



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

CARINDALE

QLD



Debra Lenehan Vision Australia

Inspiring, Energised, Enthusiastic

How a shock diagnosis led Debra to start giving back

Losing her vision has done nothing to dim Debra Lenehan's drive to help others.

Diagnosed with the rare genetic eye disorder Retinitis Pigmentosa in her 30s, Debbie was in desperate need of a helping hand – not just to guide her through her new physical reality, but also to deal with the emotional side of her loss of sight.

That's where Vision Australia stepped in, offering mobility training to teach her how to get around her house and use public transport. It also gave her computer lessons.

"When I first got diagnosed I cried for about two weeks but Vision Australia was very supportive, with training and with helping me through the emotional side of things," she says.

Over time Debbie adjusted to her new reality and was able to get back to doing many of the things she had enjoyed in her old life, such as travelling and cooking.

Soon Debbie found herself wanting to give back to the blind and low vision community, and she became a Vision Australia volunteer.

She has become known as an essential representative at the "coal face" of the organisation and is especially good at helping people adjust to new diagnoses of vision loss. Beyond that, she leads by

example to show that it is possible to have a disability and still enjoy a rich and active lifestyle.

She is actively involved in fundraising and is a familiar face at local shopping centres, railway stations and hardware stores.

"It is worth it because I feel strongly that I need to get out into the public to teach people about blindness and low vision and to raise funds for the training of seeing eye dogs."

She says it's great to be voted a Westfield Local Hero. "I'm happy to do anything to raise awareness of blindness and low vision."

Vision Australia will use the \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant to fund the training of seeing eye dogs.



Ken Loftus The Sunlight Centre

Passionate, Empathetic, Caring

Kind Ken reaches out to teens and adults with depression

It doesn't matter how busy you are, if you can do something that might save lives, you should give it your all.

That's the attitude of Ken Loftus, who in 2017 founded The Sunlight Centre, a charity offering free crisis counselling to teenagers and adults at risk of suicide in Brisbane's Cannon Hill.

Ken had no government funding and a child on the way and was already working two jobs.

But he pushed ahead out of a desire to make it easier for people to access in-person counselling when they need it most.

"After 17 years of working in mental health, I learned that what people really want is somewhere safe to talk, somewhere they can feel listened to and that is what The Sunlight Centre is there to provide," he says.

Those who need The Sunlight Centre can book themselves a free appointment without a referral from a GP, reducing wait times and costs. Others can attend one of the centre's "Healthy Mind" workshops, where Ken teaches mindfulness and coping mechanisms for anxiety.

It's all about trying to reduce self-harm and suicide, which is the largest cause of preventable death among teenagers in Australia.

"We are trying to provide people with a warm environment where they can get help to get them through a crisis," he says.

Ken says he is proud to have been recognised by his community and voted a Westfield Local Hero after just a year.

The Sunlight Centre will put the Westfield \$10,000 Local Heroes grant towards running costs and hopes to take on a new therapist.

The centre can be reached on 1300 259 724 or via its Facebook page.

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

The Sunlight Centre: 1300 259 724



Cindy Corrie
The Sycamore School

*Courageous, Driven,
Forward thinking*

The parents who started a school to improve their son's future

Cindy Corrie only ever wanted to find a school where her son would be happy and supported through his autism.

But finding no such school in her area, she decided that the best thing to do would be to start her own. So, with her husband, Cameron, Cindy founded The Sycamore School in Alexandra Hills, Queensland, to specialise in educating children with autism.

Its mission is to change predicted futures of children with autism by building independence through self-awareness, learning, and developing their strengths.

"Our son and many children like him have incredible skills, but they are often unsupported in working on key goals and challenges, so they don't get the opportunity to do their best," says Cindy.

"At The Sycamore School, we want to foster autism-friendly learning, which means working on communication, social skills, flexible thinking, behaviour and all the things that can impact a child's opportunity to engage with education," she says.

Now in its second year of operation, the school has 62 students from across Brisbane, aged from prep through to Year 6.

Importantly, each student is encouraged to understand themselves and recognise what makes them unique, Cindy says.

"Kids who were never getting invited to birthday parties are now making friends and going to sleepovers. As families develop connections with others who have kids on the spectrum it's creating a really special community."

Cindy says it's "very humbling" to be voted a Westfield Local Hero.

The school will put its \$10,000 Westfield Local Heroes grant towards science equipment and computers.

"Just about every child in the school is good with technology and we really think that many of them will be able to find work in scientific or IT jobs. So this is just another element of developing their skills," Cindy says.

Your 2018 Finalists

George Kambouris | PCYC Carindale Branch

Resilient, Supportive, Loyal

George identified through personal experience that there was a strong need to provide life skills lessons for young people who find themselves wheelchair bound for the first time, through a comprehensive training program that involves learning navigation skills for wheelchair users around their home, school and community. Now delivered via the PCYC, the program includes weekly sessions on wheelchair usage and most importantly, care for the body due to strenuous and physical rigors of life in the wheelchair.

Ron Ould | The Lion's Club Macgregor

Humble, Compassionate, Youthful

Ron is a member of the Brisbane Macgregor Lions Club and as part of his commitment to the Club, works on several projects for local charities to help those in need. These include, the Indigenous Basketball Academy, Women's Refuges, YMCA, PCYC, Drought Relief for Australian Farmer's and more.

Recognising all of our 2018 Nominees

Adam CASSIDY

United Nations Youth Queensland

Elizabeth CLAYDON

Down Syndrome Swimming
Australia

Cindy CORRIE

The Sycamore School

Kristie DE BRENNI

Queensland Pathways
State College

Cherrie DOWLING

Horses in Mind

John FLOWER

SBH Queensland

Edward HASELICH

Carina Men's Shed Inc

Robert INNES

PCYC – Breaking the Cycle
Programme

George KAMBOURIS

Living on Wheels Lifestyle
Sporting Program Pty Ltd

George KAMBOURIS

QPCYWA – Carindale Branch
(PCYC Carindale)

Debra LENEHAN

Vision Australia

Ken LOFTUS

The Sunlight Centre

Caitlin McDONALD

Girl Guides Queensland

Marco MUNOZ

Marco's Kitchens

Ron OULD

Brisbane Macgregor Lions Club

Kristin PENHALIGON

Brisbane Youth Service

Natasha ROGERS

Make-A-Wish Australia

Philippa RUSSELL

Juiced TV

Philip SARGESON

Cereal for Coffee Ltd

Graeme SHERLOCK

Brisbane Basket Brigade (part of
the Magic Moments Foundation)

Debbie SIMMS & Sue HANSFORD

Carina C&K Kindy

Chantelle THOMSON

Fight With Me Inc

Paul VOJTISEK

OzHarvest

James WHITE

Traction Community Programs



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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