



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

MIRANDA

NSW



Brook Stewart
Kingsway Community Care Inc

Tenacious, Selfless, Passionate

Helping others gives Brook a deep sense of meaning

Helping people rebuild their lives after being left homeless gives Brook Stewart a deep sense of meaning in his life.

The Community Outreach Manager at Kingsway Community Care says he got involved in the organisation because he has a passion for people on the fringe, those who have been marginalised by society.

The best part of his work is giving people a sense of family and hope when they have none.

"I think that things like clothes, food and shelter are basic needs that everyone deserves to have."

Kingsway's main mission is to help homeless people rebuild their lives. It provides crisis accommodation for homeless people and families escaping domestic violence. It also provides medium-term accommodation for young people in need.

So far it has a 97% success rate in having 300 clients transferred into longer-term accommodation.

But its scope keeps expanding and Brook has pioneered the opening of an op-shop, the profits of which are used to fund a

monthly dinner for 80 guests. This helps isolated people build connections in the community.

Many stories touch Brook's heart. But one that stands out is a man who attended a Christmas dinner and told him it was the first time he had sat down for a meal with other people.

He's also helped a woman who lost everything in her 70s and found herself homeless.

"I've seen 19-year-old girls come in who are pregnant as well."

Brook also oversees Southern Cross Kids Camp, which brings together 20-30 local children who have been identified as at risk.

Brook says it feels good to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm very proud of what we do, so it's good to get the recognition."

Kingsway will use the \$10,000 grant to fund an employee to assist staff and guests with immediate needs, including pastoral care, mentoring and resourcing items.



Paulo De Nobrega Sutherland Titans Football Club

Passionate, Caring, Committed

There's a different kind of football magic when the Titans take the field

Something magical happens when the Sutherland Titans Football Club teams play another local club.

It's no ordinary match. It shines a different light on the competitive game of soccer, says Paulo De Nobrega, coach and manager of the club, which caters for people with special needs.

The players love getting out on the field for the club, which was started in 2005 by a group of parents with the support of the Sutherland Shire Football Association.

Their opponents every Saturday of the season are association teams that have a bye that weekend.

Players of all ages and varying ability are welcome. Some rely on a volunteer buddy to help them navigate the field. It's a unique system, says Paulo. "Buddies have special dispensation as they are the only people allowed on the field other than officials and players."

And it's not only the Titans players who benefit, says Paulo. It can be a humbling experience for the members of the other teams.

"Their players benefit by understanding that the game can be much more than winning and more about bringing a smile to a child that scores a goal or is able to feel good about being part of a team.

"It's about giving kids all round a go," says Paulo, two of whose sons are on the autism spectrum and play for the club.

To him, some of the most heart-warming moments come from seeing the senior Titans players mentor the juniors.

"The pivotal moment is when I see the seniors arrive early, before their game, to help the junior kids. They do this without being asked. That just says so much about the heart of the players who play for the Titans."

Paulo says it feels awesome to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "Not for me, more for our club."

The Titans will use \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy equipment.

Paulo has helped bring in sponsorship to cover uniforms and water bottles. But, he says: "We've got so many equipment gaps. Little things that other clubs take for granted."



Kirsty Mason Dandelion Support Network Inc

*Motivated, Caring,
Committed*

Kirsty bounces back from cancer to support families in need

When Kirsty Mason was told her breast cancer was in remission, she had a strong desire to give back.

"I just got this sense of wanting to be involved in the community," she says.

That's how she became involved in the Dandelion Foundation, a charity that distributes pre-owned babies and children's clothes, toys, cots, prams, car seats and other items to families in need.

Kirsty volunteers for 15 hours a week as the toys and linen manager, leading a team who sort through mountains of items to check for quality and suitability. They also clean the toys and make up packs for distribution via social workers.

Every year the organisation diverts at least 40 tonnes from landfill through rehoming, or recycling of goods that are not suitable to give away.

Kirsty says the recipients might be refugee families, people with physical disabilities or mental illness or be homeless or starting from scratch after leaving an abusive relationship.

One of the main aims is to ease the financial burden of these families, which in turn is likely to reduce stress and help parents feel more confident in raising their children.

Another focus is to ensure children are sleeping safely.

"We've had babies sleeping in boxes and on the floor on a pile of towels because they haven't had a bed," says Kirsty.

During her time at Dandelion, Kirsty had her second son. She took only a brief break from volunteering and, with her baby on her hip, continued her work.

Kirsty often brings both her children with her as she feels it is important that they understand the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves.

One heart-warming experience for the volunteers was when a woman who they had helped four years previously returned to make a donation of her own.

Kirsty is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero and to be recognised by her community.

The cost of each support pack is about \$130, so Dandelion will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to help more than 75 disadvantaged families. It will also allow the network to include a few unused items.

Your 2018 Finalists

Callum Franciskovic | Top Blokes Foundation

Purposeful, Relatable, Empathic

Callum dedicates his time to improving local young men's mental health and well-being by supporting them to make healthier and safer life choices. As part of the Top Blokes Foundation, Callum runs workshops to help young males to build important life skills including conflict resolution, help-seeking and critical thinking.

Danielle Lucas | Care 4 Kids

Courageous, Inspiring, Dedicated

Danielle dedicates her time to creating care packs for local charity Care 4 Kids. These packs are delivered to police stations and provided to children who are victims of domestic violence.

Elizabeth O'Sullivan | Elouera Surf Life Saving Club

Caring, Committed, Selfless

Elizabeth is a founding member of Elouera's Yellow Fin Nipper Program, and dedicates her time to the set up and running of the program. Elouera Yellow Fins is an inclusive Nippers Program that supports children on the autism spectrum and with other disabilities to learn about and benefit from important surf lifesaving lessons and skills.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

Pamela BROWN
Australian Kookaburra Kids
Foundation

Paulo DE NOBREGA
Sutherland Titans Football Club

Denise DOLAN
The Beauty Bank Australia Inc

Pauline DUNCAN
WIRES South Branch

Callum FRANCISKOVIC
Top Blokes Foundation

Lee HESLEHURST
Sydney 2 CAMberra

Bernadette HOY
Orana NSW Inc

Karlynn JOHNS
Southern Community Welfare

Ruth LEWIS-JONES
Esteem Designz + ChooseREAL
Campaign

Rob LINDSAY
Gymea Community Aid &
Information Service

Danielle LUCAS
Care 4 Kids Sutherland Shire

Ken MARSLEW
Enough is Enough Anti Violence
Movement Inc

Kirsty MASON
Dandelion Support Network Inc

Jennifer McDONALD
Project Youth Inc Menai

Anyes McLEAN
Taren Point Public School

Abraham MIKHAIL
Fone King

Karen MOUNTFORD
Crossroads Community Care
Centre Inc

Jay NATALY
Sylvania Heights Football Club

Elizabeth O'SULLIVAN
Elouera Surf Life Saving Club Inc

Patricia SCHEETZ
The Sweetest Gift

Tyrah-Jade SHADLOW
Eastcoast Playgroup
(Eastcoast Church)

Vicki SHERRY
Southern Community Welfare Inc

Vanessa SMITH
Gymea Netball Club

Russell SMITH
Make-A-Wish Australia

Janelle SOUTHWELL
Give and Take Families
Sutherland Shire

Jason STANTON
Skillz4me

Sarah STANTON
Skillz4me

Brook STEWART
Kingsway Community Care Inc

Michael STODDART
Wesley Community Services
Limited, Lifeline Sydney &
Sutherland

Sam THOMPSON
National Breast Cancer Foundation

Elly UNICOMB
The Shepherd Centre for
Deaf Children

Blarsha WALMSLEY
HammondCare

Bronwyn WILLIAMS
Green Connect Illawarra



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

Kidslines: 0800 54 37 54

Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450



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