



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

PENRITH

NSW



Amanda Barnes Top Blokes Foundation

Optimistic, Ambitious, Impactful

Amanda plans to reach out to blokes across Australia

Amanda Barnes has already helped many young men cope with difficult feelings through her mentoring work at the Top Blokes Foundation. But she has big plans to reach out to thousands more by developing an online version of the foundation's social education and mentoring program.

Amanda is a part-time youth worker with the foundation and facilitates mentoring sessions in schools and the community to help disconnected and vulnerable young men, providing guidance and a safe space that encourages communication.

She says the male suicide rate is much higher than for females, so these sorts of education programs are truly needed.

"At the moment we are in three regions around Sydney, but if we had an online program, we could reach young men who can't physically attend the mentoring program face-to-face," Amanda says.

"So long as they have access to a smartphone or computer, they can log in and take part in interactive webinars each week."

Amanda also works at Platform Youth Services, which helps children aged 12 to 14 who are homeless or at risk.

In addition, she does hours of volunteer work with Rotary International each week.

"It's humbling to be named as a Westfield Local Hero, but recognition is not why we do this work," she says.

"We do it to give these young men someone to talk to, to connect with and to feel supported by. It's also such a privilege to work with these young people who have been through so much yet still have an amazing attitude and determination."

The Top Blokes Foundation plans to use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to further investigate options for providing the courses online as well as creating additional face-to-face programs.



Graeme Banks Mama Lana's Community Foundation

Reliable, Devoted, Honourable

Graeme's five days a week are 'just the Australian way'

When Graeme Banks' granddaughter started school, his childminding duties reduced considerably, leaving him with free time on his hands.

"I wasn't going to sit back and watch Days of Our Lives, so I went online to look up local charities that I could volunteer for," says Graeme, 73.

By chance, he came upon Mama Lana's Community Foundation, a Penrith-based charity that provides hot meals, bedding, toiletries, care and assistance to the homeless and disadvantaged six nights a week at a facility known as the White House.

He started by serving meals one night a week. But over the past two years, his commitment has grown to be on hand five days a week for anything from deliveries to collecting food and writing grant applications.

"It's such a great charity – it helps so many people. We are all volunteers, so every cent raised for the charity goes to those who need it most," he says.

One of his proudest achievements has been finding ways to source food and groceries for free from supermarkets involved in food recycling campaigns.

And his most touching experience came after helping a man who had been living in his car for two years move into a flat, with the assistance of Mama Lana's Community Foundation.

"I'd helped him move all his goods into the apartment and when we were finished, it started raining," Graeme recalls. "He turned to me and said": 'Thanks so much. I'll be dry tonight.'

"That was one of the most moving moments of my time volunteering."

Graeme feels humbled to be a Westfield Local Hero.

The charity will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to pay for utilities for more than a year and for ongoing vehicle running costs.

"I feel so grateful for this support but I really hope that I represent all the volunteers around the place, all of those people who give their utmost because that is the Australian way. It's what we do," says Graeme.



John Boccanfuso House with No Steps

*Selfless, Passionate,
Cherished*

Much-loved John brightens people's day with a story and a laugh

You could call John Boccanfuso the one-million-pen man.

Often dressed in bright Hawaiian shirts, the much-loved pen seller has been raising money for disabled people since 1974, volunteering seven days a week from 10am until 2pm.

John, who damaged his cerebellum in an accident at the age of 12, is always ready to share a story and a laugh with any one of his loyal customers at Westfield Penrith, some of whom buy a pen from him every day.

People cherish his positive attitude and warmth and he is quickly missed on his rare absences from the centre. On those days, several concerned shoppers are sure to stop at the concierge desk to ask where he is.

The money John raises goes to the House with No Steps, a charity that supports people with a disability.

But John's contribution goes way beyond the tens of thousands of dollars he has raised. He leads by example and his presence in the community promotes the social inclusion of people living with a disability.

John, who has been looked after by the House with No Steps for several years, also feels strongly about ensuring others learn about the services the charity provides.

He is proud to have sold more than one million pens during his 44-year career and he has received many accolades, including a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2011. He has also received a Penrith Council Citizens Award and his picture graces the Penrith Council wall of acknowledgement. But John says he is most proud of the fact that former PM John Howard bought a pen when he visited his table in 2016 for a chat.

John says it "feels really good" to be a Westfield Local Hero and he is happy that the House With No Steps will benefit.

The charity will put its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant towards buying a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Your 2018 Finalists

Maree Cairns | Zonta Club of Nepean Valley Inc

Committed, Driven, Selfless

Maree is a retired teacher and active member of the community, who applies her expertise working with The Zonta Club of Nepean Valley to empower local women and young girls. As a Chair of the club's major event 'WomenAlive!', Maree leads a team of volunteers to provide local women with opportunities to participate in a range of activities to inspire and improve their quality of life.

Kevin Finlayson | No Boundaries Art Group

Passionate, Committed, Inclusive

Kevin is well-known member of the community and the volunteer co-ordinator of No Boundaries Art Group, a collective of artists with a disability from Penrith and the surrounding areas. The mission of the group is to help people find an identity and purpose as a practicing artist, rather than being defined by their disability. Kevin is described as committed to his values and passionate about inclusion.

Colleen Vassallo | Blue Datto Foundation

Humble, Devoted, Courageous

Colleen is the co-founder of Blue Datto, a road safety education foundation that aims to protect the lives of young Australians. Following the tragic death of Colleen's 17-year-old son Philip in 2015, Colleen and her family established Blue Datto and the award winning 'Keeping Safe' program that is delivered to thousands of adolescents across NSW. The program's mission is to empower young people to make better choices on the roads as drivers and passengers.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

David ACHESON

Galari-Lachlan Reconciliation Group, Forbes Aboriginal and Community Working Party, Forbes Wiradjuri Language Group

Natalia ATCHA

Cancer Council

Graeme BANKS

Mama Lana's Community Foundation

Amanda BARNES

Top Blokes Foundation

Amy BASMAN

Mama Lana's Community Foundation

Martin BECKETT

Christ Mission Possible

Justine BLACKLEY

Mulgoa Public School

John BOCCANFUSO

House with No Steps

Maree CAIRNS

Zonta Club of Nepean Valley Inc

Sarah CUZNER

Christmas Smiles

Alysha DAVIDSON

Hands & Feet Inc

Jim DEVINE

Lions Club of Emu Plains Inc

Eric EASTERBROOK

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

Kevin FINLAYSON

No Boundaries Art Group

Jane GOLD

Penrith Women's Health Centre Inc

Charmaine GOODWIN

West Connect Domestic Violence Services

Heather GWILLIAM

Gateway Family Services

Christy HARTLAGE

Connect Child and Family Services

Louise MAHER-BALE

Australian Dysphonia Network Inc

Greg McMANUS

Resilience 2018

Ann MURRAY

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

Michelle NEW

Australian Resource Centre For PTSD Limited

Debbie O'CONNOR

The Creative Fringe

Emily PETTIT

Street Art Murals Australia (SAMA)

Samantha SKINNER

Make-A-Wish Australia

Jennifer THOMAS

Bears of Hope Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support

Tamara VAN ANTWERPEN

Luke Priddis Foundation

Colleen VASSALLO

Blue Datto Foundation Ltd

Peggy WILLCOX

Mooney Real Estate

Westfield
Local Heroes

A decorative red ribbon graphic that starts as a thick, straight line on the left and then curves and loops into a thinner, wavy line on the right.

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



SCENTRE GROUP

Owner and Operator of **Westfield** in Australia and New Zealand