

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

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Doncaster

VIC

Matt Cronin is courageously campaigning against senseless violence in memory of his youngest son, Pat, who passed away after a single coward punch in 2016.

The loving father has risen above community outrage to be a voice of calm and encourage others to think about their actions to prevent similar tragedies.

Pat, a popular physiotherapy student and sportsman, was only 19 years old when he was hit from behind in a senseless act of violence while enjoying a quiet night out.

Matt and his wife, Robyn, started the Pat Cronin Foundation to end the coward punch

Matt and others from the Pat Cronin Foundation speak to thousands of school students and members of community organisations, sharing Pat's story to change attitudes to violence.

When Matt speaks there is pin-drop silence as 16 to 25-year-olds put down their phones and tune in.

"We are determined that no other family should suffer as we have," he says.

Matt says his work is making a huge difference in the community by encouraging people to make wiser decisions.

"Pat was a normal kid from a normal family. If this can happen to Pat, it can happen to anyone, and this is why we are getting so much support from the community," Matt 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.

Pat Cronin Foundation will use its grant to give 16 presentations at local organisations that cannot afford the usual fee.

Matt's nominator says: "Matt, with his family and community, has found a way to turn the most horrendous tragedy into a positive and empowering force for change."



Matthew Cronin
Pat Cronin Foundation
Tireless, Humble, Astonishing

Courage versus the coward punch

"We are determined that no other family should suffer as we have."



Gavin Blue

Heartfelt

Generous, Compassionate, Of service

Gifting photographic memories

"No family should go home from hospital without a photographic memory of their child or baby."

Professional photographer Gavin Blue is always willing to donate his skills for a good cause, but he goes above and beyond for grieving parents.

After losing his daughter Alexandra to stillbirth in 2006, Gavin founded Heartfelt as her legacy, to provide free photographic memories for families to treasure.

It's been a labour of love, and he has inspired 340 photographers across Australia and New Zealand to volunteer their time. Over the past ten years, they have gifted precious photos to more than 11,000 families who have experienced a stillbirth or who have a seriously ill child.

The photographs capture the beauty, love and pain and enable children to be seen and remembered.

"No family should go home from hospital without a photographic memory of their child or baby," Gavin says.

Heartfelt receives 150 requests each month but stricter volunteer requirements in hospitals, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, have caused some families to miss out.

Always innovative, Gavin has come up with a strategy to recruit hospital staff as photographers.

"To be able to train hospital staff on how to use the equipment and take touching photographs would be of great value at this unprecedented moment in global history," Gavin says.

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Heartfelt will use its grant to produce an online training program, including videos, for new volunteers and hospital staff.

Gavin's nominator says: "Gavin is generous, compassionate and selfless and takes action in his community to make a difference for people, especially those who are experiencing the loss of a child."



Catherine Haining

Giant Steps Melbourne (GSM)

Compassionate, Selfless, Encouraging

Hitting a high note

"In some instances, students who do not speak will sing."

Music therapist Catherine Haining is an innovator when it comes to educating children with autism, combining songs and traditional learning to great effect.

She played a crucial role in establishing Giant Steps Melbourne (GSM), a school for children with moderate to severe autism and intellectual disabilities.

Catherine is Head of Therapy Services at the school and uses music to help the students to understand and retain numeracy and literacy skills.

The structure of music provides calm and reassurance for the students, who may live in a world of anxiety and uncertainty. Overlaying music with instructions for everyday tasks such as tying shoes and putting on sunscreen means they are more willing to try.

And music gives them a way to share how they feel when they can't find the words, Catherine says.

"In some instances, students who do not speak will sing."

Catherine says music is a way for students to connect with others. One student attended a regular music festival with carers and was elated to be able to dance alongside other attendees.

"I love working at GSM. I feel like I am making a difference but most of all I feel like I am part of something bigger than myself," Catherine says.

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Giant Steps Melbourne will use its grant to buy musical instruments and a laptop to produce music.

Catherine's nominator says: "Catherine is the heart and soul of our organisation. She is an impressive professional who is able to work in the most difficult classrooms supporting students and directing staff."

Your 2020 Finalists

Jayne Clarke

Big Group Hug Ltd

Jayne Clarke volunteers about 50 hours a week in her determination to end child poverty.

She has helped hundreds of children from birth to 12 years through the Big Group Hug. The non-profit organisation provides clothing, nappies, prams and other material aid to vulnerable families.

Along the way, Jayne has encouraged schoolchildren to pitch in by collecting items on behalf of the organisation. So far, 500 students from 10 schools have done their bit.

"I believe it takes a village to raise a family and I try to facilitate that wherever I can," Jayne says.

Loretta Bolotin

Free to Feed

After recognising that unemployment, social isolation and discrimination are the most significant issues facing refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants, Loretta Bolotin decided to do something about it.

The former caseworker co-founded the innovative non-profit Free to Feed to provide dozens of newly arrived people with paid training and employment.

Loretta's social enterprise offers training in a variety of hospitality roles, with catered events, pop-up events and cooking classes led by the participants providing the revenue to pay their wages.

Robert (Rob) Pradolin

Housing All Australians

Developer, Robert (Rob) Pradolin, has brought together like-minded business people to launch a volunteer run organisation that cuts through red tape and sets up temporary homes for vulnerable women.

The national initiative is called Housing all Australians (HAA) was launched last year.

HAA negotiates a 3-5 year lease, at nominal rent, for buildings that are awaiting redevelopment approvals or are standing empty and repurposes them into short term "pop-up" transitional accommodation for vulnerable Australians.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Chris Prandi

Alkira Centre Box Hill

Richard Davies

Warrandyte Community Association

Steve Gilbert

Mitcham Thunder Basketball Club

Jasvinder Sekhon

Australian Aphasia Association Ltd

Margie Cerato

Celebrating Abilities Inc

Natalie Walker

Partnerspeak

Krizia Sciessere

The Big Sister Experience

Bianca Sciessere

The Big Sister Experience

Jayne Clarke

Big Group Hug Ltd

Gavin Blue

Heartfelt

Loretta Bolotin

Free To Feed

Catherine Haining

Giant Steps Melbourne (GSM)

Matthew Kevin Cronin

Pat Cronin Foundation

Robert Pradolin

Housing All Australians

Gayle Porter

Cerebral Palsy Education Centre (CPEC)

Coral Reid

The Royal Victorian Eye And Ear Hospital (Eye And Ear Hospital)

David John Ryan

Warrandyte Returned Services League Sub-Branch And Army Reserve

Ryan Holloway

Deaf Basketball Australia

Karin Traeger

The Plastic Runner / Clean Up Australia

George Wakim

Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club

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
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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