



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

North Lakes

QLD

Helping children gain confidence by reading to dogs

Janine Sigley — Story Dogs

Compassionate, Purposeful, Tireless

Janine Sigley is using a novel teaching method to ensure children are not left behind in literacy.

She co-founded the Story Dogs charity almost ten years ago and uses hundreds of trained dogs and volunteer handlers to encourage more than two thousand primary school children a week to read.

The charity works closely with teachers, who select children with low self-esteem and low reading levels to read to the dogs in a private session in a quiet area of their school.

The children have fun interacting with a friendly, non-judgmental dog, which boosts their confidence and improves their reading.

The volunteer handlers also get involved and ask the children to explain parts of the text to

the dogs, which is another learning opportunity.

Most of the volunteers are retired people and the benefits of volunteering with their best mate, their dog, are enormous, says Janine, who is excited to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It's a big reflection of the wonderful work that Story Dogs does in Brisbane. It makes the work all the more worthwhile."

Janine has been the driving force in setting up sound and sustainable systems for the charity and is actively involved in training the network of coordinators who then recruit, train and support new volunteers.

"I am incredibly passionate and would like to be helping five thousand children by the end of 2020. The big goal is to have a

Story Dog in every primary school in Australia," says Janine.

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.

Story Dogs will use its grant to train twenty new dog teams for the Brisbane/Brisbane north area to help one hundred children learn to read.

"North Brisbane is a growth area, with many new schools. This grant will ensure we can expand with confidence in that area," says Janine, who has also received interest nationwide from other primary schools.

"It's amazing how we are changing kids' lives. It is really rewarding work."

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"Our Baby Bundles are filled with items that many teenage and young mothers would not necessarily be able to afford. No mother should be without the essentials that she needs for her newborn baby," Melissa says.

Inspiring young mums to complete high school

Melissa Redsell — A Brave Life

Passionate, Inspiring, Brave

Judgmental people criticised Melissa Redsell when she became pregnant at high school and accused her of ruining her life.

But she proved them wrong and went on to complete a nursing degree and qualify as a midwife.

Melissa knows that the best way for young mothers to succeed in life is to finish high school, and she started A Brave Life charity to share her own story as inspiration for local girls.

She says teenage and young mums face stigma and judgment, but her aim is to ensure they have the support they need.

"I have seen the benefits that finishing high school and pursuing further education and employment have had on my life and the life of my children."

Melissa is "blown away" by being voted a Westfield Local Hero.

"It's great to be acknowledged. It is absolutely amazing to think the community values what I'm doing."

Since 2016, she has provided peer support to more than 30 teenage mothers at Deception Bay High School. After they graduate, the mums can attend regular morning teas in North Lakes or see Melissa for one-on-one mentoring sessions.

Melissa's charity also supplies baby bundles to women aged under 25 who don't have the basic necessities when they give birth.

"Our Baby Bundles are filled with items that many teenage and young mothers would not necessarily be able to afford. No mother should be without the essentials that she needs for her newborn baby," she says.

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A Brave Life will use its grant to fund two mentors to provide weekly sessions at a local high school, cover the costs of morning teas and buy items for 100 baby bundles.

"The money will help us continue to provide mentoring to the teenage and young mothers who are completing their education," says Melissa.

"We want to continue to go into schools to provide mentors who can encourage and empower young women to dream big."



"You get emotional and grateful when you know how people have been helped by Legacy," says Glenn. "It makes me feel proud that Westfield supports organisations like us to contribute to the community."

Leaving a legacy of helping military families

Glenn Willmann OAM — Legacy QLD

Dedicated, Honourable, Committed

Glenn Willmann OAM was a member of the Australian Army for thirty-two years and served in Vietnam, but he is continuing to serve after his retirement and has been an active member of Legacy since 2005.

He has organised ANZAC Day parades, fundraising concerts, guest speaking roles at civic functions and radio and newspaper interviews to publicise the needs of veterans.

One of Glenn's responsibilities is to look after the interests of two hundred and fifty widows and dependent children of deceased veterans in the Morayfield/Caboolture area.

He contacts each individual regularly to ensure they can access the financial and other assistance that is available to them.

He is known for his resourcefulness and always seeks solutions

regardless of the problems to be overcome.

Glenn feels honoured and grateful to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero. "It makes me proud because you know that you are doing something to assist the widows and the ex-servicemen.

"I'm looking after widows of my mother's age as well as mothers of those that I served with in Vietnam. In some cases, it is the wives of my mates."

Support also includes taking women to doctors and other appointments and organising outings to ensure they are connected with others in similar circumstances.

Glenn devotes many hours a month to Legacy and the numerous other veteran causes he supports. In 2013 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia

for service to veterans and their families.

"It's important to me to uphold the respect and standards of those people who have come before me and leave a huge impact on our lives and country," he says.

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Legacy Queensland will use its grant to fund outings organised by the social inclusion program.

"You get emotional and grateful when you know how people have been helped by Legacy," says Glenn. "It makes me feel proud that Westfield supports organisations like us to contribute to the community."

Your 2019 Finalists

Cody Skinner

Aruma

Cody Skinner builds positive relationships to promote a community where everyone feels valued. He puts this into action as a Peer Mentor at Aruma, which has been supporting people with disability for more than 50 years. He is a tireless advocate for closing the gap and has made invaluable input to the Aruma Reconciliation Action Plan to ensure the organisation acknowledges Aboriginal culture. "I am deaf, and Auslan is my first language. I identify part Aboriginal and I am gay. I advocate in human rights for people with disability," he says.

Ben Taylor

HeartKids

Ben Taylor's middle child has a congenital heart defect and has needed open heart surgery four times. He started the national Heartkids Dads group because he noticed big gaps in support for fathers like him, who often feel isolated because they have to work or look after the other children and can't be as involved as mothers. Members of the group visit newly diagnosed families in hospital, provide practical and emotional support and go out of their way to be there for others. He says the purpose is simply: "Dads helping dads help their families."

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Kym AUSTIN
Mimi's House

Salvatore BARBAGALLO
Pine Rivers Men's Shed

Sonia COLVIN
Hairdressers with Hearts Ltd

Rochelle COURTENAY
Share The Dignity

Daisy COX
A Little Sparkle- Bringing Girls
On The Spectrum Together

Ryan ELSON
Tribe Social Belonging

Matthew GILCHRIST
Moreton Bay Fencing Club

Julieanne KEANE-JONES
Rope Inc

Mitchell LINGARD
Pursue Better Inc

Elke MOROZ
Leukaemia Support QLD

Marie NIEUWOUDT
BeMe Hair Salon

Jan PAYNE
Encircle Ltd

Leanne PRINCE
Brisbane Convoy for Kids

Melissa REDSELL
A Brave Life Ltd

Monique ROBERTSON
1st Pine Rivers Girls' Brigade

Leanne SCOTT
Australian Gateball Union Inc

Janine SIGLEY
Story Dogs

Cody SKINNER
House with No Steps

Coral STEVENSON
Brisbane Convoy for Kids Inc

Margaret SU'E
Help Enterprises Ltd

Ben TAYLOR
HeartKids Limited

Harata TE AMO-SIMEON
Akoako Ki Piripane Inc

Glenn WILLMANN
Legacy Club of Brisbane Ltd

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