



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

WHITFORD CITY

WA



Neil Atkinson Ocean Heroes

Compassionate, Friendly, Patient

Ocean Heroes gives Neil the perfect wave to ride

When Neil Atkinson found out about Ocean Heroes in 2016, he knew he had found a perfect way to combine his love of the surf with his desire to help others.

Ocean Heroes is a not-for-profit charity that helps children and adults with autism spectrum disorder experience the joys of surfing in a safe and supportive environment.

He was attracted to the positive nature of the people in the group and their "really good energy" from the start. "This was something I felt I could really help with," he says.

Neil knows people with autism spectrum disorder and understands the challenges they face.

One of those challenges can be finding ordinary outings like a day at the beach overwhelming.

But with the careful and gentle guidance of Neil and the other Ocean Hero volunteers, members get to enjoy the confidence-boosting benefits of surfing.

Neil is involved in every aspect of the charity, from instructing the children to tirelessly working on the logistics and helping to organise events.

Ocean Heroes run an event every month on a stretch of Perth beach, providing surfboards, wetsuits and life jackets for dozens of participants, who range in age from three to 30.

Neil is happy about being voted a Westfield Local Hero, but he believes it's far more of an affirmation for the great work done by the organisation.

"I'm just a representative of all the volunteers who are all very inspiring people. The best part for me is when medical professionals see positive results from what we do and you see the joy on the faces of the kids and the parents.

"The fact that 150 places for an event can be booked out in 10 minutes means we must be doing something right."

Ocean Heroes will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to help finance a much-needed super-long-wheel-base van to transport the 15 large surfboards, gazebos, wetsuits and life jackets used at each event.

This will allow Ocean Heroes to have further reach throughout WA and eventually around Australia.



Sian Williams Kidzucate

Inspirational, Determined, Vibrant

Brave Sian stands up to bullies with an empowering message

Sian Williams did not like being bullied because of her stutter. So, at the ripe old age of six, she decided to do something meaningful about it.

"I used to stutter a lot and I still do, but I'm much better now," Sian says.

"My peers bullied and mocked me all the time. One day I came home from school, jumped on my bed and cried my eyes out."

When her mum asked her what was wrong she said she was praying to God to take her voice away.

But then she decided she had a right to stand up to the other kids. She also decided she would help other children learn how to stand up for themselves.

So, with her mum's help, Sian started Kidzucate in 2012 to empower young people with the knowledge and awareness required to break the chain of bullying.

Kidzucate started off small but has grown considerably over the years.

"I was not expecting this at all," says Sian, who is now aged 11. I think I have impacted many people I don't even know."

She has not let her stutter hold her back from public speaking and she regularly delivers talks to large groups of children, young people and adults about her vision for creating a happier world.

In 2014, Sian attended a youth summit organised by Youth for Human Rights in Brussels and was awarded the Human Rights Hero Award. In 2017, she received the City of Joondalup Student Citizenship Award for her advocacy work in the community.

Sian is greatly appreciative and honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm so proud of what my mum and I have accomplished over the years. It is so cool to know that the community appreciates the work we do."

Kidzucate will use its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to develop advocacy packs and to implement programs in local schools, including training.

If you or anyone you know would like more information on what support is available:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800



Jan Standen Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA Inc

*Passionate, Dedicated,
Altruistic*

Caring gran finds sense of belonging through giving back

When Jan Standen found herself having to take care of her young grandchildren, the special people at Grandparents Rearing Grandchildren WA rallied to help her.

She was so impressed that she started giving back almost immediately.

"The people were so lovely and supportive I was compelled to do as much as I possibly could to help them right from the outset," Jan says.

The organisation's purpose is to provide relief, respite and support services to grandparents who are rearing grandchildren, and to protect and promote the well-being and development of grandchildren in their care.

Some grandparents care for more than four school-age children and many rely on a small government grant and their age pension to do it.

In Jan's case, her daughter has a mental illness and left her children when the youngest was 22 months. Their father looked after them for five years, but he could not manage and they were "basically living on the street".

When the children came to live with her, Jan had to give up her part-time job and lost her livelihood.

This experience gives Jan a deep understanding of other people's needs as they work to rebuild the lives of their grandchildren.

Jan is the organisation's vice president and events coordinator. She also liaises with federal and state members of parliament, advocating for grandparents who are rearing grandchildren.

She is extremely grateful to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's totally amazing to be recognised for what I do, especially considering the devastating situation that I came from. I now have a sense of belonging and community like I've never had before. I've found my forte in life thanks to this organisation."

The organisation will use a portion of its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to provide school holiday respite for grandparents and grandchildren and a fun day out for the kids, which Jan says has the added benefit of helping the kids bond with each other.

"When they see how they are all being cared for by their grandparents they develop a strong bond and a sense of belonging which is priceless," she says.

Some of the money will also go towards much-needed pamper days for the carers.

Your 2018 Finalists

Greg Hire | A Stitch in Time

Humble, Selfless, Passionate

Greg is the vice-captain of the Perth Wildcats and the founder of A Stitch in Time, a non-for-profit organisation that targets at-risk-youth through basketball. Greg coaches weekly workshops and clinics as a means to engage and educate youth via team sport. The participants are also given opportunities to mentor or teach other kids which in-turn helps to develop leadership skills and a sense of purpose.

Vincent Pettinicchio | Rotary Club of Hillarys

Kind, Dedicated, Humble

In 2013, at the age of seven, Vincent decided to help the homeless of Perth by providing them with packs of toiletries and comfort items. Now aged 12, each year Vincent enlists the help of the community to raise the funds he needs to make the packs and then brings volunteers together to ready the bags for distribution. Since 2013, 4,075 packs have been provided to the homeless of Perth and surrounding areas.

Melissa Porteus | Youth Futures

Passionate, Dedicated, Committed

Melissa has been the driving force behind NEST, a program that aids mothers who are already experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness, to maintain custody of their infant. The program provides single dwelling accommodation and intensive support to teenage mothers and their infants. Since commencing the program in 2008, Melissa has successfully helped over 400 young women maintain custody of their baby.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

Neil ATKINSON

Ocean Heroes

Marcus BLINCO

Oceanside Little Athletics

Eliza BOURGAULT DU COUDRAY

Rotary Club of Joondalup

Emma BUITENDAG

Epilepsy WA

Ashlyn BULLEY

Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club

Alma CABASSI

Good Grief

George COWCHER

The Spiers Centre Inc

Nicole CRAMPTON

The Spiers Centre Inc

Lucy DICKENS

Managing The Juggle

Greg FARRELL

West Coast Futsal Association

Scott GUERINI

Telethon

Greg HIRE

A Stitch in Time

Susan LYNCH

Alzheimer's Research – Ralph
Martins Edith Cowan University

Kirsteen McCRORY

Athena Branch Calisthenics
Association of Western Australia

Vincent PETTINICCHIO

The Rotary Club of Hillarys

Melissa PORTEUS

Youth Futures

Sarah SHORT

Goollelal Greenwood Scout Group

Jan STANDEN

Grandparents Rearing
Grandchildren WA Inc

Jeff TRUDGIAN

The Rotary Club of Hillarys

Rhiannon WILLIAMS

Communified (Inc)

Sian WILLIAMS

Kidzucate

Whitney WILLIAMSON

Perth Volunteer Branch of
Make-A-Wish Australia

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



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