

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

Fountain Gate

VIC

Josh Carell is using the power of art to help improve mental health.

Five years ago, he founded Littlefoot and Company with his sister Eden, a qualified art therapist to provide free art therapy to the community.

A range of events and workshops are on offer to young people and adults, including visual arts and spoken word and poetry workshops.

"Making art in the company of others or sharing your art allows for social connection and a sense of being valued. It can allow for healing and growth," Josh says.

Thanks to Josh, many people in the community feel they have more support and social connections, and their well-being has improved.

It's taken a lot of strength and dedication to find organisations and groups willing to share their space for the workshops.

Financial support is also an issue, so Josh coordinates popular outdoor movie nights in Berwick's botanic gardens, which help fund the free art programs.

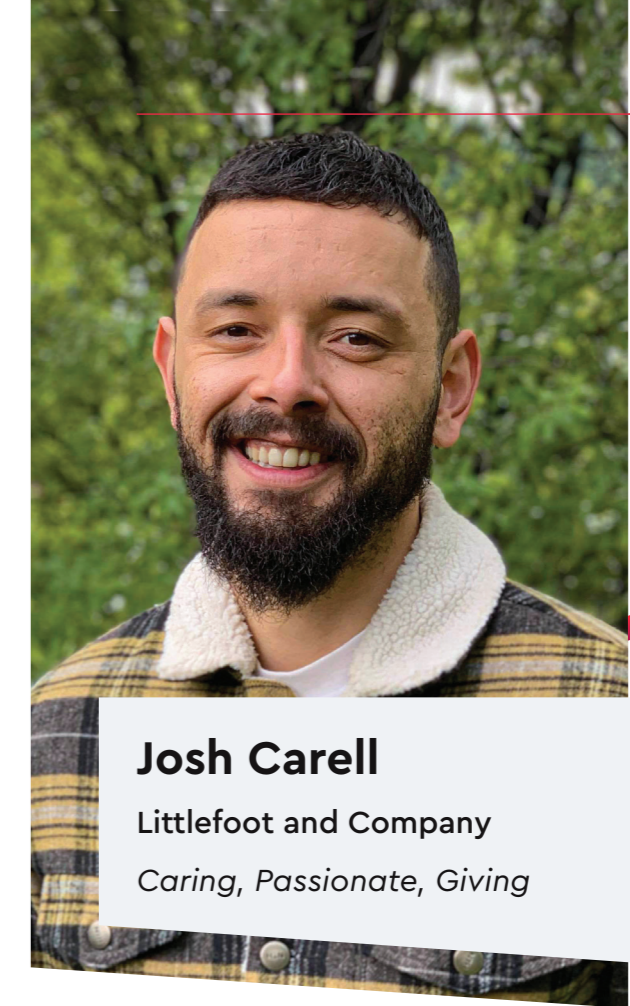
Josh and the company have worked hard to continue supporting the community during the COVID-19 pandemic through online programs.

"Art therapy is a practical resource for mental health preventative measures and is essential for developing minds to cope and comprehend the challenges we face," 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.

Littlefoot and Company will use its grant to rent a dedicated space for its free art therapy programs for a year.

Josh's nominator says: "Josh volunteers his own time to promote goodwill in the community and provides positive opportunities for young people to express themselves."



Josh Carell

Littlefoot and Company
Caring, Passionate, Giving

Healing through art

"Art therapy is a practical resource for mental health preventative measures and is essential for developing minds to cope and comprehend the challenges we face."



Sally Beard

Backpacks 4 Vic Kids

Passionate, Dedicated, Giving

Comforting displaced children

"My goal is to ensure the displaced children have clean, appropriate clothing, toiletries and a few belongings of their own."

Sally Beard leads a dedicated team of volunteers that provides much-needed comfort and dignity for vulnerable children entering foster or emergency care.

These children are often taken into care at a moment's notice with nothing more than the clothes they are wearing.

Sally was outraged when she heard many wait up to eight hours in soiled clothing or hospital clothing while waiting for a safe place to go.

She founded the non-profit Backpacks 4 Vic Kids to provide these children with a backpack of essentials and comfort items.

The backpacks contain clean, appropriate clothing, new underwear and comfort items like a blankets, soft toy and a torch.

Other items in the pack include toiletries, stationery, a book, new socks and what Sally calls extra love items such as games, lunchboxes or warm gloves.

"Each pack has several hand-made items like woollen blankets so the children can literally wrap themselves in the love of someone who cares," Sally says.

"My goal is to ensure the displaced children have clean, appropriate clothing, toiletries and a few belongings of their own."

Sally and her volunteers also prepare junior packs, which include baby items such as nappies, formula and a bottle.

"We have now delivered over 7000 packs to displaced children state-wide," she says.

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Backpacks 4 Vic Kids will use its grant to put together 200 ME packs.

Sally's nominator says: "I haven't met many people like Sally. She gives all her time and effort to ensure that she can provide help to the children who need it."

Sukhjit Singh was there to help when the worst bushfires in living memory ravaged Victoria.

The dedicated volunteer spent 16 days at the Bairnsdale relief centre working with Sikh Volunteers Australia's free food van, offering three meals a day to evacuees.

Sukhjit was up at 4.30am to start preparing breakfast and often worked late into the night.

Volunteering is a part of life for Sukhjit, who joined Sikh Volunteers five years ago, in the early days.

The organisation aims to promote peace, harmony and multiculturalism. It believes people are all the same, regardless of age, gender, religion, country of origin or social status.

Sukhjit, a first-generation immigrant who is now an Australian citizen, lives these principles by volunteering at many community events.

"I do this to promote wellbeing and prosperity for everyone," he says.

"It's my responsibility to give back something to the community that has provided my family and me with so many opportunities."

Sukhjit perfectly balances volunteering with his personal life and busy career.

"I mostly do service in our free food van program," he says.

"We not only help people in need but break down barriers and help people come together to make a great multicultural Australia."

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Sikh Volunteers Australia will use its grant to replace the oven in its food van and increase food storage capacity to serve more people in an emergency.

Sukhjit's nominator says: "Sukhjit thinks about others first and himself later. He stands first in line to provide services to the Australian community."

Sukhjit Singh

Sikh Volunteers Australia

Dedicated, Committed, Humble

Promoting peace and harmony

"It's my responsibility to give back something to the community that has provided my family and me with so many opportunities."



Your 2020 Finalists

Carrie Archer

Berwick College

Something wonderful is happening at Berwick College, with volunteer youth worker Carrie Archer encouraging previously disengaged students to turn up to school.

Carrie runs a cooking program for at-risk and traumatised 13 to 16-year-olds, and many are now getting the education they deserve.

She always has time to put a smile on a crying face, to notice those who fly under the radar and to listen to those who are often unheard.

"Together we see a combination of life, cooking and social skills emerge and the outcome is amazing," Carrie says.

Karen Janssen

Raise Foundation

When the welfare team at Cranbourne Secondary School became concerned about an increase in mental health issues and bullying among students, they turned to Karen Janssen for help.

Karen is a program counsellor with youth mentoring movement the Raise Foundation and responded to the SOS to establish a program within the school.

She matches each student with a trained volunteer mentor who helps them improve their coping skills and develop hope for the future and belief they can finish school and get a job.

"The power of having someone neutral to talk to, who really listens and hears you, is extraordinary, Karen says.

Darcy Balhas

Youth Insearch Foundation

Darcy Balhas is paying it forward for the help he received to turn his life around.

Growing up, Darcy was bullied terribly because of his Indigenous background. He had a difficult home life and was in and out of foster homes.

Darcy was struggling to cope but managed to bounce back thanks to Youth Insearch, a program that encourages young people to help other young people to rebuild their lives.

Darcy is now an Insearch youth leader and mentor for other young men.

"I show them where I have come from, to where I am as a proud Wiradjuri man," he says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Sue Johnston

Sue's Roos Kangaroo Rescue – Rehab – Release

Jodie Hollis

Cancer Support Angels (CSA)

Bassir Qadiri

Bakhtar Cultural & Publishing Association

Donna Harrison

Casey Relay For Life

Sally Beard

Backpacks 4 Vic Kids

Josh Carell

Littlefoot & Company

Sukhjit Singh

Sikh Volunteers Australia

Carrie Archer

Berwick College

Darcey Balhas

Youth Insearch Foundation

Tracey Elizabeth Ryan

Young Pink Sisters Charity

Tenille Bull

It's My Shout

Selba Gondoza Luka

Afri-Aus Care Inc. and Black Rhinos Club

Ben Macdonald

A Guide To Cardinia

Mellissa McIlroy

KorusConnect

Jacob Pearce

Alive Project

Karen Janssen

Raise Foundation

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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