



*Westfield*

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*Local Heroes*

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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.



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*Local Heroes*  

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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.

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*Westfield*

**BELCONNEN**

ACT



**Karen Keunen**  
Make-A-Wish Australia

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*Caring, Positive, Empathetic*

### **Karen's wonderful world of making wishes come true**

Karen Keunen has helped make 131 wishes come true.

For 17 years she has volunteered for the Make-A-Wish Canberra branch, which brings joy to children with life-threatening illnesses.

"It's just wonderful to do something nice for them," she says.

"The prospect of a wish often helps them get through their treatment and at the end it's like a reward for all of the hardship."

Karen spends countless hours getting to know each child to help them plan their wish.

Her dedication also involves working on fundraising events and volunteer recruitment.

Thanks to the community spirit she helps ignite, dozens of people helped a young girl fulfil her dream to be a princess — complete with a carriage ride to a special afternoon tea.

While every child has touched Karen's heart, a recent wish stands out.

For six months a little girl had lots of ideas for a wish but couldn't pin it down.

She finally called Karen and asked her to come over as she'd decided her wish was to have a puppy of her own.

Make-A-Wish sourced the exact breed and colour she wanted and had the dog flown to Canberra.

"It was just an absolute delight," says Karen.

"We went to the front door and the love of this little girl for her puppy was something I will never forget. I don't think there was a dry eye — it was love at first sight."

Karen says she is proud to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's really good to see that people are aware of who we are and that they support us."

The foundation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to fund 14 wishes for Canberra children.



**James Martin**  
YMCA Canberra

*Positive, Principled, Generous*

## Problem-solving James finds a way to give students a head start

James Martin is the kind of person who finds solutions if he sees a problem.

The YMCA executive decided to act when he found out that students with an intellectual disability struggle to get work experience, which means they struggle to find employment as adults.

So, he has set up a special 10-week work experience program for children at Canberra's Black Mountain School for students with an intellectual disability.

Called Y WEX, it puts the students to work at the YMCA's Bush Capital Lodge, which provides accommodation to school groups.

People with intellectual disabilities are often enthusiastic workers, says James, who is head of hospitality services at YMCA Canberra.

His next challenge is to find other employers to follow his lead.

"While what we are doing now might be noble, in a few years it might be normal. Work experience can make the difference between a person finding a job or facing long-term unemployment," he says.

"It increases their confidence. It increases their independence."

So far, one student from the school has been given a school-based apprenticeship at the YMCA.

The 16-year-old is paid to work two days a week at the lodge while completing his studies.

Although James says he is simply doing what the YMCA does, inspiring young people, it is well recognised among his peers that his benevolent efforts go well beyond his expected duties.

In addition to Y WEX, he has organised a Christmas party for young people in out-of-home care.

He is also a key driver of the YMCA Canberra Space Squad, which inspires high school students to study science, technology and engineering.

James says he is humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero but feels the accolades should go to his team, who embrace and nurture the students.

The YMCA will use its \$10,000 grant to offer two more students with an intellectual disability a school-based apprenticeship.

"This gives me a lot of satisfaction. It gives me a lot of pride and it makes me think we might be able to make a difference," James says.



**Emma Sckrabei**  
Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd

*Visionary, Diligent, Committed*

## **Innovative Emma opens the way to employment**

Thanks to Emma Sckrabei, 175 people now have work.

As manager of the SPARK Training and Employment initiative, it's her job to organise education, training and jobs for unemployed people in industries such as construction, retail and early childhood education.

But she went a step further by sourcing extra funds to pay for some of the necessities of becoming work-ready after finishing training or study.

"What training doesn't include is all the different tickets and licences that they actually need to be able to step into a job. The more people that are educated and employed in a community, the better a community is going to be," she says.

A diverse range of people benefit from Emma's work, including young people, women returning to the workforce, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people with disabilities.

The ACT government subsidises the cost of training, which is also offered in hospitality, aged care, horticulture, conservation and land management and business administration.

But many people would not be able to complete their qualifications without Emma's determination to remove roadblocks such as having no money for transport, needing help with reading and writing or just having someone believe in them.

"We access funds to buy bus tickets, petrol vouchers, uniforms and food vouchers," says Emma, who checks up on participants regularly. We have a really strong completion rate on our programs because we really do care about people."

Emma says it's humbling to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The organisation will use its \$10,000 Westfield grant to help up to 65 people access training free of charge to obtain the tickets and licences needed to secure a job. It will also use some of the money to pay for emergency childcare for people who are at risk of not being able to complete their training due to childcare constraints.

# Your 2018 Finalists

## **Ruth Boddy | Ozharvest**

*Passionate, Professional, Caring*

Ruth has been a volunteer at Ozharvest for the last 5 years, where she leads the community cooking sessions at Canberra College, preparing, cooking, packing and delivering highly nutritious meals to local charities including Ronald McDonald House and John James Village. The cooking sessions help to teach members of the community about nutrition and how to eat a healthy, low-cost diet.

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## **Amy Kelley | Belconnen Community Service**

*Optimistic, Empowering, Respectful*

Amy is responsible for the Belconnen Community Service Youth Employment Pathways Hub, offering one-on-one tailored employment support to vulnerable young adults aged 17-25 and in 2017, 77 young people gained a positive outcome from the program. The program empowers young people to overcome barriers to change and develop a plan through a strength-based approach. The goal is to see them gain meaningful employment and have a positive relationship with education.

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## **Nathalie Maconachie | Cerebral Palsy Alliance**

*Compassionate, Enthusiastic, Devoted*

Nathalie helps those living with neurological and physical disabilities to lead the most comfortable, independent and inclusive lives possible. Through various initiatives and programs, Nathalie and the team assist individuals and families to maximise their participation in the community, and identify ways in which CPA can help to raise awareness. Her new educational program called 'Just Like You' seeks to improve community attitudes and acceptance of disability by educating upper primary school aged students.



# Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

**Natalie BALE**

Softball ACT/ Canberra  
Eclipse Softball Program

**Ruth BODDY**

OzHarvest Canberra

**Tim DALY**

This Is My Brave Australia Inc

**Amy KELLEY**

Belconnen Community Service

**Karen KEUNEN**

Make-A-Wish Australia

**Nathalie MACONACHIE**

Cerebral Palsy Alliance

**James MARTIN**

YMCA Canberra

**Sarah REID**

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

**Melissa RICKETTS**

Hurricanes Softball Club

**Emma SCKRABEI**

Riverview Projects (ACT) Pty Ltd

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:**

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**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

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