



Westfield

Local Heroes

2018

Westfield Local Heroes were nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three successful Westfield Local Heroes per centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant to support their affiliated organisation's work, programs or activities.



Westfield

Local Heroes

In the first year of the Westfield Local Heroes program, we received an overwhelming response and many heart-warming stories after asking the local community to nominate individuals who promote wellbeing and harmony in their communities.

We congratulate every one of our nominees and recognise the important contribution they make to their local community.



Westfield

CHATSWOOD

NSW



Pam Timmins Dance Chance Incorporated

Committed, Caring, Humble

Dancing queen brings joy to her community

Pam Timmins has long recognised that anyone can find joy and creativity in dance, yet mainstream classes do not necessarily cater to those with different needs.

So, 10 years ago she started Dance Chance, a weekly dance group designed for people with disability.

At that stage she had five dancers and five volunteers, but no experience running a charity.

It was a steep learning curve, but she quickly gained the skills she needed to build a grass-roots community organisation.

It was a TV show that inspired Pam to get the ball rolling.

She was watching Andrew Denton's *Enough Rope*, and the *Merrymakers*, a dance group with mostly disabled members, put out a call for people wanting to learn how to help in their community.

"I asked my daughters and they were keen." So, they attended a *Merrymakers* master class for people wanting to hold their own dance classes.

Dance Chance now has 35 dancers, aged between five and seventy-five, with a range of physical and intellectual disabilities. They are supported by a team of over 20 volunteers.

Pam is the organisation's lifeblood, coordinating venues, organising equipment and communicating with the dancers, their families and the volunteers.

She attends every class to ensure things run smoothly and she makes time to get to know each of the dancers and volunteers individually.

Apart from the dancing, the group has a positive impact on the families and support networks of the dancers by providing opportunities for new connections.

Pam is deeply appreciative of being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's wonderful that so many people support what we are doing and that the community appreciates what the volunteers do and what it means to the carers," she says.

Dance Chance will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund venue hire, new equipment and the production of an annual concert.

"The money will have a hugely beneficial impact on the program's future sustainability," Pam says.



Dina Konceptolski Cremorne Synagogue

Strong, Caring, Inspirational

A welcoming hand from kind, calm and generous Dina

Dina Konceptolski has been passionate about helping people for as long as she can remember.

"I was brought up in an environment where I was encouraged to help and include people as much as possible from a very early age," she says.

She became a birth coach at 22 and has helped women through childbirth. She has also helped to set up two friendship circles, providing support for families of children with special needs.

"I've always had a very strong sense of community," says Dina, whose husband, Chaim, is the Rabbi at Cremorne Synagogue.

As a mother of four children, people are amazed at the time and energy she has for others. And, she is famous for welcoming people into her home to share in her legendary cooking.

In 2017, she ran in the City to Surf and raised funds to support couples with fertility issues.

Dina is respected for her strength, kindness and calm manner. But she is also known for commanding attention when she talks.

She is an important catalyst for social inclusion and for providing material and emotional support to people facing hardship. One of her passions is the empowerment of women and she organises discussion groups and educational activities specifically designed for women.

Dina says she is inspired by the acknowledgement of being voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I wasn't overly keen on being in the public eye, but... it makes me want to continue to do more and to become a better person."

The synagogue will use the Westfield \$10,000 Local Heroes grant to fund food for new mothers or people who are sick or elderly and unable to cook for themselves. It will also go towards educational programs and cultural celebrations aimed at women and young families.



Carmen Platt The Generous and the Grateful

*Kind, Determined,
Connector*

Carmen's soft touch helps people sleeping rough at home

Carmen Platt came up with her novel way of helping vulnerable people get back on their feet when she noticed a gap in the good work done by traditional agencies.

"I was helping refugees set up new lives. Caseworkers got them a property, but traditional agencies were taking up to eight weeks to provide basic living essentials. That's around 50 nights sleeping on the floor," she says.

"Everyone's passionate about homelessness, but what about those sleeping rough in their own homes?"

Carmen's response was to start her own agency, The Generous and the Grateful, to source and deliver high-quality preloved furniture and white goods to people in need.

"Life is like a big game of snakes and ladders. Agencies help with food, clothing, putting kids in school. There's a pivotal point when people are feeling hopeful about their future when they need the big, heavy, expensive things to help make an empty rental into a home," she says.

"We know what home means to us, and we are attempting to re-create that with those who have lost their homes and are now looking to the future."

Carmen's charity, which has been operating since June 2017, supports survivors of domestic violence, youth at risk, the previously homeless and people seeking asylum. She works full-time on a volunteer basis, spending her days raising funds, recruiting volunteers and working on branding and social media.

She is glad to say she no longer drives a truck and has a hydraulic lift to move fridges and beds up and down stairs.

Carmen is grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and to have received so much community support over the months. But she's adamant: "It's not about me. It's about the people we help."

The Generous and the Grateful will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund delivery costs for five months. More importantly, Carmen says, "it means approximately 100 families will receive essential furniture."

Your 2018 Finalists

Sarah Ashton | KYDS Youth Development Service Incorporated

Selfless, Remarkable, Inspiring

Sarah is a Youth Ambassador and volunteer for KYDS, an organisation that provides easy access to mental health and wellbeing support to young people, within the community. Sarah uses her own experiences to benefit others, encouraging other young people to seek help, reduce stigma amongst the broader community as well as raise awareness and funds for the organisation.

Marion Chaffe | Make-A-Wish Australia

Quiet Achiever, Selfless, Committed

Marion is a volunteer for Make-A-Wish and has worked tirelessly to grant over 368 wishes to seriously ill children with life threatening illnesses in the North Sydney region over the past 11 years. The wishes have helped the children and their families find happiness and hope during a difficult time as well as strength to keep fighting.

Kaila Van Dam | Job Centre Australia

Hardworking, Committed, Innovative

Kaila is the Manager of the Choice and Control Supports at the Job Centre Australia Chatswood and Dee Why offices, where she supports the 63 young people with disabilities registered within the area to achieve their employment goals. Each day, Kaila commutes from the Central Coast to support disabled youth, and works tirelessly within schools and the community to provide workshops and one-on-one tailored support, assistance and advice.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

Sarah ASHTON

KYDS Youth Development Service
Incorporated

Jumana AZEEM

Willoughby City Council

Lindy BATTERHAM

Castlecrag Progress Association

Lachlan BILLING

Assisted Community Living
ACL Disability Services &
Gig Buddies Sydney

Julie BURGESS

Chatswood Chamber of
Commerce

Marion CHAFFE

Make-A-Wish Australia

Sharlene DADD

The Shepherd Centre for Deaf
Children

Thomas DENT

StreetWork Australia

Margaret-Anne HAYES

Can Too Foundation Ltd

Sophia HOLLAND

Loud Theatre Company

Bianca HORWITZ &

Naomi SHERIFF

The Living Collective-Willoughby
Living

Megan JONES

Willoughby Park Anglican Church

Dina KONCEPOLSKI

Cremorne Synagogue

Cathryn McELROY

Coral Tree Family Service

Carmen PLATT

The Generous and the Grateful, Inc

Pam TIMMINS

Dance Chance Incorporated

Kaila VAN DAM

Job Centre Australia Limited

Neville WARNER

Willoughby Community Men's
Shed Inc

William WHYTE

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

Wayne WIGHAM

Black Dog Institute

Ann WILLY

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

Sue WONG

Nan Tien Buddhist Temple
Chatswood



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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