



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

KNOX

VIC



Sue Horwood
Citylife Community Care

Visionary, Committed, Faithful

Sue gives struggling mums a recipe for life

When the volunteers at Citylife Community Care teach mums how to cook as part of the life-skills program, the exchange is about much more than putting a meal on the table.

The volunteers get an invaluable opportunity to connect with the mum and the mum learns invaluable lessons about parenting, home organisation and, of course, cooking.

"The immediate impact is to relieve the mum's stress. But equally important is the longer-term benefit," says Sue Horwood, whose role is to assess the needs of mothers in distress and match them with a more experienced volunteer to mentor, support and encourage them.

Many of the volunteers are unemployed and isolated and have an opportunity to experience the joy of giving to someone else. They receive training and a confidence boost through their work, often enabling them to apply for formal employment.

Recently a former volunteer brought Sue a gift and said she would never have found a job without her experience as a volunteer.

Sue finds the connection between the mums and volunteers heart-warming to watch.

"I've found that people who are downtrodden are so generous and giving to other people," she says.

"We have people who are hanging on by a shoestring and yet will invite somebody else who is in a terrible situation into their own home, and that's because they know what it feels like."

Sue did a "happy dance" when she heard she had been voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to buy cooking equipment for the Life Skills cooking program. It also wants to buy a printable whiteboard and a laptop to help teach mums about meal planning on a budget, buying what's on special and looking up recipes that use those ingredients.

"So, you give people a lot more choices about their eating but also a lot more choices about their spending," says Sue.



Stephen Barrington Foothills Community Care

Compassionate, Hospitable, Driven

Stephen shares 9000 meals and food for the soul

Christmas Day can be miserable for people who are isolated because of homelessness, domestic violence or simply because they live alone.

That's what inspired Stephen Barrington to invite lots of strangers to Christmas Lunch at the Ferntree Gully Guild Guides hall back in 2001. And that's how Foothills Community Care was founded.

The charity has grown significantly since then and operates out of both the Girl Guides hall and the Upway Baptist Church. It has 200 volunteers serving 9,000 healthy meals a year through its Monday and Wednesday weekly meal; its community casseroles program and its annual Ferntree Gully Christmas Day lunch.

"It's not just about the food", says Stephen.

"Over a meal, we talk and we laugh and we share."

He says many people are deprived of community connection. "So that's a really important part: sitting down and listening to people's stories over a meal."

There are many stories of how Foothills has helped people. But one that stands out is about a person who was sleeping in their car when they first came for a meal.

"They weren't really eating healthily but, more than that they were really isolated. So, we provided a safe space for them to chat."

Over the years the person shared their story and began to help at Foothills.

The person moved to a local boarding house and then to public housing and now they bring other people for meals.

Over the years, the charity has expanded and now offers a domestic violence support group and hospitality training.

Stephen is excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's nice to be acknowledged for the work that we do in the community and for the local community to come on board to support that."

The charity will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to develop its in-house kitchen with new equipment and to expand the hospitality training program.



Ian Ware
Ringwood Biala

*Dedicated, Hardworking,
Optimistic*

90-year-old Ian gives breathing space to parents and carers

Being the parent of a child with special needs is a non-stop commitment. So it's a godsend when someone is willing to step in and provide respite, even for a few hours.

That's the role Ringwood Biala plays. Two days a week during the school term, 40 volunteers provide respite to dozens of parents to give them time to attend appointments, give undivided attention to the child's siblings, socialise or just have a rest.

The glue that holds it all together is Ian Ware, aged 90, who has been chair of the management committee for 30 years. He rarely misses a meeting and is assiduous about following up issues that arise.

Ian understands first-hand the value of the breathing space Ringwood Biala provides. He and his wife, Evelyn, have a disabled daughter, who is now 57 years old.

"When she was a baby there was no such thing as Biala and I know what my wife and I went through looking after Merryn, who is a delightful young lady now."

He relates the story of a family who moved from New Zealand. "They had nobody; no grandparents or relatives. They were stuck and Biala was really able to help them.

"It means so much to these parents who are stressed."

During their respite interventions, the volunteers work one-on-one with the children and follow plans set by their therapists.

There's also a social side to the program for the children. "They come and meet other children who they know are more like them. They make great friendships and our volunteers make great friendships."

To spread the word about Ringwood Biala, Ian has a regular slot on the local FM radio station and still takes his turn at fundraising sausage sizzles and selling raffle tickets.

Ian, a former Maroondah Citizen of the Year, says being voted a Westfield Local Hero is "a most unusual, but pleasant, feeling".

The \$10,000 Westfield grant will allow Ringwood Biala to fund employing a part-time coordinator and keep the organisation running for an entire year.

Your 2018 Finalists

Denise Budge | Knox Infolink

Thoughtful, Humble, Strategic

Denise has worked in the community sector for over 30 years. Through her most recent work with Knox Infolink – a non-for-profit community organisation providing information and services for those going through financial hardship, health issues and homelessness – Denise created 'Connecting Kids with the Knox Community'. 'Connecting Kids with the Knox Community' connects disadvantaged school-aged children to extra-curricular activities they are interested in, that they might have never been able to take part in due to their family's challenging circumstances.

Jenny Tomlin | Araleun

Passionate, Selfless, Exuberant

Jenny is part of Araleun, which provides a range of support services to people with intellectual disabilities including the Eastern Disability Housing Network. The Network works closely with the individual, their family and the wider community, to ensure the individual is happy, safe and an included member of society. Importantly, it provides people with a disability choice, control and independence, and gives their families peace of mind.

Frank Zimmerman | Australian Red Cross

Sincere, Dedicated, Professional

Frank is a well-known and loved driver for the Australian Red Cross. Frank drives people of all ages who can no longer drive themselves due to an ailment or illness, to their doctor's appointments during treatment. Frank's service extends so far beyond simply driving them from A to B – he acts as a friend, support and confidant during what can be one of the most difficult times in a person's life.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

Sarah BARNES

Mainly Music Wantirna South

Stephen BARRINGTON

Foothills Community Care

Leah BISHOP

Let's Eat School Food Program
(Heathmont college)

Denise BUDGE

Knox Infolink

Mara CHASE

Syndal Baton Twirlers

Rod DUNGAN

Brentwood Secondary College

Sue HORWOOD

Citylife Community Care

Michael JOHNSON

The Basin 'Food is Free' Project
and Community Garden

Chuentat KANG

GJS Intellectual Company Australia

Andrew KENNEDY

Eastern Lions Auskick and
Junior Football Club

Ann-Maree MANN

Angel Gowns for Australian
Babies Inc

Mel SPENCER

Different Journeys

Venitha SUDUDEWAGE

Make-A-Wish

Jenny TOMLIN

Araluen – Eastern Disability
Housing Network

Chris TUCKER

Melbourne Volunteer Branch of
Make A-Wish Australia

Ian WARE

Ringwood Biala

Frank ZIMMERMAN

Australian Red Cross, Patient
Transport Section Melbourne



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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