



*Westfield*

*Local Heroes*

2019

Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and grants program, designed to shine the spotlight on those people who connect and enrich their local communities across Australia and New Zealand.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities, with the outcome of a public vote determining the three successful 2019 nominees for every Westfield centre. In total, we are recognising 121 Westfield Local Heroes across Australia and New Zealand in 2019.

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Each of the affiliated organisations of the Westfield Local Heroes have received a grant to support their work. Westfield will award 121 grants across Australia and New Zealand – totalling \$1.2 million.

We congratulate all the 2019 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make to improving social wellbeing in their local areas.

[westfield.com.au/local-heroes](https://westfield.com.au/local-heroes) [westfield.co.nz/local-heroes](https://westfield.co.nz/local-heroes)

*Westfield*

**Albany**  
NZ



**“The idea is to invest in our team to invest in someone else – that person who's so full of potential, but escaping from desperate circumstances,” says Anita.**

## Surviving violence to spread ripples of kindness

### Anita Hinton — I Got Your Back Pack

*Inspiring, Passionate, Selfless*

In 2015, Anita Hinton escaped domestic violence with her daughter Neia in her arms and nothing else to tide her through.

Later that year, she came up with a way to support others and started putting together essential items in backpacks and giving them to survivors as she was able.

At first, Anita and Neia packed the backpacks themselves and attached a warm, handwritten note to each one. Today, their efforts have grown into a fully-fledged charity, I Got Your Back Pack (IGYBP), which Anita runs from a donated packing station in Silverdale.

All the work is done by volunteers, many of whom are abuse survivors and find the connection and support therapeutic.

Anita describes being voted a Westfield Local Hero as really nice. “The feeling is insane. We give so much time, energy and love across the country, and now we've got this sense that, at last, somebody has got our back,” she says.

IGYBP has already distributed more than two thousand packs to women and men escaping domestic violence and in 2019 production has increased to three hundred a month.

The team deliver the backpacks filled with toiletries, snacks, children's toys and other basic comforts to safe houses and women's refuges throughout New Zealand.

While her volunteer work is Anita's passion, she still supports herself and Neia through her job as a cleaner.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation. I Got Your Back Pack will use the grant primarily to invest in training for its volunteer team.

“This grant will allow us, for the first time, to upskill our volunteers,” says Anita. “To sustain ourselves as a charity, we need more skills in communication and branding.

“The idea is to invest in our team to invest in someone else – that person who's so full of potential, but escaping from desperate circumstances,” says Anita.

“A stone ripples when you throw it out, and it's the same with each backpack we put out there.”



**"We have some awesome, awesome artists in our community," says Arletta. "An exhibition is a great way to connect families, carers and autistic young people."**

## Finding positive ways to live and work with autism

**Arletta Van Den Bosch** — The Children's Autism Foundation  
*Compassionate, Driven, Steadfast*

Families who have a child diagnosed with autism often struggle to come to terms with the condition. Then comes the struggle of easing their child's integration into a world where autism is still misunderstood.

For sixteen years, family counsellor Arletta Van Den Bosch has been helping parents, teachers and autistic children to manage such struggles, and to discover positive ways to work with autism.

As a consultant at the Children's Autism Foundation, she uses an engaging combination of humour and practical strategies to help people achieve meaningful improvements in education, socialisation and community engagement.

"Children and young people who are adequately supported are resilient, happier and more confident," says Arletta.

She sees being voted a Westfield Local Hero as huge community recognition of the work done by her and her colleagues. But she does not see herself as a hero. "If anyone is a hero, it's not me, and perhaps not even my colleagues, it's the families we work with."

Anita is pleased that the foundation works with a diverse group of people from a range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. "I'm lucky to meet so many really cool families," she says.

The team at the foundation are highly qualified in the field of autism and their evidence-based approach makes a crucial difference to the families they work with. "They know that we know what we're talking about," Arletta says.

Apart from counselling and family support, the foundation also helps schools with autistic learners,

hosts community workshops, and helps autistic teenagers and post-teenagers with their transition into adulthood.

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The Foundation will use its grant to create a wide-ranging exhibition of work by young autistic artists.

"We have some awesome, awesome artists in our community," says Arletta. "An exhibition is a great way to connect families, carers and autistic young people."

"We see a lack of social opportunities for autistic teenagers, especially, and art is great route for creating friendly social spaces."



**"When you're grieving, you miss feeling like your old self," says Liz. "Pampering cheers our recipients up, and then they start sharing their stories."**

## Giving grieving women a chance to relax and connect

### Elizabeth York — Feeling Fab

*Nurturing, Innovative, Optimistic*

The day after Elizabeth York's grandmother died, she lost her husband, Allan, in a car crash.

She and her three young sons were devastated. "Grief is a tunnel where you think you're never coming out," says Liz.

She helped her healing by helping others and became a grief counsellor for nine years.

Today, twenty years later, she is still helping other women to find their way out of the tunnel through a charity called Feeling Fab, which she founded in 2013.

Feeling Fab hosts free monthly pamper days for women in grief or those who need support for another reason.

The women can relax with people experiencing similar circumstances and enjoy hair styling, makeup sessions, manicures, massages, craft tables, tea and lunch. There

is also counselling available if they need it.

"When you're grieving, you miss feeling like your old self," says Liz. "Pampering cheers our recipients up, and then they start sharing their stories."

"I live and breathe Feeling Fab as I know the hole you get into when you lose a loved one."

Liz feels undeserving of being voted a Westfield Local Hero. The greatest heroes, she says, are the women who arrive at a pamper day and are feeling so low that they have to be gently coaxed into participating.

Each pamper day involves up to twenty-six recipients and thirty volunteers. "My Feeling Fab angels," as Liz calls them. Recipients come from across greater Auckland and as far as Hamilton and Whangarei.

"Our programme helps recipients with support and friendship and sharing of experiences, not only on the day but ongoing from those they meet," says Liz.

"They leave our programme feeling fab and looking fab. We so deserve to feel fab, especially going through grief."

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Feeling Fab will use its grant to fund pamper days over the next five months. "It takes such a weight off," says Liz, "and buys us time to start exploring our vision of spreading pamper days countrywide."

# Your 2019 Finalists

## **Eliette Roslin**

### **The Green Room Charitable Trust**

Eliette Roslin knows the healing power of music. It has helped her through difficulties like nearly losing her father to cancer when she was nine and fighting for her life at the age of 16 when she had Guillain Barre syndrome. Now, aged 25, she is the director of The Green Room Charitable Trust, which encourages children aged eight to seventeen to play music to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression and cope with bullying. "Music has accompanied every small and big moment in my life. It is so healing and a fantastic tool," says Eliette.

## **Lorraine Owens**

### **North Shore Women's Centre**

Lorraine Owens has spent the last 30 years volunteering and working for organisations that help others to build potential and resilience. In her current volunteer role at North Shore Women's Centre, she leads a group called Age with Flair, which helps women aged 60 and older who are facing adversity. The volunteers provide support, education, friendship and networking, which contributes to family well-being. Lorraine also volunteers for De Paul House, which works with vulnerable homeless families. "The highlight of my career has been working with women in all aspects of their lives," says Lorraine.

## **Chercara Thompson**

### **Care for Families NZ**

Chercara Thompson is kept busy looking after her three children, who were all born prematurely and need special care. Her other passion is helping people in need and she supplies them with care packs of donated essential items through Care for Families NZ, a charity she set up. Most of the packs go to parents of premature children, but they are available to any family with a child aged up to five. "No matter how challenging things get at home, being able to help others is a passion that helps me get through each day," says Chercara.



# Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

**Nathalie BILLETT**  
Caring Crew NZ

**Alvin CHEUNG**  
ActivAsian – Harbour Sport

**Gary DIPROSE**  
Springboard Community Works

**Lynn DOBBSON**  
Albany Community Preschool

**Haiying DONG**  
Whanau Marama Parenting

**Georgia HARRIS**  
Finding Kowhai

**Dominic HARVEY**  
Media Works in Auckland Theedge  
Radio Station

**Anita HINTON**  
I Got Your Back Pack

**Kristina INESON**  
YMCA North

**Brent JENKIN**  
Recreate NZ

**Charlotte LEES-PEYER**  
Blind Foundation

**Victoria LESSING**  
Merge NZ

**Jianfeng LI**  
Sport Waitakere

**Kevin MA**  
Linking Sports

**Lorraine McINNES**  
Royal NZ Plunket Trust

**Lorraine OWENS**  
North Shore Women's Centre

**Vicky POND DUNLOP**  
Enlighten Education NZ

**Parri Roshan GOHAR**  
Auckland North Newcomers Network

**Eliette ROSLIN**  
The Green Room Rhythm Of Youth  
Charitable Trust

**Tasha STOREY**  
Mothers Helpers Charity

**Chercara THOMPSON**  
Care for Families NZ

**Arletta VAN DEN BOSCH**  
The Children's Autism Foundation

**David VERRY**  
North Harbour Budgeting Service

**Elizabeth YORK**  
Feeling Fab

**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

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**2019**

**SCENTRE GROUP**