



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

Carousel

WA



"Everyone in life wants and needs to achieve some things, like becoming a parent or having a job. But if we can get the balance right, we have a greater chance of achieving happiness."

Bouncing back to deliver happiness to others

Julian Pace — Happiness Co

Unconditional, Compassionate, Selfless

Julian Pace has severe dyslexia and dropped out of school at the age of thirteen after being bullied.

However, thousands of people around the world are happier because of him and Happiness Co, which he founded to tackle depression and loneliness through face-to-face and online programs.

Happiness Co promotes connection, kindness and contribution to the world. One of the reasons for its success is a focus on personal fulfilment, not just achievements and material objects, says Julian.

"Everyone in life wants and needs to achieve some things, like becoming a parent or having a job. But if we can get the balance right, we have a greater chance of achieving happiness.

"I've had the opportunity to impact over fifty thousand lives," he says, with participants

accessing his online programs from countries including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, Canada and India.

Julian was inspired to start Happiness Co because of his own mental health issues, and he feels proud and humbled to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

His lowest point came with the suicide of his father on his twenty-first birthday, and Happiness Co is dedicated to his memory.

"The programs I have created include a twenty-one-day challenge, a ten-week mentorship, workshops and one-on-one coaching," says Julian, who has branched out into workplace programs and programs that help school students with self-confidence, bullying and body image issues.

Julian was told by school teachers that he would never get an

education because he couldn't read or write. However, he has been teaching himself and aims to read sixty books this year.

"I like to increase awareness that you are in control of your own happiness," he says.

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. Happiness Co's grant will help with youth suicide prevention programs.

"Youth suicide is on the rise," says Julian. "We want to provide some powerful programs that will give young men and women the resources and tools to use before they face problems with their mental wellbeing."

If you need support, please phone Lifeline: 13 11 14



"We provide a bit of hope, happiness and positivity in the lives of children and young people who need it the most," says Leah, who also works to raise awareness about the stigma and other challenges children in care endure.

Spreading sunshine for children who need it the most

Leah Atkinson — Operation Sunshine WA

Passionate, Empowering, Selfless

Leah Atkinson spent time in care when she was a girl and is doing whatever she can to comfort the next generation of children and youth facing similar anguish.

The first few days after entering out-of-home-care can be the most challenging, so Leah puts together comforting welcome packs that are handed out on arrival.

The packs are an initiative of her volunteer-run organisation, Operation Sunshine WA, which she started to support children in out-of-home care.

Many children arrive in care with few or no belongings, and the Sunshine Packs help to preserve their dignity and make them feel less isolated, says Leah. "They contain essential items, including hygiene products and clothing, and comfort items that vary depending on the recipient's age and gender."

The packs help create a positive distraction and open communication between the young person and those involved in their care.

Leah, who is married with five children, works full-time and manages the volunteer-run organisation in her free time.

"We provide a bit of hope, happiness and positivity in the lives of children and young people who need it the most," says Leah, who also works to raise awareness about the stigma and other challenges children in care endure.

She feels good to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "The community support is motivating, knowing that there are people who recognise the work that I do and that Operation Sunshine does."

Operation Sunshine also provides packs to women and children escaping domestic violence.

"New pyjamas, underwear and other items give them some comfort at a traumatic and vulnerable time," Leah says.

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Operation Sunshine will use its grant to fund more packs, bringing it closer to its goal of providing packs to all of the more than one thousand children who go into care in WA each year.

"The grant is a huge help to us. Sunshine Packs are expensive to create and we struggle to raise the money needed to meet demand."



"Horses are my passion, but you don't need riding experience to volunteer. We have people who feed the horses or do the gardens or the administration. It's amazing what people do and what they commit to."

Mum and son activity becomes a life-affirming passion

Paige Connolly — Riding for the Disabled (Oakford)

Wholehearted, Passionate, Caring

Paige Connolly started volunteering for Riding for the Disabled (RDA) Oakford more than ten years ago because it was something she and her teenaged son could do together.

Paige knew from the start that she wanted to be involved and watched in awe as the riders developed their ability as their lessons progressed.

"The horses made my heart melt as I watched them bring so much joy and love to their riders and volunteers," she says.

Paige grew up with horses and has always had a deep affinity to them. She has not looked back since her first day at RDA and has qualified as a riding coach.

A large part of her inspiration comes from her brave little brother Dean, who passed away

when they were children. "He had cystic fibrosis and is the reason I focus on people's abilities, not disabilities."

Paige is excited to have been voted a Westfield Local Hero but is adamant it is a collective honour for all the volunteers, riders, vaulters and parents.

"Horses are my passion, but you don't need riding experience to volunteer. We have people who feed the horses or do the gardens or the administration. It's amazing what people do and what they commit to."

The riding school offers classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and Paige is part of the glue that holds it together.

Her enthusiasm is infectious, and her fellow volunteers say she is the reason teenagers get out of

bed early on a Saturday morning to come and help instead of sleeping in.

"It is humbling to see our riders' self-confidence improve as they master new skills and continue to build deeper connections with their horse, coach and volunteers," says Paige.

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RDA will use its grant to buy a vaulting horse and equipment.

"The money is really brilliant," says Paige. It opens a lot of doors for us. It turns a lot of our wishlist from a dream into reality."

Your 2019 Finalists

Catherine MacDougall

Prepare Produce Provide

Catherine MacDougall is a mother figure for the hundreds of children whom she helps on the road to career success. Catherine volunteers for not-for-profit Prepare Produce Provide, which was set up by passionate home economics teachers to help young people train for careers in education and hospitality. One of her great achievements is bringing together 25 Aboriginal students and top chefs for a week-long culinary camp. "This provides Aboriginal students with opportunities to use food as a medium to connect to their culture and provides career pathways in food and cultural practices," she says.

Neil McCulloch

First Hike Project

Neil McCulloch is dedicated to helping young refugees feel at home in Australia. He created the First Hike Project to introduce newly arrived refugees to the wonders of the Australian bush and to help them process the trauma that brought them to these shores. By the end of the overnight hike or camping adventure, they feel a greater sense of belonging and have a better understanding of Australia values. "To watch them witness their first wild kangaroo or see the sunrise through the Eucalyptus forest is something they, or we, will never forget," says Neil.

Gracie Edwards

Uni Camp for Kids

University student Gracie Edwards spends summer breaks giving at-risk children invaluable positive experiences. As president of WA's oldest children's charity, Uni Camp for Kids ("Uni Camp"), Gracie devotes twenty (often forty) hours weekly to help fund, organise and run the organisation including three one-week summer camps that Uni Camp provide for hundreds of Perth's most socially, emotionally or financially disadvantaged children. "We aim to provide an important time-out from other life stresses, interactions with positive role-models and always offer something to look forward to next time." she says.

Recognising all of our 2019 Nominees

Millie ABBOTT-FEW TRELL
Horsepower Orange Grove

Leah ATKINSON
Operation Sunshine WA

Margaret BAILEY
Elev8 Ministries Inc

Cameron BARNES
Red Frogs Australia

Mike and Emma BASC
Objective Secured

Alysia BISHOP
CRPS Network Australia Inc

Josh BOND
Initiate Australia

Paige CONNOLLY
Riding for the Disabled Oakford

Saige DEELSTRA
Make A Wish

Gracie EDWARDS
University Camp for Kids

Rob GOYEN
Stroke Foundation

Gavin GRACE
Art vs Depression

Veronica HABIEB
St Mary's Outreach Service (SMOS)

Sui LAU
Christ the King Church
(Willetton, Anglican)

DJ LIM
Perth Rams Rugby Union
Football Club

Fiona LITTLEMORE
Brookman Primary School

Catherine MacDOUGALL
Prepare Produce Provide

Neil McCULLOCH
First Hike Project Inc

Amanda MILROY
Story Dogs

Thirza NALDER
RSLWA

Margie OLDFIELD
Team Connect WA

Julian PACE
Happiness Co

Clinton PHILLIPS
C3 Langford

Cheriekah RAMIREZ
Amicus Curiae Fidelis

Pam RICHARDS
100 Women

Donna ROBERTS
Children's Tumour Foundation

Vicki WATSON
The Magic Smiles Project

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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