



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

SYDNEY

NSW



Adam Thompson
PCYC NSW – City of Sydney

*Dedication, Commitment,
Integrity*

Adam knocks down invisible barriers to get at-risk teens off to a good start

Adam Thompson believes the way young people start their day can set them up for success.

That's why he volunteered at the City of Sydney branch of the Police Citizens Youth Club NSW (PCYC) to give gym sessions and breakfast to at-risk youth before school.

Seven years later, he has taken a full-time position as manager of the club, which has 1300 members, eight staff and a team of volunteers.

He describes his role as helping to "knock down some of the invisible walls" faced by children in Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

"We try to empower our young people by building their confidence, teaching them discipline and resilience and getting them working in a team," he says.

If children have fallen out of the traditional school system, one of the aims is to use an alternative learning model to help them gain their Year 10 equivalency.

Adam is known for his inclusive approach. And the club boasts activities such as art, women's groups and cooking, alongside their traditional male-orientated activities.

On top of his role as manager, Adam also mentors groups of young people twice a week and often spends one-on-one time with them.

He has set up a Junior Boxing Squad at the club for the first time in 20 years. As coach, much of the training is done in his own time. And, of course, the focus is on personal development as well as boxing.

He says being a Westfield Local Hero shows him that people understand that the PCYC is making a real difference.

"It's a real honour, you don't do this kind of work for the accolades. You do it because you genuinely want to help people. It is really humbling."

The PCYC will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to boost a program very close to his heart – the morning gym program.

The money will enable teenagers to participate in an early morning training session, facilitated by a trainer and a youth worker with the assistance of volunteers.

"Afterwards, they will receive a nutritious breakfast and a lift to school, as truancy is still an issue," says Adam.



Andrew Everingham Sydney Homeless Connect

*Charismatic, Dedicated,
Compassionate*

Chance meeting inspires Andrew to launch homeless mega event

Nine years ago, Andrew Everingham was on a work trip in San Francisco when he had a chance encounter with a young man named Matthew that changed his life forever.

Andrew had volunteered at an annual event that connects homeless people with people who can help them when he met Matthew.

He realised homelessness is something that happens to people and not who they are. "Matthew could have been him," he says. He could have been looking in the mirror.

So, he decided to launch a similar program in Australia, and that's where Sydney Homeless Connect came from. It's a completely not-for-profit, volunteer-driven organisation with a simple but ambitious goal: to pull together an amazing event where people experiencing homelessness can access all manner of services in one location.

"One of the biggest challenges for people experiencing homelessness is knowing where to turn to for help," Andrew says.

"What we try to do is bring them all the services on one day in one place and remove all the red tape and barriers."

That ranges from a free consultation with a podiatrist to touching base with housing service providers.

Nine years later, more than 80 service and care providers gather in Sydney's Town Hall for the event with the help of more than 300 volunteers.

Andrew is humbled and thrilled to be a Westfield Local Hero. But the real heroes, he says, are the volunteers and organisers, as well as the 2,500 guests who come along each year.

"I am merely the captain of an amazing crew of dedicated individuals who believe that sometimes it is good just to do something good."

Sydney Homeless Connect will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund the next few Homeless Connect events.



Antoinette Uwera Asylum Seekers Centre

*Inclusive, Caring,
Understanding*

Antoinette gives back to the community that supported her

Antoinette Uwera knows first-hand that the right support at the right time can be life-changing for refugees seeking asylum in Australia.

"This can help families rebuild their lives and make a lasting contribution to society," says Antoinette, who sought asylum in Australia after fleeing her home country in 2008.

As a family engagement worker at the Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC), she connects families to education and community services, helping them navigate unfamiliar and complex systems.

"When families come to the centre for the first time, they are often in a critical situation and some are distressed," she says.

But things can be turned around quickly when Antoinette takes the time to listen to their concerns and connect them with the correct local community services.

"Finding the right connections acts like a magic touch, it restores people's hope so life can go on."

While Antoinette finds it uncomfortable to think of herself as a "celebrity" and prefers to keep a low profile, she says it is a privilege to be a Westfield Local Hero.

"It is a sign to me that my community supports the significant work we do at the Asylum Seekers Centre and the important part I play as an individual," she says.

The centre will use half its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund multilingual carers to look after children while their parents attend job, legal and health appointments and English classes.

"This is especially important," says Antoinette, "because many of the children experience separation anxiety, often the result of past traumas."

The other half will help fund a school readiness program for these children, which provides financial relief for families who find it hard to pay for school fees, uniforms and stationery.

Your 2018 Finalists

Melissa Abu-Gazaleh | Top Blokes Foundation

Fearless, Audacious, Purposeful

Melissa established the Top Blokes Foundation at the age of 19, to empower young men to change a youth culture that was harmful to them. She spends a considerable amount of time speaking to parents and community members on how they can take a proactive approach to improving young men's health within their communities.

Fiona Forrest | Women's Housing Company

Passionate, Committed, Tireless

The Women's Housing Company is a registered not-for-profit community housing provider that provides social and affordable housing for women on limited incomes across Sydney. Fiona facilitates consultations, workshops and forums including dedicated sessions for non-English speakers whilst coordinating bimonthly meetings across Sydney to gather views on service delivery and develop a deeper understanding of the issues facing social housing tenants.

Stephen Lunny | Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre

Connector, Educator, Leader

Stephen is the Community Programs Coordinator at Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre and works to empower the disadvantaged by designing, coordinating and running community programs for vulnerable individuals who might have struggled with chronic disadvantage, stigma or ill health. Stephen designs and runs wellness programs that teach the principles of good nutrition, healthy eating and cooking.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

Melissa ABU-GAZALEH

Top Blokes Foundation

Helen APPLETON

Giant Steps Australia

Carolyn BENN

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Jett BLACK

107

Marina BRIZAR

Aspire Motivate Believe Foundation

Deb BURDETT

Chris O'Brien Lifehouse

Maurice CABRERA

Alfalfa House Community Food
Cooperative

Helen CALLANAN

Preparing the Way

Terry CORNICK

Mr Perfect (Incorporated)

Peter DEVOY

Pymont Cares Inc

Andrew EVERINGHAM

Sydney Homeless Connect

Kylie FITZMAURICE

Weave Youth and Community
Services

Fiona FORREST

Women's Housing Company Ltd

Vicki GUTIERREZ

Sydney Latin American Film
Festival Inc

Perri HAYES

Woolloomooloo Police Community
Scholarship Foundation

Marcus HUGHES

Museum of Applied Arts and
Sciences

Ellis JANKS

Achilles Running Club Sydney

Arran KEITH

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

Maureen KENNEDY

Legacy NSW Associated Clubs

Emma LEVETT

Make-A-Wish Australia

Lazarus LORDI

Street Mobility

Stephen LUNNY

Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre

Leanne MacCALLUM

Giant Steps Australia

Mandy MAILEY

MustardSeed Ultimo Uniting
Church

John MARTIN

Spanish Community Care
Association

Alexandra MELDRUM

Lifeline Sydney & Sutherland

Dominic MONCKTON

batyr

Graeme MOORE

Stepping Stone House (Sydney
Stepping Stone Incorporated)

Mary MORTIMER

Christmas in Pymont Incorporated

Jackie RUDDOCK

The Social Outfit Incorporated

Shane STURGISS

Mission Australia

Adam THOMPSON

PCYC NSW – City of Sydney

Gearoid TOWEY

Crossing the Line Sport Ltd

Melissa TRICKEY

The Shepherd Centre

Antoinette UWERA

Asylum Seekers Centre

Melissa WINNELL

The Salvation Army –
Sydney Streetlevel Mission

Mun Khiew (Bill) YAN

Counterpoint Community
Services Inc



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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