



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 westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Airport West
VIC

Creating career opportunities for high school students

Mary Chiodo, — Copperfield College

Inspirational, Driven, Kind

Copperfield College is a large school with 68 nationalities and serves an area with high youth unemployment.

The school also has enthusiastic students with a sense of purpose.

Kings Park Campus Principal Mary Chiodo has been at the school for thirty-two years and has played a significant role in creating this positive culture.

Her standout contribution is the award-winning Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program, which actively creates connections outside the school and future career opportunities for year eleven and twelve students.

"What we do at Copperfield is extend the certificate to mirror the world of work while the students are at school," says Mary.

She is delighted to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's lovely

to be a recipient. I am very proud to work with and for the students at Copperfield College and our community."

The students spend three days a week in VCAL classes, one day on work placement and one day studying a VET subject that goes towards a nationally accredited TAFE certificate.

This structure allows them to work with employers and mentors and learn soft skills like workplace collaboration and project scoping that aren't necessarily taught in traditional subjects.

"We have tried to make it a seamless transition between school and work, which improves their chances of finding employment," says Mary.

Last year, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority recognised the success of the

VCAL program and awarded Mary the Teacher Award for Excellence in Program Development.

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Copperfield College will use its grant to commission an independent evaluation of its VCAL program and develop ways to replicate it in other schools.

"We want to share our success with other schools. It is about making the system richer, not just about making our school the number one school. The success of the grant will also be that we have put into place programs and frameworks that we will be able to continue in the future."



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"All the players have their own life story and challenges. My goal is to provide them with an opportunity to succeed."

Giving girls a safe non-judgmental place to play netball

Niketa Loftus — Craigieburn Netball Association

Selfless, Dedicated, Charitable

Niketa Loftus became a netball coach in 2014 when her daughter started playing the sport and other mums put her forward for the position.

Since then, she has founded the Craigieburn Thunders Club, which is a big multicultural family of more than eighty players in nine teams.

Niketa has ensured that everyone is welcome, regardless of their skill level or ability to pay.

Many players come from disadvantaged backgrounds, but Niketa has found sponsors, raised money and donated her own money to buy them uniforms and pay their fees.

"I noticed that there were a lot of kids who would come and play for a while and then would not come back. I found out that it was because their parents

couldn't afford it or they were disadvantaged in some way."

Niketa feels honoured and a little overwhelmed to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "Our main purpose is to provide disadvantaged children and youth with a safe place to play the game they love," says the working mother of four.

"All the players have their own life story and challenges. My goal is to provide them with an opportunity to succeed."

Her support for the players goes beyond the netball court, and the club hosts dinner evenings and team bonding sessions for the children.

"Some of them come from disturbing family backgrounds and the netball club is their non-judgmental safe place to be," says

Niketa, who was a keen netball player until her early twenties, when her second child was born.

Last year, the coach and mentor's efforts were recognised when she won Netball Australia's national One Netball Community Award.

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The netball association will use its grant to fund more players, run training workshops and buy new equipment and uniforms.

"The grant is heaven-sent. We have players on waiting lists, and it will open up netball to another twenty girls. It's a huge relief," says Niketa.



"My greatest achievement, apart from my family, is being part of the team helping to find a cure for EB, the worst disease you've never heard of."

We are well on the way to finding a cure

Gavin Shaw — EB Research Foundation

Dedicated, Reliable, Determined

Gavin Shaw jumped in to help when he saw the anguish that a debilitating skin disease was causing to his friend's daughter.

Gavin was moved by the impact of the genetic illness, epidermolysis bullosa (EB), which causes the skin to break and blister, leading to pain, disfigurement and open wounds.

He is now an invaluable volunteer with the EB Research Foundation, which raises funds for treatments and the search for a cure.

"It's close to your heart when you see your friend's daughter is not well and you're there with three healthy kids. You just want to help out where you can," he says.

"My greatest achievement, apart from my family, is being part of the team helping to find a cure for EB, the worst disease you've never heard of."

Gavin is honoured to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's great to know that we are in a community that will help people out where they can."

Gavin spends many hours a week supporting the foundation and increasing awareness in the community. One of his projects involved sourcing over one hundred items to auction at the Cotton Ball, the foundation's largest fundraising event.

His wife, Cindy, and their three children also help out with fundraisers and raising awareness at work and at school.

"In the short time the EB Research Foundation has been established, we have helped raise a lot of funds that have been directed to research," he says.

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The EB Research Foundation will use its grant to fund a symposium for medical and research professionals from leading hospitals and institutes to update them on research and encourage their involvement.

"We are trying to get as many medical professionals involved in research as possible, as many believe there is a cure within reach," says Gavin.

"The Westfield grant is a welcomed contribution towards finding a cure for the worst disease you've never heard of".

Your 2019 Finalists

Natalie McCloughan

Children's Tumour Foundation

Natalie McCloughan supports children and families with neurofibromatosis (NF), a genetic disease that causes tumours and physical deformities. She builds personal relationships with families going through the most challenging time of their life and helps them navigate the health system and community services to get the care they need. She also organises camps and social events that create a sense of belonging, connection and support. Natalie, who is legally blind, says: "I feel I am given to empathise with the isolation, rejection, uncertainty and difference members of the NF community face in their daily lives."

Zeina Assaf

Make-A-Wish Australia

After losing her 15-month-old baby boy, Zeina Assaf found an outlet for her grief in helping other parents' children. As a branch Fundraising Co-ordinator for Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia, her passion is to offer life-changing experiences to children with life-threatening illnesses. One of Zeina's most successful innovations is her Bake a Wish challenge, where she has used her business network to encourage fundraising competitions between different groups of colleagues. "I am committed to making a positive impact on the lives of seriously ill children and teenagers," says Zeina.

Sally Pittard

1st Strathmore Scouts Group

Sally Pittard's children graduated from the Cub Scouts more than five years ago, but she has enthusiastically continued leading their First Strathmore Scouts group and has even started a Joey group for five to eight-year-olds. Sally organises numerous sleepovers and camps and leads the groups in Anzac Day marches and the annual Clean Up Australia Day. She includes people with disabilities and finds ways to involve everyone in games and activities. "We focus on personal progression. This puts the youth at the centre and recognises each individual has unique needs on their developmental journey," she says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Zeina ASSAF
Make-A-Wish Foundation Australia

Sara AURORAE
Centre for Multicultural Youth

Barry BERIH
Moonee Valley City Council

Mary CHIODO
Copperfield College

Tony CORNISH
Essendon Baseball Club

Majed EL-ALI
Homeless Aid

Kay FERGUSON
Essendon Baseball Club

Pauline FORSTER
CPLT

Gareth HANLON
Westmeadows Football Club

Susan HENDRA
300 Blankets

Eve KORYTKOWSKI
The Alannah and Madeline Foundation

Niketa LOFTUS
Craigieburn Netball Association

Natalie McCLOUGHAN
Children's Tumour Foundation

Tara McGIE
Unleashed Entertainment

Sally PITTARD
First Strathmore Scouts

Gavin SHAW
EB Research Foundation

John SHIELS
White Ribbon

Jason WHITER
Vision Australia

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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SCENTRE GROUP