her community. One of the ways she achieves this is as an active board member of Ku-ring-gai Youth Development Service (KYDS), which provides free mental health counselling, education and support services to improve the wellbeing of young people across northern Sydney. Apart from her financial and ethical oversight duties as a board member, she generously shares her knowledge to support the staff, volunteers for challenging tasks and leads fundraising and event projects.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Helen BANU
Streetwork Australia

Michelle BARRY
Life's Little Treasures Foundation

Michele BEHATTIN
Giving Warmth

Rosa CHIRILLO
Make-A-Wish Australia

Bryan COLEMAN
The Banksia Project

Samantha CORNAY
UTS Football Club

Nikki DAVIS
Enlighten Education

Thomas DENT
StreetWork Australia

Roanne GONZALES
Enactus Macquarie

Lisa GRAHAM
Taldumande Youth Services

Louise GREIG
Integricare

Tom JOWETT
Reach Out Volunteers Charity

Kylie MACDONALD
KYDS Youth Development
Service Inc

Margie McCRAE
Marian St Theatre for Young People

Nirmal SINGH HANSRA
Children's Tumour Foundation

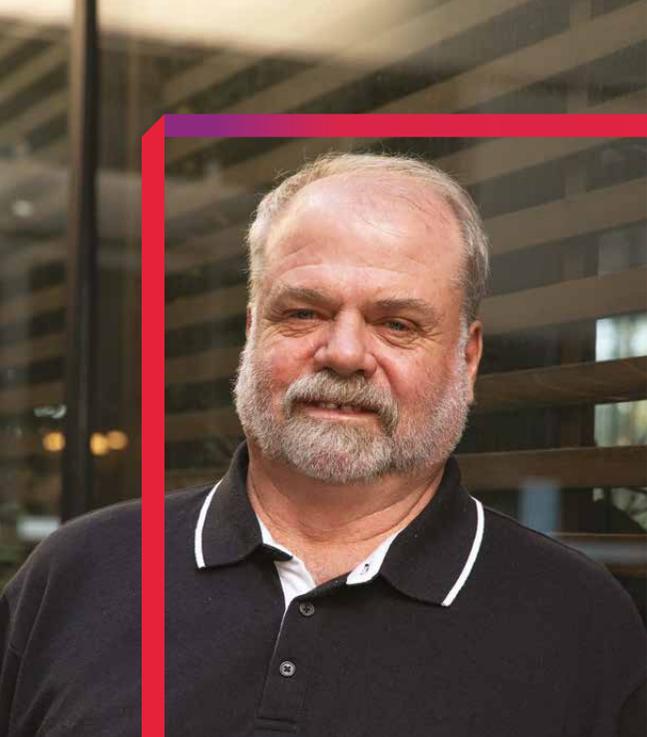
Christopher SUFFIELD
NSW Powerchair Football Association

Eliza WILSON
Streetwork

Sue WONG
Buddha's Light International
Association, Sydney Chapter

Westfield

Eastgardens
NSW



"I aim to give people with physical disabilities opportunities to engage in various wheelchair sports for all the things that sport can provide," says Craig.

Life-changing devotion to wheelchair sports

Craig Jarvis (OAM) — Wheelchair Sports NSW

Dedicated, Committed, Generous

Craig Jarvis has touched the lives of many people who have tried wheelchair sports in the eastern suburbs of Sydney.

By day, he helps Prince of Wales Hospital patients with spinal cord injuries learn how to use a wheelchair.

After work, he often introduces newly disabled people to wheelchair sports and has been a volunteer for Wheelchair Sports NSW for thirty-nine years. Every Wednesday night, he runs a wheelchair basketball scrimmage at Daceyville PCYC.

"I aim to give people with physical disabilities opportunities to engage in various wheelchair sports for all the things that sport can provide," says Craig.

One of his players nominated him as a Westfield Local Hero. Craig says that it was pleasing to know

that the community had thrown their support behind him

"Wheelchair Sports NSW is a fantastic organisation that I've been involved with for 40 years."

Craig says that wheelchair sports have a variety of benefits, including fitness, camaraderie, peer support, competition, new friendships, confidence, resilience and belonging to a community.

Craig first volunteered at an event in 1980 and was enormously impressed with the concept of sport for people with disabilities. He has been involved ever since, being appointed to the board of Wheelchair Sports NSW in 1990 and named a Life Member in 1999 in recognition of his tireless voluntary work. He has also been involved in five Paralympic Games.

Craig is synonymous with wheelchair sport in the eastern

suburbs, particularly basketball, and has received much recognition for his efforts.

This includes being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), a Distinguished Long Service Award from the NSW Sports Federation and The Sir Ludwig Guttman Award from Disability Sports Australia.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield Centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Wheelchair Sports NSW will use its grant to buy two basketball wheelchairs for new players to try the sport.

"We would like to have a few chairs with different sizes on hand for their first go before they buy their first one," says Craig.



"Sometimes when you work in health, as a caring profession, you give a lot of yourself, and it's not very often that you get any thanks. Something as big as this means a lot."

Creating a warm hospital welcome for indigenous mums

Kate Williams — Malabar Midwives

Compassionate, Committed, Experienced

As a Wiradjuri woman, midwife Kate Williams has cultural insight that makes the Royal Hospital for Women in Randwick more welcoming to Indigenous mothers.

Kate provides culturally sensitive care at Malabar Midwives and has helped triple the number of Indigenous women giving birth at the hospital over the past twelve years.

This leads to healthier babies and mothers, many of whom breastfeed and make healthy lifestyle choices.

"Unfortunately, Aboriginal women still face prejudice within the mainstream health system, and if they do not feel comfortable with the service, they will not use it," says Kate.

She feels grateful and humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero by the community.

"It's such wonderful feedback that what you're doing makes a difference," she says.

"Sometimes when you work in health, as a caring profession, you give a lot of yourself, and it's not very often that you get any thanks. Something as big as this means a lot."

Kate regularly works after hours, with the Malabar team providing a 24-hour phone service and pregnancy care, so women always have someone familiar to speak to.

Once an indigenous woman is in the hospital system, Kate becomes a passionate and committed advocate for them, speaking up when necessary and reminding non-Indigenous staff to be sensitive to cultural diversity.

"A longer-term outcome of the service is that pregnancy is a soft entry point to health

care. A positive experience for the mother often results in her relatives becoming more trusting of the hospital system and more confident about seeking medical assistance," says Kate.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Malabar Midwives will use its grant to upgrade equipment at their three clinics and provide additional support to women, such as assistance with transport to attend appointments.

"This will allow our organisation to give women the little extras, such as giving new mums and their families fruit and veggie baskets," says Kate. "These little things can make a real difference."

Working with families to make wishes come true

Emma Levett — Make-A-Wish Australia

Fun-Loving, Compassionate, Encouraging

Make-A-Wish Australia touches a chord on many levels for Emma Levett, who is President of the charity's Central Sydney branch.

One of her many roles is to visit families in their homes to speak to children about their wishes and make them come true.

During these visits, she is often reminded how kindness, love, compassion and fun can help the whole family.

On a personal level, Emma knows what it's like to have a family member diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, and this gives her insight into how many of the families that she meets are struggling.

Emma she is proud and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "To be recognised for the work that we are doing for the kids is amazing," she says.

It can take the volunteers some time to develop a plan for each child's wish, she says. "You build relationships with these families to have a positive impact."

Apart from many hours of fundraising and administration duties a month, Emma is closely involved in delivering every wish in central Sydney to ensure every child has the best possible experience.

"Receiving a wish has a significant positive impact on children's physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing," she says.

Under her watch, kids have been gifted wishes such as meeting SpongeBob SquarePants, being a purple pirate princess or riding in a batmobile.

Part of the reward is seeing the delight on kids' faces and making a difference, no matter how small, says Emma.

Almost all parents say the whole family benefits from the granting of a wish, as do friends and school communities, who are often deeply affected by the serious illness of a child in their network.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Make-A-Wish Australia will put its grant towards delivering the thirteen active wishes in the central Sydney region.

"With the money, we can keep unlocking the imaginations of children and granting those wishes," says Emma.



Emma she is proud and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "To be recognised for the work that we are doing for the kids is amazing," she says.

Your 2019 Finalists

Samantha Heron

Youth off the Streets

Samantha Heron has created heart-warming experiences by bringing disconnected school students and their elders together in a pilot mental health program. The two generations built a strong rapport, telling their stories during weekly visits over an eight-week period. The students from The Bowen College Maroubra's Youth Off the Streets program delighted their teachers by showing how patient and caring they could be, and some have gone on to complete work experience at aged-care facilities. "My vision is, at its heart, to reduce social isolation and promote inclusion and harmony for our local community," says Samantha.

Kirsty Levin

The Parents Village

When psychologist Kirsty Levin suffered early parent shock and postnatal depression in 2012, she was surprised by the lack of preparation programs available for early parenthood. This fuelled her desire to help expectant and new parents prepare for their lifelong job, and she co-founded The Parents Village to fill the gap she had experienced. "I am driven to support our clients to find their voice and their feet at home and work, to feel connected to their children, their family and the community, and to thrive instead of just survive through parenthood," says Kirsty.

Peter Hennessy

Dunbar Rovers FC NPL

Peter Hennessy has been an active and dedicated volunteer at Dunbar Rovers FC for twenty-one years. As a director, he plays an integral part in helping to keep the club fee-free, which is special, because most premier league clubs charge players more than \$1500 a season. It's an important ethical issue for the club leadership because they don't believe youth players should subsidise senior football. However, it puts extra fundraising pressure on Peter and the leadership. "I put thirty to forty hours a week into running the club," he says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Jenny ABELA
Vision Australia

Rebecca ANDREWS
John Brothie Nursery School

Dr Adam GORDON
Maroubra Veterinary Hospital

Adam HEGEDUS
Educating The Future

Peter HENNESSY
Dunbar Rovers FC NPL

Samantha HERON
Youth off the Streets,
The Bowen College Maroubra

Craig JARVIS
Wheelchair Sports NSW

Nirmal JENA
Odissi Dance & Music Company

Emma LEVETT
Make-A-Wish Australia

Kirsty LEVIN
The Parents Village

Patrick LIM
Maroubra Rotary

Kate MELHOPT
South Eastern Community Connect

Regan MITCHELL
WEAVE

Hannah MORE
Sio Ratu Foundation

Elizabeth SHEPHERD
Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick

Tony VECCELLIO
Randwick Botany Little
Athletic Centre

Kate WILLIAMS
Malabar Midwives

Westfield

Hornsby
NSW

Dishing out friendship and low-cost groceries

William (Bill) Bradley — Hornsby Connect

Inspirational, Friendly, Kind-hearted

Many people in Hornsby have had their day brightened by a friendly greeting from William (Bill) Bradley as he passes on his mobility scooter.

The 84-year-old community leader has been a quadriplegic since he contracted polio at fourteen and has been involved in volunteering for sixty-five years.

He is a proud founder of the Hornsby Connect drop-in centre, which opens every Wednesday and provides low-cost dry groceries as well as free fruit, vegetables and bread to more than one hundred people a week. It also has a café at which people can socialise and enjoy free treats.

"I oversee the free fruit and veg section and meet and greet all the people coming through," says Bill.

"We make a point of talking to everyone because a lot of people don't have anyone to talk to. We are like a family. We know a lot of the people by name."

Bill is grateful that the community supported the centre and voted him a Westfield Local Hero. "But the title hero doesn't sit well with me because I consider myself just a spokesperson for a team of dedicated volunteers."

"I get a kick out of being a volunteer. This gives me a great feeling that there is nothing wrong with me and puts me on a level field with everybody else."

Bill is a keen sportsman and a world champion Paralympic bowls player, as well as a father of two and a grandfather of four.

"Sure, disabilities make it difficult or impossible to perform tasks that others take for granted," he says. "But I am happy to note that not only have I overcome life's challenges; I have truly succeeded."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Hornsby Connect will put its grant towards a new delivery van and to fund ongoing operational expenses.

"We need a freezer truck so that we can pick up more food for the increasing number of people who are coming through," says Bill.



"I get a kick out of being a volunteer. This gives me a great feeling that there is nothing wrong with me and puts me on a level field with everybody else."



Danielle finds being voted a Westfield Local Hero both humbling and thrilling. "To know that you do have the community's support is incredibly invigorating and inspiring. It gives you new energy for your work."

Teaching our children to challenge domestic violence

Danielle Miller — Walk the Talk

Passionate, Determined, Innovative

Parenting author and educator Danielle Miller is fighting domestic violence from the ground up by teaching high school students about respectful relationships and gender equity.

In her role as Education Officer for Women's Community Shelters, she has designed and launched a two-phase program called Walk the Talk to encourage boys and girls to become change-makers in their schools and neighbourhoods.

In phase one, her team spend a day with year-nine and ten students, helping them understand that domestic violence is a reality in every neighbourhood of Australia and empowering them to speak up about it.

In phase two, the students are encouraged to work with a local shelter for a year.

The ultimate aim is to bring about generational change and

remove the need for shelters, says Danielle, who lives in the Hornsby Shire and is a long-term supporter of the local shelter.

She finds being voted a Westfield Local Hero both humbling and thrilling. "To know that you do have the community's support is incredibly invigorating and inspiring. It gives you new energy for your work."

So far, students at Barker College, Asquith Boys and Pennant Hills High have participated in the program.

"They have done some amazing things, such as fundraisers, volunteering at shelter events and running awareness campaigns at their schools.

"By teaming up with a local shelter, they learn that domestic violence is a reality in their neighbourhood," says Danielle.

This knowledge encourages the students to speak out and become a force for change.

Everyone benefits: the students, the shelter residents and the wider community, says Danielle, who in 2018 was one of four finalists for the NSW Premier's Award for Woman of the Year and has received a Suicide Prevention Australia Life Award for excellence in media reporting.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Walk the Talk will use its grant to extend the program to 400 additional students.

"The impact will be quite significant," says Danielle.



“Listening to people – really listening to them – and working out how they want to be helped and how I can help them is the first part of connecting with people in this industry,” Cherie says.

Building self-belief and helping people find work

Cherie Raffan — Ability Options

Sparkling, Professional, Committed

Cherie Raffan has been an employment adviser for people with disabilities for thirteen years because she loves helping people.

Some of her clients are highly qualified but are struggling to find a position; others have never worked or have no recent work history. Many have a mental illness.

Cherie enjoys proving them wrong if they don't believe they will find a job. “We say that right now you're a little bit stuck, grab my hand, and we will drag you out of it.”

Some clients are fearful of employment, fearful of failure or fearful of bullying. “We help them overcome those barriers,” says Cherie. “We try to keep them positive and focused. It might mean creating a resume for someone who has never had a resume or upskilling them to open new doors.”

Cherie feels both embarrassed and honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. “I don't see myself as extraordinary. But I am so very grateful to everyone who voted for me. It's a huge honour for disability employment services to be recognised.”

She believes people should encourage and support each other to reach their potential, and always takes care to treat her clients as individuals.

“Listening to people – really listening to them – and working out how they want to be helped and how I can help them is the first part of connecting with people in this industry,” Cherie says.

Once a client has a job, Cherie and a multidisciplinary team provide ongoing support to help them thrive in their new role.

“Seeing any unemployed client return to the workforce is incredibly rewarding,” says Cherie.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Ability Options will use its grant to fund driving lessons for ten young clients.

“Having a licence would mean the world to them. It can change someone's future,” says Cherie.

“Many positions that our clients would love are ruled out because they can't reach them on public transport.”

Your 2019 Finalists

Elizabeth Campbell

Studio ARTES

The first time Elizabeth Campbell visited Studio ARTES with her son, Josh, he was so happy that they had to visit again. Josh, who has autism and is twenty-four, became a member of the arts-based disability service in 2013 and has been happily attending ever since. Eventually, Elizabeth was volunteering three or four days a week, and she jumped at the opportunity when a part-time admin job came up. She still volunteers, helping members with everyday activities, working at community stalls and running the studio's shop. "I love working with the members and staff," she says.

Kate Guild

BlowFly Cricket

Kate Guild loves sport and believes in breaking down barriers for children and young adults with special needs. That's why she is the volunteer Director of Operations for Blowfly Cricket, which provides a safe, caring, non-judgmental environment in which people with disabilities can enjoy the sport. Participants don't even have to play cricket if they don't feel like it. They can watch, cheer on their friends, help with the BBQ and socialise. "The wonderful thing is the participants and their families are out being active and socialising in the community," says Kate.

Peter Kirkwood

PCYC Hornsby

Peter Kirkwood has been involved with the Hornsby Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) for sixty years. In his youth, he achieved his black belt in karate there, and in the 1990s he coached his son's basketball team. In 2002, he was appointed President of the club and persevered with a long and eventually successful campaign to replace the ageing George Street premises with a modern \$15 million building. One of Peter's priorities is inclusivity, and he has ensured the club is friendly to everyone, including the large Southeast Asian community living in local apartments.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Wendy BLAXLAND
Marian Street Theatre
for Young People

William BRADLEY
Hornsby Connect Inc

Elizabeth CAMPBELL
Studio ARTES

Brad DOWLING
Children's Tumour Foundation

Paul GODFREY
Hornsby Kuring-gai PCYC

Kate GUILD
BlowFly Cricket

Libby HEFFEREN
Make-A-Wish Australia

Peter KIRKWOOD
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC Hornsby)

Jo MARX
It's About Us Ltd

Peggy McDONALD
Higher Ground Raptor Centre

Dannielle MILLER
Walk The Talk

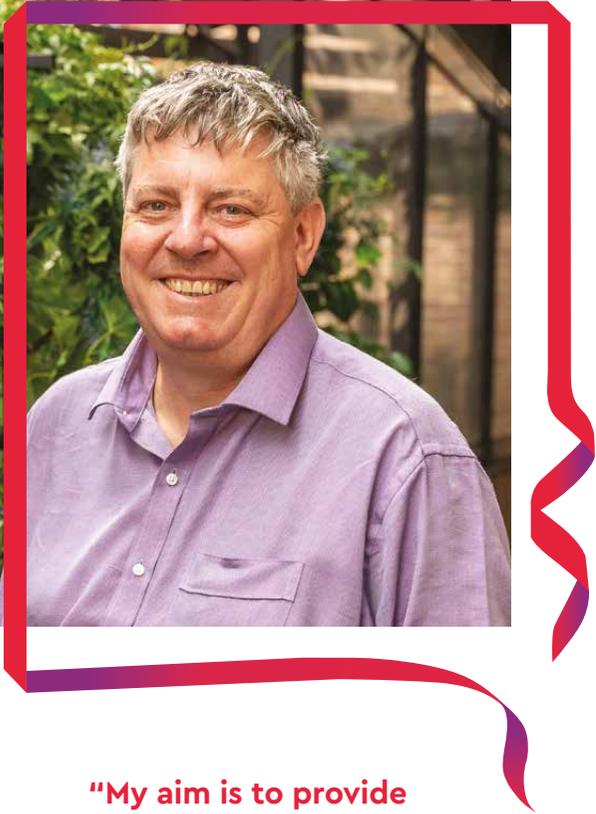
Marnie NISSEN
BlowFly Cricket

Cherrie RAFFAN
Ability Options

Priya SHARMA
Stroke Foundation

Westfield

Hurstville
NSW



"My aim is to provide opportunities for each Scout to challenge themselves physically and intellectually, develop leadership skills and feel a sense of belonging and community," says Craig, who is pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

Dad uses science to create inclusive Scouts experience

Craig Scott — 2nd Mortdale Scout Group
Committed, Inspiring, Resourceful

Not only is Craig Scott a widowed dad raising two sons while working full-time for Sydney Trains. He is also a Scout leader for a group of girls and boys and a regional Special Needs Advisor, helping to make Scouts inclusive for as many people as possible.

"My aim is to provide opportunities for each Scout to challenge themselves physically and intellectually, develop leadership skills and feel a sense of belonging and community," says Craig, who is pleased to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"Like my fellow nominees, I'm not a volunteer to seek awards, but the recognition is nice."

Craig ensures everyone in his group can live up to Scouting's motto of "Do Your Best", but this

is always in the context of each child's ability.

His Scout name is "MacGyver", which was given to him when he showed Scouts how to use sticks and a pocket-knife to get around a shortage of tent pegs.

Craig is mindful of the need to be inclusive and comes up with fun and challenging or interesting science-related activities that are popular among Scouts who may not be able to manage adventurous outdoor activities.

He is particularly proud of the more than 50 science activities he developed for his advanced training project.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each

awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Scout Association of NSW will use its grant to provide mental health first aid training and train leaders to support people with special needs. It will also develop a sensory needs kit for camp activities.

"A lot of Scout leaders don't know we have a special needs team. We would like to train more leaders," says Craig.

The funding will help broaden access to Scouts for people like Craig's son, who uses a wheelchair. While he may not be able to attend major camps, leaders can help him and others participate in other activities, he says.



He feels grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is humbling to be recognised for all the work I have done. I feel content and satisfied that the community has awarded me for all I have given over the years," says Kiro.

Helping an entire community feel at home in Australia

Kiro Pasovski — Macedonian Australian Welfare Association of Sydney

Committed, Self-sacrificing, Devoted

Like many Macedonian immigrants, Kiro Pasovski arrived in Australia in the 1960s with only a suitcase.

He worked in factories and built a life for himself and his family, rising to a senior position at the Rockdale City Council where he was in charge of forty parks.

He rose to prominence in the community and supported Macedonian churches and educational, cultural and artistic organisations.

He was often the person new immigrants would go to for help finding a job or support to bring their family over to Australia.

Thirty years ago, Kiro became a founding member of the Australian Macedonian Welfare Association to help new migrants at the time and now the elderly and the rest of the community.

Now in his eighties, he is still on the board of the welfare association and takes a keen interest in its programs.

"I am involved in the seniors nursing-home visiting program. It is close to my heart as many people I know are becoming isolated and do not have much support as life changes. We visit and provide cultural friendship, conversations in a person's first language and socialising around cultural understanding," says Kiro.

He feels grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is humbling to be recognised for all the work I have done. I feel content and satisfied that the community has awarded me for all I have given over the years," says Kiro.

"I have achieved a lot for the community over the years, including improving family

functioning, community identity and harmony."

He has also been a mentor to many young people in the community.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The association will use its grant to hire a support worker and extend and develop the nursing-home program.

"We are grateful for this grant. The support worker will accompany volunteers to the facilities and help deliver traditional food and arrange music and activities," says Kiro.



"The grant is going to go a very long way," says Meni. "It is giving us the opportunity to thrive and grow and continue what we do best."

Ensuring no child is left out or left behind

Meni Pefkos — Diversity Kids

Passionate, Innovative, Inclusive

Meni Pefkos lives and breathes diversity and inclusion and does everything in her power to prevent children from feeling excluded because of language, culture, challenging behaviour, disability or any other reason.

This passion led to the launch of her statewide social enterprise, Diversity Kids, which sends bilingual, disability and Indigenous support teams to coach teachers and educators and provides resource materials for use in schools and early childhood settings.

The aim is to ensure nobody is left out or left behind, says Meni.

"Children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities may require additional support to enable their full inclusion and authentic participation."

Meni says it feels surreal to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It tells us that the community has noticed and values what we do to make sure all our children have voices."

She describes her work as a one-stop-social-inclusion shop covering language, culture, religion, disability, special education, speech and communication difficulties.

Language support is the most requested program, she says. "There might be a child who has just hopped off the plane and has ended up in school or preschool and doesn't speak a word of English. We will send a bilingual educator to support this child and their educator."

Another focus is speech. If a child is struggling with communication, Diversity Kids provides a speech pathologist to help their educator.

"We have a whole heap of programs, and we have packaged them in a fun way for the children," says Meni.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Diversity Kids will use its grant to run a series of supported playgroups for culturally and linguistically diverse children with speech and communication delays. It will also host a local forum on the seven secrets to inclusion and engagement for children's services providers.

"The grant is going to go a very long way," says Meni. "It is giving us the opportunity to thrive and grow and continue what we do best."

Your 2019 Finalists

Nicole Scobie

2Connect Youth & Community

Nicole Scobie has dedicated her 35-year working life to supporting young people. About 28 years ago, she was a founding member of 2Connect Youth & Community, a non-profit organisation that runs social inclusion and anti-racism programs for people aged 10 to 25. She is as inspired as ever to promote social wellbeing and harmony, with many of the people she works with needing a helping hand to re-engage with school, work or the community. "I contribute by being a consistent and reliable source of support," says Nicole, who provides practical assistance, advocacy and appropriate referrals.

Jenny Bombardieri

Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club

Thirty-two years ago, Jenny Bombardieri responded to a request from parents of children with disabilities and started a Friday night swimming class at Roselands Pool. That class, which is still running, was the catalyst for Jenny to start the non-profit Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club (RSAC), which has become a way of life for hundreds of people with disabilities in south-west Sydney. It operates from several venues and has 10 staff and 80 volunteers and provides dozens of sports programs as well as dance, drama, cooking classes, social clubs, camps holidays and family outings.

Iveta Kohutova

PCYC St George

International student Iveta Kohutova arrived in Australia from Slovakia only seven years ago and is making a significant difference in people's lives as a youth worker and volunteer mentor. Iveta, who has degrees in law and social work, believes individuals can make a positive contribution in the community and is committed to halting the cycle of juvenile crime. She is an enthusiastic activities officer in three programs at the St George Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC). These are Fit For Life, Fit For Change the Traffic Offenders Intervention Program.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Debbie ARMANIOUS
Trinity Financial Adviser-Joseph
Meawad

Alanna BIORDI
Make-A-Wish Australia

Jenny BOMBARDIERI
Recreation Sports and Aquatics Club

Heidi BREEZE
Carlton South Public School
P&C Association

Daqi CHEN
St George & Sutherland Medical
Research Foundation (SSMRF)

Catherine CLARK
St George Hospital
Cancer Care Centre

Shannon CROFTON
NSW SES Volunteers Association

Tania CURLEY
Mood Active

Darren GALEA
Carlton South Public School

Iveta KOHUTOVA
St George Police Citizen
Youth Club

Teresa LI
Georges River Council
Youth Advisory Committee

Paula MASON
Our Lady of Fatima Catholic
Church – Peakhurst

Tom McDONALD
Marrickville Youth Resource Centre

Lyn McFARLANE
St Aidens Anglican Church
Hurstville Grove

Cathy NISBET
Shopfront Arts Co-op

Kiro PASOVSKI
Macedonian Australian Welfare
Association of Sydney Inc

Meni PEFKOS
Diversity Kids

Kathryn PHILLIPS
St George Instrumental Eisteddfod Inc

Angela PRYCE
Georges River College Combined
Stage Band

Nicole SCOBIE
2Connect Youth & Community Inc

Craig SCOTT
Scout Association of NSW –
2nd Mortdale Scout Group

Adele SHARP
St Aidens Anglican Church
Hurstville Grove

Justine WILLIAMS
Lugarno Public School

Margaret WONG
St Aidens Anglican
Hurstville Grove

Margaret WONG
The Exodus Foundation
Schoolwise Project

Angela ZHANG
Asian Women at Work Inc

Yan Wen Eva ZHU
St Aidens Anglican Church
Hurstville Grove

Westfield

Kotara
NSW



"Soul Café has come a long way, and I feel very lucky to represent them. Everyone is on the same wavelength about how we care about the community."

Retired football star shares food and connection

Steve Poulton — Soul Cafe

Compassionate, Hardworking, Generous

Steve Poulton was a first-grade footballer who won grand finals with Wests Newcastle in the 1980s, although he also partook in unhealthy behaviours during this time.

He has since given up his unhealthy habits and for the past fourteen years has been volunteering for twenty hours a week at the Soul Café charity, collecting donated food from restaurants and cooking breakfasts for homeless people.

"I like talking to the different people who come in. Some of these guys have no one else to talk to," Steve says. "I also like working with the other volunteers."

He feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's been a privilege. The cafe has changed my whole outlook on life," he says.

"Soul Café has come a long way, and I feel very lucky to represent them. Everyone is on the same wavelength about how we care about the community."

Steve saves the money he used to spend on cigarettes and alcohol and buys special treats to hand out to guests at the café.

He has enormous compassion for those with substance abuse problems and facilitates a weekly SMART Drug and Alcohol Recovery Program.

"The people at Soul Café are not accepted by society because of how they look or smell, or they might be struggling single parents or families. A lot of the guys are just out from prison or are in trouble," says Steve.

"At Soul Café, they can get food, hygiene products and a blanket, or

they can see the doctor or mental health nurse. We try to help them out of the trouble they are in."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Soul Café will use its grant to buy food and train more volunteers for the SMART recovery program.

"The program has had good results. The grant will really go a long way," says Steve.

And he reminds us: "Don't look down on the homeless, because one day you could end up there yourself."



"I am passionate about women's rights and empowering women through my work," says Carly, who is a confidant, role-model and mentor to her students.

Martial arts champion helps women regain confidence

Carly Reasbeck — Got Your Back Sista

Dedicated, Supportive, Compassionate

Carly Reasbeck is a former Australian martial arts champion, but little compares to the pride she feels when helping women regain their confidence after domestic violence.

Carly is a self-defence trainer at Got Your Back Sista and teaches women and girls how to protect themselves, which also improves their physical fitness and emotional wellbeing.

"I am passionate about women's rights and empowering women through my work," says Carly, who is a confidant, role-model and mentor to her students.

Her lessons support the organisation's goal of helping women to lead socially connected lives free from violence.

Carly is "over the moon" to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and is grateful to the community

for seeing what she does as important and worthy of support.

A significant number of Carly's students have experienced, or are living with, the trauma of domestic violence. By the time they complete her course, they can confidently assert and protect themselves.

They can also identify red-flags for a dangerous situation or relationship, which may help them avoid being threatened, attacked or abused.

"I've seen many of these girls transition from being reserved to being able to realise their capability. I'm always encouraging women to be themselves and able to practise in an environment where there is no judgment," she says.

"My purpose is to teach valuable skills to reduce the risk of being threatened or attacked, as well

as promote harmony and social wellbeing," says Carly, who has been the NSW Tae Kwon Do Champion 15 times and the National Champion 12 times.

She was also a reserve Olympic athlete for the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and an Olympic Program Squad member for Athens Olympics in 2004.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Got Your Back Sista will use its grant to hire an instructor to accommodate more women and girls in self-defence courses.

"This will allow more women and girls to complete the programs. To me, they're the ones that inspire me," says Carly.



“The framework of support we offer is a tangible and constant reminder to our Legatees that we will always consider them a part of the Police family,” Philippa says.

Veteran provides the glue to keep police family together

Philippa Woolf — NSW Police Legacy

Industrious, Compassionate, Dependable

Soon after her retiring following twenty-six years in the NSW Police, Philippa Woolf started volunteering for NSW Police Legacy to support serving and retired members and their families.

She works with patience and compassion across the Hunter region to ensure local Legatees feel connected to the police community and can access a diverse range of services and assistance.

Philippa, whose husband is still serving in the Police, is regarded as the glue that holds the local network together and regularly checks in on people of all ages, providing the charity with updates on their needs.

She feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. “I think the level of support is a demonstration that people understand how difficult policing is, and they want

families of serving and retired officers to be looked after.”

Philippa says NSW Police Legacy provides an amazing range of services and support options for families; but, sadly, the number the Legatees who need assistance continues to grow.

“My role is to provide ongoing support to those facing significant hardship and challenges and to encourage and maintain their connection to the wider Police family,” she says.

In 2016 Philippa set up a resource library with books, printed material and DVDs on grief, building resilience and other useful information.

“The framework of support we offer is a tangible and constant reminder to our Legatees that we will always consider them a part of the Police family,” Philippa says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

NSW Police Legacy will use its grant to provide school scholarships, welfare payments and access to psychologists for those touched by tragedy or difficult circumstances.

“We are committed to finding ways to support the various needs of our Legatees wherever we can,” says Philippa.

“This may be in practical ways such as arranging driving lessons or scholarships, or through more emotional support options such as attending regular catch-ups with others who have shared experiences of loss.”

Your 2019 Finalists

Grace Woolcock

Newcastle Meals on Wheels

Grace Woolcock has been an integral part of Newcastle Meals on Wheels for decades and, at the age of 90, she still serves meals two or three times a week. "I have been a volunteer since 1966, originally cooking, serving and delivering five days a week," she says. Part of her legacy is Grace's Place, a welcoming venue named in her honour that is the heart of the organisation's Wellness Program. Anyone over 65 can enjoy a meal and participate in activities designed to reduce social isolation and nurture physical health and cognitive skills.

Wendy Jenkins

Angel Gowns For Australian Angel Babies

When Wendy Jenkins sits down to watch TV at night, she invariably has a crocheting hook in hand and will be making beautiful tiny blankets, booties and beanies to send to a stranger in need. She is a committed volunteer for Angel Gowns for Australian Angel Babies Inc (AGFAABI), which supplies funeral attire for stillborn babies and those up to 18 months who have passed away. Families are provided with free packs that contain a gown/wrap, blanket, nappy, beanie and booties as well as a keepsake. Volunteers repurpose the gowns out of donated wedding dresses.

Joanne Sunderland

Narnia Young Parents Early Learning Centre

Joanne Sunderland is full of admiration for young mums and dads who strive to finish their HSC after their baby is born. She is also perpetually cheerful and loves babies, making her a perfect fit with the Narnia Early Learning Centre. She eagerly and lovingly cares for the little ones while their parents attend school in a flexible learning environment that also teaches them parenting and life skills. Thanks to people like Joanne, many of the students have achieved generational change and have become the first in their family to finish school or go to university.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Sonia BARATTINI
Waltz-Sing Matildas Inc

Lisa BARTLEY
Hunter Breast Cancer Foundation

Robert BELL
Hunter Multicultural Communities Inc

Brian BOW
Lions Club of Jesmond

Jennifer BURNS
Communities Activities Centre
Uniting Church Merewether

Peter BUSCH
Leukaemia Foundation

Bryna BUTLIN
Make-A-Wish Australia

Adam COOK
Foodway Medowie

Nick CRAMERI
The Marching Koalas

Dayle CUMMINGS
Ronald McDonald House Charities

Michelle FAITHFULL
Hunter Homeless Connect

Melissa GONTIER
Hunter Hands of Hope

Lisa GREISSL
The Big Hug Box

Wendy JENKINS
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Alan JOHNSON
Arts In Recovery

Chris JONES
Live Free Project

Toby KABLE
All Ability Sports Coaching

Kay LANE
Music Teachers' Association of NSW

Melissa LAWS
Wallsend Warriors Swimming Club

Kupakwashe MATANGIRA
Hunter Christian School

Mark MIDSON
New Lambton FC Arnetts Program

Melissa MIDSON
New Lambton FC Arnetts Program

Howard MOLE
Bikers For Kids Inc

Milly MORISON
Sen Events

Hollie NEWMAN
Elasmo Ocean

Glenn OLDFIELD
The Valentine Hydrotherapy Pools Inc

Sonja POHLMAN
Parkrun Australia

Steve POULTON
Soul Café

Carly REASBECK
Got Your Back Sista

Belinda ROALS
Tiki Animal Rescue

Michael SCHRADER
Centre for Hope

Monica SKEHAN
Young People's Theatre Newcastle
Incorporated

Paige SMITH
Mission Australia

Shelly SPALDING
It Takes a Village

Joanne SUNDERLAND
Narnia Early Learning Centre
Young Parents – Waratah

Michael THOROUGHGOOD
Cerebral Palsy Alliance

Elizabeth TREADWELL
Wemoosh Before and
After School Care

Kristy WHITE
Firstchance Inc

Barry WILKINSON
Australian Armed Force
Re-enactment Heritage Unit

Gabriel WINGATE-PEARSE
Newcastle Aikido

Grace WOOLCOCK
Newcastle Meals on Wheels

Philippa WOOLF
NSW Police Legacy

Westfield

Liverpool
NSW



Agnes feels elated and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's a confirmation that what we're doing is benefitting our students. We're so small that any recognition for our work is a big thing for us."

Dream project empowers refugees to become leaders

Maria (Agnes) Barnard — The Dream Project

Cheerful, Motivational, Inspiring

Despite working in a demanding full-time executive role, Agnes Barnard managed to set up the Dream Project four years ago to help school students from refugee backgrounds integrate into the Australian community.

The charity's volunteers are university students and young professionals who provide practical study support as well as motivational support in programs run at several schools.

They promote a supportive education environment, help model positive social behaviours and encourage equal educational and employment opportunities. They also help facilitate a smoother transition into the local community.

"Our refugee students easily relate to our volunteers because of their warmth, empathy and closeness in age. Students become more

engaged in school and are more open-minded about what they can become," says Agnes.

Agnes feels elated and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's a confirmation that what we're doing is benefitting our students. We're so small that any recognition for our work is a big thing for us."

She immigrated to Australia 12 years ago and knows that settling in a new country can be a challenge. However, that challenge can be enormous for refugee children because of the hardship and trauma they have experienced.

"Our goal is to empower them to be future leaders in the Australian community," she says.

The project has three main programs: Academic Coaching, Life Skills and Girls' Club, with a club for boys to be introduced soon.

It's not only the school students who benefit, says Agnes.

"Through volunteering and our leadership program, volunteers learn about mentoring, being professional, responsible, proactive and others-oriented."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Dream Project will use its funds to review, standardise and document its systems and procedures for both its mentoring program and its volunteer training program.

"The recognition will also help us get more volunteers or even more people who could support us in different ways, whether financially or otherwise," says Agnes.



"I love creating opportunities for community and then seeing them shine," says Jannike, who worked with South West Multicultural and Community Centre to create Pacific Runway.

Giving a platform to creative people of Pacific heritage

Jannike Seiuli — South West Multicultural and Community Centre
Motivated, Passionate, Committed

Jannike Seiuli helped her community-worker parents from a young age and developed a passion for giving to others.

Her other big passions are her Maori Samoan community and culture, as well as performing arts and event management.

Eight years ago, Jannike pulled it all together and staged her first Pacific Runway fashion show in the heart of Campbelltown to provide a platform for designers, stylists and performers of Pacific heritage.

It started slowly, but the annual non-profit show now attracts international attention and features up to 20 designers and 70 models from around Australia, the Pacific Islands and New Zealand.

"I love creating opportunities for community and then seeing them shine," says Jannike, who worked with South West Multicultural

and Community Centre to create Pacific Runway.

She feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is a beautiful reminder as to why I love doing what I do and working within my local community," she says.

The fashion show is held at the Carriageworks contemporary arts centre and creates opportunities for designers, make-up artists and stylists to go into business and for the models to gain experience and develop a career.

Models and designers have gone on to perform in Paris, London and around the Pacific.

One of Jannike's obstacles to achieving her vision was that she had lots of experience running events but no qualifications. So, she completed a certificate and diploma, despite working two jobs

and looking after her first baby at the same time.

Despite her success, she holds onto her humble beginnings and says she will never forget her values and where Pacific Runway all started.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

South West Multicultural and Community Centre will use its grant to provide workshops and multimedia support for Pacific Runway participants.

"We are able to assist those in need and those who are looking for ways to break into the industry," says Jannike.

Chef cooks up opportunities for troubled kids

Siarn White — Youth Off The Streets

Passionate, Dedicated, Engaged

When Siarn White was head chef at a busy restaurant, she enjoyed training the apprentices.

She then went to university and became a high school teacher for eight years, developing a passion for helping troubled teens. Next came a move into youth work.

That's how Siarn arrived at Youth Off the Streets, first as a volunteer and now as a teacher at Eden College, where she has introduced creative classes to give young people a second chance at education and fulfilment.

One innovation is a hospitality qualification, which is aimed at increasing her students' chances of finding employment.

Siarn strongly believes in the value of Vocational Education and Training (VET), especially for young people who are at risk.

"The qualification will help them to develop the teamwork, communication and employability skills that employers are seeking."

She is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "To quote the movie Notting Hill, 'it's surreal but nice'. It's a humbling experience to know that I'm just going about my daily job, and the community thinks it is worthy of a vote. I am making a difference for the kids that I teach."

Not only did Siarn navigate complicated practical and regularity requirements to introduce the hospitality course, but she has also been instrumental in setting up a school café to help her teach practical skills.

The aim is to give students real-life skills in a real-life environment to boost their confidence and empower them.

"Education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of disadvantage," says Siarn.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Youth Off the Streets will use its grant to fund fifteen participants in the Eden College Opportunities and Options program, including vocational training in hospitality. It will also supply appropriate attire for work experience.

"We are teaching these kids confidence, teamwork, organisation, being independent and taking initiative," says Siarn.

"These are transferable skills, and it's about giving them better opportunities in life."

Siarn is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "To quote the movie Notting Hill, 'it's surreal but nice'. It's a humbling experience to know that I'm just going about my daily job, and the community thinks it is worthy of a vote. I am making a difference for the kids that I teach."

Your 2019 Finalists

Kate Heffernan

Bright Sparks Learning Club

Every week of every term, Kate Heffernan shows up to help newly arrived refugee and asylum-seeker children settle into their school. As a Bright Sparks Learning Club volunteer, she creates a fun and safe learning space where the primary-aged children are helped to build confidence and develop friendships. Kate has completed more than 350 hours at Bright Sparks and improves English skills by engaging the children in conversation. She also helps with homework and social skills. "We aim to make sure these kids and their families have the support and care they need," says Kate.

Christine Rickert

Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative

Playgroup facilitator Christine Rickert knows from experience what it's like to feel isolated after the birth of a child. That's why she is passionate about creating and running socially diverse playgroups at which parents can connect. Christine has been with the Macarthur Diversity Services Initiative (MDSI) since 2009 and has set up groups at Minto, Claymore, Rosemeadow and Narellan, where 200 families from various backgrounds, including new immigrants, support each other and build relationships. "Listening to parents while demonstrating unconditional acceptance and showing genuine interest in their family is vital to the role," she says.

Josiane Reubens

Open Support

When Josiane Reubens became isolated as the sole carer of her mother, the highlight of her days was a visit from an Open Support volunteer. Since her mother passed away, Josiane has joined the charity and has three clients whom she visits and takes to community events. Josiane loves talking to her clients and enjoys hearing their stories. This helps the clients to feel less isolated and improves their wellbeing, potentially enabling them to live independently for longer if they choose to. "The short visit gives them something to look forward to," says Josiane.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Nedhal AMIR
The Mandaean Women's Union

Agnes BARNARD
Reledev Australia (The Dream Project)

Alycia CANTRILL
Campbelltown Collegians
Cricket Club Inc

Fernando DROGO
The Junction Works

Tony FINNERAN
Stroke Foundation

Kate HEFFERNAN
SPARK – St Vincent de Paul
Society NSW

Russell HODGE
Amputee Association of
New South Wales Inc

Mary HILMI
NSW Police

Robyn McKEOWN
Children's Tumour Foundation

Maryanne MIZZI
Youth Off The Streets

Josiane REUBENS
Open Support

Jemma RICHARDS
The Junction Works

Christine RICKERT
Macarthur Diversity Services
Initiative – MDSI

Josh RYAN
The Junction Works

Jannike SEIULI
South West Multicultural and
Community Centre Inc

Russell SMITH
Make-A-Wish Australia

Adam WASHBOURNE
Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia

Gary WEST
Campbelltown Meals on Wheels

Siarn WHITE
Youth Off The Streets

Westfield

Miranda
NSW

Dance studio opens doors to music and movement

Shantelle Tagg — Shimmy Shakes Dance Studio

Strong, Generous, Amazing

Shantelle Tagg believes no one should be stopped from enjoying the magic of dance because of disabilities or a lack of money.

She operates Shimmy Shakes Dance Studio, which keeps its fees low and welcomes boys and girls who cannot join regular classes.

Her uniquely inclusive classes for under-fives feature teachers using sign language, a high staff-to-student ratio and a low-sensory environment designed for children who would be overwhelmed in conventional studios.

Shimmy Shakes also offers classes for school-aged children with severe to profound disabilities. These are run in a studio with wheelchair access and no ballet barres or distracting dance mirrors.

"We aim to break down barriers for children with challenges," says Shantelle, a former professional

dancer whose oldest daughter has disabilities.

Although the studio has had previous accolades and was named Sutherland Shire's Inclusive Business of the Year in 2017, Shantelle feels overwhelmed by the recognition of being voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It makes me realise that we are touching the lives of so many families in our local community, which makes me very happy.

"After seeing how much my daughter responded to music and movement, I started Shimmy Shakes to try to bring the love of dance to all children," says Shantelle.

Her classes use a lot of creative exercises to help the children develop gross motor skills in an enjoyable environment.

They have great fun being creative and doing something that many other kids take for granted.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Shimmy Shakes will use its grant to hire more teachers and provide accredited disability dance training to all staff.

The classes are not only for the children. Their parents appreciate the opportunity to relax, knowing their child is in good hands with staff who can care for all their needs.

"To see the response from parents is astounding," Shantelle says.

Seeing their children have access to these classes often becomes the highlight of their week."

"After seeing how much my daughter responded to music and movement, I started Shimmy Shakes to try to bring the love of dance to all children," says Shantelle.



Kim says it was just what they needed, and if it wasn't for Make-A-Wish, their world would have fallen apart. Happily, her son has overcome his cancer and is a healthy adult today.

Mum keeps paying back for son's healing wish

Kim Hiron — Make-A-Wish Australia

Compassionate, Understanding, Caring

Many years ago, Kim Hiron and her family experienced the healing power of Make-A-Wish Australia when her son was recovering from cancer treatment.

Since then, she has dedicated many hours to helping make other children's wishes come true and is the leader of the South Sydney branch of the organisation.

"My greatest joy is being able to help grant cherished wishes," says Kim, a teacher, mother and grandmother.

She loves working with children and builds personal connections with the families she helps. "Being able to help bring joy, strength, hope and happiness to these special children and their families is a wonderful heartfelt experience," she says.

Granting a sick child's wish does more than create a special

moment for them and their family; it can help them heal.

"There are studies that show there is a positive health benefit for children."

Kim is humbled and grateful to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero, but her biggest reward comes from seeing the impact of making wishes come true.

"The anticipation of a wish and having something fantastic to look forward to really helps in their recovery."

In her case, Kim's son was granted the wish of a family holiday to Fiji, which helped the family recover after his cancer treatment.

Kim says it was just what they needed, and if it wasn't for Make-A-Wish, their world would have fallen apart. Happily, her son has overcome his cancer and is a healthy adult today.

Kim knew from the start that when she was back on her feet, she would give back to Make-A-Wish and help make a difference to other families trying to cope with the illness of a child.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Make-A-Wish Australia will use its grant to fund one or more of the nine wishes on which the South Sydney branch is working.

"The grant will help ensure these special children have the joy, hope, strength and happiness that a wish can bring them," Kim says.



"Importantly, we provide an environment where patrons can interact with each other and with our volunteer group, providing them with connections and community."

Cooking up hot meals and human connection

Rob Cook — One Meal – It Makes a Difference

Humble, Genuine, Driven

Rob Cook is on a mission to provide healthy hot meals to people in need across the Sutherland Shire, but his work is about more than food.

In 2016, Rob became a founding member of the Sutherland Shire branch of One Meal – It Makes a Difference, and leads a group of volunteers who provide up to 150 meals a week to people who are homeless or struggling to make ends meet.

The volunteer-driven organisation is active in several areas of Sydney and collaborates with other not-for-profits to help people access other support services, such as emergency financial relief or counselling.

Rob has personally assisted in finding emergency housing for people and has arranged haircut vouchers from local hairdressers. He has also organised medical and dental treatment for patrons who

struggle to access these services themselves.

"Our ultimate aim is to assist and support our patrons to return to independence," says Rob.

"Importantly, we provide an environment where patrons can interact with each other and with our volunteer group, providing them with connections and community."

Social connection is of huge importance, Rob says, as many people with material needs are also isolated.

Rob is grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and appreciates the community support. But he says the service is a team effort and everyone deserves recognition.

"I find that helping someone in such a direct way is hugely rewarding. It leaves you feeling good," he says.

Rob is also an energetic fundraiser and led a drive to replace the worn-out van previously used by the charity. This has enabled the volunteers to expand their service to Cronulla and Miranda.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. One Meal is using its grant to cover the ever-increasing operating costs of its growing service and to buy a deep freezer and food handling equipment.

"I am very happy that One Meal Sutherland Shire has received this grant, and I thank our team of volunteers who make it all possible," Rob says.

Your 2019 Finalists

Andrew Barrs

Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation

Andrew Barrs makes a point of being there for children who might otherwise miss out because their mum or dad has a mental illness. As a volunteer camp leader at the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation, Andrew has helped hundreds of vulnerable children. He has volunteered at over 50 of the foundation's camps over the past 12 years, providing participants with support and opportunities to form lasting connections. "When the young people return from our weekends, families report positive changes, deeper understanding and conversations about the mental illness in their families," Andrew says.

Keaton James

Top Blokes Foundation

Keaton James is a professional wrestler, but his moves outside the ring are having the most significant impact. By night, he is known as "Captain Keato" in the wrestling world, but he spends his days working as Top Blokes Foundation mentor for young people. Known for his authenticity, Keaton has helped over 250 young men over the past three years, encouraging them to develop their self-confidence. "I'm a passionate youth worker and a wrestler, and I feel it's a massive achievement to turn two of my passions into proper jobs," Keaton says.

Diane Manns

Sutherland Shire Family Services

Diane Manns is dedicated to eliminating domestic violence and assisting those who have lived through it. She is the CEO of Sutherland Shire Family Services and leads a team of 40 social workers, psychologists, mothercraft nurses, teachers, law specialists and others who help families recover from trauma. In the 17 years Diane has been at the service, she has taken its impact to a new level by becoming a vocal campaigner for reducing the causes of family violence. "We aim to provide safer outcomes for our children, young people and families," Diane says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Andrew BARRS
Australian Kookaburra Kids
Foundation Ltd

Andrew BRODALA
Steve Waugh Foundation

Robert BULL
Miranda RSL Youth Club

Toni BURNHAM
WIRES

Avril CHANGEME
Kingsway Community Care

Rob COOK
One Meal – It Makes a Difference

Edward (Ted) CRAMSIE
Vision Australia Ltd

Michelle DRUERY
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC Sutherland)

Janice DUFFICY
Angel Gowns Australia Inc

Joy FRIEND
Gonyah Seaview RSL Day Club
(A subsidiary of Bundeena RSL
Sub-branch)

Sarah GRINHAM
Wombat Occasional Childcare Inc

Lee HESLEHURST
Sydney2CAMberra

Kim HIRON
Make-A-Wish Australia

Bernadette HOY
Orana Inc

Kathryn HULL
Southern Power AFC

Keaton JAMES
Top Blokes Foundation

Joshua KANDELAS
Sutherland Titans Special Needs
Football Club

Robert LINDSAY
2Connect Youth & Community Inc

Daniella LUCHI
White Ribbon Australia

Diane MANNIS
Sutherland Shire Family Services

Ken MARSLEW
Enough is Enough Anti Violence
Movement Inc

Garry MORRIS
St George Children with
Disabilities Fund

Avril MUNDY
Southern Cross Kids Camp

Melinda PATERSON
Engadine Community Services (ECS)

Greg PIERCE
Wanda Surf Life Saving Clinic

Joan ROBB
BeConnected Community
Services Inc

Darlene ROYAL
Engadine Community Services (ECS)

Jessica RUSSELL
The Roving Artisan

Kristy SARGENT
Wombat Occasional Childcare Inc

Patricia SCHEETZ
The Sweetest Gift

Staci SMYTHE
Expanding Influences

Shantelle TAGG
Shimmy Shakes Dance Studio

Sophie TOWNSEND
Run MND Event Fundraiser for Motor
Neurone Disease Association of NSW

Moya TURNER
Community Palliative Care
Calvary Hospital

Anne VAN VUUREN
3 Bridges Community

Ken WARBURTON
Sylvanvale Foundation Ltd

Westfield

Mt Druitt
NSW



"I am able to build a good connection with the young people and help educate them on life skills and how to achieve success the right way," says Ned, who was released from juvenile detention at the age of seventeen and was lucky enough to find his own mentor.

Using lived experience to keep young people safe

Ned Narouz — Rap 4 Change

Caring, Dedicated, Selfless

Ned Narouz felt lost when he was growing up and he knows from experience how vital a mentor can be for young people who are struggling through the juvenile justice system.

As the founder of Rap 4 Change, the volunteer uses music, creativity and sport to tackle substance abuse, self-harm, bullying and racism.

"I am able to build a good connection with the young people and help educate them on life skills and how to achieve success the right way," says Ned, who was released from juvenile detention at the age of seventeen and was lucky enough to find his own mentor.

Ned's mentor taught him the value of hard work and chasing big goals.

Now he is giving back with Rap 4 Change, which offers school-wellbeing programs, hip-hop lessons, mentoring, sporting activities and counselling to youth in juvenile detention – all on a shoestring budget.

He feels proud to be voted a Westfield Local Hero for his good work, and believes the community support reflects well on everyone at Rap 4 Change, which he established in 2016.

It's all about encouraging young people to make positive choices in their lives, and showing them how it can be done, says Ned.

"Growing up, I was lost," he says. "People were telling me to do things like go to school or get a job, but my mentor was the first person to explain why those things are worth doing."

In 2018, Ned was named Blacktown's Australia Day Citizen of The Year and he has completed a Community Services Certificate at Mt Druitt TAFE.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Rap 4 Change will use its grant to fund a ten-week leadership program called Ready For Success. The aim is to create education, employment and life skills opportunities for up to twenty young people at a time.

"With the help of the grant, we will be helping people who are either at risk of going into juvenile detention or just coming out of it," Ned says.



"Our goal is to run a safe haven for the community and give struggling parents the chance to allow their child to be a part of something amazing," says Rosie, who is in her final year of an education degree.

Giving all dancers a chance to shine and grow

Rosie Surace — Shalvey Community Centre

Amazing, Dedicated, Beautiful

University student Rosie Surace believes everyone deserves to dance, no matter how much money they have.

That's why she volunteers her time to run Shalvey Community Dance for children from disadvantaged and migrant families around Mt Druitt.

"Our goal is to run a safe haven for the community and give struggling parents the chance to allow their child to be a part of something amazing," says Rosie, who is in her final year of an education degree.

"It is about offering families a place to bring their children, a place to seek advice and most importantly a place where support and guidance is given."

Rosie feels honoured and humbled to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero by her local

community, whose support she relies upon to run the centre.

But her greatest joy comes from knowing her vision is putting smiles on the faces of the dancers, who are aged two to eighteen and include those with disabilities.

"Our centre is a rarity in places like Shalvey," she says.

She took over the studio in 2016 when it had twenty-four students. Since then, the number of students has increased six-fold.

Rosie organises festivals and an exciting end-of-year concert at which the young dancers can show off their new moves to their families and friends.

"It's held in a professional theatre, so our students get to experience what it's like to perform on stage with proper lighting, sound and costumes," Rosie says.

She takes the time to get to know all the students and works with each one to build confidence and resilience, which is just as important as the dancing, keeping fit and being part of a team.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Shalvey Community Centre will put the grant towards new safety gear, mirrors and a better sound system. It will also fund dance shoes, costumes and a great venue for the end-of-year concert.

"This grant couldn't have come at a better time," Rosie says.



"When our beautiful daughter died, we received thousands of messages saying how kind and empathetic she was. We decided that Billie's legacy would become one of kindness," Danny says.

Building a legacy of love out of family tragedy

Danny Mayson-Kinder — Flyhighbillie
Strong, Focused, Compassionate

Danny Mayson-Kinder's world was shattered in 2016 when she lost her 12-year-old daughter, Billie, in a tragic horse accident.

But she has ensured Billie's legacy lives on with the charity Flyhighbillie, which is dedicated to promoting kindness, empathy and compassion in children.

"When our beautiful daughter died, we received thousands of messages saying how kind and empathetic she was. We decided that Billie's legacy would become one of kindness," Danny says.

Flyhighbillie publishes interactive B Kinder workbooks and other merchandise for children to promote kindness, empathy and compassion to prevent mental health issues, bullying and suicide.

Central to the charity's mission is spreading a message to "B Kinder" (be kinder), a

reference to Billie's name and her compassionate nature.

Danny says it is humbling to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "Not only is it wonderful to be recognised by the local community, but it also means that people are recognising the need for our positive B Kinder message."

She is also excited about the opportunity to expand the charity's mission.

"Billie's dream was to write a book, so I compiled her poems, stories and artwork into a beautiful book called Hope," says Danny.

"Through Billie's amazing gift of empathy and insight, this book inspires and gives hope to others."

Sales of Hope and the workbooks have raised over \$130,000, which has been donated to charities

such as Bear Cottage children's palliative care home and Feel the Magic, which supports children's physical and mental health.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Flyhighbillie will use its grant for marketing, printing, bookkeeping, and to commission a social impact report on the B Kinder workbooks to boost the evidence base for the project.

"The grant means so much to us," Danny says. "We really want to spread our B Kinder messages and our unique, positive and empowering resources for children."

Your 2019 Finalists

Mayor Chagai

PCYC Blacktown

The Savannah Pride basketball and mentorship program is producing some of Australia's next champions, but its biggest achievement is off the court. Head coach Mayor Chagai has been running the program since 2007 with a mission to shape young lives through sport. Based at PCYC Blacktown, Mayor and his team of coaches and mentors put on basketball training and competitions for up to 200 young people a week. "It keeps young people away from engaging in antisocial behaviour, away from crime, and creates better education pathways for them," says Mayor.

Gary Pontifex

The Children's Hospital at Westmead

Family means everything to Gary Pontifex, which is the driving force behind his 25-year fundraising effort for The Children's Hospital at Westmead. Gary relentlessly goes about selling merchandise at shopping centres and train stations and organising fundraising BBQs. Last year was one of his "biggest and proudest", and he raised \$60,000. "I love fundraising for the hospital, and if it can make a difference, that makes me happy," says Gary, who believes no child deserves to be sick. The money Gary raises is used for research, equipment and to support families with sick children.

Auntie Jenny Ebsworth

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation

When Aboriginal people in western Sydney need the advice, support and wisdom of an Elder, Aunty Jenny Ebsworth is always there to call on. Aunty Jenny is one of four Elders behind the Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation, a group that helps the local community in every aspect of their lives. She and her fellow Elders host weekly meals, turning no one away and seeking to build their people's pride in their identity. "I am very well known in the community and am often called upon to attend meetings and give cultural advice," Aunty Jenny says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Daniel ANGUS
Headspace Mt Druitt

Denise AUMAU MAZHEW
I Am Comunity

Mayor CHAGAI
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC Blacktown)

Tania DAVIDSON
Greater Western Aboriginal Health
Service

Rosie SURACE
Shalvey Community Centre

Alison EASTWOOD
Mount Druitt Seventh Day
Adventist Church

(Auntie) Jenny EBSWORTH
Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation

John FERNANDES
Lions Club of Kings Langley Inc

Emma GILLHAM
Make-A-Wish Australia

Darryl HAMILTON
NSW Police – Mount Druitt
Police Area Command

Kim KING
Yenu Allowah Aboriginal
Child & Family Centre

Cheryl LYNCH-GARDNER
Budo Ryu Karate Academy

Danny MAYSON-KINDER
Fly High Billie Limited

Gricel MENDEZ
Set2Learn

Gailsusan MOORE
Community Foundation of North
Western Sydney

Carol MURRAY
Carol Murray Productions

Ned NAROUZ
Rap 4 Change

Melinda PARKER
Made With Love – Murrumbidgee

Gary PONTIFEX
The Sydney Children's
Hospitals Foundation

Rooby ROO
Blacktown Area Community
Centres Inc (BACC)

Jeffrey SMITH
Mount Druitt Neighbour Aid Inc

Chris SUFFIELD
NSW Powerchair Football Association

John SYOBODA
Western Sydney Suicide Prevention
and Support Network

Matt TAYLOR
Rooty Hill RSL Football Club

Willa TONGIA
Security

Law TUILAEPA
Youth Off The Streets

Rebecca VERRIER
DT Performing Arts

Faye WEBB
Ratha's Place – help2help

Teigan WISE
Coles Mt Druitt

Westfield

Parramatta
NSW



“The grant will help us continue and expand our existing programs, but the impact from the exposure is just as important for raising awareness of autism,” Belinda says.

Super-volunteer helps families break autism isolation

Belinda Tabbaa — Autism Community Network

Inspirational, Dedicated, Caring

Belinda Tabbaa is a super-volunteer for children with autism and their families, giving up hours of her time so others can thrive.

As a volunteer coordinator with the Autism Community Network, Belinda oversees programs across western Sydney for children with autism and their parents.

She is appreciated and respected by the many families that rely on the activities she puts on to help break the isolation they would otherwise experience.

With a child on the autism spectrum of her own, she runs tailored cooking classes, bowling days for the kids and a regular support network for parents and carers.

“Teaching life skills to kids with autism is wonderful,” Belinda says.

She has also personally benefited from the network, which provided her with much-needed information and support after her son’s diagnosis.

Belinda says it is a great honour to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero, admitting that she had to dry her eyes after spotting her photo around Parramatta.

“It was lovely to have people coming up and congratulating me, and it was funny to have my friends and family taking selfies with my photos and sending them to me,” she says.

The mother of three works at her family business during the day but she describes her volunteer role as the most rewarding job she has ever had.

“Most families find it hard to find appropriate programs for their kids elsewhere,” she says.

“And thanks to funding from the Autism Community Network, they can join these activities free of charge in a nice family environment where no one is judged by anyone.”

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Autism Community Network is using its grant to fund a wellness program for carers and training and support for volunteers.

“The grant will help us continue and expand our existing programs, but the impact from the exposure is just as important for raising awareness of autism,” Belinda says.



Susai feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and is grateful for the community support, which he says is encouraging all the volunteers at the centre. "Credit should go to everyone involved, not just me," he says.

Giving free legal support to marginalised people

Susai Benjamin — Toongabbie Legal Centre

Dedicated, Committed, Selfless

Solicitor Susai Benjamin believes being marginalised and vulnerable should not deny people the right to high-quality legal support.

Driven by this philosophy, he founded the Toongabbie Legal Centre, which provides free services to culturally, socially and economically disadvantaged people who don't qualify for means-tested support from NSW Legal Aid.

The centre operates twice a week at St Anthony's Church, where it helps more than six hundred clients a year and has supported more than six thousand since it opened in 2007.

Susai is well known and popular in the area and never turns anyone away if they come to his home in seek of help when the centre is not open.

"We try to assist people who cannot afford legal support.

Sometimes we provide representation and hopefully try to resolve legal issues so that people can avoid having to go to court," Susai says.

Volunteers at the centre include solicitors, barristers, law students, migration agents and people from various other relevant professions.

Susai feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and is grateful for the community support, which he says is encouraging all the volunteers at the centre. "Credit should go to everyone involved, not just me," he says.

In the beginning, the centre's work usually involved minor criminal or traffic offences, but these days most of the cases are far more complex and often involve family law.

"Our clients are often confronting a legal issue for the first time and can be quite overwhelmed

and desperately looking for legal help," says Susai.

One of the centre's innovative projects involves inviting experienced lawyers and judges to present insights on everyday legal issues at free seminars for the local community.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The centre will use its grant to replace its old and unreliable computers.

"This grant is important because as a team of volunteers we struggle financially and are looking for support to make our work full-time," Susai says.



“Receiving the grant and recognition just reinforces the great work PCYC NSW and the NSW Police Force are doing in the youth sphere,” Draz says.

Achieving a policing ambition by supporting youth

Draz Brkljac — PCYC Parramatta

Enthusiastic, Devoted, Respected

Senior Constable Draz Brkljac's life ambition was always to serve and protect the people of NSW by becoming a police officer.

He is taking that ambition to the next level through his work as an engaged and innovative role model and mentor to young people.

For the past seven years, he has been a case manager at Parramatta's Police Citizens Youth Club, where he helps young offenders and at-risk youth to improve their self-respect and reduce their risk of reoffending. He also encourages them to participate positively in the community and teaches them life and social skills that other people may take for granted.

Draz, who was named the 2019 Blacktown City Citizen of the Year, is deeply honoured also to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

His most successful initiative is the Stand Tall program, which is designed to help disengaged youth to resolve criminal and behavioural issues or cope with learning difficulties.

The program redirects participants away from making negative decisions.

“It exposes the program participants to the NSW Police Force in a positive way,” he says. “They realise that the police are there to help and to protect.”

The overall focus of Draz's work is to empower young people to take control of their lives.

The social skills he teaches include basic manners like greeting someone in the morning or shaking their hand when appropriate. This helps to counter the potential anti-social and negative influence of screen-based distractions like social media and video games.

“We try to break down the barriers – especially of technology – that are preventing conversation between individuals.”

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Parramatta Police Citizens Youth Club will use its grant to fund the continuation of the Stand Tall program and to provide barista courses.

“Receiving the grant and recognition just reinforces the great work PCYC NSW and the NSW Police Force are doing in the youth sphere,” Draz says.

“Both organisations are empowering young people to make positive life choices.”

Your 2019 Finalists

Gabrielle Dracopoulos

Granville & Districts Soccer Football Association

Soccer is known as the beautiful game, but for Gabrielle Dracopoulos, it is also a game that anyone should be able to play. Gabrielle is a volunteer director of the Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association, which includes 23 grassroots clubs from around Parramatta. It's Australia's oldest continuously running soccer association, but Gabrielle has been breathing new life into the league by opening it up to new groups, including new migrants and people with disabilities. "When people begin participating in sport by either playing or volunteering, they are building friendships and new networks," she says.

Alex Long

Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW

Alex Long is a social justice advocate who works tirelessly to help young migrants become future leaders of their communities. She is the inspirational leader of Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW, an organisation that supports young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to build the skills and networks they need to be active citizens in Australia. With the support of a tiny staff, Alex has helped thousands of families around NSW. "We work towards a society where all young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds are connected, influential and valued," Alex says.

Jennifer Harris

The Hills School SSP, Northmead

Jennifer Harris is dedicated to helping school students with special needs to be the very best they can be, no matter what obstacles life has thrown in their way. Jenny has been a long-serving volunteer on the parents and citizens committee at The Hills School for students with intellectual and physical disabilities. As immediate past treasurer on the committee, she coordinated fundraisers which helped the school pay for therapy sessions, playground upgrades and equipment. "I get a great deal of happiness helping others but my greatest pride and happiness lies in my family," Jennifer says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Susai BENJAMIN
Toongabbie Legal Centre Inc

Mark BENNETT
Abdominators PT

Sarah BENNETT
Sarah Bennett

Norma BOULES
The Community Migrant
Resource Centre

Anton BREINL
Cancer Council NSW

Draz BRKLJAC
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC Parramatta)

Gab DONNELLY
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Gabrielle DRACOPOULOS
Granville & Districts Soccer
Football Association

Mathew EDSALL
Hills Triathlon Club

Nichole EDSALL
Hills Triathlon Club

Tanya GHOSN
Walk for Hope

Jennifer HARRIS
The Hills School

Tanya HEBERLEY
Ronald McDonald House Charities
Greater Western Sydney

Kimberlee HUGHES
Kool Kids And Teens Therapy Service

Fevziye KAVAS
Our House

Jacqui KEOGH
Myeloma Australia

Glen LEBEAU
Disability Sports Australia

Lynette (Lyn) LEERSON
Reconciliation for Western Sydney Inc

Jarrod LOMAS
Make-A-Wish Australia

Alex LONG
Multicultural Youth Affairs
Network NSW

Sayd MAHMUD
SSI International

Alex McALONAN
GRILL'D

Christine McKENNA
Angel Gowns Australian Inc

Rosemary McKENZIE-FERGUSON
Craig's Table NSW

Mark MIKHA
Yaruki Martial Arts School

Ross PARKINSON
Youth Off The Streets

Antoun SALEM
BMDH Fundraising and Events

Elizabeth SHEPHERD
The Children's Hospital at Westmead

Belinda TABBAA
Autism Community Network

Lija TAYLOR
NSW Powerchair Football Association

Jane THEAU
Settlement Services International

Sarah THORNTON
Walk for Kids Cancer

Naomi WHITE
Winston Mall Children's Centre

Sue WOOD
ROSE Charity Incorporated

Westfield

Penrith
NSW



Helping people with disability engage in sport

Brooke Wilkie — NADO

Inclusive, Passionate, Selfless

“Young people who once had little to talk about to friends and family now have their own proud story to tell,” says Brooke, who is not concerned about recognition for herself and finds being voted a Westfield Local Hero a little overwhelming.

In her personal and professional life, Brooke Wilkie is committed to helping people with disability.

The Penrith resident is General Manager of the Nepean Area Disability Organisation (NADO), which prides itself on being a local organisation that provides tangible interventions to help people with disability find work and enjoy friendships, sport, leisure and independence.

Brooke spent much of her own time setting up the charity's Penrith Touch Football Team after she realised many people who loved football were being relegated to the sidelines because of their disabilities.

Through Brooke's devoted support over the past six years, there are now seventy players across the different touch football

teams, all enjoying an opportunity to experience the joy and tears of winning and losing, in addition to gaining ball skills and learning the importance of teamwork.

At first, it was a challenge to get all the players to run in the right direction. But now many are equal to or better than those in the opposing team.

“Young people who once had little to talk about to friends and family now have their own proud story to tell,” says Brooke, who is not concerned about recognition for herself and finds being voted a Westfield Local Hero a little overwhelming.

Brooke is proud to be creating opportunities for people to “live a life of fulfilment”. Even during her holidays, she is committed to helping people with disabilities.

Before a recent trip to Bali, she collected gifts to give to the local school for children with a disability.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

NADO will use its grant to support the team's entry into the State Cup 2020.

“It can be quite challenging to find ongoing sponsorships for our teams each year. This grant will allow myself, the team and their families to focus on preparation and training and cover all costs associated with registrations, jerseys, travel and accommodation,” says Brooke.



At court, Nicole and her dogs provide traumatised children and vulnerable adults with emotional support so they can concentrate on their testimony while feeling they are in a safe, supportive environment.

People and dogs reach out to share comfort and care

Nicole Celeban — Nepean Therapy Dogs

Tireless, Selfless, Empathetic

Imagine an anxious child waiting to give evidence in court, a lonely person in a nursing home or an isolated school student.

That's where Nicole Celeban, President of Nepean Therapy Dogs, and her team of well-trained human and canine volunteers step in.

They live the charity's mission statement, "always there to show they care", by comforting people of all ages at hospitals, nursing homes, special needs schools and courts throughout western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

The visits are extremely rewarding, says Nicole, who has worked with the charity since 2000 and regularly takes her four dogs to visit hospital patients and witnesses.

She got goosebumps about being voted a Westfield Local Hero but sees herself as the "figurehead of

an awesome team. The community understands what we are doing and are happy with what we're doing. It's a huge honour."

Nicole says the charity has been flying "under the radar" for years and has benefitted from the extra attention.

One of her roles as president for the past six years has been to lead the way towards becoming a professionally run charity with high standards for volunteers and their dogs.

"A few years ago, we only had a dozen volunteers, and we've grown to 50-plus."

At court, Nicole and her dogs provide traumatised children and vulnerable adults with emotional support so they can concentrate on their testimony while feeling they are in a safe, supportive environment.

At Nepean Hospital, she and the dogs provide emotional comfort to child and adult patients and their families.

Nicole, who also runs her own small business, always responds to calls for help and has taken her dogs as far Wollongong to support vulnerable witnesses.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Nepean Therapy Dogs will use its grant to cover rent, electricity and insurance for six months.

"It will free up many of our volunteers from time-consuming fundraising to allow us to extend our services to those in need," Nicole says.

Providing community support for tired families

Christy Hartlage — Connect Child & Family Services (YAWN Program)

Enthusiastic, Caring, Knowledgeable

When Christy Hartlage moved to the Blue Mountains from New Zealand, she had a 10-month-old son who didn't sleep and no support in the area to offer her respite.

"I would often cry wishing we had a grandmother nearby who wanted to hold the baby so I could have a shower or something to eat," says Christy.

YAWN (You Ask, We Nurture), was born eight years ago out of Christy's experience "and the amazing community support we eventually found".

Christy runs YAWN as part of Connect Child and Family Services and links volunteers with parents who need a helping hand.

She says that being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a "fantastic acknowledgement" of the service that YAWN provides.

"The more validation we have, the more we can show how important it is to support families when a baby is born."

YAWN's approach is all about kindness. The kindness of a volunteer giving time to a parent when they need help; and parents understanding that they can be kind to themselves and that it is okay to need a break sometimes. It is also about creating a community that values families.

"We provide support to families at a vulnerable time," says Christy. "The birth of a baby is a joyful occasion, but it is also demanding and sometimes overwhelming."

Sometimes, however, Christy must also support a volunteer. For example, when a mum may have been crying for the whole of a two-hour visit because her baby has been sick for the first

time. "While it is important to be present in that situation, it is not an easy thing to do," says Christy.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The YAWN Program will use its grant to train more volunteers and support more families as well as to market its services and develop a social media strategy.

"We want to let the community know how we help families, and getting more volunteers is really important," says Christy.

"We provide support to families at a vulnerable time," says Christy. "The birth of a baby is a joyful occasion, but it is also demanding and sometimes overwhelming."

Your 2019 Finalists

Adam MacKenzie

Platform Youth Services

Adam MacKenzie's mission in life is to be "the best me I can be". One of the ways the Platform Youth Services program coordinator achieves this is by tirelessly helping vulnerable young people strive for a better version of themselves. He and his team provide 24-hour emergency accommodation and ongoing support to help people build healthy relationships and develop the skills they need to live on their own. Adam, a Rural Fire Services leader, is also the best dad he can be and is devoted to his six children, three of whom are foster children.

Cathy Craig

Penrith Community Kitchen

Cathy Craig is synonymous with the Penrith Community Kitchen, where she was a pioneer volunteer 21 years ago and now runs the show. Thanks to her warm personality, she and her team ensure the kitchen has the feel of a big family table. It is a place where homeless people, abuse survivors, lonely folk, the poor and substance abusers find safe refuge, a hearty meal and someone to talk to. All are welcome without judgment, says Cathy, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2012.

Leann Tibbey

PCYC Penrith

When Leann Tibbey was appointed manager of the Penrith PCYC, her priority was to reinvigorate it as a modern, friendly and busy community hub for all age groups. Within no time, she was consulting with stakeholders and putting her plan into action. An upgrade was completed in 2017 and membership and volunteer engagement have soared. Entire families enjoy the atmosphere of inclusion and the vastly increased choice of activities. "Youth who feel like they are a part of something are less likely to engage in risky behaviours," says Leann. "I believe the whole community benefits."

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

David ACHESON
Forbes Aboriginal & Community
Working Party

Alan BAKER
NSW Police Legacy

Martin BECKETT
Christ Mission Possible

Louise BORG
Make-A-Wish Australia

Nicole CELEBAN
Nepean Therapy Dogs Inc

John CHOMA
Lions Club of Emu Plains Inc

Catherine COLE
Connect Child and Family Services –
The YAWN Project

Cathy CRAIG
Penrith Community

Marzi DESANTI
Thornton Community Group for the
Thornton Community Garden Project

Nigel DOECKE
Fusion Western Sydney

Haitham EL MASRI
Australian Resource Centre 4 PTSD
(ARC4PTSD)

Cameron ELLIOTT
Children's Tumour Foundation

Ragesh EMPERUMAL
Western Sydney University

Jennifer GURRY
Diamond Women's Support

Christy HARTLAGE
Connect Child and Family Services
YAWN Program

Mikielah LEIGH
Our Tribe

Adam MACKENZIE
Platform Youth Services

Cheryl MCDONALD
Southern Prosthetics and
Orthotics, Penrith

Jo O'DEA
Little Athletics

Gayl O'GRADY
Minddogs

Eric PETRACCO
Horrie Eley Hall
Management Committee

Simone SEELEY
Rainbow Families

Leann TIBBEY
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC Penrith)

Brooke WILKIE
NADO (Nepean Area Disability
Organisation)

Colleen YATES
The Community Charity Shop Inc

Westfield

Sydney
NSW

Year-long sabbatical achieves deeply-rewarding results

Jane Horvath — Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Enthusiastic, Driven, Passionate

When Jane Horvath took a year's sabbatical from her career to volunteer full-time, she offered her services to Newtown Neighbourhood Centre (NNC).

She grabbed an opportunity to help set up the centre's Newtopian Outreach, which uses the services of professional volunteers and trained 20 locals to engage with and support rough sleepers.

Thanks to Jane's pioneering work, amazing community support and leadership from NNC, community harmony has improved, and fear and stigma have been reduced. Now, other similar projects are planned.

Jane says being a Newtopian Outreach has been one of the most rewarding experiences of her life. "I have connected with my community of 20 years in a deeper and more authentic way."

Jane says she is used to working behind the scenes and feels many

emotions about being voted a Westfield Local Hero. Primarily, she sees it as a great reflection on what community can do, rather than necessarily celebrating her individual effort.

"It's confirming that what we are doing for people who are experiencing homelessness is having a positive impact, and that's really exciting."

Jane's colleagues respect her for prioritising the needs and interests of people experiencing homelessness wherever possible and including them in determining what response best serves their needs, rather than imposing solutions.

She also has strong values around the importance of acting and connecting locally, knowing one's neighbours and showing empathy towards those who are doing it tough.

Jane says it is not only people experiencing homelessness who benefit from the project. "The wider community can be distressed by the plight of people experiencing homelessness and feel powerless to assist or direct them to appropriate services."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities. The top three finalists per Westfield centre are each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their organisation. Newtown Neighbourhood Centre will use its grant to replicate Newtopian Outreach in other areas. This will increase Sydney's capacity to assist people experiencing homelessness more effectively.

"As part of the Local Hero program, I've enjoyed getting out and walking the streets of Newtown having conversations to raise awareness of homelessness with businesses and the local community."

"As part of the Local Hero program, I've enjoyed getting out and walking the streets of Newtown having conversations to raise awareness of homelessness with businesses and the local community."



"The grant means so much to us," says Jessica. We run on the smell of an oily rag, and every dollar makes a difference. The girls' lives are going to be changed by this money."

Sister mentors give girls an opportunity to thrive

Jessica Brown — Life Changing Experiences Foundation

Selfless, Passionate, Inspirational

Jessica Brown was a high school teacher for ten years, and it broke her heart to see girls falling through the cracks because of childhood trauma.

She was determined to give them an opportunity to thrive and break the cycle of unemployment and neglect that may have been in their family for generations.

So, seventeen years ago, she made many personal sacrifices to set up the Life Changing Experiences Foundation and the SISTER2sister program.

SISTER2sister pairs the girls up with trained mentors who often become safe and positive life-long role models.

The girls are also taken through an intensive course that helps them heal, build self-belief and set career goals.

The mentors are like big sisters that some of our girls never had, says Jessica. "For most of them, it is the first time in their life that they have had someone positive and stable."

Jessica feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "We don't do it for the recognition, but it's lovely to be recognised," she says.

So far, she has taken close to six hundred girls through the program and usually stays in touch with them afterwards. More than eighty per cent of the graduates have gone on to finish high school, and more than half of them are the first person in their family to do so.

Another positive outcome is that most can identify when a relationship is bad for them, says Jessica, who has been an NSW finalist for Australian of the

Year and received the 2013 NSW Woman of the Year-Local Hero Community Choice Award.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The foundation will use its grant to cover the cost of training eleven mentors to ensure a safe, stable and positive experience for eleven girls.

"The grant means so much to us," says Jessica. We run on the smell of an oily rag, and every dollar makes a difference. The girls' lives are going to be changed by this money."

Brave fighter helps vulnerable girls rewrite their future

Vivian Stavis — Lillian Howell Project

Inspirational, Passionate, Caring

Vivian Stavis had been the manager of the Lillian Howell Project (Lillian's) for only a year when state reforms cut off funding.

Fearful for the vulnerable young women in her care, Vivian led a persistent lobbying campaign and a change.org petition that convinced the NSW government to backtrack. As a result, she received the Edna Ryan Award for community activism and feminist activity.

Four years later, Lillian's is going strong, providing supported housing for up to 11 teenagers at a time. They learn how to lead fulfilling lives and are helped to heal from sexual abuse, neglect, homelessness or family violence.

"Lillian's allows the girls to follow their dreams and to rewrite their future," says Vivian, who is

excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It is amazing to be recognised for the work by the wider community. It's a real honour. For a long time, we had a very low profile. But the only way we can keep on thriving and providing opportunities for the girls is to garner community support."

Vivian has been working in community services for 15 years but says her best job ever is at Lillian's "supporting and empowering young women to be the best version of themselves".

Vivian's work also includes an outreach program. "We provide workshops in schools, promoting awareness about the causes of homelessness and providing information about services available for young girls."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Lillian's will use its grant to run workshops on wellbeing and resilience for 100 vulnerable young girls and women. Activities will teach the girls to thrive mentally and socially, help them to be more safe and secure within themselves and enhance their self-esteem.

"We want to run these workshops for the girls and young women that we case manage, to provide beneficial experiences to increase their social capacity. This also includes art therapy and play therapy," says Vivian.

More social outings, such as going to the cinema or doing ice-skating, are also on the cards.

"It is amazing to be recognised for the work by the wider community. It's a real honour. For a long time, we had a very low profile. But the only way we can keep on thriving and providing opportunities for the girls is to garner community support."

Your 2019 Finalists

Kate Manton

Settlement Services International

Kate Manton's passion for diversity and inclusion makes her a perfect volunteer ambassador for the Welcome2Sydney project. Welcome2Sydney is run by Settlement Services International and helps new arrivals feel connected to the city and improves their self-confidence and social wellbeing. Kate is a driving force behind the project and has taken on the role of public spokesperson. She has personally helped more than one hundred refugees and other newcomers practice their English and form meaningful connections. "Being an ambassador has opened my eyes to the struggles faced by new arrivals," says Kate.

Kai Noonan

ACON

Kai Noonan is a rare advocate for people in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) community who experience domestic and family violence. She has worked tirelessly to raise awareness and develop resources since 2015 when she started managing a project on behalf of LGBTIQ advocate organisation ACON. She says LGBTIQ people are as likely, if not more likely, than people in the general population to be involved in an abusive intimate or family relationship, but they often don't know where to find help. This is something Kai wants to change.

Will Hawes

Will2Live

Will Hawes hit rock bottom seven years ago, living in his mum's garage, in debt and addicted to drugs. When he was ready to turn his life around, he could not find work. But he was grateful for the support he had and started giving back. He would make healthy sandwiches at his mums and walk the streets, handing them out along with a piece of fruit and water. That humble start turned into Will2Live, which now serves more than 700 hearty meals a week and holds mass support events for vulnerable people in Sydney.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Steve ANTHONY
Giant Steps Australia

Helen APPLETON
Giant Steps Australia

Jennifer BRISCOE-HOUGH
Tender Funerals

Jessica BROWN
Life Changing Experiences Foundation

Angela COOKE
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC South Sydney)

Denise CRAMSIE
Vision Australia

Jeremy DIMECH
Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

Sandy DONOHOE
Plates4Mates

Fatma ELZEIN
Mummies Paying It Forward

Sarah FOSTER
Childrens Book Council
Australia (NSW) Branch

Jessica GERAGHTY
Make-A-Wish Australia

Michael GOLDBERG
Community Cat Carers

Kylie HARRIS
Midnight Feast – theatre that unites

Will HAWES
Will2Live

Maureen HEFFERNAN
Open Support

Jane HORVATH
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre Inc

Leanne MacCALLUM
Giant Steps Australia

Kate MANTON
Settlement Services International

Rosano MARTINEZ
Youth and Family Connect

Michael MOBBS
Sustainable House

John MORAN
Ovarian Cancer Research Australia

Kai NOONAN
ACON

Ian PARTRIDGE
Youth Off The Streets

Matt RODEN
Story Factory

Vivan STAVIS
Lillian Howell Project Inc

Cathryn STOKES
Mums 4 Refugees

Chris VAGG
Pass It On Clothing & Co

Lucy WATSON
Milk Crate Theatre

Westfield

Tuggerah
NSW



"To live and to give is my life's motto," says Dorf, who is pleased that parents and carers can have a well-deserved break while their children are being taken care of on camp.

All-round good person helps people feel connected

Bryan Dorfling — Camp Breakaway

Exuberant, Patient, Caring

Guitar in hand and an enthusiastic smile on his face, Bryan Dorfling is the kind of role model you want on a youth camp.

The Camp Breakaway youth leader connects with people through his love of music; removing barriers and encouraging people with disabilities to socialise and join in activities.

Dorf, as he likes to be known, volunteers at every Breakaway camp and shares his love of life with children and adults with disabilities, children with high medical needs, young carers and disadvantaged youth.

"I love putting a smile on people's faces," says Dorf, whom a colleague describes as an all-round people person.

He feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but also feels

privileged to be part of Camp Breakaway. "What they're doing in our community is amazing. They're beautiful people doing beautiful work."

Dorf says one of his roles at Camp Breakaway is to be an adult male that people can trust, so they are able to re-engage socially and develop confidence.

"To live and to give is my life's motto," says Dorf, who is pleased that parents and carers can have a well-deserved break while their children are being taken care of on camp.

Dorf is a keen traveller and has visited more than 60 countries, and he usually finds a way to help others wherever he goes.

His next big adventure is a thousand-kilometre walk from Budgewoi to Brisbane to promote good mental health.

"I have been struggling with and hiding my mental health issues for 36 years. Now that I'm talking about them and seeking help, I need to let other people know that they are not alone," he says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Camp Breakaway will use its grant to fund a six-week Stepping Forward Program, which teaches children the interpersonal and cooperative skills they need to transition to training or employment.

"When Breakaway is able to fund more programs, it makes our kind of jobs much more meaningful," says Dorf.



“When I took on the role of treasurer in 2003 I had no bookkeeping or computing skills and was a one-fingered typist,” says Rhonda. But she stepped up to the task and in 2015 won an award for being a top not-for-profit treasurer.

Retiree's 'love job' helps with cancer travel costs

Rhonda Doyle — Central Coast Kids In Need

Selfless, Caring, Incredible

Retired hairdresser Rhonda Doyle volunteers for 30 hours a week at Central Coast Kids in Need, where she and 17 others help the families of seriously ill children who must travel to Sydney or Newcastle hospitals for treatment.

The need is high and growing, with the charity helping more than 2500 families since Rhonda joined 17 years ago.

“I call it my love job,” says Rhonda, whose title is treasurer but is effectively the co-team leader with her sister Lorraine, the charity’s secretary.

She is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. “The people that we help are just so grateful. In this financial year alone, we’ve helped 172 families and outlaid roughly \$96,000 worth of support.”

The charity started out helping dozens of families a year but

has increased to more than three hundred.

Assistance includes accommodation and travel costs as well as funding for medication, specialist formula and quality-of-life equipment.

Rhonda says families often have to pay thousands of dollars for accommodation while their children receive treatment for leukaemia or other types of cancer.

“Many mums have to give up their jobs even though they have mortgages. Without our help, they could lose their homes.”

Apart from her treasurer duties, Rhonda is the first point of contact for social workers and families and is actively involved in fundraising.

“When I took on the role of treasurer in 2003 I had no bookkeeping or computing skills

and was a one-fingered typist,” says Rhonda. But she stepped up to the task and in 2015 won an award for being a top not-for-profit treasurer.

Rhonda is the longest-serving active member of Central Coast in Need and has been awarded Life Membership for her dedication, commitment and hard work.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Central Coast Kids will use its grant to help cover the growing cost of accommodation and travel for families in need.

“It will go a long way to helping even more families,” says Rhonda.

Thoughtful food packs for people without a kitchen

Rebecca Law — Shoebox Revolution *Caring, Selfless, Committed*

The plight of homeless people on the Central Coast touched Rebecca Law to such an extent that she founded a charity to help them.

Through the Shoebox Revolution, the part-time chef and full-time mum of two promotes social wellbeing by supplying care packs of food and other necessities to people who find themselves without a permanent home for even one evening.

The food is carefully selected to suit someone with no amenities and is intended to last 24 hours. Other items include feminine hygiene products, personal grooming products and comfort possessions such as socks.

"I'm just hoping to make a difference in our backyard while teaching our children empathy, kindness and compassion," says

Rebecca, who has lived on the Central Coast for most of her life.

She is humbled that her local community voted her a Westfield Local Hero. "It makes me feel that what we're doing is a good thing and that other people think that we're doing a good thing."

Rebecca is the driving force behind the charity, which distributes 400 packs a month, either directly to recipients or via local services and other charities.

Despite a full work and home life, she manages to be available to assist at events that engage the homeless community she cares so much about.

She is always busy, picking up donations, packing essential items and delivering packs.

In addition to this, she spends many nights engaging socially

with homeless people and always has an ear for a good story.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. The Shoebox Revolution will use its grant to buy non-perishable food and other items for care packs and will be able to invest in better storage and packing facilities.

"The money will go a long way to helping us replenish our stocks of less-donated items such as deodorant and toothpaste," says Rebecca.

"Fundraising is hard work, and we'll be able to help more people with the money, especially over Christmas."

She is humbled that her local community voted her a Westfield Local Hero. "It makes me feel that what we're doing is a good thing and that other people think that we're doing a good thing."

Your 2019 Finalists

Dylan Brassington

Top Blokes Foundation

When Dylan Brassington walks into a local school, you can be sure many students will be running up to him to say hello. As a mentor with the Top Blokes Foundation, he has helped thousands of young people over the years. He embodies healthy masculinity and shows young men how he can be gentle and nurturing and still feel powerful and strong. People know he will give everything he has to make a difference. "I'm passionate about being a mentor to young men to help them to grow into top blokes," he says.

Mike Harrison

Riding for the Disabled - Central Coast

Mike Harrison is retired and could be spending his time on any number of pursuits. Happily, he thrives on helping children with special needs experience the therapeutic benefits of horse riding. Mike first learned to ride bareback on retired circus horses in the UK and volunteers at Riding for the Disabled, where he helps care for the horses and assists children during their lesson. His payback for seven dedicated years of volunteer work is seeing the children's happy faces as they overcome their fears, increase their self-confidence and achieve their goals.

Angela Thomas

Musicians Making a Difference

Angela Thomas is a former international gymnast, a surfer, a youth mentor and all-round local legend. By day she is a teacher's aide, and in the evenings she runs the Musicians Making A Difference (MMAD) dance department. She coaches 100 at-risk, disadvantaged or marginalised youth at her popular hip-hop classes. This gives people aged eight to eighteen a creative and positive way to express themselves and feel believed in. Each class starts with a discussion in a peer-supported safe space, allowing the students to talk and know they are not alone.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Jenni ALLAN
ADSSI Limited

Brenda BOOTH
Stroke Foundation

Jeffrey BRADFORD
Wyong Public School
Community Centre

Dylan BRASSINGTON
Top Blokes Foundation

Bryan DORFLING
Camp Breakaway Inc

Rhonda DOYLE
Central Coast Kids In Need

Milly GRAINGER
batyr

Mike HARRISON
Riding for the Disabled (NSW)
Central Coast Centre

Racquel HASSETT
Police Citizens Youth Club NSW
(PCYC Bateau Bay)

Dawn HOOPER
Iris Foundation

Rachel JAMIESON
Make-A-Wish Australia

Betty JORDAN
NSW Police Legacy

Melissa LAVER
Tuggerah Public School P&C Canteen

Rebecca LAW
Shoebox Revolution

Christine MASTELLO
Southlakes Marketplace

Christine MASTELLO
Community Hair Project (CHP)

Joshua MAXWELL
Jopuka Productions

Marea O'KEEFE
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Shane ORR
Central Coast Junior Rugby Union

Madonna PETRIDIS
Angel Gowns Australia Inc

Crystal RUSSOM
CoastFM 96.3 Community Radio

Angela THOMAS
Musicians Making A Difference
(MMAD)

Janet WALLACE
Senior Smiles

Westfield

Warringah Mall
NSW



"It's about creating a world for others that I wish my brother had lived in. There is really nothing to surpass the feeling you get from helping someone or contributing positively to a person's life. It's super-rewarding."

Sister gives others opportunities her brother never had

Laura O'Reilly — Fighting Chance Australia

Passionate, Entrepreneurial, Determined

Laura O'Reilly grew up seeing the world through the eyes of her brother Shane, who had profound cerebral palsy.

Although Shane was a dynamic young man with computer skills, there were desperately limited post-school opportunities for him.

This inspired Laura and her other brother, Jordan, to create a business that could help Shane reach his potential. Sadly, Shane died in 2011.

The siblings' goal lives on in Fighting Chance, a non-profit organisation they set up to collaborate with others to build sustainable social enterprises that provide much-needed opportunities for people with disabilities.

Laura is the CEO and is surprised and honoured to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero "given the calibre of the other candidates".

She says her work is highly personal. "It's about creating a world for others that I wish my brother had lived in. There is really nothing to surpass the feeling you get from helping someone or contributing positively to a person's life. It's super-rewarding."

So far, Fighting Chance has developed two social enterprises: Jigsaw and Avenue.

Jigsaw is a document and data management business that offers services to government and commercial clients. It is aimed at fundamentally changing the way people with disability receive job training and transition to mainstream employment.

Avenue is a co-working space that supports adults with profound and severe disability to work in the sharing economy, either in micro-enterprises or on their own business idea.

Both support Laura's steadfast conviction that "all people have a contribution to make to society, and that no person should be excluded from using their talents in the economy simply because of their disability".

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

"Because of the community voting for me, Fighting Chance is able to buy new computer equipment for our community. It means a great deal to me to have been successful but it means a lot to the people that we support as well," says Laura.



"The grant is huge for us. It removes a lot of pressure," says Terry. "It means we can multiply what we are doing and support more people in the community."

Mate's tease inspires a male-bonding movement

Terry Cornick — Mr. Perfect

Empathetic, Motivated, Passionate

Terry Cornick felt uneasy when a friend teased him about being "Mr Perfect" and having it all.

The friend did not know his history or his problems, and Terry wasn't sure how to talk about them, or the pressure men can feel to be perfect.

"I felt I had lost connection with the world a little when I was going through some struggles," says Terry.

Mr. Perfect was born when Terry opened up to his mates in the pub, and they had their own troubles to share.

The idea behind the movement is to reduce isolation in men by arranging BBQ get-togethers where friendships can form and people can share their mental health story if they wish.

For Terry, one of the most gratifying things about being voted a Westfield Local Hero is for his efforts to be recognised by his own community.

"It shows there are people who care about what we do."

Mr. Perfect has meetup BBQs at more than twenty locations around Sydney and New South Wales, but the Northern Beaches is where Terry lives. One of the flagship BBQs is held at the local Freshwater beach.

Terry says he wants his two young sons to grow up in a community where they can reach out socially for support for their mental health should they need to.

Mr. Perfect has also expanded into the digital world and complements its BBQs by offering

online support for men and their families through blogs and forums.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Mr. Perfect will use its grant to fund almost one hundred BBQs at five locations for a year.

"The grant is huge for us. It removes a lot of pressure," says Terry.

"It means we can multiply what we are doing and support more people in the community. I have grown Mr. Perfect with little resources from one location to where it is now, and have handled all operations, juggling this with a busy life."

Your 2019 Finalists

Alison Harrington

Moove and Groove by discoDtours

Alison Harrington has used her entrepreneurial skills and a passion for philanthropy to set up a silent disco program that engages more than 200 Northern Beaches seniors in healthy and enjoyable weekly activities. The participants aged 65 to 90 have a ball listening to familiar tunes played through wireless headphones as the Moove & Groove instructors get them dancing. The ultimate purpose is to create moments of joy for older Australians, their carers and families, says Alison. "While our classes deliver benefits to all seniors, we also have a program which specifically caters for people with dementia."

Andrea Hogan

Northern Beaches Women's Shelter

Andrea Hogan loves living in Manly with her family. She also has a strong social conscience and a desire to help others. So, in 2009, she and a few friends formed The Sisterhood; a group of women who meet quarterly to support each other, have fun and raise funds for charity. One of the charities is the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, which relies heavily on The Sisterhood. "We actively assist at a grassroots level to allow the wonderful women running the shelter to provide the services necessary to support the women in need," says Andrea.

Laura Hamilton

Avalon Youth Hub

Laura Hamilton has a special rapport with young people and takes personal responsibility for their wellbeing. As Community Engagement Manager at the Avalon Youth Hub, she is often the first port of call for those aged 12 to 25 in need of support, and she sensitively ensures they are connected with the right service. She also consults widely so young people have a say about the services and workshops on offer. "All the areas we focus on are driven by young people for young people," says Laura, who has a degree in counselling and communication.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Layne BEACHLEY
Aim for the Stars Foundation

Jack BERNE
A Fiver for a Farmer

Monika BIERNACKI
DoggieRescue.com

Malcolm BROWN
Red Cross

Terry CORNICK
Mr Perfect

Jayne ECONOMOS
Make-A-Wish Australia

Laura HAMILTON
The Burdekin Association

Alison HARRINGTON
Moove & Groove by discoDtours

Andrea HOGAN
Northern Beaches Women's Shelter

Samantha KING
Business Education Network
(The BEN)

Georgia LLEWELLYN
Elanora Girl Guides

Alicia LOW
Pilates Alicia

Peta MURTCHISON
Bounce for Batton or Bear Cottage

Laura O'REILLY
Fighting Chance Australia

Eleni PSILLAKIS
Brazengrowth

Danielle RYAN
Blue Bottle Films

Mel THOMAS
KYUP! Project

Eliza WILSON
Streetwork Australia





Australian Capital Territory

Belconnen
Woden

Westfield

Belconnen ACT



"We believe every child deserves a safe start and every family deserves dignity."

Giving babies a safe start

Hannah Andrevski — Roundabout Canberra

Dedicated, Energetic, Giving

Hannah Andrevski was on maternity leave when she wanted to pass on some of her high-quality baby items to people less fortunate than herself.

She could not find such a redistribution service in Canberra. So, after doing her research, she decided to start her own charity.

Despite having her newborn and a toddler to care for and no experience running a charity, Hannah recruited a team of volunteers and launched Roundabout Canberra in February 2018.

So far, the charity has provided more than one thousand children with packs of items that may include safety-checked car seats, cots and prams as well as linen, clothing and toys.

"When a service is working with a family in need of essential items for their children, they order

exactly what that client needs, so the items differ from client to client. We also always include lots of consumables like nappies and wipes," says Hannah.

"We believe every child deserves a safe start and every family deserves dignity."

She is chuffed to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I have worked hard to build a charity that makes a difference in our local community, so it's amazing to have that recognised by the community."

Hannah has returned to her paid work but devotes many hours a week to running volunteer sessions, packing orders, checking car seats and managing relationships with local social workers and organisations.

"The families that we support experience a range of challenges, with the predominant factor

being financial strain. Other challenges include social isolation, family violence, disability and homelessness," says Hannah.

Roundabout has also made a significant contribution to the environment. "Since we opened, we've saved approximately nine tonnes of baby and children's items and equipment from landfill," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Roundabout Canberra will use its grant to provide one hundred family support packs with specially selected items.

"Being able to help those extra families will make a big difference," says Hannah.



Camille says that as a sexual violence survivor it feels validating to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am grateful that people are listening and noticing and making a big effort to be a part of the change by voting."

Brave survivor leads cultural change on uni campus

Camille Schloeffel — The STOP Campaign

Passionate, Dedicated, Activist

Camille Schloeffel could have been put off by the cynics who said she was too young and inexperienced to start a student movement against sexual violence.

But driven by her own experience of sexual violence and a desire to help others, the Australian National University student persevered and successfully launched the STOP Campaign, which is bringing about cultural change on campus.

With her team of twenty-five volunteers, Camille is educating students about consent, becoming an effective bystander and students' responsibilities to each other.

"Many students are fresh out of high school and have received limited education on healthy relationships and sexual health, which is where we come in."

Camille says that as a sexual violence survivor it feels validating to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am grateful that people are listening and noticing and making a big effort to be a part of the change by voting."

She says sexual violence is a sensitive topic and working with survivors can be traumatising, so it has been "amazing to see" the movement grow. "It definitely shows the power of youth in being able to make a big change in their own community."

Since Camille launched her campaign, the university has updated several policies to tackle sexual misconduct.

"I am responsible for advocating that all residential colleges advertise that they have a sexual violence disclosure policy," says Camille, a final-year Human Rights

and Development Studies student and winner of the 2018 Fenner Hall Collegiate Award for outstanding service to the community.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The STOP Campaign will use its grant for marketing and to produce educational material to share stories of survivors, reduce stigma and raise awareness about the prevalence and impact of sexual violence.

"The grant means we can reach more people on campus and get out to other universities as well as reach more people in the Canberra community. It will also take a lot of fundraising stress off the students," says Camille.



"Learning dialectical behaviour skills changes the lives of those with BPD and their families," says Natalie. "It is an evidence-based treatment for those who are highly suicidal."

Giving care to people with borderline personality

Natalie Malcolmson — BPD Awareness ACT

Selfless, Compassionate, Resilient

Natalie Malcolmson gave up her public service career in 2014 to care for her husband, who has borderline personality disorder (BPD), a complex and often misunderstood mental illness.

She was horrified by the lack of affordable support in ACT, so she sought training in dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), which has improved her and her husband's quality of life.

She also set up BPD Awareness ACT to offer affordable community support for those with BPD and their families and to teach DBT skills to others.

"Learning dialectical behaviour skills changes the lives of those with BPD and their families," says Natalie. "It is an evidence-based treatment for those who are highly suicidal."

She says it is validating to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's exciting because it's not just about me, it is also recognition for people with BPD and their families, who really struggle and who often feel hopeless and helpless."

People tend to judge those with BPD because they have trouble maintaining relationships and often become emotionally dysregulated, says Natalie. "Once you understand BPD and that the behaviours are not on purpose, you can come from a more compassionate place."

She wants to share a message of hope that people can learn how to self-regulate and improve their quality of life.

"I believe in recovery from mental illness, and I am committed to working with those who need dialectical behaviour skills the

most but can't afford it," says Natalie, who was named ACT Carer of the Year in 2018.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

BPD Awareness ACT will use its grant to help fund the cost of hiring a venue for group sessions. The money will also be used to run a parenting course for those with BPD and to pay for community awareness activities.

"It is an amazing opportunity for people on a low income or on New Start to be able to access dialectical behaviour skills that will improve their lives," says Natalie.

If you need support, please phone Lifeline: 13 11 14

Your 2019 Finalists

Bill Caddey

Belconnen Community Services

Bill Caddey was a primary school teacher for 25 years and strongly believes all children deserve an opportunity to do their best.

As Network Coordinator at Belconnen Community Services, he works with teachers and caseworkers to identify the support families need to help them achieve this. "My role is to bring people together to address needs in our community. The aim is to build a young person's confidence and skills so they can develop a sense of belonging and in turn be able to make a positive contribution," says Bill.

Ben Shipard

Marathon Health

Ben Shipard is the kind of volunteer every charity needs. One week he'll be sharing strategic ideas at a conference, the next he will be cooking at a youth refuge. Ben's passion is youth mental health, and he works tirelessly with headspace Canberra to encourage people to seek help if they need it. Through his outreach work, he reduces the stigma of mental illness and helps people recognise mental health issues in themselves and others. Ben often provides a welcoming and non-judgemental first point of contact for people seeking information about headspace.

Tim Daly

This Is My Brave Australia

Tim Daly's infectious enthusiasm helps people believe they can do things they haven't tried before. He uses this quality to reduce the stigma of mental illness by encouraging people to share their lived experience through live theatre events organised by This Is My Brave Australia (TIMBA).

Tim started TIMBA because of the stigma he felt after he gave up his high-powered corporate career because of anxiety and depression and to care for his wife, who has multiple sclerosis (MS). Through expressing themselves and being involved in a collaborative venture, people feel less stigmatised, says Tim.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Hannah ANDREVSKI
Roundabout Canberra

Peter BONE
Survivors Ink

Bill CADDEY
Belconnen Community Service

Tim DALY
This is My Brave Australia Inc

Bronte FROOME
White Ribbon and DVCS

Joshua GOYNE
Stroke Support & Awareness Australia

Jan HEROLD
ALEA (Australian Literacy Educators'
Association)

Kristen HEWETT
Adamas Nexus

Betty LAM
Baringa Early Learning Centre

Lea LEES
Marathon Health Limited

Natalie MALCOLMSON
BPD Awareness ACT

Tim McLAUHLAN
Marathon Health

Caroline ODGERS
GIVIT

Luke O'MAHONEY
Centre for Excellence in
Domestic Violence Interventions

Bronwyn PARSONS
Another Chance Op Shop

Melissa RICKETTS
Hurricanes Softball Club

Camille SCHLOEFFEL
The Stop Campaign

Josh SCHWARTZ
Make-A-Wish Australia

Ben SHIPARD
Marathon Health

Robyn THURECHT
ArtKids

Sue WHITE
Scullin Community Group

Alexander WILSON
Cerebral Palsy Alliance

Nathan WOODWARD
Act Softball Association

Westfield

Woden ACT

Champion runner unleashes Indigenous potential

Robert de Castella (AO) — The Indigenous Marathon Foundation
Passionate, Inspirational, Determined

Marathon great Robert de Castella AO MBE is proud of his sporting feats but says his greatest achievement has been helping Indigenous Australians.

The Commonwealth Games marathon champion and Olympian founded and directs the Indigenous Marathon Foundation.

Through its Indigenous Marathon Project (IMP) and five thousand-strong Deadly Running Groups, the foundation promotes a healthy lifestyle and trains young Indigenous men and women to lead the charge.

Each year, 12 Indigenous men and women aged 18 to 30 are selected for the IMP. They train for the New York City Marathon and are provided with mentoring and funding to help them with their careers and personal development and also to establish health and fitness groups in their communities.

Graduates of the program have gone on to set up their own businesses, study medicine and make an impact on health outcomes, with one young man raising enough funds for a dialysis machine in his remote community.

"Indigenous Australians are significantly disadvantaged compared with other Australians, highlighted by an approximate ten-year gap in life expectancy, lower education levels, unemployment and chronic disease," says Robert, who was Australian of the Year in 1983.

He is proud and humbled to be named a Westfield Local Hero. "It means the work of the foundation is being recognised, including showcasing the resilience and achievement and the beautiful, rich Indigenous culture we have in Australia."

Robert primarily sees himself as "a mouthpiece for a whole host of

amazing agents of change who are very passionate about providing a better future for their children and their community".

In 2014 Robert was named an Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to the community through programs promoting children's health and fitness, as a supporter and mentor of young Indigenous men and women and for service to marathon running.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The foundation will use its grant to host a three-day coaching and mental health workshop for IMP graduates.

It will help them unleash their inner potential, says Robert.

Robert is proud and humbled to be named a Westfield Local Hero. "It means the work of the foundation is being recognised, including showcasing the resilience and achievement and the beautiful, rich Indigenous culture we have in Australia."



"I meet amazing people with incredible life experiences and seeing them smile and getting stronger is an amazing thing."

Improving health one step at a time

Kristen Pratt — Capital Nordic Walking *Pioneer, Dynamic, Altruistic*

Occupational therapist Kristen Pratt is on a mission to encourage people of all ages to improve their health while having fun.

She founded Capital Nordic Walking to share her passion for the healthy activity, which involves using walking poles.

Kristen has taught Nordic walking to over one thousand Canberrans of all fitness levels, including those with mobility or health challenges and the frail elderly. She helps them to keep walking by linking them into free groups through an outreach program.

The comradery gives people the motivation to make exercise a habit. This helps them reduce stress and their risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, Parkinson's, arthritis and heart disease, she says.

Kristen can't believe she has been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "Doing community work is like a gift that gives back," she says.

"I meet amazing people with incredible life experiences and seeing them smile and getting stronger is an amazing thing."

Kristen discovered Nordic walking eight years ago while in Switzerland working on disability and rehabilitation with the World Health Organisation. She was impressed when it aided her recovery from a frozen shoulder.

She completed an instructor course and has been making health professionals aware of the benefits, resulting in many referrals of patients to her growing program of free walking groups.

"People are amazed at how far they travel when walking and

talking together and enjoying the beautiful surrounds of Canberra. I am struggling to keep up with the demand," says Kristin, who is on the boards of Parkinson's ACT and the International Disability Rights Fund.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Capital Nordic Walking will use its grant to fund the training of a much-needed volunteer network so it can expand across Canberra.

"We can't keep up with demand," says Kristen. "A lot of people can't join our walks as it's too expensive for them to travel to meet up with our current groups, so this grant will have a huge impact."

Teenage survivor tells his story to save lives

Thomas Campagna — PARTY Program

Strong, Brave, Resilient

After surviving a devastating car crash caused by a drug-affected driver, teenager Thomas TJ Campagna is volunteering his time to help keep others safe on our roads.

He shares his traumatic story with young people through the PARTY Program, a charity that helps school students understand the consequences of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

His mum speaks on his behalf during student events at Canberra Hospital, where doctors, nurses and trauma patients help spread the safety message.

TJ survived severe internal injuries, muscle loss, fractures and mouth damage in the 2017 crash.

Apart from the talks, he has collected thousands of dollars

for the hospital and the PARTY Program through a fund-raising dinner.

He says his work with the PARTY program is a way of giving back and thanking the Canberra Hospital for saving his life.

TJ is proud and happy to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It means the work me and mum do with the hospital is obviously working."

TJ was thirteen at the time of the crash, which was caused by a woman who had used the drug ICE.

"Since the crash, I have had four hospital stays and five surgeries. It is likely I will have more surgeries in the future," he says.

TJ's extensive rehabilitation meant he missed a year of school and now has to catch up.

He is a keen football player and has been able to return to the sport this year. However, he has been told he won't be able to play at an elite level because of his injuries.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Party Program will use its grant to offer more education sessions.

"It means the message about risk-taking behaviour can be shared with more students," says TJ. "Hopefully this will avoid more car crashes from the big five: driving under the influence, driving tired, not wearing your seatbelt, distractions and speeding."

TJ is proud and happy to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It means the work me and mum do with the hospital is obviously working."

Your 2019 Finalists

Alexandra (Sandy) Van Der Toorn

Woden Community Service

Sandra Van Der Toorn goes above and beyond to help isolated, elderly people make new friends. She uses her own car to pick up people, so they don't miss out on activities she organises in her role as a social group coordinator for Woden Community Service. She utilizes resources that aren't covered by funding, and, often prepares treats, cakes and salads for clients and visits them in the nursing home with her beautiful therapy dog, Honey, by her side. "We see such lovely results with our group activities, people laughing and dancing and improving their fitness and mobility," Sandy says.

Kristine Hewett

Philanthropize Pty Ltd

Kristine Hewett is working to fill a gap in support for domestic violence and abuse (DVA) survivors. Aware there are many prevention and crisis support services but little in the way of ongoing support, she and her business partner set up. Adamas Nexus, a monthly self-help support group for women after they have passed the crisis period. "Now we want to expand to help more women throughout Canberra and Australia," Kristine says.

Carey Russell

Children's Tumour Foundation

Carey Russell jumped in to help people with neurofibromatosis after she was diagnosed with the genetic disorder that leads to disfiguring tumours. She has become the primary ACT representative for the Children's Tumour Foundation, which supports people with the condition and funds research into a cure. As a volunteer, Carey manages fundraising events, supports families online or by phone and has rallied businesses and politicians to increase awareness. "Tumours should never be anyone's normal," says Carey, who promotes inclusivity by showing the community how to celebrate difference and rise above one's circumstances.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Thomas CAMPAGNA
PARTY Program

Brett CANNING
United Taekwondo

Robert DE CASTELLA
Indigenous Marathon Foundation

Russell FORT
Woden Blues Australian
Football and Netball Club

Kristine HEWETT
Adamas as Nexus

Gabrielle LEEN
Make-A-Wish Australia

Rikki LLOYD
Canberra Police Community
Youth Club

Kate LUKE
Little Oak Sanctuary

Kristen PRATT
Capital Nordic Walking

Delia QUIGLEY
Diversity ACT Community Services

Jenna ROSS
Marathon Health

Carey RUSSELL
Children's Tumour Foundation

Michelle RUSSELL
Marathon Health

Morgane SMEE
Tayler Made – Ronald McDonald
House Canberra

Jane SMEE
Tayler Made – Ronald McDonald
House Canberra

Alexandra VAN DER TOORN
Woden Community Service

Coralie WOOD
CAT Awards





Victoria

Airport West

Doncaster

Fountain Gate

Geelong

Knox

Plenty Valley

Southland

Westfield

Airport West
VIC

Creating career opportunities for high school students

Mary Chiodo, — Copperfield College

Inspirational, Driven, Kind

Copperfield College is a large school with 68 nationalities and serves an area with high youth unemployment.

The school also has enthusiastic students with a sense of purpose.

Kings Park Campus Principal Mary Chiodo has been at the school for thirty-two years and has played a significant role in creating this positive culture.

Her standout contribution is the award-winning Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program, which actively creates connections outside the school and future career opportunities for year eleven and twelve students.

"What we do at Copperfield is extend the certificate to mirror the world of work while the students are at school," says Mary.

She is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's lovely

to be a recipient. I am very proud to work with and for the students at Copperfield College and our community."

The students spend three days a week in VCAL classes, one day on work placement and one day studying a VET subject that goes towards a nationally accredited TAFE certificate.

This structure allows them to work with employers and mentors and learn soft skills like workplace collaboration and project scoping that aren't necessarily taught in traditional subjects.

"We have tried to make it a seamless transition between school and work, which improves their chances of finding employment," says Mary.

Last year, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority recognised the success of the

VCAL program and awarded Mary the Teacher Award for Excellence in Program Development.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Copperfield College will use its grant to commission an independent evaluation of its VCAL program and develop ways to replicate it in other schools.

"We want to share our success with other schools. It is about making the system richer, not just about making our school the number one school. The success of the grant will also be that we have put into place programs and frameworks that we will be able to continue in the future."



"We want to share our success with other schools. It is about making the system richer, not just about making our school the number one school. The success of the grant will also be that we have put into place programs and frameworks that we will be able to continue in the future."



"All the players have their own life story and challenges. My goal is to provide them with an opportunity to succeed."

Giving girls a safe non-judgmental place to play netball

Niketa Loftus — Craigieburn Netball Association

Selfless, Dedicated, Charitable

Niketa Loftus became a netball coach in 2014 when her daughter started playing the sport and other mums put her forward for the position.

Since then, she has founded the Craigieburn Thunders Club, which is a big multicultural family of more than eighty players in nine teams.

Niketa has ensured that everyone is welcome, regardless of their skill level or ability to pay.

Many players come from disadvantaged backgrounds, but Niketa has found sponsors, raised money and donated her own money to buy them uniforms and pay their fees.

"I noticed that there were a lot of kids who would come and play for a while and then would not come back. I found out that it was because their parents

couldn't afford it or they were disadvantaged in some way."

Niketa feels honoured and a little overwhelmed to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "Our main purpose is to provide disadvantaged children and youth with a safe place to play the game they love," says the working mother of four.

"All the players have their own life story and challenges. My goal is to provide them with an opportunity to succeed."

Her support for the players goes beyond the netball court, and the club hosts dinner evenings and team bonding sessions for the children.

"Some of them come from disturbing family backgrounds and the netball club is their non-judgmental safe place to be," says

Niketa, who was a keen netball player until her early twenties, when her second child was born.

Last year, the coach and mentor's efforts were recognised when she won Netball Australia's national One Netball Community Award.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The netball association will use its grant to fund more players, run training workshops and buy new equipment and uniforms.

"The grant is heaven-sent. We have players on waiting lists, and it will open up netball to another twenty girls. It's a huge relief," says Niketa.



"My greatest achievement, apart from my family, is being part of the team helping to find a cure for EB, the worst disease you've never heard of."

We are well on the way to finding a cure

Gavin Shaw — EB Research Foundation

Dedicated, Reliable, Determined

Gavin Shaw jumped in to help when he saw the anguish that a debilitating skin disease was causing to his friend's daughter.

Gavin was moved by the impact of the genetic illness, epidermolysis bullosa (EB), which causes the skin to break and blister, leading to pain, disfigurement and open wounds.

He is now an invaluable volunteer with the EB Research Foundation, which raises funds for treatments and the search for a cure.

"It's close to your heart when you see your friend's daughter is not well and you're there with three healthy kids. You just want to help out where you can," he says.

"My greatest achievement, apart from my family, is being part of the team helping to find a cure for EB, the worst disease you've never heard of."

Gavin is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's great to know that we are in a community that will help people out where they can."

Gavin spends many hours a week supporting the foundation and increasing awareness in the community. One of his projects involved sourcing over one hundred items to auction at the Cotton Ball, the foundation's largest fundraising event.

His wife, Cindy, and their three children also help out with fundraisers and raising awareness at work and at school.

"In the short time the EB Research Foundation has been established, we have helped raise a lot of funds that have been directed to research," he says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The EB Research Foundation will use its grant to fund a symposium for medical and research professionals from leading hospitals and institutes to update them on research and encourage their involvement.

"We are trying to get as many medical professionals involved in research as possible, as many believe there is a cure within reach," says Gavin.

"The Westfield grant is a welcomed contribution towards finding a cure for the worst disease you've never heard of".

Your 2019 Finalists

Natalie McCloughan

Children's Tumour Foundation

Natalie McCloughan supports children and families with neurofibromatosis (NF), a genetic disease that causes tumours and physical deformities. She builds personal relationships with families going through the most challenging time of their life and helps them navigate the health system and community services to get the care they need. She also organises camps and social events that create a sense of belonging, connection and support. Natalie, who is legally blind, says: "I feel I am given to empathise with the isolation, rejection, uncertainty and difference members of the NF community face in their daily lives."

Zeina Assaf

Make-A-Wish Australia

After losing her 15-month-old baby boy, Zeina Assaf found an outlet for her grief in helping other parents' children. As a branch Fundraising Co-ordinator for Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia, her passion is to offer life-changing experiences to children with life-threatening illnesses. One of Zeina's most successful innovations is her Bake a Wish challenge, where she has used her business network to encourage fundraising competitions between different groups of colleagues. "I am committed to making a positive impact on the lives of seriously ill children and teenagers," says Zeina.

Sally Pittard

1st Strathmore Scouts Group

Sally Pittard's children graduated from the Cub Scouts more than five years ago, but she has enthusiastically continued leading their First Strathmore Scouts group and has even started a Joey group for five to eight-year-olds. Sally organises numerous sleepovers and camps and leads the groups in Anzac Day marches and the annual Clean Up Australia Day. She includes people with disabilities and finds ways to involve everyone in games and activities. "We focus on personal progression. This puts the youth at the centre and recognises each individual has unique needs on their developmental journey," she says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Zeina ASSAF
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Sara AURORAE
Centre for Multicultural Youth

Barry BERIH
Moonee Valley City Council

Mary CHIODO
Copperfield College

Tony CORNISH
Essendon Baseball Club

Majed EL-ALI
Homeless Aid

Kay FERGUSON
Essendon Baseball Club

Pauline FORSTER
CPLT

Gareth HANLON
Westmeadows Football Club

Susan HENDRA
300 Blankets

Eve KORYTKOWSKI
The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

Niketa LOFTUS
Craigieburn Netball Association

Natalie McCLOUGHAN
Children's Tumour Foundation

Tara McGIE
Unleashed Entertainment

Sally PITTARD
First Strathmore Scouts

Gavin SHAW
EB Research Foundation

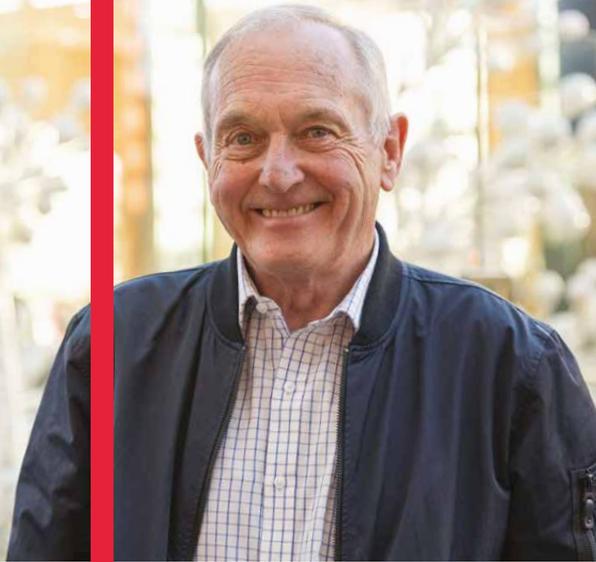
John SHIELS
White Ribbon

Jason WHITER
Vision Australia

Westfield

Doncaster

VIC



"I don't see myself as a hero but an advocate for those who don't have a voice. I think this says I am making a difference and that's important to me," he says.

Tenacious treasurer fights for sanctuary's rights

Trevor Eddy — Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House

Tenacious, Energetic, Selfless

Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House is a much-valued sanctuary wherein elderly, disabled and lonely people can socialise and learn new skills, and it makes an effort to embrace people who don't speak English as a first language.

However, a major commercial development next door was threatening its existence by keeping people away.

That's where volunteer treasurer Trevor Eddy came in.

He led a media and face-to-face campaign that secured compensation, returned Clota to a firm financial footing and brought the community back together.

Trevor is known for tenaciously fighting for the rights of others and feels exhilarated and humbled to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"I don't see myself as a hero but an advocate for those who don't have a voice. I think this says I am making a difference and that's important to me," he says.

"I love trying to resolve injustice, inequity and the isolation."

Trevor secured a large cash and in-kind compensation payment from the construction company, which returned the house to profit.

He has also reviewed all house policies and procedures and engaged local councillors to support the sanctuary.

The house is just one of the many causes Trevor supports. He volunteers, consults and advocates for ten other organisations and was named Chisholm Volunteer of the Year in 2017 and Whitehorse Citizen of the Year in 2019.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House will use its grant to replace its ageing computers and to set up a hub to teach technology. The front of the house will be converted into a warm and welcoming place where people can have a cup of tea, play cards or watch a movie.

"It will change the face of the whole place," says Trevor.

"There will be new programs, new equipment and new people. What it will really do is give us an opportunity to fulfil the hopes and aspirations for the people who share their time with us."



Alice is often the public voice of families with neurofibromatosis in matters concerning their needs. She engages with the media and plays integral role in reducing social isolation and advocating for positive social attitudes.

Determined mum fights for wellbeing of kids with tumours

Alice Dell — Children's Tumour Foundation

Strong, Compassionate, Selfless

When Alice Dell's son Barney was two years old, she and her family received the devastating news that he has neurofibromatosis (NF), a genetic condition that causes tumours to grow on a person's nerves.

She was strong and determined to not let NF define Barney, who has brain tumours and is now in primary school.

Ever since the diagnosis, Alice has fought for Barney's wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. She has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and is always ready to share her story with other parents to help them navigate the uncertainty of a diagnosis.

The primary school teacher channels her support through the Children's Tumour Foundation and has worked hard to further its goals of improving awareness,

celebrating difference, supporting families and funding research.

"NF is an incredibly variable condition with no way to tell how it will affect each individual," she says. "Barney has spent endless hours in hospital. He has had twenty-four MRIs under general anaesthetic and brain surgery."

Alice is often the public voice of families with NF in matters concerning their needs. She engages with the media and plays integral role in reducing social isolation and advocating for positive social attitudes.

Her family are also passionate about NF, and her parents have established the Barney Fellowship, which provides funding to the Murdoch Research Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital.

Despite the seriousness of the condition, Alice has not lost her

sense of humour. She is the leader of the Barney Army, a team of over sixty friends and family who have run in their undies at Cupid's Undie Run every Valentine's day to raise funds.

"We have raised over \$300,000 but, more importantly, have educated hundreds of people about NF," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The foundation will use its grant to engage a paediatrician for fortnightly clinics at the Royal Children's Hospital.

The aim is to prove there is enough demand from patients to sustain a service through Medicare billing.



Luke is grateful for his electric wheelchair. "I wouldn't be where I am without it. I don't think I would be working, have a partner or go travelling for the sports I play."

Changing lives through electric wheelchair sport

Luke David — Victorian Electric Wheelchair Sports Association

Proactive, Responsive, Resilient

Luke David has a disabling condition called Nemaline Myopathy and relies on an electric wheelchair.

Despite his challenges, he is committed to helping others and spends most of his time volunteering for organisations that support people with disabilities.

His main passion is sport, specifically electric wheelchair sport, which he took up when he was thirteen.

He's experienced the personal benefit and represented Australia at an international level.

"Growing up with a physical disability, I never thought I'd be able to play sport," says Luke, who is President of the Victorian Electric Wheelchair Sports Association.

He says he is proud to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "This will do

a lot for us. Our players are very dedicated to their sport, and they spend a lot of time and money coming to events and don't really get the recognition or awareness they deserve."

He is forever coming up with new ways for people with disabilities to access and enjoy sport and believes participation helps build character through teamwork, communication, leadership, perseverance and good sportsmanship.

Luke is grateful for his electric wheelchair. "I wouldn't be where I am without it. I don't think I would be working, have a partner or go travelling for the sports I play."

He plays as much sport as he can, including powerchair hockey, football and rugby league. In 2018 he was the captain of a powerchair hockey team

that competed at the World Championships in Italy.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The grant means the Victorian Wheelchair Sports Association will be able to purchase equipment and hire new venues across the state to make electric wheelchair sports accessible to more players.

"At the moment we have players all around the state, but we only play in the Eastern suburbs. We are the only organisation in Victoria specifically for electric wheelchair users, and transport can be challenging. This will make us more inclusive," says Luke.

Your 2019 Finalists

Todd MacDougall

Nexus

Todd MacDougall is a military veteran with nearly forty years of service to the Australian Defence Force. With the help of local RSL sub-branches, he has formed a group called Nexus to help veterans connect with their community and overcome post-traumatic stress disorder. Apart from get-togethers, outings and free tickets to sports matches, three Nexus volunteers also offer veterans a 24-hour number they can call to speak to someone or request welfare support. "The idea is to provide the veterans and their families with a soft landing point to reconnect with the community," says Todd

Trish Karedis

Giant Steps Melbourne

Trish Karedis took a leap of faith when she left her friends and family in Sydney to start Giant Steps Melbourne, an independent school for students with autism. She and a small team registered the school, raised funds, developed the curriculum, employed the staff, defined the culture and enrolled the students. That was in 2016, and Trish hasn't looked back. As principal, Trish leads 100 staff. "Helping children and adolescents living with autism has changed my life," she says. And the students are thriving in the specialist environment that combines education and therapy.

Caroline Eshak-Liuzzi

The Art Cabriolet

Caroline Eshak-Liuzzi has been waging a brave campaign to use art as an alternative therapy since 2009 when she started helping children who were traumatised by the Black Saturday bush fires. She founded The Art Cabriolet (AC) and ran it at Marysville Primary School for three years, where she helped children heal and thrive while she developed the organisation's ethos, ethics and methodologies. Caroline says the therapy helps address adverse childhood experiences such as substance abuse, autism, bullying, divorce, domestic violence, eating disorders, incarceration, learning disabilities and grief.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Jodie BURNS
Big Group Hug Ltd

Louisa CHIAM
Foster Dreamz

Erika CRAMER
The Queen of Confidence

Ana DARRAS
TLC For Kids

Luke DAVID
Victorian Electric Wheelchair
Sports Association Inc

Vickie DAVY
PetRescue Ltd

Alice DELL
Children's Tumour Foundation

Trevor EDDY
Clota Cottage Neighbourhood
House Inc

Caroline ESHAK-LIUZZI
The Art Cabriolet

Norman GALE
The Salvation Army Camberwell

Verity Julia GRAINGER
Crocmmedia

Helen GUNTHER
Nunawading Toy Library

Cassandra HARDING
Australian Legislative
Ethics Commission

Marguerida HOLMES
Macedon Blues United FC

Julie JONES
Doncaster and District
Netball Association

Trish KAREDIS
Giant Steps Melbourne

Eliza LI
Halad to Health

Todd MacDOUGALL
Nexus

Leon MOORE
LARFS

Heather RENTON
Syndromes Without a Name
(Australia)

Peter ROYCE
300 Blankets

Robbie SINGH
Gracie Jiu Jitsu Burwood

Doreen STOVES
Doncare Community Services

Annette SUBHANI
New Pathways Life Coaching

Guy TUYAU
Society for Aid to Children
Inoperable in Mauritius (SACIM)

Wendy UPASENA
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Chris VARNEY
I CAN Network

Westfield

Fountain Gate

VIC



"It's nice that the community values what we're doing. The organisation has been of help to a lot of people, and it's encouraging that they want to recognise that."

Retired teacher keeps families out of crisis

Judy Martin — Endeavour Ministries

Dedicated, Energetic, Passionate

Judy Martin has always felt compelled to help those in need.

In 1994 an opportunity arose to open an op-shop with volunteers from different churches and the local community to raise funds to provide food vouchers to people in need.

Judy jumped at the chance and has been volunteering for more than five days a week ever since.

Judy's involvement has expanded over the years, and she now leads a team of more than 100 volunteers from various professions who provide a range of services for families in crisis in the Endeavour Hills, Lysterfield and Doveton communities.

She feels "honoured" to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's nice that the community values what we're doing. The

organisation has been of help to a lot of people, and it's encouraging that they want to recognise that."

Judy's family are also involved in Endeavour Ministries. Her daughter is one of six psychologists, and her solicitor husband provides free legal advice. Her mother ran the Monday Meals program for more than eighteen years. As a retired teacher, Judy provides educational services.

Endeavour Ministries services include support groups for people with mental health issues, financial and material crisis aid, emergency accommodation, meals, group outings, no-interest loans and education programs.

Judy and her husband have opened their home to homeless people at different times – including a girl who needed a safe place to live for eighteen months to complete her schooling.

"I think my main achievement would be bringing together such a talented team of volunteers who use their particular expertise to help people in a whole variety of ways," says Judy, who has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for her contribution to society.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities. Three people from each Westfield centre are awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Endeavour Ministries' grant will help Endeavour Ministries provide emergency help for families in need, especially preventing homelessness.



Helping at-risk youth stay engaged with education

James Seary — Operation Newstart Casey

Patient, Caring, Inspirational

James engages directly with participants. "I enjoy getting out and getting dirty alongside the young people. It enables me to build strong and trusting relationships."

One of the most rewarding parts of James Seary's work with at-risk youth is when he meets up with one of his former students who has grown up into a successful adult.

"It gives me a warm feeling," says James. "Listening to their memories of their time with us is always a great experience."

James is the Program Manager at Operation Newstart Casey, where he has helped more than three hundred and fifty young people stay engaged with their education over the past twelve years.

Many of the students referred to the program by local schools display risk-taking behaviours, lack motivation, have low self-esteem, are disruptive, engage in truancy or engage in criminal activity.

During the term-long program, they attend their home school for

two days a week and Operation Newstart for three.

The multi-layered intervention includes outdoor and adventure activities, community service and group work that involves parents.

James engages directly with participants. "I enjoy getting out and getting dirty alongside the young people. It enables me to build strong and trusting relationships."

As a result, he has become a caring father figure for many of the students.

He has found it surreal to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "You don't enter a role like this to receive accolades. It does, however, feel nice to know that enough members of the community think my work is valuable," he says.

"We consistently go over and above to support these young people when much of their life is in crisis. They know they can call on my staff or me at any time."

In 2016 James received an award from the Casey community and was nominated as Citizen of the Year for his work at the program.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Operation Newstart Casey's grant will bring welcome relief from financial pressure and will help to sustain its program until 2020.

"This money will fund an entire term of activity and food for our next cohort," says James.



Dedicated mentor

Daniel Beeson — TRY Australia

Passionate, Positive, Persevering

Daniel Beeson grew up amid adversity and has taken some wrong turns. But he has always landed on his feet and learnt lessons from his experiences. He uses his life experience to help vulnerable young

people do the best they can for themselves and is a dedicated mentor and coach. Daniel was a volunteer for three years at TRY Australia before he was employed as mentoring coordinator. In

this role, he has developed positive connections with key stakeholders and established mentoring programs for seven schools across Melbourne's south-east in just four months.



Looking to the future

Lauren Moore — Abacus Learning Centre

Inspirational, Intense, Forward-thinking

Lauren Moore's world was turned upside down when a paediatrician gave her 18-month old son an autism diagnosis and said he would never speak or have meaningful relationships. The only advice

offered was to find good respite services. Lauren had never heard of autism and had to look it up in the dictionary. Then she researched how to give Billy the best chance she could. She discovered ABA

(Applied Behaviour Analysis) therapy and started using the method at home with Billy. Other parents were impressed with his progress and asked Lauren to help their children.

Your 2019 Finalist

Colin Moore

Cranbourne Junior Football Club

Despite its rich history, the Cranbourne Junior Football Club was facing several challenges until its President, Colin Moore, pulled it up by its bootstraps. Colin sees the club's more than 300 players as his kids and is firmly focused on keeping the family robust and healthy, both physically and spiritually. He is committed to social diversity, giving the children a sense of belonging and ensuring no one is left behind. "My challenges are to keep the kids active, off the streets and away from devices, as well as to build social inclusion," says Colin.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Vicky ARGYROPOULOS
Dandenong High School

Chalanka ATHALAGE
Thala Asapuwa

Amrullah BANOORI
Cranbourne Iqra Association Corp

Jacob BARTLEY
Mister Minit

Daniel BEESON
TRY Australia

Helen BRENNAN
Casey Cardinia Triathlon Squad

Rachel BRIGHT
Angel Gowns for Australian Angel
Babies Incorporated

Josh CARELL
Littlefoot & Company

Eden CARELL
Littlefoot & Company

Dean COWAN
Pakenham Pony Rescue
(Not for Profit) Organisation

Suzanne FARR
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Leanne FORBES
Children's Tumour Foundation

Lorraine GOODWIN
Cancer Council Victoria

Eva IOSIFIDIS
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Emma JACKEL
Ladies From the Land Australia

Carol LARTER
Dandy Cat Rescue

Michelle LEWIS
Berwick College

Judith MARTIN
Endeavour Ministries Inc

Margaret McDONALD
Lardner Preschool

Laura McDONOUGH
No Hairs Ark

Aanchal MESHARAM
Indian Association Cardinia Casey

Lauren MOORE
Abacus Learning Centre

Colin MOORE
Cranbourne Eagles Football Club

Luan Thai NGUYEN
Officer City Soccer Club

Nathaniel POTTS
Divergent Martial Arts

Rebecca ROSS
Mindfull Aus

Matt RUNNALLS
Mindfull Aus

Ash SCOTT
Operation Newstart Casey

James SEEARY
Operation Newstart Casey

Sujatha SHANMUGAM
Vasudeva Kriya Yoga

Anthony TONEN
Fountain Gate Cricket Club

Ariana TUGAGA
Centre for Multicultural Youth

Kelly WARREN
Bk2basics

Eric WIECKMANN
CHIPS (Christians Helping
In Primary Schools Inc)

Westfield

Geelong
VIC



"Our clients come from many complex life situations. A few words of encouragement and support can work minor miracles," Michael says.

Creating a friendly place for the homeless and lonely

Michael Nolan — Lazarus Community Centre

Committed, Generous, Humble

Former priest Michael Nolan has worked tirelessly to establish the Lazarus Community Centre to provide a safe and welcoming place for the most vulnerable and needy people in Geelong.

It's a place where those living rough or experiencing social isolation can share a daily meal, shower, clean their clothes and watch TV or play pool.

In its first eighteen months of operation, the service has served close to five thousand meals and assisted well over two thousand people to cope better with daily living, says Michael.

He is delighted to be named a Westfield Local Hero as it means more people will learn about Lazarus Community Centre.

"I have a great crew of about twenty volunteers and thanks to

the publicity I have eight more waiting to do volunteer training," says Michael.

"I'm totally chuffed. It gives me a sense of real satisfaction that what we are doing is worthwhile for our clients. It's great that something good has come through me to the centre."

The facility is open Monday to Friday and is linked in with other community services so clients can be given referrals for housing and other practical help.

After serving as chairman of the board for twelve months and training a group of leaders, Michael is now a regular volunteer. He pops in regularly through the week and loves to cook at home for his rostered volunteer duty day.

"Our clients come from many complex life situations. A few

words of encouragement and support can work minor miracles," he says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Lazarus Community Centre's grant will provide welcome relief from the ongoing stress of finding funds to buy high-quality food to prepare nutritious meals. "This will cover us for six months. That's a lot of worries straight off my plate," says Michael.

"I also want to use the funds to add an additional toilet. Sometimes we have three or four people queuing up for our one toilet."



"Our guests enjoy person-centred care," says Tessa. "I firmly believe all people have a right to good nursing."

Giving carers a break at home-like day hospice

Tessa Davis — Anam Cara House

Compassionate, Caring, Giving

Nurse Tessa Davis is known for her big heart and her empathetic care of people with life-limiting illnesses.

She runs the day hospice program at Anam Cara House in Geelong, which gives carers a well-earned break for a few hours while their loved ones are well looked after by a team of trained palliative care volunteers.

People at the hospice are treated as guests and encouraged to engage socially with others in a similar situation. Guests can also choose to live out their final days in home-like comfort at the house.

The aim is to have one volunteer for each guest so everyone receives individualised care.

Tessa and the team are always on the lookout for beautiful little things that make a difference.

"We had one lady who loved gin and tonic, and we encouraged her to enjoy a drink for as long as she wanted," says Tessa.

She feels privileged to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and is happy it will increase Anam Cara House's recognition in the community.

"It's really important to let people know about our hospice and that it's a happy, supportive and safe place."

One of Tessa's outstanding contributions is a satellite hospice in the northern suburb of Norlane, which she helped start because she was concerned some people couldn't afford to travel to Geelong to visit Anam Cara House.

Every Wednesday, she heads off for the satellite program in a minibus, picking up guests along the way.

Now Anam Cara House plans to develop a second satellite day program south-east of the city of Geelong.

"Our guests enjoy person-centred care," says Tessa. "I firmly believe all people have a right to good nursing."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Anam Cara House will use its grant to bring Tessa's dream of a second satellite program to fruition.

"My wish is that we have many more hospices like this in our country. We don't have a lot of hospices that offer home-like care," she says.



"It's lovely to see that community support behind us and recognition that more needs to be done about brain cancer, which is often a forgotten cancer. Our clients will feel that their voices are being heard."

Family tragedy inspires brain cancer foundation

Rebecca (Bec) Picone — Peace of Mind Foundation

Driven, Dedicated, Unstoppable

Rebecca (Bec) Picone created the Peace of Mind Foundation to support people with brain cancer after her sister-in-law died from the disease.

The foundation runs a support group and annual retreats and provides financial and in-home support to brain tumour patients and their families.

Bec is available 24/7 to offer support and has raised more than \$680,000 for the foundation.

"I founded Peace of Mind to provide much-needed and difficult-to-find support and care for patients and families fighting brain cancer," says Bec, who is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's lovely to see that community support behind us and recognition that more needs to be done about brain cancer, which is often a forgotten cancer. Our clients

will feel that their voices are being heard."

However, she sees her clients as the true heroes. "They're going through the most awful, challenging time of their life but they are still so positive and courageous."

Brain cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in people under forty and kills more children than any other disease.

However, it receives less funding than other cancers, which is why Peace of Mind is raising awareness and much-needed funds.

Bec works full-time for the charity as its CEO and takes only a small, part-time wage, volunteering the remaining hours.

"The end goal is to run Australia's first nationwide support service for families fighting brain cancer," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Peace of Mind will use its grant to fund the annual running costs of its Geelong Brain Tumour Support Group and its regional forum, which help reduce social isolation.

"Unless people go along to a support group or our forum, they may never meet anybody else who has brain cancer. It's a great opportunity for people to connect and build support networks and friendships," says Bec.

"We also have a lot of bereaved carers who come along. Our services don't just stop when the person has passed away."

Your 2019 Finalists

Libby Gibson

HeartKids

When nurse Libby Gibson was asked to help HeartKids, she took up the challenge and ran with it. The request was simply to host monthly gatherings for families of children with congenital heart disease (CHD). But Libby's enthusiasm grew and she took it upon herself to get involved in fundraising and organised regular events at local hospitals. The passionate volunteer is now the Geelong branch coordinator for the national charity. "Over the past 11 years I have raised almost \$100,000. I have been able to help numerous families and have made lifelong friends," says Libby.

Rachel Parker

Ocean Mind

When Rachel Parker discovered surfing, she finally found the perfect coping strategy for her mental illness. Eager to share her discovery, the experienced youth worker founded the charity Ocean Mind, which teaches surfing to children and teenagers with mental health issues, disability or social isolation. Over six weeks, surf instructors work one-on-one with the young surfers to build their confidence, self-efficiency and resilience. "I discovered surfing in 2015 and found my saving grace. I knew it could change the lives of many of the young people experiencing challenges," says Rachel.

Sarah Tuohey

Angel Gowns for Australian Angel Babies

Sarah Tuohey is doing what she can to support parents who have lost their babies and need to plan a funeral. The mother of three is a volunteer with Angel Gowns for Australian Angel Babies, which transforms wedding dresses into gowns for babies who have passed away up to the age of 18 months. Angel Packs containing a gown or wrap, blanket, nappy, beanie, booties and a keepsake are provided to hospitals, funeral homes and direct to distressed parents who find it difficult to find an outfit for their angel baby.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Hazy-Mars CONNELLY
The Stroke Association of Victoria

Tessa DAVIS
Anam Cara House Geelong Ltd

Nicki DUNN
Bellarine Training and
Community Hub

Mieke FOSTER
NOMAD Teddy Bear Hospital

Libby GIBSON
HeartKids

Kate-Victoria INGRAM
KV Dance

Rachael MARSHALL
Department of Justice and
Community Safety

Michael NOLAN
Lazarus Communicate Centre

Rachael PARKER
Ocean Mind

Rebecca PICONE
Peace of Mind Foundation

Louise PITITTO
bestchance Child Family Care

Nicole RIDDLE
OneCare Geelong

Angela SEECKTS
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Annaliese SZOCS
The Inspiring Grace Foundation Inc

Sarah TUOHEY
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Michele WARREN
3216 Connect Op Shop

Westfield

Knox
VIC



"We strive to give people the opportunity to hear their voices again and express themselves through song," says Wendy, who has recovered her voice after her stroke but is unable to interpret touch on her right side.

Generous stroke survivor helps others find their voice

Wendy Lyons — Stroke A Chord Choir

Passionate, Enthusiastic, Inspirational

Stroke survivor Wendy Lyons started the Stroke A Chord Choir in 2010 when she met other survivors who could sing despite losing the ability to speak.

"We strive to give people the opportunity to hear their voices again and express themselves through song," says Wendy, who has recovered her voice after her stroke but is unable to interpret touch on her right side.

She is excited to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's so humbling that many people care to vote."

The choir sings across a broad range of musical genres and rehearses weekly in East Ringwood.

Its concerts are inspiring events and bring much joy to the audience, who typically leave on a high, full of admiration for the performers.

"We see many of the stroke survivors look happier and able to communicate better because of the choir," Wendy says.

"We've got our 10th birthday coming up, and we definitely want a special party to thank all the people and the council who have helped us start the choir and keep the choir going."

The choir also seeks to educate the general public about stroke and to raise awareness about the difficulties of living in a community when you have no speech.

Wendy, who has also set up an art group called Brushstrokes, has participated in research and has received several awards for her work. These include the Life after Stroke National Stroke Foundation Award, an Australia Day Volunteer Award, The Stroke Association of Victoria Appreciation Award and a Yooralla Volunteer Award.

The mother of five daughters has also published an inspirational autobiography, *Left of Tomorrow: A Journey of Stroke Recovery*.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Stroke A Chord Choir will use its grant to print choir booklets and to pay for ongoing expenses such as hall rental and music copyright.

"We can do extra things to make people happy and put on more concerts," says Wendy.



"I am passionate about assisting survivors of sexual assault to overcome the horrific events that have occurred and to work towards decreasing the prevalence of sexual assault in the community," says Donna.

Kitchen conversation leads to healing action

Donna Jordan — Hands Off Foundation

Compassionate, Dedicated, Energetic

Donna Jordan came up with the idea for the Hands Off Foundation during a kitchen table conversation about helping survivors of sexual assault to heal.

Under her leadership, the foundation has grown into a charity that provides tangible emergency support in the form of care packs with necessary items and shopping vouchers. It also provides survivors with opportunities that support their healing.

Donna coordinates fundraising and works with the Centre Against Sexual Assault to ensure each client receives what they feel will help them the most, not what has been selected for them.

"Beneficiaries include children, men and women of all ages and backgrounds," says Donna.

Although the foundation has won previous awards, she feels the community has given her validation

for her hard work by voting her a Westfield Local Hero. "It says the community is behind us, and we need that to keep going."

One of Donna's goals is to expand the variety of opportunities the foundation offers. For example, it was recently able to sponsor a 14-year-old girl for part-time employment at a horse-riding school, instead of offering 10 horse-riding lessons.

"I am passionate about assisting survivors of sexual assault to overcome the horrific events that have occurred and to work towards decreasing the prevalence of sexual assault in the community," says Donna.

Through the foundation, survivors know someone in the community cares for their wellbeing and is there for them during their recovery journey.

Apart from her work with the foundation, Donna has been a yoga teacher for 30 years and is also an active supporter of Oz Child and has fostered children from different backgrounds. "It is my belief that all children should feel loved and safe," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. The Hands Off Foundation will use its funds to provide more support to more survivors.

"We want to help people in more meaningful ways, like giving opportunities for people," says Donna.



"My commitment has resulted in a support system for a community that would otherwise quite likely be misunderstood, underestimated and marginalised," says Mel.

Mum uses lived experience to help people with autism

Mel Spencer — Different Journeys

Dedicated, Selfless, Courageous

"The bigger the challenge, the bigger the opportunity for growth" is a philosophy close to Mel Spencer's heart.

Mel and her three children are on the autism spectrum and she has overcome significant personal hardship in her life, which inspires her to strive for more for her family and for others.

In addition to being the primary carer for her children, she is a dedicated advocate for people on the autism spectrum.

In 2016, she co-founded Different Journeys, which holds four events a month to share valuable life skills and reduce the social isolation of people with autism.

Most of the committee members are on the autism spectrum or have a family member with autism, which means they can use their lived experience to help the 400 members.

"My commitment has resulted in a support system for a community that would otherwise quite likely be misunderstood, underestimated and marginalised," says Mel.

To be voted a Westfield Local Hero is a "very humbling" experience, she says.

"It means that we are creating more awareness regarding autism, which in turn means more acceptance and inclusion. The journey for families, teens and adults with autism is made better by connecting with the world and not feeling so alone."

Despite her busy life, Mel manages to attend all four monthly events and knows the name of every attendee.

"Most of my time is dedicated to Different Journeys," she says. "I see each challenge as an opportunity to take Different

Journeys further and to ensure support for the autism community continues to grow."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Different Journeys will use its grant to expand its events to a new area, Banyule. It will also provide autism peer-support training to carers and event staff.

"This recognition will help raise our profile and potentially connect with more individuals and their families with autism," says Mel.

"It may help them find their tribe or people who speak the same language and just 'get' each other."

Your 2019 Finalists

Darren Hill

Rotary Club of Knox

Darren Hill has always tried to do the right thing. But he wanted to do more for his community and joined the Rotary Club of Knox as a vehicle to channel this energy. Darren has taken responsibility for managing the club and providing new direction, and he has taken the membership along with him. "Our purpose is to support community, specifically youth," says Darren. "We use the skills and knowledge of members and local services such as Harrison Uniting Care, Anchor and Knox Infolink where the need arises, so we do not need to re-invent the wheel."

Alice Garrick

Community Casseroles

Alice Garrick has a gift for making people feel cared for. Five years ago, she started Community Casseroles to provide food to those in need. She started preparing meals in her kitchen with a few friends for new mothers in the area. Now Alice brings dozens of volunteers together for cook-ups to connect while they prepare 1,000 frozen meals a month for people who need support for any reason, from bereavement to social upheaval. Alice does most of the deliveries herself and often sits, listens and cries with the recipients.

Shusannah Morris

Life's Little Treasures Foundation

Shusannah Morris's daughter Molly-Rose was born at 25 weeks weighing 880 grams. Shusannah spent five harrowing months with her at Melbourne's Royal Women's Hospital, where she met four other mothers going through the same thing. Life's Little Treasures was born when they decided to extend their circle of support to other families and do something about the lack of information and community care they experienced. Fourteen years later, thanks mainly to Shusannah's efforts, the charity is active at Box Hill, Monash Children's, the Mercy, the Royal Women's Hospitals and another 120 neonatal hospitals around Australia.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Lisa ALSTON
Bayswater Football Club

Mario ANDERS
Children's Tumour Foundation

Graham CRICHTON
Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade

Alice GARRICK
Community Casseroles

Darren HILL
Rotary Club of Knox

Lauren HUNT
Kiss Goodbye to MS

Donna JORDAN
Hands Off Foundation Inc

Chuentat KANG
GJS Intellectual Company Australia

Les KENNEDY
Australian Air League Victoria Group

Jaime LEE
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Wendy LYONS
Stroke a Chord Choir

Shusannah MORRIS
Life's Little Treasures Foundation

Robert NASH
Nunawading Cricket Club

Fiona QUINN
Aussie Veterans Op Shop

Melinda SPENCER
Different Journeys

Danielle STOREY
Eastern Innovation Business
Centre Pty Ltd

Nicola TOUHEY
Wantirna South Primary School

Westfield

Plenty Valley
VIC

Family tragedy unleashes a passion for caring

Alex Fabiani — Global Care

Hardworking, Loving, Cheeky

The turning point in Alex Fabiani's life came during the ten years that he spent looking after his brother who was left a quadriplegic by a heroin overdose.

During that time Alex gave up drugs and alcohol himself and embarked on a journey of recovery that included becoming an advocate for the disabled and reigniting his passion for writing.

After Alex's brother died, he founded the Infinity Church Community Meals Kitchen South Morang, which provides more than one hundred meals a week to people in need and also gives families food parcels that include items needed for children's school lunches, including treats.

"I started helping out more at church and then one day it came to me that the kitchen was what

I wanted to do," says Alex, who never declines anyone seeking a home-cooked meal.

"Our community meals kitchen is not just for food, it's a place for social interaction and to feel wanted."

Alex has written two inspiring books about his life story and feels grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I've learnt it's not about me, it's what I can do for others," he says.

Over the past nine years, the Community Meals Kitchen has provided thousands of meals to the homeless, elderly, disabled, struggling families and refugees. Last Christmas, Alex and his team of volunteers handed out hundreds of parcels, more than a thousand toys and delighted women with gifts of a handbag.

Thanks to Alex's involvement in local emergency relief and disability networks, the program also offers help beyond a regular meal. "We give out information about other organisations and support programs that may be able to help people," he says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Community Meals Kitchen, which is affiliated to Global Care, will use the grant to buy kitchen equipment and to relieve the constant pressure to raise funds.

"The kitchen costs over \$20,000 per year to run and we don't charge for meals," says Alex.



Alex has written two inspiring books about his life story and feels grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I've learnt it's not about me, it's what I can do for others," he says.



"The work I do with refugee women means a lot to me. It brings a lot of satisfaction because I can see the difference it makes in the women's lives, particularly the newly arrived ones."

A guiding hand for refugee women

Sousan Hawalla — Drummond Street Services

Selfless, Compassionate, Honest

Sousan Hawalla is dedicated to helping women refugees and asylum seekers to find their feet in Australia.

She works at Drummond Street Services, where she established a social group for vulnerable women who are struggling to settle into their new country.

The women participate in ten Bright Morning Women's Group sessions which provide a safe environment for them to discuss challenges they are having with cultural differences, family violence, parenting, financial matters and tenants' rights.

"It alleviates some of the social isolation and provides a safe environment for the women to learn, ask questions and connect," Sousan says.

She feels humbled and "a bit overwhelmed" to be voted a

Westfield Local Hero by the community.

"The work I do with refugee women means a lot to me. It brings a lot of satisfaction because I can see the difference it makes in the women's lives, particularly the newly arrived ones."

Sousan understands what it is like to start again as she escaped civil war in Lebanon and arrived in Australia when she was just ten years old.

"The women find it really helpful to have someone who speaks their language, somebody from the same culture who can actually answer some of their questions."

With Sousan by their side, some women have found the courage to attend court after experiencing family violence. Through the group, the women become financially literate and have

learned to embrace rights many have not enjoyed before.

"One woman had never been shopping on her own before. She felt empowered after she started shopping by herself," says Sousan.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Drummond Street Services will use its grant to fund skills and employment training for the women and help the group to run on an ongoing basis.

"When each group ends after ten sessions the women are upset and sad," says Sousan. "We are looking at training some of the women to run the group to sustain it long-term."



"I am very passionate about giving back to the community," says Gurinder.

Taking interfaith tolerance to the next level

Gurinder Kaur — Khalsa Education Society

Passionate, Selfless, Committed

Gurinder Kaur is a proud Sikh and just wants everyone to get along without misunderstanding each others' culture and traditions.

As a volunteer with the Khalsa Education Society, she promotes cultural harmony and interfaith solidarity by visiting schools and workplaces to familiarise people with the turban Sikhs wear to represent equality.

The program helps to break down stereotypes and misconceptions that sometimes lead to bullying of Sikh children, Gurinder says.

"Sometimes there can be a negative association between turbans and terrorism."

One of the society's innovations is to run turban tying stalls, where non-Sikhs can try on a turban and get to know more about the religion.

Gurinder is over the moon about being voted a Westfield Local

Hero for work that is part of her identity. "I grew up with a culture of sarbat da bhala, which in Punjabi means wellbeing of all," she says. "I was raised to care about the people around you without any judgment. They are like my extended family, my brothers and sisters."

Gurinder has been going above and beyond in her efforts to help her local community since arriving in Australia in 2006. Despite a full-time job as a business analyst, she never turns down a request to support local projects, such as getting involved in the Whittlesea Relay for Life to support cancer research.

Taking the lead, she encouraged many in the Sikh and Indian community to take part.

"I am very passionate about giving back to the community," says Gurinder.

"But in my Punjabi community, there are still a lot of people who don't know about community work. I believe my recognition will motivate the younger generation and the Punjabi community to come forward."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Khalsa Society will use its grant to reach out to more schools and develop educational material, such as videos and leaflets.

"It will help increase awareness of the Sikh community and create better relationships," says Gurinder.

Your 2019 Finalists

Matthew Odgers

Links Community Group

Matthew Odgers is bringing people together through the flourishing public garden that has become a proud landmark in Lalor. There are no individual plots, and everyone is free to enjoy the space. Matthew has also helped create gardens for local schools and organised free workshops. "New families moving into the area have a way to get to know their neighbours," says Matthew, who founded the Links Community Group with the intention of starting the garden. "Refugees and new migrants get to know their new town is safe and inviting," he says.

Melissa Flentjar

Lalor Running Club

Melissa Flentjar was overweight and depressed, but she changed her life when she started running, lost 48kg and stopped smoking. She wanted to share her healthy new lifestyle with others, so she organised a regular local park run and set up the Lalor Running Club. These enable beginner and intermediate runners and walkers to exercise together in a safe and social environment. Now Melissa has funding for a regular 5km Saturday morning walk and run managed by volunteers. "Over 10,000 people in the Epping North area will be able to participate," she says.

Leonie White

Thomastown Secondary College

When she started at the school 43 years ago, there was high unemployment nationally and particularly for the youth in the northern suburbs. There was a view that success was only possible for a few. This impacted on students' self-esteem and aspirations. But after banning the word 'disadvantaged' and focusing instead on all that was possible, students started to thrive. In 2018, 91 per cent of students who applied for a tertiary place received a first-round offer and 97% of Year 12s had positive exit destinations. "Students are not only motivated to achieve, they do," says Leonie

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Rosa CORNWELL
Findon Calisthenics Club Inc

Alex FABIANI
Global Care

Melissa FLENTJAR
Lalor Running Club

Dinnae GALLOWAY
1st Doreen Scout Group

Craig GRAHAM
Northern BMX Club Inc

Simone GREEN
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Sousan HAWALLA
Drummond Street

Sarah HOPES
Findon Calisthenics Club

Gurinder KAUR
Khalsa Education Society Inc

Julie MALHERBE
JABS Joey and Bat Sanctuary

George McMURTRY
Arilla Retirement Village

Daryl McSHANAG
Mernda Bulls Basketball Club

Matthew ODGERS
Links Community Group

Revati (Rae) SUBRAMANIAM
MANAS (Mental Awareness
Network And Support)

Kylie WEBB
Children's Tumour Foundation

Leonie WHITE
Thomastown Secondary College

Westfield

Southland
VIC



"These families may be unable to feed themselves, to clothe themselves and may not be able to afford safe equipment for their children," says Donna. "This support is life-changing, so to be able to have a positive impact on so many families is just phenomenal."

Dedication boosts support for families in need

Donna Cartwright — Mums Supporting Families In Need

Committed, Dynamic, Persistent

Donna Cartwright is a driving force when it comes to supplying material aid to families doing it tough.

Despite the demands of her family, employment and study, she has worked hard to raise the profile of Mums Supporting Families In Need, a volunteer-run charity that has so far helped twenty thousand families in crisis with high-quality food, clothes and baby items such as prams and cots.

Last winter it provided warm coats and gumboots to children at a local kinder who were turning up in thongs and t-shirts because their families couldn't afford warm gear.

Donna feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and hopes it will inspire other people to get involved in community work. "It's great to be an example, not just for my children but for the local

community," she says. "I really believe if everyone did a little, no-one would need to do a lot.

"Our focus is ensuring no child goes without essentials," she says.

The organisation was supporting fewer than twenty families when it started seven years ago and is now helping well over one hundred and fifty a month.

Donna volunteers many hours a week and has secured tens of thousands of dollars of grants and has significantly increased the charity's social media following.

She has also grown support for the annual Christmas appeal, with the number of children helped increasing to more than three thousand.

While finding spare time is challenging, Donna is proud that her efforts allow the charity to

continue its work. "We are a lifeline for families," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Mums Supporting Families In Need will use its grant to support more than three hundred families in crisis.

"These families may be unable to feed themselves, to clothe themselves and may not be able to afford safe equipment for their children," says Donna.

"This support is life-changing, so to be able to have a positive impact on so many families is just phenomenal."



"It's been so wonderful to be able to advocate for what I do. It's going to open up so many new opportunities to continue what I am doing in the community."

Driven to help all parents learn child first aid

Nataly Tormey — The Parentmedic Movement

Passionate, Powerhouse, Generous

Nurse Nataly Tormey wants every parent to know how to save their child's life in an emergency but is aware that many families cannot afford first-aid training.

Nataly was inspired to establish The Parentmedic Movement after she was approached by a mother who was distressed because her baby kept turning blue but couldn't afford baby first aid training.

Nataly provided her with free lessons, but now The Parentmedic Movement has more than sixty licensed educators providing training to more than five hundred parents a month.

Most parents pay for their lessons but educators donate some of their time, so free training can be given to those in need. A portion of every booking fee is also donated to a health clinic in Kenya.

"Our training covers everything from rashes and safe sleep to emergency first aid," says Nataly, who organises free sessions for refugee groups, teen mothers and immigrants.

Nataly says it is a "really big deal" to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"I grew up in this area so to have local recognition means more than any national awards I've been nominated for," she says.

"It's been so wonderful to be able to advocate for what I do. It's going to open up so many new opportunities to continue what I am doing in the community."

By teaching parents what to do when their child is unwell, Nataly is also reducing the burden on hospital emergency departments.

"We want to reach more parents, especially those without

the means to fund education themselves," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Parentmedic will use its grant to develop an online first aid training program for all parents and to fund twenty face-to-face training sessions.

"The face-to-face training will specifically be for vulnerable groups," says Nataly. "One will be for families that may have experienced domestic violence. We will also connect with other not-for-profits to offer sessions to groups that may not be able to afford training."

Unlocking hope for children with a cruel disease

Kathlene Jones — Prader-Willi Research Foundation Australia

Honest, Warm, Brave

Kathlene Jones's daughter was born with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS), which causes physical disability, cognitive impairment, crippling emotional imbalance and a life expectancy of just thirty years.

Kathlene founded the Prader-Willi Research Foundation Australia in a determined effort to improve treatment and support for all children and adults with the cruel genetic disease.

She says those with PWS are among the most excluded and vulnerable of all people with a disability, and part of her mission is to show how "beautiful and amazing" the children are and to highlight their potential.

"This genuine pride, affection and support give our children confidence and self-esteem to participate and build friendships."

Kathlene feels privileged and honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's great the community is behind us," she says.

"Our kids have so much potential. When we can support them to get their Prader-Willi symptoms better managed, you can see all of the beauty the child brings."

So complex is the condition that caring for a child or adult with PWS is considered harder than looking after someone with disabilities caused by stroke, brain injury or dementia.

One of the biggest challenges is that the children can become critically ill without showing signs of illness.

Kathlene's current focus is on implementing a healthcare model to help the estimated two thousand Australian families living with PWS. This will help

all doctors who treat the children better understand the complexities of their condition.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Prader-Willi Research Foundation Australia's will put its grant towards work on the new healthcare model.

"The ideal long-term treatment is gene therapy that will enable the children to function without all of the challenges," Kathlene says. "In the meantime, our kids could be getting a lot better preventative care. This provides an immediate improvement in quality of life for the individual with PWS as well as reduced stress and medical care burden for their family."



"Our kids have so much potential. When we can support them to get their Prader-Willi symptoms better managed, you can see all of the beauty the child brings."

Your 2019 Finalists

Beau Arnfield

Spair Pair

Law student Beau Arnfield is doing his bit to change the world for the better. With his best mate, he co-founded social enterprise Spair Pair to help provide basic necessities for those in need. Their social enterprise sells high-quality, ethical, sustainable and locally made undergarments, and for every pair sold, an exact duplicate of the same product is provided to someone who is doing it tough. Last year Spair Pair launched a successful pre-ordering campaign, allowing the organisation to already help 500 people in need within their first two months. "It is our goal to allow people to see how easy it is to create meaningful change," says Beau.

Cynthia Pollak

Jewish Bereaved Parents Support Group

After losing her son to a rare cancer, Cynthia Pollak was driven to help other grieving parents. She founded support group Jewish Bereaved Parents after realising only someone who has walked in the same shoes can understand the devastation parents feel. Cynthia encourages parents who have lost a child of any age to meet up at least once a week to share their feelings and get back into life through activities such as exercise classes, craft and toy-making for sick children. "We also help siblings who have lost their brother or sister," she says.

Patricia Culliver

Kingston Active-Southland Striders

Patricia Culliver has the perfect combination of skills and patience to support the walkers of varying abilities at the twice-weekly sessions of the Kingston Active-Southland Striders After 16 years of dedication to the indoor walking group, she is acknowledged as the lead volunteer. Apart from the physical benefits, the sessions promote social connection, and Patricia is always on hand to welcome new walkers to introduce them to existing members. "People new to the area have joined us and now have new friends and new activities," she says. "I ensure everyone feels part of the group."

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Janet ANDERSON
Phoenix Festival Of Dance Inc

Beau ARNFIELD
Spair Pair

Josh BURT
Mentone Hockey Club

Donna CARTWRIGHT
Mums Supporting Families in Need

Patricia CULLIVER
Kingston Active – Southland
Striders Program

Tanya DONTAS-BOYD
Vollie

Emily HIGGINS
East Brighton Vampires Netball Club

Kathlene JONES
Prader-Willi Research
Foundation Australia

Robyn LAVERY
Angel Gowns Australian Inc

Berlin LEW
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Ray LEWIS
MESAC Bayside Marine Education
Science and Community Centre

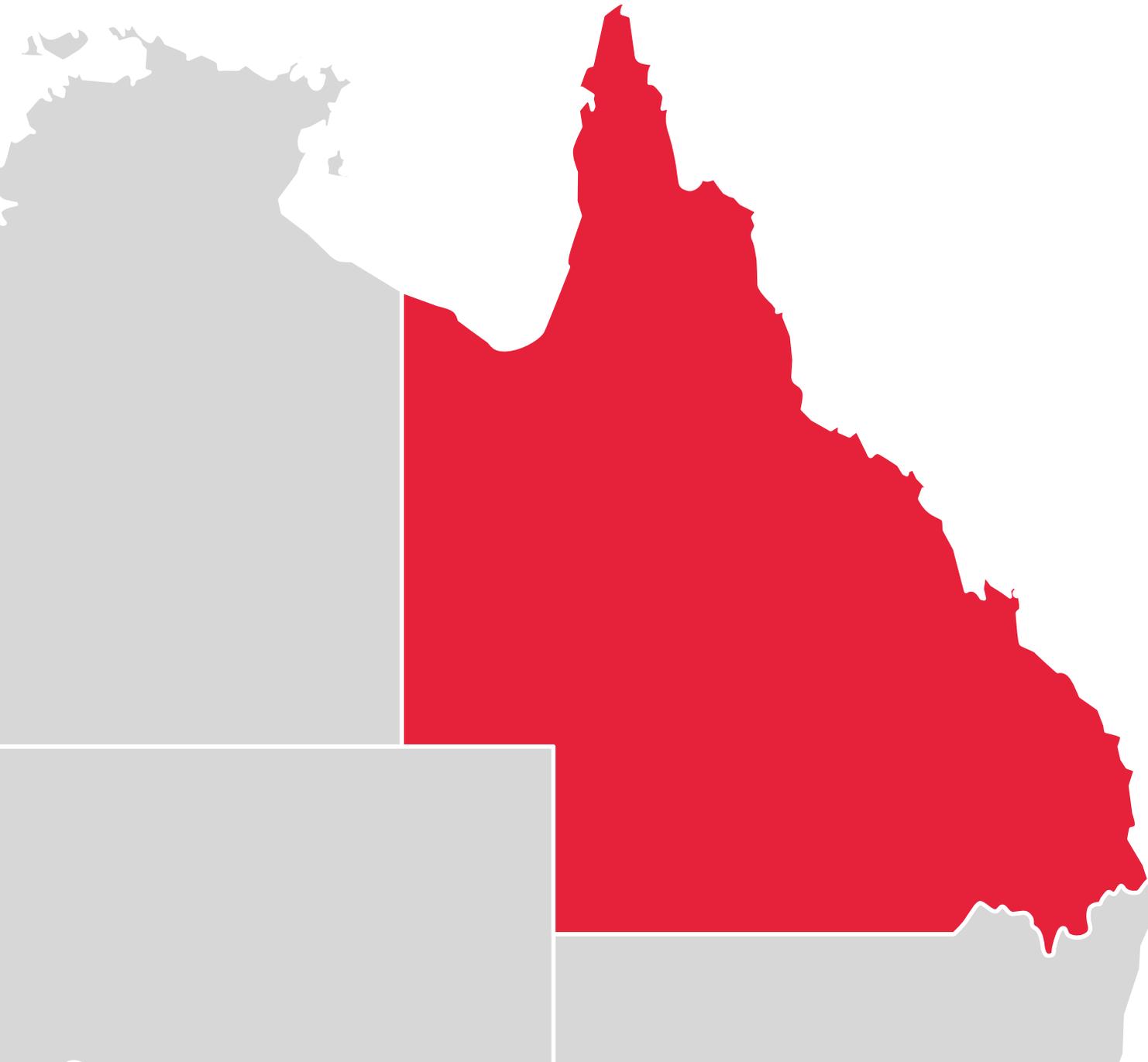
Olivia MCCLUSKEY
Radio Lollipop

Sarah Louise NEWMAN
Salvation Army Church Carrum Downs

Cynthia POLLAK
Jewish Bereaved Parents Inc

Nataly TORMEY
The Parentmedic Movement

AJ WILLIAMS-TCHEN
Girraway Ganyi Consultancy



Queensland

Carindale

Chermside

Coomera

Garden City

Helensvale

North Lakes

Westfield

Carindale

Qld



"Swimming helps build self-esteem and promotes great lifelong friendships. We also improve family support networks and build relationships between like-minded families," says Craig.

Making inclusive swimming fun and meaningful

Craig Tobin — Special Olympics Redlands
Caring, Dedicated, Understanding

Craig Tobin has been involved with swimming for forty years and touched the lives of thousands of people along the way.

For the past ten years, the much-loved former swimming champion has volunteered to coach inclusive squads of Special Olympic and Down syndrome swimmers at the Clem Jones Sports Complex in Carina.

"We teach swimming and water safety. We have athletes starting their swimming journey and we have many athletes that have completed at World Championships, says Craig, who makes the lessons both fun and meaningful.

He is an internationally respected coach, but his influence goes beyond the swimming pool.

"Swimming helps build self-esteem and promotes great lifelong friendships. We also improve family support networks

and build relationships between like-minded families," says Craig.

He has found it a "sensational" experience to be voted a Westfield Local Hero, validating his years of work. He is also excited about the community recognition for the Special Olympics.

Many members of Craig's squad have gone on to hold part-time jobs in the community, such as with the Lions AFL Club, modelling or working at the local gym or coffee shop.

They are also making impressive achievements in the pool and several won medals at this year's Special Olympic World Games.

One of the swimmers he mentored is now a bronze-level coach and one of his assistants.

Craig recently volunteered to run a successful day for refugees at which he taught parents and children about water safety.

Previously, he introduced a program for refugees attending Milperra High School who had never seen a swimming pool and were afraid of the water. He also worked closely with the Muslim community, offering lessons that catered to their religious and cultural requirements.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Special Olympics Redlands will use its grant to market itself and cover the costs of gear and pool entry for those who cannot afford it.

"These funds mean we can promote swimming to more athletes and turn them into better athletes," says Craig.



"I have been influenced by my mother since I was a child to pay it forward," says Katherine. "Whether it was a school fete, local charity or church group, mum would encourage me to volunteer."

MaD team help out with top-quality backpacks

Katherine Hoyle — Making a Difference – Brisbane

Inspiring, Passionate, Bold

Katherine Hoyle and her mother, Denise, started Making a Difference – Brisbane after the 2011 floods.

Better known as The MaD Team, they and their group of volunteers have become an integral part of the local support network and their main role is to distribute backpacks with essential items to vulnerable people.

"I have been influenced by my mother since I was a child to pay it forward," says Katherine. "Whether it was a school fete, local charity or church group, mum would encourage me to volunteer."

She and her mum run the non-profit operation from their home in Manly West. They raise funds to buy the high-quality backpacks and have collection points

throughout Brisbane for toiletries, food and other essential items.

"I am passionate about our MaD Team," says Katherine. "Our motto is giving a hand up – not a hand out."

She is delighted by the community recognition of being voted a Westfield Local Hero, but her main focus is to stay grounded and continue working for the community.

The MaD team regularly attend street feeds to hand out the backpacks and the other items.

Over the years, they have also distributed more than six hundred backpacks to school children and more than a thousand pairs of pyjamas to children in foster care.

It's not only locals who benefit. They have sent fifty large boxes of shoes, clothing, school supplies, toiletries and T-shirts to Fiji and

twenty boxes of clothing to an Indigenous community in Katherine in the Northern Territory.

Thanks to their large following on social media and collection points all over Brisbane, they are able to collect a large number of items in a small amount of time.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Making a Difference – Brisbane will use the grant to buy and make up more than a thousand backpacks.

"The backpacks have to be high quality to deal with various weather conditions. We want people to take pride in them," says Katherine.

Shiny shoes spark conversations about compassion

Lauren Cahill — Children's Tumour Foundation

Empathetic, Generous, Trailblazer

Lauren Cahill had never heard of the genetic disorder neurofibromatosis (NF) until a brave girl with a tumour on her brain stem came into her shoe store.

Young Emme touched Lauren's heart and, in a spontaneous act of kindness, she decided to design a girl's shoe in her honour and name it after her.

All profits go to the Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia.

Now, thanks to the charitable small business owner, girls all over Brisbane are wearing the hand-made rose mocha glitter shoes, not only raising much-needed funds but also raising awareness and compassion about NF, which can be both debilitating and disfiguring.

The shoes are also available on the internet and have been bought for girls all over the world,

raising awareness about NF in other countries.

Being voted a Westfield Local Hero made Lauren cry with happiness. She is delighted by the community support, which she says is like "two gigantic arms wrapping themselves around Emme and her family". Of course, Emme is also a local hero in her own right, she says.

When trying on the shoes, mothers often take the opportunity to have a conversation with their daughters about compassion.

"They talk about Emme, about her illness, and that their contribution is making a difference. That they are helping others, through the act of giving," says Lauren.

She has also produced a video featuring Emme and her mother, which she not only uses to market

the shoes but also to tell the girl's brave story.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia will use its grant to cover the cost of employing an NF specialist nurse at the Queensland Children's Hospital to offer weekly support to up to twelve families.

Lauren says being voted a hero also raises awareness about Emme's shoes.

"The more we sell; the more conversations parents are having with their girls about neurofibromatosis."



"They talk about Emme, about her illness, and that their contribution is making a difference. That they are helping others, through the act of giving," says Lauren.

Your 2019 Finalists

Carolyn Robinson

Beyond DV

Carolyn Robinson started Beyond DV to help domestic violence survivors through the vulnerable early days after leaving a shelter. Her registered charity has two programs; Bright Start and Time Out. Bright Start is run by teachers who work with families, the Education Department and schools to smooth the way for children who relocate after domestic violence. Time Out offers quarterly personal development workshops to help women rebuild lost self-worth, regenerate hope and develop critical support networks with other survivors. "We support survivors at the recovery stage when there are limited services available," says Carolyn.

Alison Layton

Caring for Carers Australia

Alison Layton launched Caring for Carers Australia because she knows firsthand how relentless it can be when a loved one needs 24-hour support. Now the charity has started an innovative One Day Off campaign, which gives people an opportunity to sponsor a short break for the almost half a million unpaid carers in Queensland and many more throughout Australia. "A carer's job is both rewarding and demanding," says Alison. "One Day Off acknowledges and honours unpaid carers by giving them a choice of either eight hours of respite, domestic cleaning or yard maintenance."

Jenny Walsh

HeartKids

The HeartKids team in Queensland can rely on Jenny Walsh. For six years since she retired, she has spent Mondays and Tuesdays volunteering at their office, keeping people with congenital heart disease connected with the care they need. Jenny's passion is tween children, those aged eight to twelve who are becoming too old for paediatric care. "It is important we maintain contact with these kids and their families as they transition into the adult health system. The systems are vastly different and one third of this group are lost to follow-up," she says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Gerard Alchin
Willowburn

Brianna Anderson
Legacy Brisbane

Sarah Bayliss
Making Mama Village

Mary Berry
Stroke Foundation

Lauren Cahill
Children's Tumour Foundation

David Clune
DonateLife Queensland

Cherrie Dowling
Horses in Mind Inc

Sylvia Heterick
Yurara Art Society

Katherine Hoyle
Making a Difference – Brisbane

Catriona Kucks
Bayside Adolescent
Boarding Inc (BABI)

Tom Kyle
Sporting Wheelies and
Disabled Association

Alison Layton
Caring for Carers Australia

Andreas Leonakis
Mates4Mates

Norman McGillivray
BedDown

Julie Messenger
The Sunlight Centre

Carolyn Robinson
Beyond DV ITD

Julie Robinson
Priceless House

Ian Shaw
Make-A-Wish Australia

Kate Smith
Broken to Brilliant Ltd™

Deb Simms
Carina C&K Kindergarten

Sue Hansford
Carina C&K Kindergarten

Craig Tobin
Redlands Special Olympics

Cherylee Treloar
Footprints in Brisbane

Jenny Walsh
HeartKids Limited

Laurie Woods
RAAF 460 Squadron Veterans
and Friends

Narelle Wyvill-Anstey
Lions Club of Brisbane Macgregor, Inc

Westfield

Chermside

QLD



"It is not a privilege for a community member of any ability to be involved. It is their right," says Jay, who has put many hours and his own money into the program since creating it in 2006.

Scoring goals for participation in sport

Jay Larkins — Brisbane Paralympic Football Program

Selfless, Passionate, Committed

Jay Larkins was determined to create an opportunity for this son, Jarrod, to play football, even though he has cerebral palsy.

He achieved his aim and has also brought the game to people with different abilities all over Brisbane.

Jay is the founder and head coach of the Brisbane Paralympic Football Program, which exists to ensure that anyone can play football.

"It is not a privilege for a community member of any ability to be involved. It is their right," says Jay, who has put many hours and his own money into the program since creating it in 2006.

Jarrod has gone on to represent Australia in Paralympic football, along with four others from the program. He now assists Jay and the team, supporting others to participate in the sport.

"It is great that he has reached the pinnacle in his chosen sport, but to me, it's what he does to assist others that I find inspiring," says Jay.

"He works to help other participants with the same dream of being the best they can be, in whatever sport they choose."

Jay is grateful to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am truly humbled to be chosen by my community," he says.

Apart from giving participants the health benefits of sport, Jay endeavours to help them connect with their community, make friends and develop confidence.

"I can think of one young participant who arrived five years ago, with her mother telling us she would always use a wheelchair."

"Today she uses crutches and a walker and can even walk six steps unaided. I have no doubt she will one day represent Australia in Paralympic sport."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Thanks to the grant, Brisbane Paralympic Football Program is buying uniforms for all players and volunteers and expanding the program around Queensland.

"You can only truly understand what the program means for participants by seeing them in action," says Jay.



Bravery Box will use its grant to buy gifts such as T-shirts, journals and bravery gym packs to help kids strengthen their "bravery muscles".

Mum uses daughter's cancer bravery to help others

Tanya Allan — Bravery Box

Supportive, Dedicated, Enthusiastic

Bravery is more than a word for Tanya Allan; it's something she sees every day in kids fighting cancer.

Tanya is the founder of Bravery Box, a support program that helps children and teens find their inner strength in the toughest of circumstances.

She started Bravery Box as a way of supporting her daughter Lara when she was receiving treatment for leukaemia. Tanya and her husband found that she would respond positively when they celebrated her choice to be brave.

"Lara began to look forward to hospital visits," says Tanya. "She focused on the connection, celebration and her friendships with the nursing staff."

Two years on, the charity has provided hundreds of young people with support, encouragement and donated

rewards as they deal with the constant challenges of their condition.

"We wanted to be able to arm all children with this kind of resilience," says Tanya, who has found being voted a Westfield Local Hero an incredibly emotional journey.

Lara underwent 800 days of chemotherapy, and Tanya says she benefited immensely from having her bravery encouraged and celebrated during her hospital stays.

Other families have found it useful as well, with parents reporting that children have begun to look forward to their hospital visits and see past the pain they are experiencing.

"Recently, I heard from the mother of a girl with a rare cancer that requires quite a long and painful treatment.

"She received our new series of teen books at a recent hospital visit, and they quickly helped distract her from her pain, so she almost skipped out, excited to get home and begin reading."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Bravery Box will use its grant to buy gifts such as T-shirts, journals and bravery gym packs to help kids strengthen their "bravery muscles".

"Just being nominated was extraordinary, and we have benefited from the exposure as well as the financial help," says Tanya.

Providing for sick kids in the house that love built

Sue-Ann Dunning — Ronald McDonald House

Dedicated, Inspiring, Passionate

Sue-Ann Dunning helps families of very sick kids who need a place to stay while in Brisbane or the Gold Coast for medical treatment.

As a volunteer at Ronald McDonald House Charities South East Queensland, she makes the lodging as welcoming as possible for children and their parents who often need to spend months away from their home town.

The charity has three houses and can accommodate one hundred and thirty-nine families at a time, giving more than seven hundred families from regional Queensland a place to stay every year.

Sue-Ann has experienced personal illness and loss in her family, which helps her relate to others going through a challenging period.

She is excited by the recognition the charity has received from

her being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"I am very passionate about my volunteer work for Ronald McDonald House," says Sue-Ann. "To me, it's the house that love built."

Throughout the year, she organises activities for the children and gives much-needed personal support to their parents, even if it is just a listening ear or a hug.

She also works with others to help make Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter and Christmas special occasions.

"We prepare a Christmas hamper for every family, and it is waiting for them on Christmas morning," says Sue-Ann. "We make sure there is a gift for every child and also festive treats for the whole family."

Beyond that, she helps with fundraising and gives up time every year to work at the charity's week-long cycling event.

"I am more than happy to do my bit and offer as much support as I can during the ride," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The charity will use its grant to fund maintenance at Ronald McDonald House in Herston.

"The grant means McDonald House Charities can continue to provide much-needed support and essential accommodation for families of sick or injured children," says Sue-Ann.



"The grant means McDonald House Charities can continue to provide much-needed support and essential accommodation for families of sick or injured children," says Sue-Ann.

Your 2019 Finalists

Eileen Cooke

Preterm Infants' Parents' Association

Eileen Cooke knows first-hand just how stressful the birth of a preterm baby can be, and she is committed to helping other families when it happens. About one in 12 babies in Australia are born more than three weeks early, and they often have severe and ongoing medical problems. But families in Brisbane can turn to Eileen and the other volunteers at the Preterm Infants' Parents' Association, who give them financial and emotional support. "We help parents navigate the rollercoaster of having and raising a preterm baby," Eileen says.

Jane Hockey

Hope Centre Services (Mimi's House)

Jane Hockey believes there is no such thing as a bad child and that even the most complex behavioural problems can be overcome with perseverance and love. Jane is a volunteer with Mimi's House, a mentoring and nurturing program based at Hope Centre Services, for local children who might be struggling at primary school due to their behaviour. Many of the young participants come from difficult family backgrounds, but Jane helps them build confidence, learn new skills and make friends. "I am an educator and an advocate for the vulnerable," says Jane.

Phil Lilliebridge

Legacy Brisbane

Phil Lilliebridge is there for military families in their time of need. Together with the other volunteers at Legacy Brisbane, Phil helps the loved ones of soldiers who have died or become incapacitated. A former commissioned officer and son of servicepeople himself, Phil lost his father when he was 21 and experienced the support Legacy provided to his mother. Now, he provides personal support to families going through the first stages of grief. "I am rewarded by knowing that I've made a difference in the lives of people who really need me," Phil says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Tanya ALLAN
Bravery Box

Phil LILLIEBRIDGE
Legacy Brisbane

Peter BREEN
The Stairwell Project – Music
in Hospitals

Janelle BULL
Albany Creek Kindergarten
Association Inc

Courtney BURKE
Make-A-Wish Australia

Eileen COOKE
Preterm Infants' Parents' Association
Inc (PIPA)

Emma DEAN
Cheep Trill Ltd

Sue-Ann DUNNING
Ronald McDonald House Charities
South East Queensland

Alice EDDY
Destiny Church Brisbane

Timothy EGGAR
Queensland State Emergency Service

David ENGWICHT
Creative Communities International

Rebecca GREENSHAW
Make-A-Wish Australia

Yasmin GRIGALIUNAS
World's Biggest Garage Sale

Jane HOCKEY
Hope Centre Services – Mimi's House

Nikki HOWSON
GIVIT

Adam JAMES
Liberty Enterprises Australia Ltd

Jay LARKIN
Brisbane Paralympic Football Program

Jesse MOSS
Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospital

Hilda MURPHY
Wesley Mission Queensland

Zoe REHBEIN
Children's Tumour Foundation

Brownwyn SHEEHAN
The Pyjama Foundation

Adrian SURPLICE
Dayboro RSL Sub Branch

Howard TAYLOR
Brisbane Excelsior Band

Gabrielle TOCHTERMAN
Bramble Bay Deadly Runners
and Walkers

Westfield

Coomera

QLD

Palliative care pioneer keeps on offering compassion

Deirdre Hanna — Rev Dr Ian Mavor Foundation

Tireless, Inspirational, Resilient

Children's author, palliative care pioneer and all-round humanitarian Deirdre Hanna has touched thousands of lives on the Gold Coast.

In 1994, she and her late husband, Rev Dr Ian Mavor, started the Gold Coast's first Hospice, Hopewell Hospice. Next came the Paradise Kids charity to help children after a loved one passed away.

"We wanted the hospice to be a place of serenity and beauty where families could visit, where pets could come and stay, where children could sleep over, where bereaved loved ones could be comforted, and where the concept of hospitality for which the Gold Coast is renowned could be extended to those at the end stage of life," says Deirdre.

She feels immensely privileged to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "We started out to care for a few

dying people but have cared for over four thousand children and two thousand adults, and we are continually expanding to care for more in the community."

One of Deirdre's main projects is the creation of educational resources for grieving children, including storybooks that explain the grief process in children's language. Another is the Paradise Kids Angel Choir, which builds confidence and self-esteem for the participants.

Although in her seventies, she says she still has a lot to achieve.

"I want to continue writing and training future generations in compassionate community service.

After her husband and co-founder died in the hospice they established, Deirdre started a foundation in his name to keep the

charities going, and to honour his legacy of health education and spiritual care.

In 2016, she started Living Well Respite to provide emotional and social support for home carers by offering them a day out each week.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The foundation will create five new workbooks to accompany the storybook collection, provide singing and performance training to twenty young people and host morning teas for bereaved adults.

"The grant will help us with these programs and will also help fund the foundation," says Deidre.



Deirdre feels immensely privileged to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "We started out to care for a few dying people but have cared for over four thousand children and two thousand adults, and we are continually expanding to care for more in the community."



"I share a message of being proud of who you are and where you come from, and also about the richness of the culture and the opportunities in Australia."

Bringing people together to create a sense of belonging

Kevin Dando — Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast
Giving, Selfless, Hilarious

Kevin Dando has an innate ability to connect people, making him perfect for his many roles at Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast (MCCGC).

He works with teachers, guidance counsellors, community leaders and social services to encourage a sense of inclusion among new arrivals in Australia as well as Indigenous people.

One of his passions is youth development, with much of his work in this area taking place in his own time.

"Engaging, connecting and supporting the diverse communities is rewarding, challenging and inspiring," says Kevin. He is equally passionate regardless of whether he is with a youth soccer team, addressing a community leaders' meeting or building connections between different groups.

"I share a message of being proud of who you are and where you come from, and also about the richness of the culture and the opportunities in Australia."

He feels emotional about being voted a Westfield Local Hero. "The joy you get out of it after working hard gives you a push to carry on. In community work you have to have passion. You have to be driven."

Kevin enjoys listening to people's stories and getting a sense of their journey.

"I also get to share my journey, because I migrated here as well eighteen years ago. I was born in New Zealand, and my mother is from the Cook Islands and my father is Australian."

He is particularly pleased with MCCGC's engaging new pop-up approach to Harmony Day. "My

area was the northern part of the Gold Coast. We filled vans with different cultural performers and sports personalities and popped into schools to stage short harmony events."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

MCCGC will use its grant to fund cultural and wellbeing workshops in the northern Gold Coast region and support and promote community events.

"There is rapid population growth in the northern area of the Gold Coast," says Kevin. "This grant will help us support the people and organisations there."



Andrew is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is very positive. I'm in a privileged position because I feel my job has meaning, and I can make a positive impact on the lives of others."

Community worker with a 20-year record of helping others

Andrew Chant — Endeavour Foundation
Selfless, Community-spirited, Big-hearted

Andrew Chant's community work is all-encompassing, and he lives his life as a behavioural expert, coach, sympathetic listener, advocate, manager and educator.

He has been an integral part of the Endeavour Foundation for almost 20 years, assisting people with intellectual disability to live independently, make connections and find work.

He manages the foundation's Kingston Learning and Lifestyle service, where many clients are recent school leavers who are not yet ready for employment. There are also refugees, people with substance abuse issues and members of the LGBTQI community.

Andrew and his team work with clients and their families to help them achieve their goals in a friendly and fun environment. This could mean preparing them for

work or helping them to improve their daily living skills.

"You don't just deal with the individual with intellectual disability; you are equally committed to their family and carers," Andrew says.

Clients are also helped to form social connections to ensure they don't become isolated and can make meaningful friendships.

Andrew is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is very positive. I'm in a privileged position because I feel my job has meaning, and I can make a positive impact on the lives of others."

Andrew is on call 24 hours a day in case someone needs help settling an emotionally distraught person or meeting authorities to vouch for a teen to prevent incarceration.

One of the centre's success stories is a group of school leavers who

have formed a band. They have recorded an album, performed gigs and appeared on TV news.

"When we met them, the members had been socially isolated and had difficulty forming friendships," says Andrew. "We brought them together and helped them build the confidence to do something amazing."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Endeavour Foundation will use its grant to buy new furniture for the Kingston centre and music equipment for the band.

"It is going to be a wonderful help for us," says Andrew.

Your 2019 Finalists

Gerry Moloney

Toogoolawa School

When Gerry Moloney started at Toogoolawa School, it was for a six-week replacement stint. But he never left and has been principal for the past 13 years. Gerry knew from the get-go that he was going to make a difference for the students, who were not welcome at other schools. When he started, there were three boys and three staff. Now there are 102 boys and 30 staff. The key to his success is reducing stress by encouraging the boys to work at the level they can cope with rather than where they should be.

Jo Chapman

Nightlight Outreach

When Jo Chapman has visitors over in her lounge room, it is likely they are making up hundreds of toiletry packs for homeless people. Despite her own health problems, including breast cancer twice in nine years, she has set up a veritable cottage industry to source and pack items for distribution by the Nightlight Outreach charity, which provides food, clothing and other essentials to those in need, including victims of domestic violence. "I organise members in my local area to source whatever items are required at the time," says Jo.

Heather Murray

St Vincent de Paul Society

Heather Murray joined St Vincent de Paul Society 31 years ago and has been a faithful volunteer ever since. As President of the St Mary's conference, she leads from the front and is on the phone every day working with the help-line volunteers. "Our conference has seven members. We are busy and driven to do the vital work we do to assist the needy," Heather says. "I always try to keep the spirituality of being a Catholic church-goer alive." Heather and her team work at grass-roots level, assisting the needy with food, clothing and shelter.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Amelia ANDERSON
Southport Surf Life Saving Club

Dreddyn BHANA
Man Up

Andrew CHANT
Endeavour Foundation

Jocelyn (Jo) Ann CHAPMAN
Night Light

Kevin DANDO
Multicultural Communities
Council Gold Coast

Kerry DUNN
Ronald McDonald House Charities
South East Queensland

Deirdre HANNA
Rev. Dr Ian Mavor Foundation

Sarah INGRAM
Pacific Arts Inc

Karen JEFFERSON
Cherish Bereaved Parents
Support Group

Sarah KAVANA
Pacific Arts & Cultural Heritage Inc

Carlie KENDALL
CK Academy

Tracy KENNY
Ormeau Woods SHS

Alison LAYTON
Caring for Carers Australia

Gerry MOLONEY
Toogoolawa School

Heather MURRAY
St Vincent de Paul Society

Kimberly O'NEILL
Variety the Children's Charity

Jake SPENCE
Children's Tumour Foundation

Megan STRAY
Heal.ed Tribe

Westfield

Garden City

QLD



"Our passion is to give a voice and a tangible solution to our community's most vulnerable," says Chris, who has 25 years of experience in community work and in 2012 completed a Churchill Fellowship on child protection and family support systems.

Social worker develops a life-changing safety plan

Chris Boyle — Commsync Foundation

Compassionate, Tenacious, Respectful

Social worker Chris Boyle has developed a way for women and children at risk of domestic violence to call for help discreetly if threatened.

Chris is the founder of the non-profit Commsync Foundation, which provides free wearable technology that transmits live audio and location at the touch of a button or in response to a voice command.

This alerts pre-identified supporters to call triple zero or respond in another way.

"Our passion is to give a voice and a tangible solution to our community's most vulnerable," says Chris, who has 25 years of experience in community work and in 2012 completed a Churchill Fellowship on child protection and family support systems.

He feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am privileged to be giving vulnerable women and children a voice and to have that recognised by our community."

The foundation's philosophy is that recipients must never pay for their protection, and Chris and his colleagues have funded devices for 200 people.

The foundation trains caseworkers to help recipients identify their responders, which can take time as many are isolated from family and friends.

"The process helps them transition out of isolation into inclusion, connecting them with people who now know they are vulnerable and commit to caring for them any time, any day, any place. The connection helps circuit break the cycle of domestic violence," says Chris.

The technology in itself is not the solution, he says. "It is just a tool. The solution is people who care."

One recipient says: "Knowing I've got my safety team available at the push of a button has given me my life back. The feeling is awesome."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The foundation will use its grant to provide devices to ten vulnerable people. "The investment will change their lives forever," says Chris. "We will keep those devices on for as long as they need. That could be for years or decades."



In the volunteer role, Claire is giving back for the support she has received from the charity since she was a child, when she participated in a specialised playgroup and attended school holiday camps.

Rising above severe personal challenges to help others

Claire Gonchee — SBH Queensland

Determined, Strong, Passionate

Claire Gonchee was born with disabling spina bifida and hydrocephalus and has endured social isolation, bullying and multiple hospital stays.

Despite this, she has managed to complete a Human Services degree and is engaged, but jokes she needs to stay out of hospital long enough to actually get married.

She is also a dedicated board member and secretary of SBH Queensland, supporting the charity's life-changing programs and therapy services for people with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus.

In the volunteer role, Claire is giving back for the support she has received from the charity since she was a child, when she participated in a specialised playgroup and attended school holiday camps.

Something that Claire has learned from the charity over the years and wants to share with others is that it is ok to be a disabled person and there is nothing to be apologetic about.

Claire has a powerful voice in board decisions on governance, strategy, volunteering and advocacy for members of the charity.

She also puts many hours of work into planning and developing grant applications and coordinating events.

She is an engaging speaker and often shares her story at public events to raise awareness about the condition.

"I endeavour to support SBH Queensland to best represent our community," says Claire.

"We support seven hundred and fifty clients across the state

through therapy, group programs, advocacy, information resources and outreach trips to regional Queensland. We achieve this through our multidisciplinary therapy team, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

SBH Queensland will use its grant to provide a four-day personal development workshop for adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus.

The intensive program will help people to make sense of the difficulties of living with a disability.



"I am extremely aware of the challenges those in the blind and low-vision community face every day and the need for volunteers to assist."

Taking pride in helping people gain independence

Anne Clements — Vision Australia

Caring, Committed, Passionate

Thanks to Anne Clement, most people in Brisbane have come across Vision Australia's coin-collection dogs for the seeing eye dog program.

The dedicated volunteer builds warm relationships with the businesses across the city that are home to the plastic dogs and takes care of the coins when they are full.

Anne has a vision-impaired son and immersed herself in charity work when it was time for him to gain his independence after high school.

"With my children grown up, it was time for me to give back to ensure clients achieve their goals of independent lifestyles," says Anne.

"I am extremely aware of the challenges those in the blind and low-vision community face every

day and the need for volunteers to assist."

Anne is genuinely surprised at being voted a Westfield Local Hero but says it feels great to know that other people appreciate her work. "It is nice to have something that says you are a valued member of the community and the organisation."

Anne is also an enthusiastic member of the Friends of Vision Australia Coorparoo volunteer group, which raises funds for seeing eye dogs and promotes Vision Australia at various events.

Something that gives her great satisfaction is her work with the client services team, which involves accompanying clients on outings and helping to teach life skills.

"I take great pride in seeing our clients learn how to prepare

and cook a meal for ongoing independence," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Vision Australia will put its grant towards providing a seeing eye dog to someone who is either waiting for a replacement dog or is waiting for their first dog.

"I know what people are able to achieve by having a seeing eye dog to help them get out and about. The \$10,000 will go a long way towards funding a dog for someone," says Anne.

Your 2019 Finalists

Ron Ould

Lions Club of Brisbane Macgregor

Lions International member Ron Ould knows things get done when organisations work together instead of separately. He's the go-to person for community groups who know he will arrange help through his many connections when people are in need. "I have always tried to be a committed member of the community," says Ron. "I have established a large network of not-for-profit organisations who assist the ever-growing group of low socio-economic households."

Angela Lynch

Women's Legal Service Queensland

Women tend to have a tougher time navigating the legal system than men. But thanks to lawyer Angela Lynch and her the team at Women's Legal Service Queensland, those facing domestic family violence have a team of expert lawyers on their side. Angela is a lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in the domestic and family violence sector and is a respected advocate for women in need. "The purpose of the service is to build safer futures for Queensland women and their children who have experienced domestic and family violence," she says.

Tamsyn Rosenberg

Alive Project

Tamsyn Rosenberg wants everyone to be part of the effort needed to reduce youth suicide. Her contribution is the Alive Project, which runs school and online interventions to build emotional resilience in young people and educates teacher and others to be part of the solution. The project's youth programs empower and prepare young people to navigate away from a crisis. They address stress, anxiety and bullying, and they promote healthy boundaries with social media and technology. "I've personally grappled with anxiety through my life, and this is what initially led me to this work," says Tamsyn.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Amanda AMOS
Caring Angels Funerals

Dana BLINCO
Brisbane Broncos

Matt BOULTON
Hope Centre Services – Circuit
Breaker Domestic Violence Program

Chris BOYLE
Commsync Foundation

Peter CAMERON OAM
Legacy Brisbane

Justine CHRISTERSON
Centenary Plains BMX Club Inc

Anne CLEMENTS
Vision Australia

James CLIPPINGDALE
Make-A-Wish Australia

Ciara CONDREN
Code Blue for Autism

Wendy COX
Graceville Fine Foods and Deli

Karen DAY
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Shaun DORNEY
Brisbane Regional Youth
Orchestra Inc

Tyson ELISAIA
Lava Lava Boys

Frank FONTAINE
Coot-tha MTB Inc

Donny FRASER
Australian Skateboarding
Community Initiative

Claire GONCHEE
SBH Queensland

Brittany GORDON-BROWN
The Nappy Collective

Jane GRIFFIN
Friends of HEAL Foundation

Bronwen HEALY
Hope Foundation

Natasha KILBY
Alliarna's Wish

Tom KYLE
Sporting Wheelies and
Disabled Association

Angela LYNCH
Women's Legal Service Queensland

Ann Maree MANN
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Gladys MATEKUARE
Destiny Church Brisbane

Doug McDONALD
Leukaemia Foundation

Noela O'NEIL
Starlight Children's Foundation

Ronald OULD
Lions Club of Brisbane MacGregor Inc

Caitlyn ROBINSON
Cait's Charity Cards

Gabriel ROMERO
Spanish Centre Mortimer Road
Acacia Ridge

Tamsyn ROSENBERG
Alive Project

Caron WATT
Mount Ommaney Special
School – Early Childhood
Development Program

Russel WIRINGI
Keystone Community &
Family Services

Westfield

Helensvale

QLD



"It was quite a buzz to know many people were being really supportive. The recognition is amazing from the perspective of bringing awareness to teenage mental health."

Teacher works tirelessly to help troubled teens

Megan Stray — Heal.ed tribe

Selfless, Compassionate, Devoted

Former primary school teacher Megan Stray founded the enterprise Heal.ed Tribe to help young people with mental illness stay engaged with family, friends, school and their life.

She takes every opportunity to run empowerment programs for children and teens and to give presentations at schools and awareness-raising events.

But Heal.ed is getting its best results from its free day retreats for girls.

Within these retreats, the girls are shown different coping skills by practitioners who donate their time. Megan ensures a full day of love, pampering and healing with activities including yoga, kinesiology, facials, journaling and reiki.

The retreats have a novel funding mechanism. For each fee-paying woman, a teen in need is gifted a

day of nurture, understanding and care.

"Women are nurtured and empowered through their own retreat day and, through participating, they give to a beautiful yet dangerously vulnerable group of teens," says Megan.

She feels "totally honoured" that her community voted her a Westfield Local Hero.

"It was quite a buzz to know many people were being really supportive. The recognition is amazing from the perspective of bringing awareness to teenage mental health."

Heal.ed participants are referred by community organisations such as Gold Coast Youth Centre, Kalwun, Arcadia College, Homeless Youth and local high schools as well as through private referral.

"Towards the end of my teaching, I retrained as a kinesiologist and began my kinesiology journey," says Megan. "It was within my kinesiology practice that I saw more and more young people struggling.

"What I learned is that they all wanted to be heard, to be understood, to be cared for. But there is not enough support."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Heal.ed will use its grant to fund website development and marketing. It will also be able to put on extra retreat days for teens and tweens.

"The grant will allow me to put the structures in place to begin the expansion of Heal.ed," says Megan.



"It gives me tremendous satisfaction that we're doing something good and it's positive for the community. It's proof that the programs are working."

Coach gives joy of Nippers to kids with special needs

Nick Marshall — The Albatross Nippers
Selfless, Friendly, Fun

Physiotherapist and surf club coach Nick Marshall knew he had to help when he realised local children with special needs were missing out on the joy of Nippers.

So, he started the Albatross Nippers to provide an inclusive opportunity to enjoy the quintessentially Australian rite of passage.

Nick, who is the physiotherapist for the Australian Lifesaving Team and has been a coach at Nobby's Beach surf club for ten years, designed a special program in which his young Nippers buddy up with mainstream peers to enjoy confidence-building activities in the surf and on the beach.

He is "blown away" by being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It gives me tremendous satisfaction that we're doing

something good and it's positive for the community. It's proof that the programs are working."

The award also creates better awareness of the Albatross Nippers, which could attract new volunteers, says Nick.

He plans activities around each child's abilities and puts a lot of care into recruiting compatible buddies for each one.

Over the past five years, the program has expanded to beaches from Southport on the Northern end of the coast to Currumbin on the southern end.

"I don't have a family member who has special needs and I can't imagine or begin to understand what these families are going through," says Nick. "But as a surf coach, physiotherapist and parent, I can make a difference to

these families and I can make the community I live in a better place."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Thanks to its grant, the Albatross Nippers will be able to fully fund participation in the Nippers for two or three seasons, including the cost of safety uniforms.

"It'll be easier to expand the program to new beaches and surf clubs," says Nick. "Each summer, we add a program to a new surf club and hope to reach out to new volunteers."



"I want to thank friends, families and the community for their support. We know that we are making a positive difference in the lives of families with children with special needs."

Mother gives the gift of mobility and socialisation

Jane Standen — GiveAbility

Selfless, Empathetic, Passionate

School children borrow all-terrain wheelchairs and walkers to participate in their first cross country. Families borrow specialist wheelchairs for their first trip to the beach together.

These are just two of the ways GiveAbility co-founder Jane Standen is helping local disabled children.

Her work is inspired by her first-hand knowledge of illness and disability as her eldest son was diagnosed with leukemia before his third birthday, and her seventeen-year-old daughter is profoundly disabled.

"These lived experiences and the challenges we have faced as a family have been the genesis for the GiveAbility program," says Jane, who co-founded it with her husband, Scott Standen, and paediatric physiotherapist Melissa Locke.

Jane is extremely grateful for being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"I want to thank friends, families and the community for their support. We know that we are making a positive difference in the lives of families with children with special needs."

The foundation lends out its mobility equipment free-of-charge, which is especially useful for families waiting for their own equipment through National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding.

GiveAbility also facilitates improved well-being and social interaction by providing a safe place for families to learn new skills or just relax and meet new friends in its multi-sensory room at Parkwood Village.

In the past, the program has offered free music therapy sessions in its sensory room to help with cognitive

development, gross and fine motor development and social development and interaction.

Each of these initiatives supports the health and wellbeing of children with special needs and provides opportunities for broader community participation and social inclusion for them and their families.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. GiveAbility will use its funds to relaunch its music therapy program, directly helping 400 children and their families.

"Our music therapy sessions in the sensory room are highly sought after and provide important social interaction," says Jane.

"Hopefully we can create more awareness for families who need our help."

Your 2019 Finalists

Carly Fradgley

Baby Give Back

When lawyer Carly Fradgley roped in a few friends to start Baby Give Back, she thought it would be a fun way to help families in need. What started as a hobby has grown into a full-blown charitable enterprise that has helped more than 1700 families in two years. It provides children and babies with new or safety-checked preloved essentials such as car restraints, clothes and cots. "We believe every baby deserves a safe start regardless of their family's situation," says Carly, who is both CEO and an active volunteer for the charity.

Ben Tullipan

Empower Golf Australia

Ben Tullipan suffered horrific injuries and lost his legs in the 2002 Bali Bombings. In 2007, he took up golf for rehabilitation and recreation and started meeting people who wanted to play but couldn't because of disabilities.

Ben has a passion for getting the disabled active and volunteers for Empower Golf Australia. He has introduced a mobility device called the ParaGolfer to the Parkwood Golf Course and organises free development days for the disabled. "I empower these less-abled individuals with the choice to live and get active through sport," says Ben.

Tani Stubbs

Radio Lollipop

Tani Stubbs has a heart condition and other health challenges, but that has never stopped her from going out of her way to help as many people as she can. When she was hospitalised as a child, she thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment put on by the Radio Lollipop crew. For the past two years, she has been giving back as a Lollipop volunteer on the East Coast, providing a welcome distraction and fun for children in hospital. The young patients can request their favourite songs, win prizes and hear their voice on the radio.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Jonathon ALBERTINI
Gold Coast Barbershop
Harmony Club Inc

Margaret BRAY
Make-A-Wish Australia

Kathy CARDONA
Sheilas Shack Inc

Jaeneen CUNNINGHAM
Safe Haven Community

Carly FRADGLEY
Baby Give Back Ltd

Wendy GREEN
United Hands of Hope Inc

Nicole GUSMAN
Jumpstarz

Shannon JAMIESON
Tamborine Mountain Eagles
Football Club

Rusanne JOURDAN
Scripture Union

Malcolm KENNEDY
Set Free Ministries

Dianne KENT
Ronald McDonald House Charities
South East Queensland

Kirsten Leigh KILGOUR
JDR Films Ltd

Fiona LAMB
Lotus Living Organically Inc

Mindy MANN
Baby Give Back

Nick MARSHALL
Albatross Nippers Inc

Nikki MCCAHERN
Mama Tribe

Melanie McKENZIE
Harrison's Little Wings

Natalie McMAHON
Kiwanis Pacific Pines

Theresa MITCHELL
Agape Outreach Inc

Andrew PYE
Miami Oztag

Jessica REILLY
Helensvale Calisthenic Dance
Academy Inc

Kathy ROGERS
Days for Girls

Andrea SIMMONS
Australian Anti Ice Campaign

Rachel SKELTON
Children's Tumour Foundation

Jane STANDEN
GRT Foundation Limited – GiveAbility

Megan STRAY
Heal.ed Tribe

Tani STUBBS
Radio Lollipop (Australia)

Simone STUMER
Robina Lions Club Inc

Mary THOMSON
Animal Welfare League of QLD

Daniel TIAITI
Forward Church

Ben TULLIPAN
Empower Golf Australia

Bryce U'REN
Super Max & Bryce as part of the Lions
Club of Gold Coast Tallebudgera Inc

Kathleen VLASIC
Rosie's

Belinda WELSH
Ronald McDonald House Charities
South East Queensland

Mark WOODHOUSE
Silver Bridle Action Group Inc

Westfield

North Lakes

QLD

Helping children gain confidence by reading to dogs

Janine Sigley — Story Dogs

Compassionate, Purposeful, Tireless

Janine Sigley is using a novel teaching method to ensure children are not left behind in literacy.

She co-founded the Story Dogs charity almost ten years ago and uses hundreds of trained dogs and volunteer handlers to encourage more than two thousand primary school children a week to read.

The charity works closely with teachers, who select children with low self-esteem and low reading levels to read to the dogs in a private session in a quiet area of their school.

The children have fun interacting with a friendly, non-judgmental dog, which boosts their confidence and improves their reading.

The volunteer handlers also get involved and ask the children to explain parts of the text to

the dogs, which is another learning opportunity.

Most of the volunteers are retired people and the benefits of volunteering with their best mate, their dog, are enormous, says Janine, who is excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's a big reflection of the wonderful work that Story Dogs does in Brisbane. It makes the work all the more worthwhile."

Janine has been the driving force in setting up sound and sustainable systems for the charity and is actively involved in training the network of coordinators who then recruit, train and support new volunteers.

"I am incredibly passionate and would like to be helping five thousand children by the end of 2020. The big goal is to have a

Story Dog in every primary school in Australia," says Janine.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Story Dogs will use its grant to train twenty new dog teams for the Brisbane/Brisbane north area to help one hundred children learn to read.

"North Brisbane is a growth area, with many new schools. This grant will ensure we can expand with confidence in that area," says Janine, who has also received interest nationwide from other primary schools.

"It's amazing how we are changing kids' lives. It is really rewarding work."



"I am incredibly passionate and would like to be helping five thousand children by the end of 2020. The big goal is to have a Story Dog in every primary school in Australia," says Janine.



"Our Baby Bundles are filled with items that many teenage and young mothers would not necessarily be able to afford. No mother should be without the essentials that she needs for her newborn baby," Melissa says.

Inspiring young mums to complete high school

Melissa Redsell — A Brave Life

Passionate, Inspiring, Brave

Judgmental people criticised Melissa Redsell when she became pregnant at high school and accused her of ruining her life.

But she proved them wrong and went on to complete a nursing degree and qualify as a midwife.

Melissa knows that the best way for young mothers to succeed in life is to finish high school, and she started A Brave Life charity to share her own story as inspiration for local girls.

She says teenage and young mums face stigma and judgment, but her aim is to ensure they have the support they need.

"I have seen the benefits that finishing high school and pursuing further education and employment have had on my life and the life of my children."

Melissa is "blown away" by being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's great to be acknowledged. It is absolutely amazing to think the community values what I'm doing."

Since 2016, she has provided peer support to more than 30 teenage mothers at Deception Bay High School. After they graduate, the mums can attend regular morning teas in North Lakes or see Melissa for one-on-one mentoring sessions.

Melissa's charity also supplies baby bundles to women aged under 25 who don't have the basic necessities when they give birth.

"Our Baby Bundles are filled with items that many teenage and young mothers would not necessarily be able to afford. No mother should be without the essentials that she needs for her newborn baby," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

A Brave Life will use its grant to fund two mentors to provide weekly sessions at a local high school, cover the costs of morning teas and buy items for 100 baby bundles.

"The money will help us continue to provide mentoring to the teenage and young mothers who are completing their education," says Melissa.

"We want to continue to go into schools to provide mentors who can encourage and empower young women to dream big."



"You get emotional and grateful when you know how people have been helped by Legacy," says Glenn. "It makes me feel proud that Westfield supports organisations like us to contribute to the community."

Leaving a legacy of helping military families

Glenn Willmann OAM — Legacy QLD

Dedicated, Honourable, Committed

Glenn Willmann OAM was a member of the Australian Army for thirty-two years and served in Vietnam, but he is continuing to serve after his retirement and has been an active member of Legacy since 2005.

He has organised ANZAC Day parades, fundraising concerts, guest speaking roles at civic functions and radio and newspaper interviews to publicise the needs of veterans.

One of Glenn's responsibilities is to look after the interests of two hundred and fifty widows and dependent children of deceased veterans in the Morayfield/Caboolture area.

He contacts each individual regularly to ensure they can access the financial and other assistance that is available to them.

He is known for his resourcefulness and always seeks solutions

regardless of the problems to be overcome.

Glenn feels honoured and grateful to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It makes me proud because you know that you are doing something to assist the widows and the ex-servicemen.

"I'm looking after widows of my mother's age as well as mothers of those that I served with in Vietnam. In some cases, it is the wives of my mates."

Support also includes taking women to doctors and other appointments and organising outings to ensure they are connected with others in similar circumstances.

Glenn devotes many hours a month to Legacy and the numerous other veteran causes he supports. In 2013 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia

for service to veterans and their families.

"It's important to me to uphold the respect and standards of those people who have come before me and leave a huge impact on our lives and country," he says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Legacy Queensland will use its grant to fund outings organised by the social inclusion program.

"You get emotional and grateful when you know how people have been helped by Legacy," says Glenn. "It makes me feel proud that Westfield supports organisations like us to contribute to the community."

Your 2019 Finalists

Cody Skinner

Aruma

Cody Skinner builds positive relationships to promote a community where everyone feels valued. He puts this into action as a Peer Mentor at Aruma, which has been supporting people with disability for more than 50 years. He is a tireless advocate for closing the gap and has made invaluable input to the Aruma Reconciliation Action Plan to ensure the organisation acknowledges Aboriginal culture. "I am deaf, and Auslan is my first language. I identify part Aboriginal and I am gay. I advocate in human rights for people with disability," he says.

Ben Taylor

HeartKids

Ben Taylor's middle child has a congenital heart defect and has needed open heart surgery four times. He started the national Heartkids Dads group because he noticed big gaps in support for fathers like him, who often feel isolated because they have to work or look after the other children and can't be as involved as mothers. Members of the group visit newly diagnosed families in hospital, provide practical and emotional support and go out of their way to be there for others. He says the purpose is simply: "Dads helping dads help their families."

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Kym AUSTIN
Mimi's House

Salvatore BARBAGALLO
Pine Rivers Men's Shed

Sonia COLVIN
Hairdressers with Hearts Ltd

Rochelle COURTENAY
Share The Dignity

Daisy COX
A Little Sparkle- Bringing Girls
On The Spectrum Together

Ryan ELSON
Tribe Social Belonging

Matthew GILCHRIST
Moreton Bay Fencing Club

Julieanne KEANE-JONES
Rope Inc

Mitchell LINGARD
Pursue Better Inc

Elke MOROZ
Leukaemia Support QLD

Marie NIEUWOUDT
BeMe Hair Salon

Jan PAYNE
Encircle Ltd

Leanne PRINCE
Brisbane Convoy for Kids

Melissa REDSELL
A Brave Life Ltd

Monique ROBERTSON
1st Pine Rivers Girls' Brigade

Leanne SCOTT
Australian Gateball Union Inc

Janine SIGLEY
Story Dogs

Cody SKINNER
House with No Steps

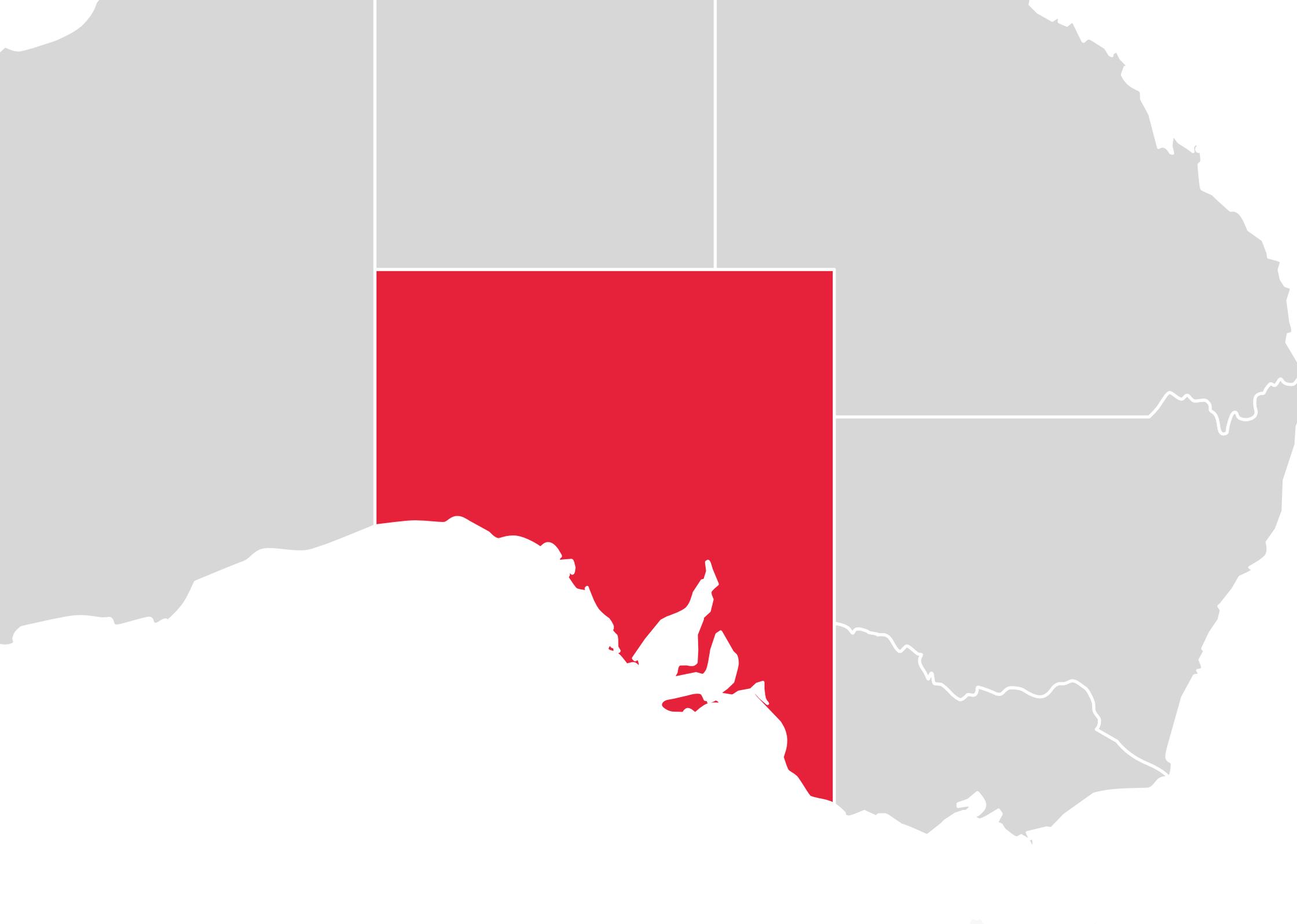
Coral STEVENSON
Brisbane Convoy for Kids Inc

Margaret SU'E
Help Enterprises Ltd

Ben TAYLOR
HeartKids Limited

Harata TE AMO-SIMEON
Akoako Ki Piripane Inc

Glenn WILLMANN
Legacy Club of Brisbane Ltd



South Australia

Marion

Tea Tree Plaza

West Lakes

Westfield

Marion
SA



"Some of the kids we work with haven't been to school for six months, and we get them back into education," says Neil. "Most of them won't thank you at the time, but you might meet them ten years later and they say, 'you know what, you changed my life'."

Brave dad prevents youth violence in honour of lost son

Neil Davis — Sammy D Foundation

Courageous, Dedicated, Passionate

After losing his son Sam to violence, Neil Davis dug deep to save other families from similar grief.

He founded the Sammy D Foundation in honour of Sam, who died from one unprovoked punch when he was seventeen.

Neil now tells his story through programs aimed at preventing violence and the harm caused by alcohol and illicit drugs.

"As difficult as it is for me to talk about Sam's story, the chance of saving just one life makes it all worthwhile," he says.

Neil is proud to be named a Westfield Local Hero because it recognises the passionate work of the whole Sammy D Foundation team.

"It's good to have the work that you are doing validated," he says. "Something so tragic that

happened to us has turned into something so positive for the community. In one school alone, acts of violence have dropped by eighty-two per cent in the five years since we started presenting our education sessions to the students."

Neil has completed a Diploma of Youth Work to ensure he has the best understanding of how to get his message across.

Since 2008, the Sammy D Foundation has reached over one hundred thousand children and teenagers aged from seven to seventeen and visited hundreds of schools. Neil has volunteered more than seven thousand hours of his time.

He is particularly proud of the one-on-one mentoring program the foundation has set up for at-risk youth.

"The mentor shares their life experience, skills and knowledge to assist the young person to reach their goals."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Sammy D Foundation will use its grant to fund mentoring for ten at-risk children.

"Some of the kids we work with haven't been to school for six months, and we get them back into education," says Neil.

"Most of them won't thank you at the time, but you might meet them ten years later and they say, 'you know what, you changed my life'."



"I founded the group in 2017 after dealing with my own mental health issues and seeing the gap in the system," says John, who feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

A safe place for men to find support

John Denholm — SA Brothers

Altruistic, Committed, Humble

John Denholm has founded an organisation that offers mateship and emotional support to more than twenty thousand men across South Australia.

His non-profit organisation, SA Brothers, uses social media to create a safe, non-judgmental space for men of all ages and walks of life to ask for advice and support.

There are also meetups during the week so men can have a chat if they are having a hard time at home or are dealing with mental health issues.

The aim is to reduce the stigma around men's mental health and help men move forward with a more positive outlook.

"I founded the group in 2017 after dealing with my own mental health issues and seeing the gap in the system," says John, who feels

humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It means a lot that the time and effort I am putting in is recognised. Our numbers have grown substantially in just 18 months without any backing, so we are obviously filling a massive void in the system," says John. "This will help us reach further into the community and more blokes."

Despite the demands of his full-time job, John has been the driving force behind SA Brothers' success and has personally funded much of its development.

The organisation also provides practical help, such as emergency food, shelter and clothing in certain circumstances.

John was the chief organiser of a Christmas event in Bonython Park, which provided men at risk and their families with a meal, activities

and a showbag for each child. The experience has been credited with reunifying several previously estranged families.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

SA Brothers will use its grant to provide mental health first aid and suicide prevention training to its administrative team.

"It's really important for us to better manage the people who come forward with mental health issues," says John.

"The grant will also help with social media management and practical help such as food vouchers and emergency clothing."



"Our work saves babies' lives. We want to end preventable stillbirth and reduce the number of broken-hearted families who leave the birthing suite without their babies."

Turning grief into a driving force to protect other families

Claire Foord — Still Aware

Resilient, Passionate, Inspiring

After learning her daughter's stillbirth could have been prevented, a devastated Claire Foord was determined to help protect others from grief.

Claire founded Still Aware in 2014 to raise awareness about stillbirth and prevent deaths. Now she travels the country, giving talks to parents and educating clinicians.

Her daughter Alfie's death could have been prevented with simple communication and education, she says.

"It's very simple advice, and most of it is around seven protective actions parents can do each day. Babies have a frequency and pattern of movements, and that's the best tool we have of measuring how they are going."

Still Aware is similar to overseas campaigns that have been shown to help decrease the number of

stillbirths, over half of which occur at full-term.

"Australia must catch up. Every year we could be saving more than a thousand babies' lives," says Claire, whose work also involves supporting grieving families.

She is humbled to be named a Westfield Local Hero and says the honour also belongs to the people who work with her.

"While I might be leading the organisation and starting the change, without this army of people we could never achieve what we want to do," she says.

"My daughter Alfie is why we started the charity, but it's for everybody else that we continue to exist."

Claire says stillbirth is the leading cause of death in children aged under fourteen, with the loss of babies in pregnancy devastating

to siblings, grandparents and other family members as well as parents.

"Our work saves babies' lives. We want to end preventable stillbirth and reduce the number of broken-hearted families who leave the birthing suite without their babies."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Still Aware will use its grant to fund twenty education sessions for midwives, GPs, obstetricians and other health professionals on stillbirth prevention.

"The funding will aid us to dramatically move forward with what we are attempting to achieve with reduction of stillbirth in Australia," says Claire.

Your 2019 Finalists

Leigh Aitken

Operation Flinders Foundation

For many children on the wrong path, an outdoor adventure led by Leigh Aitken is the turning point in their lives. Leigh is a volunteer with Operation Flinders Foundation, which helps teenagers with challenging behaviours realise their potential through an eight-day, 100km remote outback trek. Leigh has helped many young people become more confident, more interested in school and determined to turn their lives around. "During the trip they learn basic bush craft, camp craft and survival skills and undertake a range of activities to develop self-confidence, teamwork and problem solving," says Leigh.

Melanie Tate

Puddle Jumpers

Social worker Melanie Tate founded Puddle Jumpers in 2012 to fill the gap in support for children living away from their parents with foster carers or relatives. She and her team of volunteers run camps at which children struggling with a range of issues get to enjoy activities aimed at giving them social skills, confidence and good self-esteem. Each child is teamed up with a mentor. "The impact of having the undivided attention of one adult who chooses to be with them because they care is often life-changing," says Melanie.

Leighton Boyd

MarionLife Community Services

Every day, Leighton Boyd gives it his all to help break the cycle of poverty. He is the director of MarionLife Community, which provides emergency relief to people and families, followed by support to move on to a better life. The people he helps are dealing with homelessness, domestic violence, unemployment, mental health issues and other struggles. Leighton and his team provide vouchers to the local Foodbank where their clients can buy discounted items and get free fruit and vegetables. "Where possible we also provide items like bus tickets, shoes vouchers and blankets," he says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Leigh AITKEN
Operation Flinders Foundation Inc

Paul BARNDEN
Goodwood Saints Football Club

Leighton BOYD
MarionLIFE Community Services Inc

Kimberley CEPON
Shoe Boxes of Love Inc

Neil DAVIS
Sammy D Foundation

John DENHOLM
SA Brothers

Mathew D'ONOFRIO
Nightlife First Aid

Helen ERCEG
Adelaide Buggy Club Inc

Claire FOORD
Still Aware

Emily GANN
Connecting the Dots in Music

Michael HARRIS-WALKER
Sk8 Therapy

Don HARVY
431 Army Cadet Unit

Jennifer HOWARD
Safe Pets Safe Families

Lindy IRWIN
Make A Wish

Debbie JOHNSON
Clovelly Park Primary School

Emma KNIGHTS
Emma Knights Productions

Daniels LANGEBERG
EcoCaddy

Susan LEE
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Alyson MENZIES
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Natasha OLSEN
Healing Through Love

Caleb PATTINSON
The Mad Tea Co

Lynda STEWART
All Saints Seacliff Anglican Church

Melanie TATE
Puddle Jumpers Inc

Sarah TINNEY
Cancer Council SA

Westfield

Tea Tree Plaza
SA



"It is not a normal job; it's a passion," says Dorothy. "I do it because their world has been shattered, and they need help to navigate those early days, weeks and months."

Helping families to grieve after the loss of a child

Dorothy Crosby — SIDS and Kids SA

Life-saving, Selfless, Dedicated

People often ask Dorothy Crosby how she manages to keep supporting grieving families following the unexpected death of a child.

But what they should be asking is why she does her work.

"It is not a normal job; it's a passion," says Dorothy. "I do it because their world has been shattered, and they need help to navigate those early days, weeks and months."

Dorothy has a master's degree in counselling and works three days a week for SIDS and Kids SA. But she is always on call to respond to referrals from the police, ambulance service or hospital social workers.

"Sometimes, I need to respond immediately, and other times they might ask me to visit the family the next day," says Dorothy.

She feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"We are grateful for the recognition of maybe quieter stories in the community."

Dorothy has found friends and relatives are often there to support grieving families for the first few weeks and months following their loss but can expect them to get back on with their life more quickly than is realistic.

"Bereaved families need support and people to validate their experience as they navigate their loss. There are activities that can trigger strong emotional responses, such as returning to work, socialising and meeting other people who have children. We help families grieve in the way they need to grieve and give them tools to do this," says Dorothy.

Another part of her role is to hold monthly support groups where parents can meet others on a similar journey.

"We also hold an annual memorial service for families to honour their child. I consider it an honour to walk beside these families as they rebuild their lives," says Dorothy.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. SIDS and Kids SA will use its grant to continue running the counselling service.

"It gives us security to know we can continue doing the work we do," says Dorothy.



"The grant will allow us to sponsor underprivileged people to come to our camps where they have a safe place to come and share their stories and get ongoing support," says Stacey.

Encouraging young people to talk out loud

Stacey Mousley — Talk Out Loud

Trustworthy, Selfless, Caring

Stacey Mousley is a brave and resilient young woman who has had more than her share of adversity.

But she's determined to give back and dedicates her spare time to volunteering, wanting to make a positive and lasting impact on her community.

Stacey lost her cousin and a close friend to suicide, and one of her passions is suicide prevention, so she volunteers at Talk Out Loud, where she helps provide a safe space for young people who are struggling with a crisis. "We also try to reach parents of children with mental health issues," says Stacey, who has a bachelor of psychological science degree and has completed first aid and suicide awareness training.

She says it is "amazing" to have been voted as a Westfield Local

Hero. "I am very passionate about youth mental health. It's good to have the community behind us. It means a lot."

She says one of the tough times she has faced in her life was in 2016 when she and her mentor were struck by lightning. Both were admitted to hospital, but "sadly, my mentor passed away. This was hard, but volunteering and providing support to others helped me get through this period of my life."

Stacey and other volunteers run youth camps for Talk Out Loud and organise various events at the organisation's premises in Ridgehaven.

"Young people often feel like they are alone and have nowhere to turn to when things are tough, and we help provide a safe space for them."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Talk Out Loud will use its grant to fund camps, set up a website, buy signage for its premises and run weekly events, including meditation, workshops, karaoke and movie nights.

"The grant will allow us to sponsor underprivileged people to come to our camps where they have a safe place to come and share their stories and get ongoing support," says Stacey.

If you need support, please phone on Lifeline: 13 11 14

Midwife proves that no act of kindness is a bad idea

Stephanie Malan — The Village Co SA
Kind, Determined, Passionate

Stephanie Malan never set out to start a charity, but the midwife could not stop herself from feeling heartbroken by new mums who did not have the essentials needed to care for themselves and their babies.

Now the mother of two runs The Village Co SA from her family home, sourcing donations and distributing bags of necessities to close to a thousand new mums a year.

The grateful recipients are typically living with financial strain, domestic violence or mental illness. They may also be teenage mothers or refugees.

Stephanie says she burst into tears when she found out that she had been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I felt a little bit embarrassed because I never

thought I would be called a hero. But I feel really proud and honoured that the organisation has been recognised.

"It is so special to me to have created an organisation which marries the work of midwives and the gift of pure kindness to women."

At first, Stephanie was told her wish to help would be too difficult to achieve, but she says no act of kindness is a bad idea.

"Forming a charity was never my plan, but the idea evolved into something big, and something people want to join and support," she says.

The bags of essentials are distributed by midwives and social workers at Lyell McEwin Hospital and The Women's and Children's

Hospital, but Stephanie would like to reach more women.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Village Co SA will use its grant to rent space to store donations and to extend its service to a third hospital.

"I get thousands and thousands of nappies in one day, and I have to store them in my bedroom at home," says Stephanie.

"Having a place for donations to be delivered safely as well as a public space for volunteers to come and help us pack bags will be amazing."



"It is so special to me to have created an organisation which marries the work of midwives and the gift of pure kindness to women."

Your 2019 Finalists

Alexandra McGee

Welcoming Australia

To Alexandra McGee, the things that unite people are far more relevant than those that divide. Guided by that philosophy, the inspiring teacher has taken a group of 15 refugees and migrants under her wing in her 12-month Intercultural Futures program. Alexandra started by understanding the interests of each of her participants, aged 18 to 30. She then developed the program around them and found mentors for each one. "I can see we are making a difference," says Alexandra, who is impressed by the cohesive, resilient and questioning group that has developed during the 12-month program.

Damien Walker

Salisbury City Rotaract Club

Damien Walker's mission in life is to donate his time to improve his community. As President of the Salisbury City Rotaract Club for people aged 18 to 30, the 23-year-old teacher and life coach is doing that and more. The club gives young people from all backgrounds an opportunity to develop themselves and give back to the community. "Our organisation is a platform where diversity thrives and where young people can learn, develop and lead," Damien says. "As an openly gay man, I show people they can rise above perceived adversity to be a success."

Christopher Lynch

Golden Grove Cricket Club

Christopher Lynch founded the Golden Grove Cricket Club more than 20 years ago and is as enthusiastic as ever. Early on, he, his sons and other members converted the club to a turf wicket. At times, he used his own money to fund the club through periods of financial instability. Christopher believes participation in community cricket aids inclusion into the local community and Golden Grove is actively recruiting Indian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi, Afghani and Pakistani cricketers. He wants every cricketer to feel welcome at the club regardless of gender, cultural background or skill level.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Ann BANSEMER
Adelaide Zombie Walk

Tim BARNES
Empty Hands Martial Arts

Pauline BROWN
Angel Gowns for Australian
Angel Babies Inc

Nathan CASEY
The Salvation Army

Cody CHADWICK
Salisbury Cycle Speedway

Casey CLIFTON
EPC All Star Cheerleading

Leanne COULSON
Country Fire Service

Troy COWELL
Troy Cowell Personal Training

Dorothy CROSBY
SIDS and Kids South Australia

Efthymios EFTHYMIU
St Raphael Seniors Club

Mary GALOUZIS
Talk Out Loud

David GEORGE
Clovercrest Baptist Church

Eleanor GORDON
The Salvation Army Tea Tree Gully

Kim JEANES
United Way SA Inc

Elizabeth JOHNSON
Edmund Rice Camps SA

Emma KING
Nourish and Flourish
(Kangatraining Tea Tree Gully)

Chris LYNCH
Golden Grove Cricket Club

Eilish MAGUIRE
Welcoming Australia

Stephanie MALAN
The Village Co SA Ltd

Steven MANN
Pembroke Old Scholars Soccer Club
(POSSC)

Jane MATTHEWS
Angel Gowns Australia

Alexandra McGEE
Welcome to Australia

Stacey MOUSLEY
Talk Out Loud Australia

Brenton PRING
Tiger Judo Club

Ben ROWE
Elizabeth Church of Christ

Marianne SORGINI
Make A Wish

Danielle STEWART
Lyell McEwin Emergency Department
Staff Wellness Board

Damien WALKER
Salisbury City Rotaract Club

Kirsty WHITEHEAD
Children's Tumour Foundation

Kathlene WILSON
Family Zone Lutheran Community
Care Ingle Farm

Westfield

West Lakes
SA



Kym is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is a wonderful feeling to be acknowledged for the thousands of hours of volunteer work I have done. But as much as I drive the Purple Crusade, I am supported by an amazing community of people."

Supporting and informing families on their epilepsy journey

Kym Meers — The Epilepsy Centre SA

Humble, Devoted, Selfless

Kym Meers could not find enough information or support when her daughter Izla was diagnosed with a catastrophic form of epilepsy at the age of four months.

Izla has West Syndrome and the family were told she would "never do anything developmentally".

However, when she started to walk at the age of two, Kym wanted to save other families from the same lack of information and founded Izla's Purple Crusade.

"We bring communities together," says Kym, whose work is closely aligned with The Epilepsy Centre SA.

In the past seven years, the Crusade has raised close to one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to support children and families with epilepsy.

The money goes towards seizure monitors, children's

campus, community support and information sharing.

Thanks to one of the biggest fundraisers, every hospital in the state has pamphlets for people to take home after a diagnosis.

Kym is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It is a wonderful feeling to be acknowledged for the thousands of hours of volunteer work I have done. But as much as I drive the Purple Crusade, I am supported by an amazing community of people."

Kym describes living with epilepsy as a rollercoaster ride. "It is heartbreaking because you can't fix it and you never stop thinking about it.

"Our basic aim is inclusiveness of children with epilepsy, which quite often can come with disability as well, which our daughter has," she says.

"What we would have loved back when Izla was diagnosed would have been a path to follow."

In 2016 Kym won the prestigious Epilepsy Australia Golden Light award for the Purple Crusade, and in 2017 she was named an SA local hero.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Epilepsy Centre SA will use the grant to fund seizure monitors to keep people with epilepsy safe while they sleep.

"The benefit of the grant is that it will go back to families living with epilepsy," says Kym.



"We are certainly becoming a larger organisation," says Rikki, who feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's an incredible privilege to know that people are supporting our charity. It's a lovely feeling."

Virtuous circle grows out of a challenging foster-care experience

Rikki Cooke — Treasure Boxes

Passionate, Dedicated, Kind

Social worker Rikki Cooke was spurred into action when four emergency foster children arrived at her home without any necessities.

She started a charity, Treasure Boxes, that provides clothing, toys, car seats and other items to families escaping domestic violence or to children going into foster care.

That was in 2015. At first, it was a humble contribution towards filling a big need.

However, this year has been a turning point, with the charity growing five-fold and distributing seven hundred thousand dollars' worth of goods in the first eight months.

"We are certainly becoming a larger organisation," says Rikki, who feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's an incredible privilege to know that

people are supporting our charity. It's a lovely feeling."

The charity provides mostly donated items to over eighty agencies. These include domestic violence shelters, poverty support, refugee support, drug and alcohol support, child protection, Aboriginal support and family support services.

"By marrying up giving with receiving, we are creating an avenue for compassion, change and optimism for children and their families who desperately need a hand up," says Rikki.

She shares a story about a woman who donated one thousand dollars: "Four years ago we gave her some items after she had left her husband because of domestic violence. She promised herself that when she was back on her feet she would donate back to support other women

experiencing domestic violence. That meant a lot to us and showed us the impact of what we are doing is life-changing at times."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Treasure Boxes will use its grant to engage a specialist to coordinate a large-scale fundraising event aimed at bringing in \$30,000 and boosting awareness about the charity.

"Most of the money will be used to buy goods and to expand our operations. We constantly run out of cots and car seats, so we have to buy them new because the demand is outweighing the donated supply," says Rikki.



Barry has previously been named Neighbour of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, but says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a beauty! "It makes me feel good. I'm real proud of it."

Big-hearted neighbour devotes his days to children's centre

Barry Nitschke — Le Fevre Community Children's Centre

Generous, Selfless, Hardworking

Barry Nitschke lives next door to the Le Fevre Community Children's Centre and has been helping in one way or another for decades.

The retired port worker is a 24-hour volunteer caretaker, toy repairman, groundsman and sausage sizzle turner.

Barry, who is in his eighties, helps at working bees and assists with walking the children to the local preschool a few days a week.

He also built a chook house to use up the centre's food scraps and gives the eggs to the staff.

Not only that, he shares his yard with the centre, allowing the children to play under his large Norfolk pine.

"By doing all these jobs I save the centre a few bob," he says.

"It keeps me alive as it gives me something to do. I enjoy hearing

the sound of children laughing coming over the fence."

Barry has previously been named Neighbour of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, but says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is a beauty! "It makes me feel good. I'm real proud of it."

His neighbourliness doesn't stop at the centre. He cares for everyone in the neighbourhood. He ensures bins get put out and checks on people's wellbeing.

Barry regularly collects dumped old bikes and fixes them for children in the community, he mows the lawn for several people and is always happy to help with repair jobs such as fixing a fence.

In the past, he would help an elderly neighbour tie his shoelaces every day until he passed away.

"I've been living here for 54 years. I know everybody in Taperoo," Barry says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The centre will use its grant to replace its damaged storage shed and lay more grass for the children to play on.

"The shed will have a roller door and electricity for my blower. And it's going to be called Barry's Shed. That really means something," says the proud volunteer.

Your 2019 Finalists

Tricia Flowers

Enlighten Education

Tricia Flowers has always been passionate about encouraging women in business, sport and the media. As a mum to two young children, Tricia has now turned her passion towards the wellbeing of children. She is an active advocate and gets involved in many local causes. These include volunteering for the Kids Matter mental health and wellbeing initiative, volunteering as a sports coach, advocating and encouraging girls and women to succeed in life and business.

Carolina Correa Posada

Portlife Church

When Carolina Correa Posada emigrated from Colombia with her Australian husband and baby 10 years ago, she was sad to leave her family. She struggled with English and felt so isolated that she cried every day. Her life improved when the Portlife Church launched its Green Monkeys play group for pre-schoolers and their carers, where she found companionship and support. She quickly became a regular volunteer at the twice-weekly group, giving back to other parents over several years. This made her the obvious choice when a paid position to coordinate the program came up.

Alipate Carlile

Power Community

As a retired Port Adelaide Football Club player and multicultural ambassador for AFL, Alipate Carlile is the perfect person to promote social wellbeing and harmony among high school boys and girls from diverse backgrounds. He does this through his key role in implementing the Power Intercultural Program on behalf of Power Community. The program uses AFL and the football club as catalysts for social connection and acceptance. "The aim is to create a welcoming environment that is willing and able to work with the young people to help them achieve their individual goals," says Alipate.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Shirley BROOKMAN
Portland Football Club

Lynnie CALLAGHAN
Port Adelaide Softball Club

Alipate CARLILE
Power Community Ltd

Jade COCKRELL
Dynamic Gymnastics Club Inc

Rikki COOKE
Treasure Boxes

Carolina CORREA POSADA
Portlife Church Inc

Sarah DAVIES
Foodbank SA

Tricia FLOWERS
Enlighten Education SA

Chris GLACKEN
coastalfunruns

Debbie GULLY
Make A Wish

Kym MEERS
The Epilepsy Association
of SA & NT Inc

Roy MANNER
Henley Surf Life Saving Club

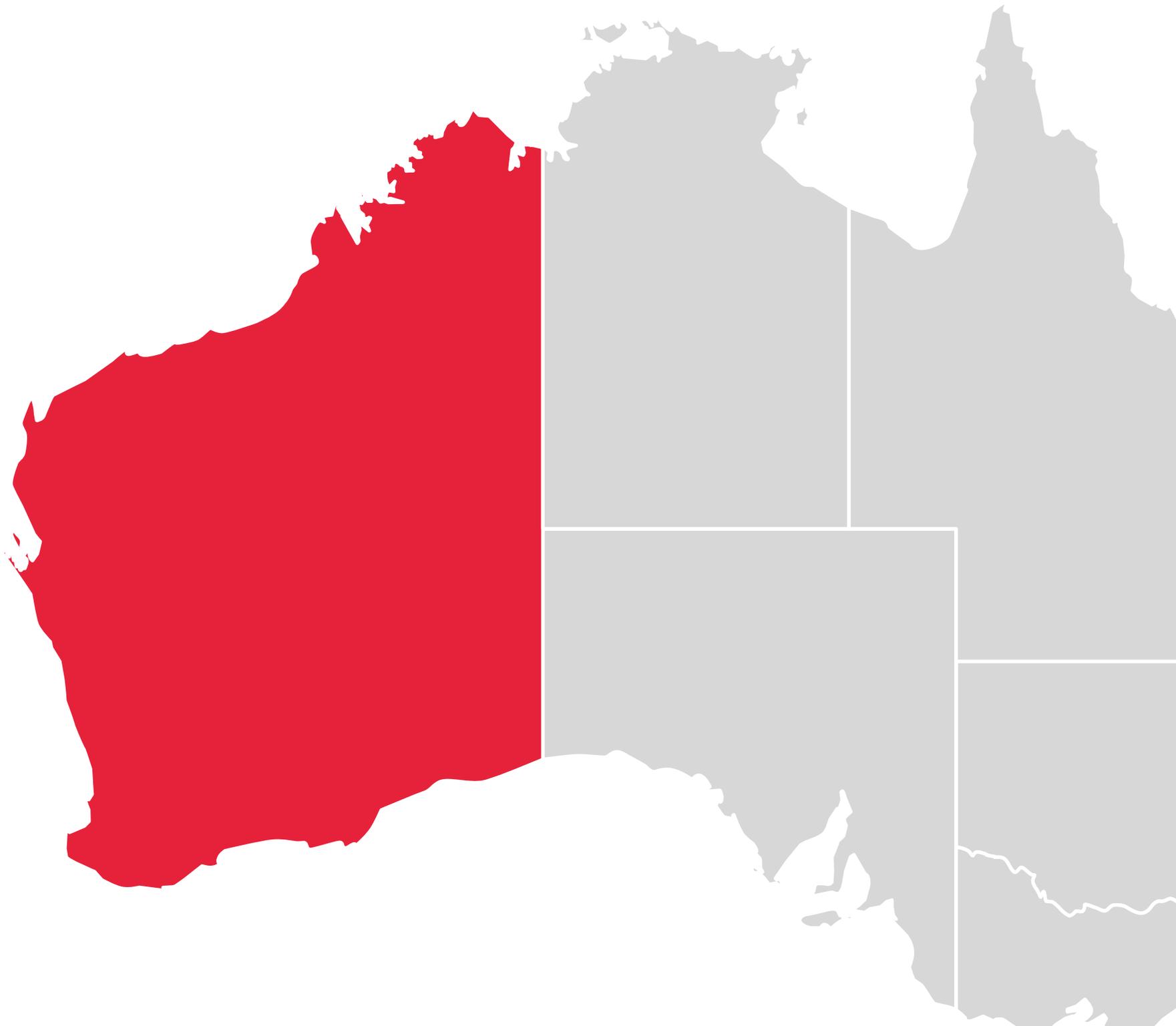
Dennis MEREDITH
Port Adelaide District Hockey Club

Barry NITSCHKE
Le Fevre Community
Children's Centre

Bronwyn PLATE
Nanas Free Food Basket Inc

Eman RAHIM
Heart and Soal Food Assistance

Jack WELLS
Grange Surf Life Saving Club Inc





Western Australia

Carousel
Innaloo
Whitford City

Westfield

Carousel

WA



"Everyone in life wants and needs to achieve some things, like becoming a parent or having a job. But if we can get the balance right, we have a greater chance of achieving happiness."

Bouncing back to deliver happiness to others

Julian Pace — Happiness Co
Unconditional, Compassionate, Selfless

Julian Pace has severe dyslexia and dropped out of school at the age of thirteen after being bullied.

However, thousands of people around the world are happier because of him and Happiness Co, which he founded to tackle depression and loneliness through face-to-face and online programs.

Happiness Co promotes connection, kindness and contribution to the world. One of the reasons for its success is a focus on personal fulfilment, not just achievements and material objects, says Julian.

"Everyone in life wants and needs to achieve some things, like becoming a parent or having a job. But if we can get the balance right, we have a greater chance of achieving happiness.

"I've had the opportunity to impact over fifty thousand lives," he says, with participants

accessing his online programs from countries including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, Canada and India.

Julian was inspired to start Happiness Co because of his own mental health issues, and he feels proud and humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

His lowest point came with the suicide of his father on his twenty-first birthday, and Happiness Co is dedicated to his memory.

"The programs I have created include a twenty-one-day challenge, a ten-week mentorship, workshops and one-on-one coaching," says Julian, who has branched out into workplace programs and programs that help school students with self-confidence, bullying and body image issues.

Julian was told by school teachers that he would never get an

education because he couldn't read or write. However, he has been teaching himself and aims to read sixty books this year.

"I like to increase awareness that you are in control of your own happiness," he says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Happiness Co's grant will help with youth suicide prevention programs.

"Youth suicide is on the rise," says Julian. "We want to provide some powerful programs that will give young men and women the resources and tools to use before they face problems with their mental wellbeing."

If you need support, please phone Lifeline: 13 11 14



"We provide a bit of hope, happiness and positivity in the lives of children and young people who need it the most," says Leah, who also works to raise awareness about the stigma and other challenges children in care endure.

Spreading sunshine for children who need it the most

Leah Atkinson — Operation Sunshine WA

Passionate, Empowering, Selfless

Leah Atkinson spent time in care when she was a girl and is doing whatever she can to comfort the next generation of children and youth facing similar anguish.

The first few days after entering out-of-home-care can be the most challenging, so Leah puts together comforting welcome packs that are handed out on arrival.

The packs are an initiative of her volunteer-run organisation, Operation Sunshine WA, which she started to support children in out-of-home care.

Many children arrive in care with few or no belongings, and the Sunshine Packs help to preserve their dignity and make them feel less isolated, says Leah. "They contain essential items, including hygiene products and clothing, and comfort items that vary depending on the recipient's age and gender."

The packs help create a positive distraction and open communication between the young person and those involved in their care.

Leah, who is married with five children, works full-time and manages the volunteer-run organisation in her free time.

"We provide a bit of hope, happiness and positivity in the lives of children and young people who need it the most," says Leah, who also works to raise awareness about the stigma and other challenges children in care endure.

She feels good to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "The community support is motivating, knowing that there are people who recognise the work that I do and that Operation Sunshine does."

Operation Sunshine also provides packs to women and children escaping domestic violence.

"New pyjamas, underwear and other items give them some comfort at a traumatic and vulnerable time," Leah says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Operation Sunshine will use its grant to fund more packs, bringing it closer to its goal of providing packs to all of the more than one thousand children who go into care in WA each year.

"The grant is a huge help to us. Sunshine Packs are expensive to create and we struggle to raise the money needed to meet demand."



"Horses are my passion, but you don't need riding experience to volunteer. We have people who feed the horses or do the gardens or the administration. It's amazing what people do and what they commit to."

Mum and son activity becomes a life-affirming passion

Paige Connolly — Riding for the Disabled (Oakford)

Wholehearted, Passionate, Caring

Paige Connolly started volunteering for Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Oakford more than ten years ago because it was something she and her teenaged son could do together.

Paige knew from the start that she wanted to be involved and watched in awe as the riders developed their ability as their lessons progressed.

"The horses made my heart melt as I watched them bring so much joy and love to their riders and volunteers," she says.

Paige grew up with horses and has always had a deep affinity to them. She has not looked back since her first day at RDA and has qualified as a riding coach.

A large part of her inspiration comes from her brave little brother Dean, who passed away

when they were children. "He had cystic fibrosis and is the reason I focus on people's abilities, not disabilities."

Paige is excited to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero but is adamant it is a collective honour for all the volunteers, riders, vaulters and parents.

"Horses are my passion, but you don't need riding experience to volunteer. We have people who feed the horses or do the gardens or the administration. It's amazing what people do and what they commit to."

The riding school offers classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and Paige is part of the glue that holds it together.

Her enthusiasm is infectious, and her fellow volunteers say she is the reason teenagers get out of

bed early on a Saturday morning to come and help instead of sleeping in.

"It is humbling to see our riders' self-confidence improve as they master new skills and continue to build deeper connections with their horse, coach and volunteers," says Paige.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

RDA will use its grant to buy a vaulting horse and equipment.

"The money is really brilliant," says Paige. It opens a lot of doors for us. It turns a lot of our wishlist from a dream into reality."

Your 2019 Finalists

Catherine MacDougall

Prepare Produce Provide

Catherine MacDougall is a mother figure for the hundreds of children whom she helps on the road to career success. Catherine volunteers for not-for-profit Prepare Produce Provide, which was set up by passionate home economics teachers to help young people train for careers in education and hospitality. One of her great achievements is bringing together 25 Aboriginal students and top chefs for a week-long culinary camp. "This provides Aboriginal students with opportunities to use food as a medium to connect to their culture and provides career pathways in food and cultural practices," she says.

Neil McCulloch

First Hike Project

Neil McCulloch is dedicated to helping young refugees feel at home in Australia. He created the First Hike Project to introduce newly arrived refugees to the wonders of the Australian bush and to help them process the trauma that brought them to these shores. By the end of the overnight hike or camping adventure, they feel a greater sense of belonging and have a better understanding of Australia values. "To watch them witness their first wild kangaroo or see the sunrise through the Eucalyptus forest is something they, or we, will never forget," says Neil.

Gracie Edwards

Uni Camp for Kids

University student Gracie Edwards spends summer breaks giving at-risk children invaluable positive experiences. As president of WA's oldest children's charity, Uni Camp for Kids ("Uni Camp"), Gracie devotes twenty (often forty) hours weekly to help fund, organise and run the organisation including three one-week summer camps that Uni Camp provide for hundreds of Perth's most socially, emotionally or financially disadvantaged children. "We aim to provide an important time-out from other life stresses, interactions with positive role-models and always offer something to look forward to next time." she says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Millie ABBOTT-FEWTRELL
Horsepower Orange Grove

Leah ATKINSON
Operation Sunshine WA

Margaret BAILEY
Elev8 Ministries Inc

Cameron BARNES
Red Frogs Australia

Mike and Emma BASC
Objective Secured

Alysia BISHOP
CRPS Network Australia Inc

Josh BOND
Initiate Australia

Paige CONNOLLY
Riding for the Disabled Oakford

Saige DEELSTRA
Make A Wish

Gracie EDWARDS
University Camp for Kids

Rob GOYEN
Stroke Foundation

Gavin GRACE
Art vs Depression

Veronica HABIEB
St Mary's Outreach Service (SMOS)

Sui LAU
Christ the King Church
(Willetton, Anglican)

DJ LIM
Perth Rams Rugby Union
Football Club

Fiona LITTLEMORE
Brookman Primary School

Catherine MacDOUGALL
Prepare Produce Provide

Neil McCULLOCH
First Hike Project Inc

Amanda MILROY
Story Dogs

Thirza NALDER
RSLWA

Margie OLDFIELD
Team Connect WA

Julian PACE
Happiness Co

Clinton PHILLIPS
C3 Langford

Cheriekah RAMIREZ
Amicus Curiae Fidelis

Pam RICHARDS
100 Women

Donna ROBERTS
Children's Tumour Foundation

Vicki WATSON
The Magic Smiles Project

Westfield

Innaloo
WA



"I believe each person has within them something great to contribute to this world and I am passionate about helping people realise their worth and reach their potential," says Amanda.

Forging a better life and dignity through HOPE

Amanda Ellerby — HOPE (Helping Out People Everywhere)

Passionate, Selfless, Driven

Social worker Amanda Ellerby is passionate about helping people who are homeless or at-risk to forge a better life.

As a coordinator with HOPE (Helping Out People Everywhere), she ensures her team offers clients dignity as well as practical help such as sleeping bags, showers, food and toiletries. They also assist with some of the financial costs associated with obtaining and maintaining suitable accommodation.

"I believe each person has within them something great to contribute to this world and I am passionate about helping people realise their worth and reach their potential," says Amanda.

She feels humbled to be named a Westfield Local Hero. "It's an honour to be recognised by the

local community. People haven't been aware of the extent of our work, so this means we can reach a lot more people who can benefit from the work that we do."

Last year, HOPE provided food relief to over two thousand families. This year the aim is to move beyond practical assistance and provide clients with skills and mentoring to help them succeed in life, an approach Amanda has used in more than fourteen years of working in the homeless sector.

"In my years of work, I've seen grown men break down in tears after sharing that they've had enough of years of daily drug use and I've had the opportunity to provide them with the tools to start making changes in their life," she says. "I've had a young girl call me each time she thought

she'd used too much heroin, just to have someone on the other end of the phone."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

HOPE's grant means it can meet more of the demand for help. It will also be able to upskill volunteers and further develop life skills workshops for clients.

"This grant means we can start implementing many of the things I've had a vision for but not had the funds or resources to do so," says Amanda.



"At the moment there is no easy way for them to play together on equipment. This will allow them to just be together as friends and will provide stimulating play for all children, including those in wheelchairs," says Rebecca.

Helping to give a voice to children with special needs

Rebecca Watson — Holy Rosary School Doubleview Parents and Friends Association

Inclusive, Dedicated, Inspiring

Rebecca Watson became a champion for children with special needs when her daughter Marlee was diagnosed with Rett syndrome.

The little girl was unable to communicate verbally until she received an eye-gaze computer that speaks the words as she looks at them on the screen.

With Rebecca's help, teachers and aides at the Holy Rosary School Doubleview are helping her daughter and other special needs children use the devices.

"The more Marlee's aides learned, the more expressive she became. It allowed her to be seen and share her thoughts," Rebecca says.

She is excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero as it means more people will be aware that people who can't talk or gesture can still communicate.

"It's just amazing when you see people realise others can understand them.

"Once people believe someone understands what they are saying, they treat them differently and involve them in so many more things," she says.

Rebecca has now changed careers to help children who use communication devices at other schools, which she describes as the most rewarding job she has had.

Rebecca and Marlee have presented their journey at conferences and workshops to spread awareness about what is possible with the right support.

"I am passionate about demonstrating how children living with complex communication needs and severe body movement disorders just want to learn and do what their friends do," says Rebecca.

"These children can make great friendships, be stimulated and learn age appropriately."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Holy Rosary School Doubleview Parents and Friends Association will use its grant to fulfil a long-held dream to purchase a Sway Fun Glider that allows children in wheelchairs and their friends to play together.

"At the moment there is no easy way for them to play together on equipment. This will allow them to just be together as friends and will provide stimulating play for all children, including those in wheelchairs," says Rebecca.



Hayden's infectious enthusiasm for changing the youth alcohol and party culture has won the praise of past school leavers and the police. And he has also pioneered Red Frog teams in Malaysia, Singapore and India.

Spreading the word about responsible partying to keep school leavers safe

Hayden Glass — Red Frogs Australia

Remarkable, Generous, Leader

For the past 18 years, Hayden Glass has been keeping an ever-increasing number of young people safe in Western Australia.

He is the coordinator of the WA branch of Red Frog, which promotes healthy partying behaviours.

Hayden leads the volunteer teams and is responsible for their pastoral care, ensuring they are well enough to serve others without it taking a toll on their own mental health.

He also engages with the community and in 2018 spoke to fifteen thousand school leavers about making healthy choices about alcohol and other intoxicants.

Hayden has grown the number of volunteers in WA from 20 to 200 and has expanded the program beyond the school gates to

music festivals, sporting events and universities.

"Our presence at events means young people know there are a group of people who have their back if something goes wrong," he says.

Hayden says it's a little overwhelming to have been voted a Westfield local hero.

"It's a massive privilege and an honour to be recognised by the community for work that I do that I love."

Hayden's infectious enthusiasm for changing the youth alcohol and party culture has won the praise of past school leavers and the police. And he has also pioneered Red Frog teams in Malaysia, Singapore and India.

While Red Frog's primary target is young people, they are not the only ones who benefit, says Hayden.

"We allay parents' fears when they know we will be present at festivals, and we contribute to the safety of all attendees at events." One security manager told him that every Red Frogger is worth two security guards.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Red Frog will use its grant to extend its outreach to more schools and student housing organisations in the Perth CBD and at Edith Cowan University.

"We'll be able to provide pastoral care, event planning and a listening ear to help students living away from home offset feelings of loneliness and isolation," says Hayden.

Your 2019 Finalists

Ken Raine

Lifeline WA

Ken Raine enjoys dressing up as different comic characters, but he has his youngest son to thank for his transformation into a fundraising superhero. The inspiration came at Comic-Con when Ken and his sons were swamped by people wanting photos of them in costume. His son mentioned they could raise money for charity if they charged a dollar per photo and Ken leapt into action, setting up the WA Team of Charity Heroes (WATCH) Network. "We donate our time to bring happiness to sick or less fortunate kids and raise money for good causes," he says.

Carilyn Holmes

Rebound WA

Carilyn Holmes was thrilled when the Australian wheelchair basketball team won gold at the Beijing Paralympics. A long-time volunteer with Rebound WA, she was there when many members of the gold-medal team first sat in a basketball wheelchair. Rebound has been helping people with a disability to live more active, fuller lives for 60 years and Carilyn has been volunteering for the state and national wheelchair basketball teams for 36 of those. "Being a small part of their mental and physical development, and even watching some of them achieve Paralympic success is something I'll never forget," she says.

Lesley Cangemi

Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Services

Lesley Cangemi is so dedicated to helping women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that she stayed on as a volunteer when her paid job was lost due to funding cuts. Despite fragile health, the retired nurse and social worker seldom ever misses a day's work at Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Service. The all-women organisation offers clients culturally appropriate health and wellbeing services as well as vital help with navigating organisations such as Centrelink. "Watching the women grow, be empowered and build their capacity to develop social and employment skills is hugely satisfying," says Lesley.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Bronwyn BATE
Mettle Women Inc

Eleana BREDEMEYER
Ability Centre

Kirsten BUTTON
Saba Rose Button Foundation

Lesley CANGEMI
Ishar Multicultural Women's
Health Services

Peter CARLINO
Balcatta FC

Katie DUNKLEY
RSLWA

Amanda ELLERBY
HOPE Inc

Charles FEDOR
Western Australian Debating
League (WADL)

Janet GARCIA-WEBB
Girl Guides Western Australia Inc

Hayden GLASS
Red Frogs Australia

Kishani GREEN
Westside BMX Club Inc

Carilyn HOLMES
Rebound WA Inc

Rebecca JOHNSON
Type 1 Diabetes Family Centre

Veronica JOHNSTON
Make A Wish

Kevin KENNEALLY
Western Australian Gould League

Monique KERR
Allergy Support Hub

Robert (Bob) KING
Pelican Point Sea Scouts

Hilary MacWILLIAM
St Mark's Anglican Church,
Bassendean

Tommy O'DONOVAN
Story Dogs

Ken RAINE
Perth Childrens Hospital Foundation

Emma ROSCOE
Stirling Women's Centre -
City of Stirling

Rebecca WATSON
Holy Rosary School Parents
and Friends

Westfield

Whitford City
WA





"I am a passionate advocate for greyhounds and positive education, and with this program, I get to combine both," says Liz, who volunteers for Greyhound Adoptions WA.

Educator spreads wellbeing with three positive pooches

Liz Povah — Woodvale Secondary College

Generous, Reliable, Kind

When students at Woodvale Secondary College are feeling sad, stressed or lonely, they go to the school's wellness centre for some unconditional love from a trio of friendly greyhounds.

Boots, Rush and Archie are terrific dogs, and it takes them no time to put a smile on the students' faces, says educator Liz Povah, who started the Positive Pooches Program at the school three years ago.

"The students arrive anxious about whatever is going on in their lives and walk away feeling much better. Students who had found attending school a challenge now attend full-time and happily," says Liz.

"The greyhounds have also given socially isolated students a means of connecting to others over their shared affection for the dogs," she says.

"It is a wellbeing initiative that has made such a difference for everyone at the school."

Liz feels proud to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero and humbled by the support from the community. But her main reward is seeing how much joy and support the dogs bring to the students and staff.

As an educator with 30 years' experience, Liz believes schools can help students, staff and the community to embrace positive psychology. This is why she was instrumental in developing the wellness centre, where students also learn mindfulness, relaxation techniques and the power of positive thinking.

She has helped other institutions introduce similar programs, and a Department of Education video about the Positive Pooch Program has gone viral.

"I am a passionate advocate for greyhounds and positive education, and with this program, I get to combine both," says Liz, who volunteers for Greyhound Adoptions WA.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. The school will use its grant to improve the area in which the students engage with the dogs.

"It is going to make a huge difference," says Liz. "I am also hoping to use some of the money to put together resources for other schools that want to implement similar programs."



"The funding and publicity will enable us to help a lot of women with something that most of us take for granted and to remove barriers and difficulties from the everyday lives of women and girls," says Cathy.

Providing sanitary items to women and girls

Cathy O'Brien — Share the Dignity
Uplifting, Hilarious, Kind

Accountant Cathy O'Brien has always been grateful that her material needs have been fulfilled, and is conscious things could have been different if she were born into a different family.

It is important to her to help others in need, which is why she jumped at the chance to volunteer for Share the Dignity, a charity that collects sanitary and hygiene items which are distributed via partners to girls and women who are homeless, victims of domestic violence or facing other types of hardship.

One of the charity's highlights takes place every November when it collects handbags filled with sanitary items and products such as shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, soap and toothpaste to give away as Christmas gifts.

"I find so much rewarding about the work," says Cathy, who juggles her volunteering with her professional career and being a single mum.

She values the ability to make a difference in people's lives as well as the opportunity to meet and connect with kind and inspiring people who are working hard to help others.

Cathy is a diligent ambassador for the charity and has a track record of signing up many businesses as collection points. Her work helped Share the Dignity meet its targets last year.

She feels both proud and grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm excited about the opportunity to help more people and raise awareness of a cause I care greatly about.

"By receiving these essential items, women improve their sense of dignity by not having to go without or make do with substitutes," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Share the Dignity will use its grant to increase the number of products distributed via partner charities.

"The funding and publicity will enable us to help a lot of women with something that most of us take for granted and to remove barriers and difficulties from the everyday lives of women and girls," says Cathy.



"We have seen time and again that when we involve the local community in the opportunity of participating and in helping someone back onto their feet, the community unites together."

The life-changing joy of helping others

Janine Wood — No Limits Perth

Dedicated, Caring, Gentle

Janine Wood loves helping others and co-founded No Limits Perth with two police officers to offer random acts of kindness to those in crisis.

The charity redistributes furniture, white goods, linen, toys, emergency packs and food to people who are struggling to make ends meet.

Those who benefit include victims of domestic violence needing to start over, people who have been made redundant, single-parented families or pensioners.

The mission is to give everyone a second chance, without judgment, at no cost and expecting nothing in return.

Although happily married for the past 25 years, Janine is a survivor of domestic violence and understands how it feels to need support.

She is humbled to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I am very grateful because the work we do is obviously making a difference. For many, the donations have been life-changing, and doing the work has been just as life-changing for us."

Janine is proud that all practical donations reach those in need at no cost through the efforts of volunteers.

She also organises the distribution of more than 1000 food hampers a year for the needy and uses her background in education and qualifications in pastoral and youth care to provide guidance and support.

Known for her compassionate outlook, Janine says the work of the charity helps to build stronger communities.

"We have seen time and again that when we involve the local community in the opportunity of participating and in helping someone back onto their feet, the community unites together."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with three people per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. No Limits Perth will use its grant to buy fuel and to pay delivery staff.

"We have a lot of volunteers. Some are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, so the grant means we can now pay them to help us with deliveries and much-needed help. We value people and for us to be able to offer something in return for their effort is huge."

Your 2019 Finalists

Fraser Griggs

P2S RUGBYWORKS

Fraser Griggs was inspired to set up P2S RUGBYWORKS following a trek across England to raise money for a similar charity. He found sponsors and high-profile ambassadors for the program, which uses the values of rugby union to help disadvantaged young people reach their potential. Spurred on by seeing his daughter bullied at school, Fraser aimed to break the cycle of aggression by creating employment and mentoring opportunities for at-risk children. "Our young people move into meaningful employment using the skills they have practised, such as teamwork, communication and trust," Fraser says.

Alex Wilson

Red Frogs Australia

Alex Wilson struggled to find a clear direction after leaving high school, but knew he'd found the right vocation after volunteering for Red Frogs Australia. A formidable leader with an ability to see the big picture, Alex works around the clock to provide a support network for university students and school leavers — from acting as the sober friend at parties and organising alcohol-free alternatives to running first-year welcome seminars and helping kids with identity issues. "Our presence at university events means that students know there are a group of people who have their back if something goes wrong," Alex says.

Mark Harrison

Mullaloo Beach Community Group

Decorated Red Cross volunteer and passionate environmentalist Mark Harrison dedicates his time to helping kids learn about coastal ecosystems while preserving Mullaloo Dunes for future generations. An experienced bush regeneration specialist, he is developing a program that encourages school children and special needs students to develop conservation skills and take ownership of small plots of land. He has designed a strategy to eliminate the onion weed that threatens to destroy the much-loved, 16-hectare sand dunes. "The purpose of the work is to include the local community in the environmental guardianship of Mullaloo Dunes," Mark says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Lizzy ALDERSON
Make A Wish

Tara CONRADT
The Sanctuary

Michelle DUNLOP
Street Friends

Melissa GARDINER
Wanneroo Basketball Association

Fraser GRIGGS
P2S Rugby Works

Mark HARRISON
Mullaloo Beach Community Group Inc

Sharon KENNEY
The Spiers Centre Inc

Stephen KINNERSLY
Brighton Seahawks JFC

Alisha MACLEAN
Red Frogs Australia

Natalie MASON
9 Lives Cat Rescue

Celeste MILNER
Perth Ice Skating Club

Cathy O'BRIEN
Share the Dignity

Cassie PETHRICK
Girl Guides WA Inc

Olly PICKETT
Wheelchairs for Kids

Elizabeth POVAH
Woodvale Secondary College

Jasmine SAINSBURY
Merriwa Community Hub

Felicity SPILLER
Duncraig Outdoor Girl Guides

Joshua WALSH
Greenwood Giants Basketball Club

Jackie WANN
Girl Guides WA Inc

Judy WELCH
RSLWA

Kay WHITELEY
Wagamuffns Dog Training

Alex WILSON
Red Frogs Australia

Janine WOOD
No Limits Perth



New Zealand

Albany

Manukau City

Riccarton

St Lukes

Westfield

Albany
NZ



“The idea is to invest in our team to invest in someone else – that person who's so full of potential, but escaping from desperate circumstances,” says Anita.

Surviving violence to spread ripples of kindness

Anita Hinton — I Got Your Back Pack

Inspiring, Passionate, Selfless

In 2015, Anita Hinton escaped domestic violence with her daughter Neia in her arms and nothing else to tide her through.

Later that year, she came up with a way to support others and started putting together essential items in backpacks and giving them to survivors as she was able.

At first, Anita and Neia packed the backpacks themselves and attached a warm, handwritten note to each one. Today, their efforts have grown into a fully-fledged charity, I Got Your Back Pack (IGYBP), which Anita runs from a donated packing station in Silverdale.

All the work is done by volunteers, many of whom are abuse survivors and find the connection and support therapeutic.

Anita describes being voted a Westfield Local Hero as really nice. “The feeling is insane. We give so much time, energy and love across the country, and now we've got this sense that, at last, somebody has got our back,” she says.

IGYBP has already distributed more than two thousand packs to women and men escaping domestic violence and in 2019 production has increased to three hundred a month.

The team deliver the backpacks filled with toiletries, snacks, children's toys and other basic comforts to safe houses and women's refuges throughout New Zealand.

While her volunteer work is Anita's passion, she still supports herself and Neia through her job as a cleaner.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. I Got Your Back Pack will use the grant primarily to invest in training for its volunteer team.

“This grant will allow us, for the first time, to upskill our volunteers,” says Anita. “To sustain ourselves as a charity, we need more skills in communication and branding.

“The idea is to invest in our team to invest in someone else – that person who's so full of potential, but escaping from desperate circumstances,” says Anita.

“A stone ripples when you throw it out, and it's the same with each backpack we put out there.”



"We have some awesome, awesome artists in our community," says Arletta. "An exhibition is a great way to connect families, carers and autistic young people."

Finding positive ways to live and work with autism

Arletta Van Den Bosch — The Children's Autism Foundation
Compassionate, Driven, Steadfast

Families who have a child diagnosed with autism often struggle to come to terms with the condition. Then comes the struggle of easing their child's integration into a world where autism is still misunderstood.

For sixteen years, family counsellor Arletta Van Den Bosch has been helping parents, teachers and autistic children to manage such struggles, and to discover positive ways to work with autism.

As a consultant at the Children's Autism Foundation, she uses an engaging combination of humour and practical strategies to help people achieve meaningful improvements in education, socialisation and community engagement.

"Children and young people who are adequately supported are resilient, happier and more confident," says Arletta.

She sees being voted a Westfield Local Hero as huge community recognition of the work done by her and her colleagues. But she does not see herself as a hero. "If anyone is a hero, it's not me, and perhaps not even my colleagues, it's the families we work with."

Anita is pleased that the foundation works with a diverse group of people from a range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. "I'm lucky to meet so many really cool families," she says.

The team at the foundation are highly qualified in the field of autism and their evidence-based approach makes a crucial difference to the families they work with. "They know that we know what we're talking about," Arletta says.

Apart from counselling and family support, the foundation also helps schools with autistic learners,

hosts community workshops, and helps autistic teenagers and post-teenagers with their transition into adulthood.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The Foundation will use its grant to create a wide-ranging exhibition of work by young autistic artists.

"We have some awesome, awesome artists in our community," says Arletta. "An exhibition is a great way to connect families, carers and autistic young people."

"We see a lack of social opportunities for autistic teenagers, especially, and art is great route for creating friendly social spaces."



"When you're grieving, you miss feeling like your old self," says Liz. "Pampering cheers our recipients up, and then they start sharing their stories."

Giving grieving women a chance to relax and connect

Elizabeth York — Feeling Fab

Nurturing, Innovative, Optimistic

The day after Elizabeth York's grandmother died, she lost her husband, Allan, in a car crash.

She and her three young sons were devastated. "Grief is a tunnel where you think you're never coming out," says Liz.

She helped her healing by helping others and became a grief counsellor for nine years.

Today, twenty years later, she is still helping other women to find their way out of the tunnel through a charity called Feeling Fab, which she founded in 2013.

Feeling Fab hosts free monthly pamper days for women in grief or those who need support for another reason.

The women can relax with people experiencing similar circumstances and enjoy hair styling, makeup sessions, manicures, massages, craft tables, tea and lunch. There

is also counselling available if they need it.

"When you're grieving, you miss feeling like your old self," says Liz. "Pampering cheers our recipients up, and then they start sharing their stories."

"I live and breathe Feeling Fab as I know the hole you get into when you lose a loved one."

Liz feels undeserving of being voted a Westfield Local Hero. The greatest heroes, she says, are the women who arrive at a pamper day and are feeling so low that they have to be gently coaxed into participating.

Each pamper day involves up to twenty-six recipients and thirty volunteers. "My Feeling Fab angels," as Liz calls them. Recipients come from across greater Auckland and as far as Hamilton and Whangarei.

"Our programme helps recipients with support and friendship and sharing of experiences, not only on the day but ongoing from those they meet," says Liz.

"They leave our programme feeling fab and looking fab. We so deserve to feel fab, especially going through grief."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Feeling Fab will use its grant to fund pamper days over the next five months. "It takes such a weight off," says Liz, "and buys us time to start exploring our vision of spreading pamper days countrywide."

Your 2019 Finalists

Eliette Roslin

The Green Room Charitable Trust

Eliette Roslin knows the healing power of music. It has helped her through difficulties like nearly losing her father to cancer when she was nine and fighting for her life at the age of 16 when she had Guillain Barre syndrome. Now, aged 25, she is the director of The Green Room Charitable Trust, which encourages children aged eight to seventeen to play music to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and cope with bullying. "Music has accompanied every small and big moment in my life. It is so healing and a fantastic tool," says Eliette.

Lorraine Owens

North Shore Women's Centre

Lorraine Owens has spent the last 30 years volunteering and working for organisations that help others to build potential and resilience. In her current volunteer role at North Shore Women's Centre, she leads a group called Age with Flair, which helps women aged 60 and older who are facing adversity. The volunteers provide support, education, friendship and networking, which contributes to family well-being. Lorraine also volunteers for De Paul House, which works with vulnerable homeless families. "The highlight of my career has been working with women in all aspects of their lives," says Lorraine.

Chercara Thompson

Care for Families NZ

Chercara Thompson is kept busy looking after her three children, who were all born prematurely and need special care. Her other passion is helping people in need and she supplies them with care packs of donated essential items through Care for Families NZ, a charity she set up. Most of the packs go to parents of premature children, but they are available to any family with a child aged up to five. "No matter how challenging things get at home, being able to help others is a passion that helps me get through each day," says Chercara.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Nathalie BILLET
Caring Crew NZ

Alvin CHEUNG
ActivAsian – Harbour Sport

Gary DIPROSE
Springboard Community Works

Lynn DOBBSON
Albany Community Preschool

Haiying DONG
Whanau Marama Parenting

Georgia HARRIS
Finding Kowhai

Dominic HARVEY
Media Works in Auckland Theedge
Radio Station

Anita HINTON
I Got Your Back Pack

Kristina INESON
YMCA North

Brent JENKIN
Recreate NZ

Charlotte LEES-PEYER
Blind Foundation

Victoria LESSING
Merge NZ

Jianfeng LI
Sport Waitakere

Kevin MA
Linking Sports

Lorraine McINNES
Royal NZ Plunket Trust

Lorraine OWENS
North Shore Women's Centre

Vicky POND DUNLOP
Enlighten Education NZ

Parri Roshan GOHAR
Auckland North Newcomers Network

Eliette ROSLIN
The Green Room Rhythm Of Youth
Charitable Trust

Tasha STOREY
Mothers Helpers Charity

Chercara THOMPSON
Care for Families NZ

Arletta VAN DEN BOSCH
The Children's Autism Foundation

David VERRY
North Harbour Budgeting Service

Elizabeth YORK
Feeling Fab

Westfield

Manukau City
NZ



Eddie is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's huge. The acknowledgement is amazing; it's for our volunteers as much as me. For many of us, Manukau is our hometown, our place. It's special, really moving, to get this support from our home community."

Laundromat in a van provides dignity and conversation

Edward (Eddie) Uini — Orange Sky New Zealand

Compassionate, Generous, Kind

Edward (Eddie) Uini's journey into full-time community service was inspired by a homeless man who passed away alone on the steps of a local church.

"He wasn't particularly old," Eddie recalls. "He could have been any one of us. We all make mistakes. Some of us are just luckier in the support we get."

Knowing that people need dignity as much as they need food and shelter, Eddie created a laundromat in his van and began to offer a free laundry service at locations where people were sleeping rough.

A few months into his one-man operation he called Orange Sky, the Australian non-profit laundry and shower service, for advice. In the conversations that followed, Orange Sky New

Zealand was born. Today the charity's distinctive orange van, fitted with washing machines, dryers and a shower, restores self-respect to hundreds of homeless Aucklanders.

Eddie is Orange Sky's sole New Zealand employee. He works seven days a week, supported by dozens of volunteers.

He's delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's huge. The acknowledgement is amazing; it's for our volunteers as much as me. For many of us, Manukau is our hometown, our place. It's special, really moving, to get this support from our home community."

Even more important than a shower and clean clothing, says Eddie, is the human connection that Orange Sky brings to its clients. At every location, Eddie

and his team pull out six orange chairs. "We sit there and make a safe circle for conversation," he says. "Sometimes, the people who join us have spent weeks without speaking to anyone."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Orange Sky New Zealand will use its grant to maintain and expand its service across Auckland, where its range has been restricted by the cost of fuel.

"The funds will support hundreds of people doing it tough by covering our fuel, registration and insurance costs for a year," says Eddie.



"I have always been a volunteer. My heart drives me. I am always busy trying to find practical solutions to make things easier for people."

Respect for people and food drives volunteering initiative

Lucy Shah Mohamady — Community Service Connect Trust

Aroha, Generous, Practical

Raised on a small farm between Gisborne and Wairoa, Lucy Shah Mohamady grew up with a keen sense of communal sharing and respect for the origins of food.

"Just as each person has their whakapapa or ancestral lineage, so does each type of produce," says Lucy.

In Auckland, she found it strange to witness hunger and isolation amid abundance.

So, as a Maori Muslim drawn to the charitable morality embedded in both cultures, she found it natural to start a solution: Community Service Connect, a trust that coordinates initiatives toward better life-outcomes for Auckland's urban poor.

In one of its initiatives, Lucy and other volunteers recover surplus food which they use to cook meals that they distribute to people in

need. They also distribute surplus clothes, toiletries and other essentials.

When handing out the food and other items, the volunteers make a point of connecting with homeless people in a meaningful way.

Lucy feels humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "The vote makes us, as a team, very excited for the people we help, because it's for them.

"If people are vulnerable, we help them within our capacity," says Lucy. "We don't turn anyone away, whether they have a home or not, whether they have a job or not.

"I have always been a volunteer. My heart drives me. I am always busy trying to find practical solutions to make things easier for people."

Lucy makes a point of listening carefully to the needs of people,

and the trust's next initiative will be a small enterprise-creation programme that will help empower members of Auckland's homeless community to move beyond dependence.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Community Service Connect will invest its grant in a refrigerated van, which will help to keep recovered produce fresh.

The van will also give the trust access to more donor companies. "The logistics for perishables are complex," says Lucy. "Donors need us to have the van so that everything stays super-compliant with food safety legislation."



"My community work means the world to me," says Sarah, "because it feels like Noah's legacy, and the legacy of so many other babies who've joined the angels early."

Supporting grieving families through the loss of a baby

Sarah Numan — Baby Loss NZ

Devoted, Inspirational, Passionate

The lack of empathy Sarah Numan experienced after losing her baby son Noah has made her determined to help others through their grief.

She does this through her charity, Baby Loss New Zealand, which provides support for bereaved families.

Noah was lifted at birth from Sarah's arms. His body was sent straight to a post-mortem examination, and she had barely a quarter of an hour in which to greet him, hold him and say goodbye.

Since 2008, her charity has been helping bereaved parents and educating hospital staff to be sensitive through the first stages of grief.

The charity's volunteers also engage in empathetic, judgment-free discussion with parents

who have received a painful prenatal diagnosis and face agonising decisions.

"My community work means the world to me," says Sarah, "because it feels like Noah's legacy, and the legacy of so many other babies who've joined the angels early."

She feels honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It lets us, as a team, know we're needed and in the place we should be."

The charity has built a close relationship with Bereavement Care Services at Middlemore Hospital and its services are offered to every family whose baby dies from fourteen weeks' gestation.

Bereaved families are provided with gift packages which are customised to their individual circumstance and include items

such as teddy bears and a journal devised by Sarah, who has trained as a birth and bereavement doula to offer families full support before, during and after birth.

An important memory-making gift is a cast of the baby's hands and feet, and Sarah has created more than ten thousand of these since 2008. "They provide a memory you can always touch," she says.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Baby Loss New Zealand will use its grant to sustain its three-hour packages, which give grieving families the tools and the time to cast, bathe, dress and truly be with their baby, says Sarah.

Your 2019 Finalists

Paul Dickson

OKE Charity

Paul Dickson had been working in the corporate world for 20 years when he decided there must be a better way to use his skills. Soon afterwards, he became a stay-at-home dad and launched the OKE charity, which builds school gardens. Each garden is sustainable and includes raised beds, a greenhouse, composting solutions, kids' tools, teachers' tools and irrigation. They are built in one day by pulling together teachers, parents, whanau and local businesses. "This takes place on a school day, allowing the kids to see their community build something special for them," says Paul.

Ezekiel Robson

Recreate NZ

As a vision-impaired person, Ezekiel Robson has first-hand experience of what it means to be disabled. That knowledge drives his passion for enhancing respect and inclusion for all disabled people. Ezekiel provides strategic and consumer input to Counties Manukau District Health Board and he supports the Disabled Persons Assembly by promoting greater understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. "I have dedicated 20 years to supporting local youth," says Ezekiel, who serves on the Board of Trustees of Recreate NZ, where he relentlessly advocates for youth who have a disability.

Kramer Hoeflich

PHAB Association

Kramer Hoeflich is a young Pasifika man who became depressed and isolated after suffering a disabling injury while visiting family in the Cook Islands 10 years ago. However, the PHAB Pasifika disability organisation helped him find hope and meaning and provided him with a sense of connection and acceptance. Kramer's confidence grew to such an extent that he has become a powerful inspiration for other young people with disabilities. "I found my passion to work with young people of all abilities, cultures and backgrounds to make a difference," Kramer says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Adrienne AIRS
Manurewa Scout Group

Glen ANAUA
Voice Ministries

Kristina CAVIT
The Kindness Institute

Matt CONNOLLY
TTS

Baljit DHEIL
Woman Care Trust

Paul DICKSON
OKE Charity

Vita DRYDEN
Thames Coast Community
Kindergarten

Joseph FA'AFIU
Gateway Community Trust (The Gate)

Francis FANNING
Sisters of Compassion

Ben GREENWOOD
Revolution Tour

Maree HEMANA
Victim Support

Kramer HOEFLICH
PHAB Association Inc

Jit KAUR
New Zealand Sikh Womens
Association Inc

Shannon KEANE
YMCA North

Ang MIZZIEBO
Wot It Iz Sports Club

Lucy Shah MOHAMADY
Community Service Connect

Mahia MOKARAKA
Youthline Manukau

Swanie Nelson MOKORAKA
Community Builders NZ & Pātaka Kai
Open Street Pantries

Serena MURDOCH
Friendship House He Whare Tangata

Ramon NARAYAN
Action Education Inc

Ann-Helen NU'UALI'ITIA
Affirming Works

Sarah NUMAN
Baby Loss NZ

Carla Moana PERESE
Faith Family Baptist Centre

Fangafua POOI
Totara Hospice South Auckland

Ezekiel ROBSON
Recreate NZ

Gina SANDERS
Clevedon Valley Music
Foundation Trust

Christine SICA
Hands of Hope (Ringa O Te Tumanako)
Ministry Outreach (NGO) and
Kia Kaha Hope for the Hope-Less
Charitable Trust

Montee STEHLIN
Heart Kids New Zealand Inc

Georgie THOMPSON
Ruapotaka Marae

Edward UINI
Orange Sky New Zealand

Marshal WALIA
Aiga Energy Ltd

Michael WICHMAN
Ivory Fitness

Westfield

Riccarton

NZ

Child's hospital visit inspires ongoing acts of kindness

Christina Buckland — From One Mother To Another

Determined, Selfless, Kind

After experiencing fear and stress when her daughter was rushed to hospital, Christina Buckland set out to help other parents through the same experience.

The dispensary technician co-founded One Mother to Another (OMTA), a charitable trust that provides gift packs to mothers and carers of acutely sick children in hospital.

The packs contain practical items such as tea and coffee, something to eat, shampoo and lip balm; and luxuries such as hand cream as well as an empathetic hand-written note. Special packs are made up for Christmas and Mother's Day.

"We know what a gift bag full of practical, indulgent items and a letter of encouragement would have meant to us during such a vulnerable time," says Christina,

who teamed up with a friend, Joy Reid, to start the charity.

She feels humbled and honoured to be named a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's an amazing confidence boost to have my community vote for me, and to know they value what we are doing," says Christina.

"We identified a need and have watched One Mother to Another grow slowly into what it is today. I get so much fulfilment knowing that we are helping mums on what might be one of the scariest days of their lives."

Well-known and respected in the community, Christina spends hours asking businesses for donations, delivering bags and replying to emails.

OMTA delivers more than two thousand packs a year to mothers

with a child in neonatal ICU at Christchurch, Nelson or Invercargill hospitals.

Christina's dream is to reach more mothers and carers at other hospitals.

"Our aim is to relieve some of the stress others are facing and let them know other mothers are thinking of them during this time."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

OMTA will use its grant to double the number of gift bags it supplies.

"This is a game-changer," says Christina. "It will help us provide thousands more gift bags and ensure our charity continues for years to come."



"We identified a need and have watched One Mother to Another grow slowly into what it is today. I get so much fulfilment knowing that we are helping mums on what might be one of the scariest days of their lives."



"The need for what we do and the support we provide is growing. Qtopia is a vital lifeline for the LGBTI+ community," says Alice.

'Professional Aunty' makes the world a kinder place

Alice Andersen — Qtopia

Passionate, Uplifting, Brilliant

For many young LGBTI+ people, group sessions at Qtopia are the only time they can be themselves.

Led by Executive Director and 'Professional Aunty' Alice Andersen, Qtopia offers young people a safe and welcoming place to meet in an environment where diversity is celebrated.

The Christchurch-based non-profit offers separate support groups for children under 12, teenagers and those over 18, as well as for parents and carers.

"I make a lot of cups of tea - I know all anyone really needs is a safe place where someone believes in them," says Alice.

Qtopia has five hundred active members, with new members joining up every month.

"The need for what we do and the support we provide is growing.

Qtopia is a vital lifeline for the LGBTI+ community," says Alice.

Alice is delighted to be named a Westfield Local Hero. "It's incredibly special to have the work that you are doing acknowledged by the community. Hopefully, it means we are heading in the right direction," she says. "We are so proud of the work we do, making the world a kinder place."

Thanks to Alice, Qtopia also encourages greater acceptance of LGBTI+ people in the community.

She has developed and delivers diversity and inclusion workshops and provides community outreach programmes to schools. She is also a key member of a new Rainbow Coalition forming in Christchurch and has developed alliances with other national LGBTI+ youth service providers.

"I work hard with good people to effect positive change," says Alice.

"We do that in a range of ways, whether it's support, education or, most importantly, celebration."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Qtopia's grant will provide welcome relief for ongoing operational costs.

"It's going towards our event and venue costs for all our social support groups," says Alice. "For us, it's really important that we provide a safe and accessible inner-city space. Any resources that can be put towards that are hugely helpful."



"For us it's gold," says Jan. "It means we can provide these educational resources developed over many years and based on what we have learnt from the children."

Devoted therapist helps children reach their potential

Jan Murphy — Christchurch Early Intervention Trust
(The Champion Centre)

Wise, Compassionate, Benevolent

Jan Murphy has devoted her working life to ensuring children with disabilities can achieve more than anyone thought possible.

In her forty years with the world-renowned Champion Centre, she has been instrumental in developing successful early intervention programmes that have supported more than two thousand children up to the age of six.

The centre helps children with complex disabilities such as Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, dyspraxia and global developmental delay.

Jan started at the centre as a speech and language therapist and is now the clinical practice manager. She and the team look beyond the disability of each child to find their untapped potential, with the outcomes often surprising the children and their families.

"We see a positive impact every day. Parents reflect that they feel better able to help their children develop and learn," says Jan.

She feels honoured to be named a Westfield Local Hero. "My work is about removing the barriers and allowing people to step through and belong. But I am part of a whole group of people, colleagues, families and amazing children, who are all heroes," Jan says.

"This recognition shows the community wants to honour these children and their families."

In her leadership role, Jan supports the team of health professionals, early intervention educators and support workers to coordinate their care and communication with families.

The results are impressive, with more than nine out of ten children successfully moving on to their local school.

"We believe that every child, regardless of disability, has the fundamental right to reach their full potential; physically, intellectually and socially," says Jan.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

The centre will use its grant to provide further support to the children as they move into their pre-school and school communities.

"For us it's gold," says Jan. "It means we can provide these educational resources developed over many years and based on what we have learnt from the children."

Your 2019 Finalists

Anna Manson Shocking Pink

Despite the demands of a full-time job, family and her own health challenges, Anna Mason has become the beating heart of breast cancer charity Shocking Pink. The organisation supports women aged 45 and under who have breast cancer, both during treatment and during the "fallout" after treatment is over. Anna, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at 31 amidst the Christchurch earthquakes, joined Shocking Pink as a volunteer in 2012 and now oversees more than 500 members. "The purpose of my work is to provide financial support and online and face-to-face emotional support," she says.

Alexandra Poetschke Recreate NZ

The timing was perfect when Alexandra Poetschke stumbled across Recreate NZ, which provides social and recreational activities for young people with disabilities. A speech-language therapist, she was eager to use outdoor adventure to help people develop their independence and communication. Alexandra spent two years volunteering before moving into a permanent role in Recreate NZ's Christchurch office. She coordinates half-day to five-day programs that also help build friendships and gives families some respite. "I've seen young people transform and blossom through participation in outdoor pursuits that challenge and delight them," she says.

Bridget Kelly Women's Centre

Bridget Kelly devotes hundreds of hours a year to supporting women in crisis at the Women's Centre Incorporated. The centre provides counselling, referral and access to resources for up to 10,000 women a year who are experiencing a crisis because of domestic violence, mental health issues or trauma. Bridget wears many hats as a volunteer, but her most significant role is being the welcoming person the women see and engage with they arrive at the centre. "My primary aim as the initial contact is to ensure women feel both safe and heard," she says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Alice ANDERSEN

Qtopia

David BRITTEN

Dark Side Entertainers

Christina BUCKLAND

From One Mother To Another

Darral CAMPBELL

Dementia Canterbury Inc

Mary Jo CHASE

The Village Community Centre

Christina FREEMAN

North Avon Christchurch BMX Club

Hayley GUGLIETTA

Richmond Community Garden

Jennifer HEPARI

Mini Ha Ha Haven Charitable Trust

Bridget KELLY

Womens Centre Inc

Anna MANSON

Shocking Pink

Lizzy MINISH

CDN Trust

Jan MURPHY

Christchurch Early Intervention
Trust – The Champion Centre

Vicki-Anne PARKER

NZ Gifts of Love and Strength

Alexandra POETSCHKE

Recreate NZ

Nui RIRINUI

Rolleston Warriors
Rugby League Club

Bronwyn SIMONS

MND New Zealand

Paige SULLIVAN

Youth Voice Canterbury

Lucy VAN'T WOUT

Cat Rescue Christchurch
Charitable Trust

Judith WAKELIN

Heart Kids Canterbury

Westfield

St Lukes
NZ



"The heroism is really in everybody's determination to overcome our social barriers and the food wastage that's part of that. It's great that we're getting recognition for this."

Fighting hunger and waste with chef-created meals

Nicholas (Nick) Loosley — Everybody Eats

Committed, Passionate, Humble

It might sound too good to be true: a restaurant dining experience where absolutely anybody can enjoy a quality, three-course meal and pay what they feel inclined to – or eat free.

In 2017 Nicholas (Nick) Loosley turned this fanciful concept into reality and created Everybody Eats, which today is a firm feature in Auckland's culinary landscape.

Staffed by volunteers and sourcing healthy produce that would otherwise go to waste, Everybody Eats restores dignity to many of those one-in-six New Zealanders who cannot regularly afford food, let alone a chef-created meal.

Everybody Eats emerged from two of Nick's life strands: his fascination with the conundrum of global food wastage, which he researched for his master's degree

in green economics; and a family background in restaurant management.

"We invite anyone and everyone to join us, and they all get treated and served equally," says Nick. "You'll see people who live on our streets sitting barefoot with lawyers in suits, chatting over a meal devised by one of our chefs."

Over the years Everybody Eats has collaborated with many of New Zealand's top chefs, including Josh Emmet, Des Harris, Samir Allen, Dariush Lolaiy and Josh Barlow.

Nick sees being voted a Westfield Local Hero as a vote not for himself, but for the Everybody Eats concept and the more than one thousand volunteers who have donated their time and passion to it. "The heroism is really in everybody's determination to

overcome our social barriers and the food wastage that's part of that. It's great that we're getting recognition for this."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Nick describes the grant as "Amazing... For a young and lean charity, \$10,000 goes a very long way."

Everybody Eats will use its grant to buy equipment for its second permanent restaurant, which is set to open in socially diverse Onehunga.

"The concept has no limits," says Nick, "it could help to bond diverse communities across New Zealand and beyond."



"It's an incredible honour to be voted a Local Hero," says Genevieve. "Auckland is our home, and to be recognised by our community for the work we do at Voices of Hope means more than we can actually explain."

Sharing her own vulnerability to help others

Genevieve Mora — Voices of Hope

Passionate, Visionary, Selfless

From her childhood, Genevieve Mora wrestled with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). She would wash her hands until they bled, and lived in thrall to the number four – turning pages or doorknobs four times over, believing that if she did not, she would die.

After OCD began to dominate her eating habits, she developed life-threatening anorexia.

Today, in her mid-20s, Genevieve helps others to open up about mental illnesses that still carry a stigma. "In my case, OCD, anorexia and anxiety all worked together," she says. "If sharing my story and vulnerability can help make someone else's journey easier, then my years of fighting my own mind were so worth it."

In 2017, Genevieve founded Voices of Hope with Jazz Thornton, an

equally outspoken survivor of mental illness. Together Genevieve and Jazz made and launched a short film, "Dear Suicidal Me", that went viral and gathered worldwide media attention.

Besides continuing to produce internet videos that tell healing stories to an international audience, Voices of Hope works within the Auckland community to promote mental well-being, empowerment and recovery.

Genevieve and Jazz have also spoken at schools, corporate events and workshops across New Zealand, Australia and the US.

"It's an incredible honour to be voted a Local Hero," says Genevieve. "Auckland is our home, and to be recognised by our community for the work we do at Voices of Hope means more than we can actually explain."

"There's a saying I love about the importance of community," she adds, "and it's simply, 'We are stronger together'."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. Voices of Hope will use its grant to scale up its production of healing videos.

"A huge part of what we do is make hope-filled video content," says Genevieve. "The videos have been proven to give strength to people who are struggling to hold on any longer. With the grant, we can create more content for saving lives in our community and beyond."



"Amazing – a blessing," is how Peter describes being voted a Westfield Local Hero. "On the days when it feels tough, when we ask if we're really doing anything, that community affirmation helps to keep us going."

Growing roots for the rootless

Peter Leilua — Global Hope Missions

Determined, Dedicated, Selfless

In his previous role as a court registrar, Peter Leilua witnessed the problems that alienation and rootlessness inflict on young people.

Determined to become part of the solution, he left the security of his full-time position in 2010 to form an organisation that could make a difference at the frontline of youth development.

Today that organisation, Global Hope Missions, provides a host of services – from courthouse advocacy through to academic mentoring – that bring direction into the lives of vulnerable youths and their families.

Peter works closely with his wife, Tiliilagi, a Global Hope co-founder who also served as a court registrar.

"We share the same vision," says Peter. "She's a massive backup

for me, and I think I'm the same for her." Tiliilagi brings a special focus to programmes for women and girls, complementing Peter's rescues of alienated young men.

"Amazing – a blessing," is how Peter describes being voted a Westfield Local Hero. "On the days when it feels tough, when we ask if we're really doing anything, that community affirmation helps to keep us going."

Among Peter and Tiliilagi's biggest successes has been the Pacific Learning Centre, which supports local families.

The team at the centre includes teachers, sports coaches, mental health workers, prison officers, parents and grandparents. So far, more than 30 centre participants have found employment or continued on to further studies, while six families have embarked on social enterprises.

Peter has also started a youth leadership group that encourages peer mentoring and youth events.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Global Hope Missions will use its grant to support skilled facilitation for its programmes, and to buy basics such as team uniforms, sport and art equipment and stationery.

"Uniforms play a big part," notes Peter. "When you take a youngster who's spent his life looking apart, and you put him in a team with a uniform, you see his eyes light up – something inside him is now saying: 'I feel like I belong'."

Your 2019 Finalists

Jason Dodunski

Morningside Urban Market Garden

Jason Dodunski is a sustainable food advocate, keen gardener, chef, all-round foodie and generous volunteer. He is putting all those attributes to good use at the Morningside Urban Market Garden, which is a social enterprise that develops business skills among women with a migrant or refugee background by growing edible flowers and vegetable shoots for use in local cafes. "Having studied business management and sustainable enterprise at AUT, I am inspired by the possibility of social enterprise transforming our neighbourhoods and developing a just and regenerative food future," says Jason.

Jonathan Hughes

Pasadena Intermediate School

The number of students at Pasadena Intermediate School has doubled since Principal Jonathan Hughes was appointed four years ago, largely because of his family and student-first approach to education. An example of his philosophy is the Māori-medium class he introduced at the request of a group of parents. Although there was no government funding, he found a solution and worked with others to establish a best-practice model that is more than just a Māori version of an English-medium classroom. "Our full-immersion classroom is a huge success and something we are very proud of," says Jonathan.

Sheridan Jackson

Recreate NZ

Sheridan Jackson started at Recreate NZ five years ago as a volunteer and now oversees the educational aspect of the charity's programmes that push the boundaries of what young people with disabilities can achieve. One of her roles is the work-experience programme known as MOXIE, which bridges the gap between school and employment. Through experiential training, Sheridan and her team help the participants gain confidence as they learn different skills and protocols. "Often our young people are not work ready when they leave school, so this project helps them to become more employable," says Sheridan.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Nanette CARILLO
NZ-PHIL SCOT Charitable Trust

Jason DODUNSKI
Morningside Urban Market Garden

Nova GIBSON
Massey Primary School

William HADNETT
Cans for Christmas Charitable Trust

Chelsey HARNELL
YMCA North

Jenn HOOPER
Changing Places NZ

Greg HORTON
MND New Zealand

Jonathan HUGHES
Pasadena Intermediate School

Sheridan JACKSON
Recreate NZ

Marie JUJNOVICH
Heart Kids Auckland Branch

Peter LEILUA
Global Hope Missions

Tililagi LEILUA
Global Hope Missions

Nick LOOSLEY
Everybody Eats

Mahsa MOHAGHEGH
She Sharp

Genevieve MORA
Voices of Hope

Geoff MORRIS
Edendale Tennis Club

Anna PUZYRKOVA
Asthma New Zealand Inc

Hamish REID
Project Litefoot Trust

Paul SAGGERS
Eden Rugby Club Inc

Rongxue SHEN
New Zealand Chinese Youth
Federation

Renu SIKKA
Our Stories On Plate

Dayne SMITH
TYLA Youth Development Trust

Duncan SMITH
Disabled Surfers Association
New Zealand

Irene SMITH
Belgravia Leisure

Yolanda SUTTON
Deaf Wellbeing Society Inc

Alison TALMAGE
Centre for Brain Research and School
of Music, The University of Auckland

Jan TATE
Cystic Fibrosis New Zealand

Sandy THOMPSON
ECPAT Child Alert Trust

Jazz THORNTON
Voices of Hope

Roman TRAVERS
Big Buddy Mentoring Trust

Colin WARD
Iona Scouting Group

Tony YURETICH
Graeme Dingle Foundation

If you or anyone you know would like more information on what support is available:

AUSTRALIA

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

MensLine: 1300 78 99 78

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

NEW ZEALAND

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865

Kidsline: 0800 54 37 54

Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450

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Local Heroes

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