

*Westfield*

*Local Heroes*

2020

Westfield Local Heroes is a recognition and awards program that discovers and celebrates people across Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community and environment.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities and a public vote determines the successful 2020 nominees for every Westfield centre.

The successful heroes are each awarded \$10,000 for their affiliated organisations.

*Westfield*  
*Local Heroes*

Since the program began, we have awarded \$3.62 million to 363 community organisations.

Every year, we recognise more than 120 Westfield Local Heroes and provide more than \$1.2M in community grants to their affiliated organisations.

We congratulate all the 2020 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make.

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

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

# Westfield

## Coomera

### QLD

**Nicolle Edwards decided to take-action after hearing about a family in need of help as they fled domestic violence.**

Her solution was to create RizeUp, a Gold Coast not-for-profit that has since provided life-changing, practical support to more than 1070 families across Queensland.

Nicolle and her husband started from their garage, putting together packs for families staying in refuges.

RizeUp now has over 520 volunteers and support between five and eight families per week, via strong partnerships with specialist domestic violence services across Queensland.

RizeUp sets up and furnishes homes, where families can focus on rebuilding their lives, and supports children as they start at a new school.

"RizeUp's programs reduce the likelihood that the families will return to the perpetrator due to financial hardship or lack of resources," says Nicolle.

"They also reduce the likelihood of homelessness, provide a stable home environment and increase a sense of belonging and an anchor for recovery."

Many of RizeUp's volunteers have survived domestic violence themselves and believe Nicolle is helping to break the cycle of domestic violence.

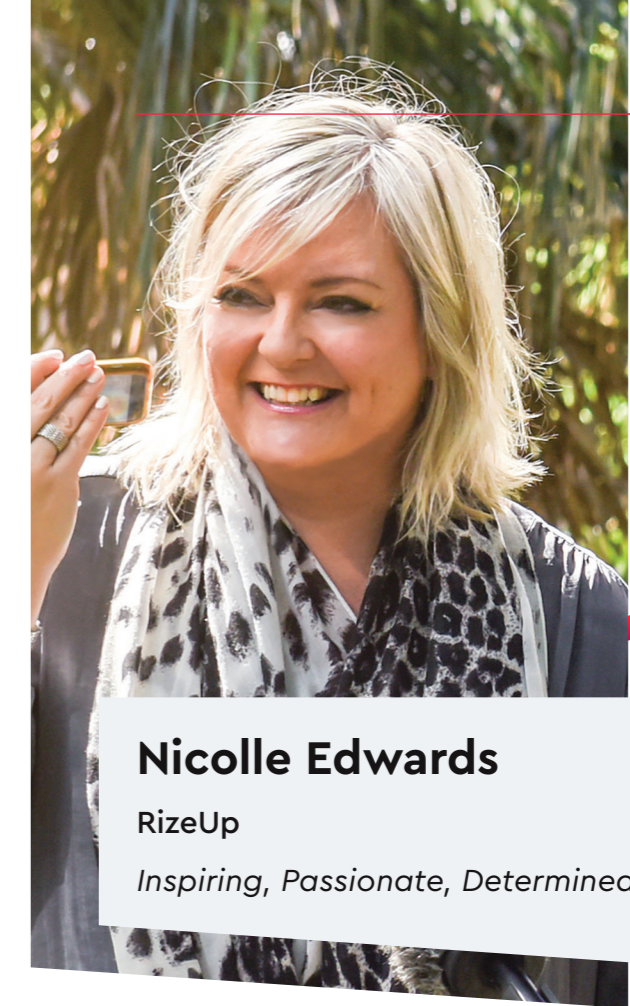
Believing that no one organisation can lead the fight against domestic violence, she mentors other organisations and encourages them to establish additional programs that will help to create safe, sustainable outcomes for at-risk families.

"It is imperative we wrap as much support around these vulnerable families as we can," Nicolle 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.

RizeUp will use its grant to expand its programs and launch a choir to support survivors of domestic violence.

*Nicolle's nominator says: "To stop domestic violence, we need to empower a community. To do this, we need strong and courageous women like Nicolle to step up and inspire others."*



**Nicolle Edwards**

RizeUp

*Inspiring, Passionate, Determined*

## Reducing cycle of domestic violence

**"RizeUp's programs reduce the likelihood that the families will return to the perpetrator due to financial hardship or lack of resources."**



## Alexandra (Alex) Wells

Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program

*Caring, Passionate, Dedicated*

## Inclusive sports program

**"The main focus and goal of the program is to educate the community that people with additional needs are not different to able-bodied people."**

**Alex Wells was just 14 when she founded a program to help children with disabilities participate in sport.**

It wasn't easy for Alex, who found it tough to access funding and convince adults to take her idea seriously.

But with the help of her school principal, who provided the venue and insurance, the Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program came to life in 2016.

Now hundreds of children with disabilities are able to play sports, modified for their ability, for fun and fitness.

As an added innovation, Alex's program encourages other young people to volunteer to support the athletes. This breaks down stereotypes and creates a culture of inclusiveness.

"The main focus and goal of the program is to educate the community that people with additional needs are not different to able-bodied people," Alex says.

"We should be welcoming to everyone in our community."

Despite the demands of a studying for a degree in journalism and having two part-time jobs, Alex finds the time to create training programs that develop gross and fine motor skills and encourage healthy eating and good sportsmanship.

She also helps train the volunteers, runs sessions and looks after marketing.

"I work closely with politicians and local businesses to help create a more inclusive community," Alex says.

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Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program will use its grant to buy much-needed sporting equipment, jerseys, trophies and medals for the athletes.

*Alex's nominator says: "Alex is breaking down stereotypes and helping children with disabilities to be included in all parts of our community. She is educating teenage volunteers to be accepting of all abilities and not judge on appearance."*

**Xenia Schembri believes people should not need to accept bad behaviour from anyone, and co-founded At The Ark to support victims of abuse and domestic violence.**

The charity helps more than 100 families in several ways, including by providing food parcels, help with emergency accommodation and counselling.

"I walk with the families towards healing from the pain they have suffered," says Xenia, who is a qualified counsellor. "I want families and individuals to know their worth."

Xenia aims to help men and women change, to respect the people they live with and to build each other up instead of pulling them down.

"I would also like to get people the help that they need before the violence starts."

Xenia has written the Brave Little Bear series of books to help children and adults recognise and report abusive behaviour.

Xenia's aim is for the books to be made available to every primary school classroom so they can be available for all children, not only those who are known to be at risk.

"The statistics are that one in five children will be sexually abused before they are 18," she says. "We want to see these statistics change."

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At The Ark will use its grant to fund preventative programs and to provide material aid to families affected by child abuse.

*Xenia's nominator says "Xenia is selfless in her endeavour to see families and individuals set free from the effects of child sexual abuse and domestic violence."*

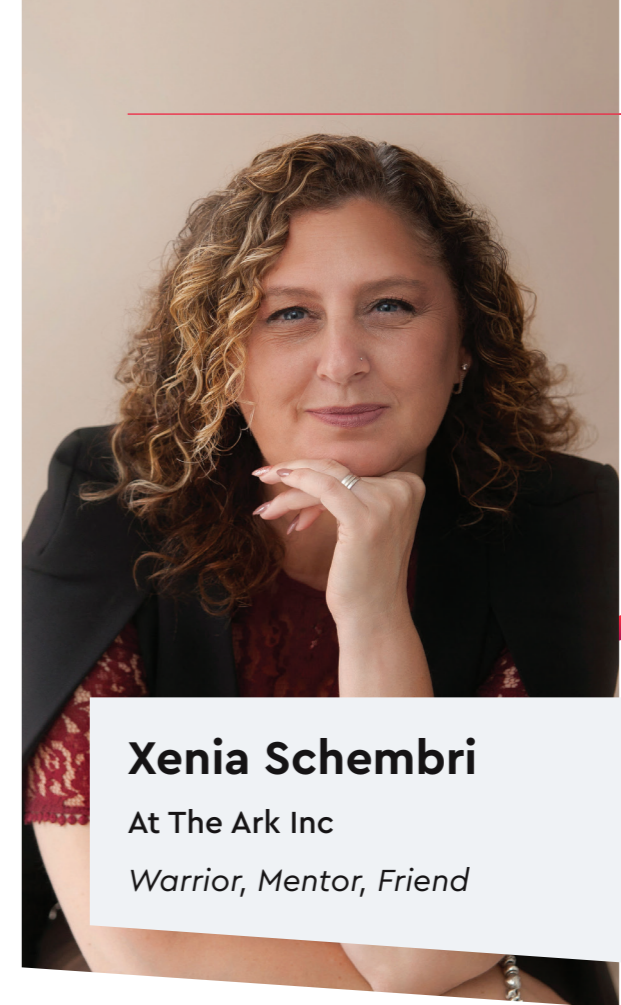
## Xenia Schembri

At The Ark Inc

*Warrior, Mentor, Friend*

## Standing up for others

**"I would also like to get people the help that they need before the violence starts."**



## Your 2020 Finalists

### Amanda Carroll Gold Coast Youth Service

Amanda Carroll feels hers is the most crucial job in the world.

She works with the Gold Coast Youth Service and advocates for young people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Many are living with trauma from family breakdown, drug addiction, mental illness or domestic violence.

A mother herself, Amanda treats all young people like family and makes no judgment about their past behaviours and life choices.

"Everyone is equal and deserves a safe place to live, with a sense of belonging to the community," Amanda says.

### Zoe Scharenguivel Friends With Dignity Australia

Zoe Scharenguivel jumped into action after her pregnant friend lost her life to domestic violence.

The busy mum of three decided to organise a small lunch to raise funds to support an organisation involved in domestic violence prevention.

Thanks to Zoe's contacts and interest in the event, the lunch turned into something much bigger and raised \$5000.

The lunch also led Zoe to another advocate for people affected by violence. Together they founded Friends With Dignity Australia, which transforms houses into sanctuaries for women, men and children.

"I am passionate about making a difference and being a positive role model for my children," Zoe says.

### Judy Nyp OzHarvest

Judy Nyp is a powerhouse when it comes to helping those in need.

As a volunteer driver's assistant with OzHarvest, she rescues a whopping 800kg of food from the hospitality industry every day.

The food is high quality and nutritious but is no longer useful to supermarkets and fresh produce retailers. It is redirected to up to 20 charities, including crisis centres, food pantries, women's shelters and drop-in centres.

Judy sees her effort as a win-win. "I suffer from osteoarthritis, and my charity work has helped me to maintain bone mass from all the physical work involved," she says.

## Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

**Dreddyn Bhana**  
Man Up

**Jodie Sippel**  
Coomera Cubs Baseball Club

**Tim Fisk**  
Complete Men

**Rosalinde Brinkman**  
Gold Coast Catchment Association

**Kym Farquhar**  
Coomera Crushers Rugby Union Club Inc

**Ruth Crafter**  
Peachey Community Garden

**Amanda Carroll**  
Gold Coast Youth Service

**Alexandra Wells**  
Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program

**Judy Nyp**  
Oz Harvest

**Nicolle Edwards**  
RizeUp

**Zoe Scharenguivel**  
Friends with Dignity Australia

**Jane Padden**  
Christmas Presents For Kids In Care

**Jamieson Mackenzie**  
One Vision Productions Pty Ltd

**Natasha Price**  
Invincible Pty Ltd

**Sharron Whittingham**  
The Scout Association Of Qld Helensvale

**Laura Kelly**  
General Wellness Centre

**Stacey Hammond**  
St Josephs College

**Rachel Skelton**  
Children's Tumour Foundation Of Australia

**Ngawai Hepi**  
Instinct Netball Club

**William "Blake" Harris**  
12 Baskets

**Ashley Lenehan**  
Vision Australia

**Jaeneen Cunningham**  
Safe Haven Community

**Selina Lee**  
Saved.org.au

**Sue Jenkins**  
Friends With Dignity Limited

**Jane Howe**  
Saint Stephens College

**Michelle Carmel Ryan**  
Rotary Club Of Coomera Waters

**Kimberly O'Neill**  
AAA Restraints

**Michelle Louise Saluja**  
Body Mind Soul Clinic

**Victoria Leadbeatter**  
Foxwell State Secondary College

**Michael Cowling**  
Weaving Technology Into The Fabric Of The Classroom

**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  
Kidslines: 0800 54 37 54  
Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757  
Samaritans: 0800 726 666  
Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450

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