

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

Hornsby

NSW

James Thomas believes that with the right support, great things can come from tragedy.

"I like to think that I'm a good example of this," says James, who felt bereft after losing his parents as a young adult; his father in 2005 to cancer and his mother unexpectedly on his 31st birthday in 2011.

After his mother passed away, James sold his successful signwriting business and launched Feel the Magic, which supports children and teens through grief.

The non-profit runs mentor-led programs for bereaved children and teenagers who have lost a parent, sibling or guardian.

There are three key programs: Camp Magic Parent and Guardian Workshop and the online Healthy Grieving Program.

So far, James has helped hundreds of families by creating a safe grieving environment, aiding healing and providing "magic through the power of connection".

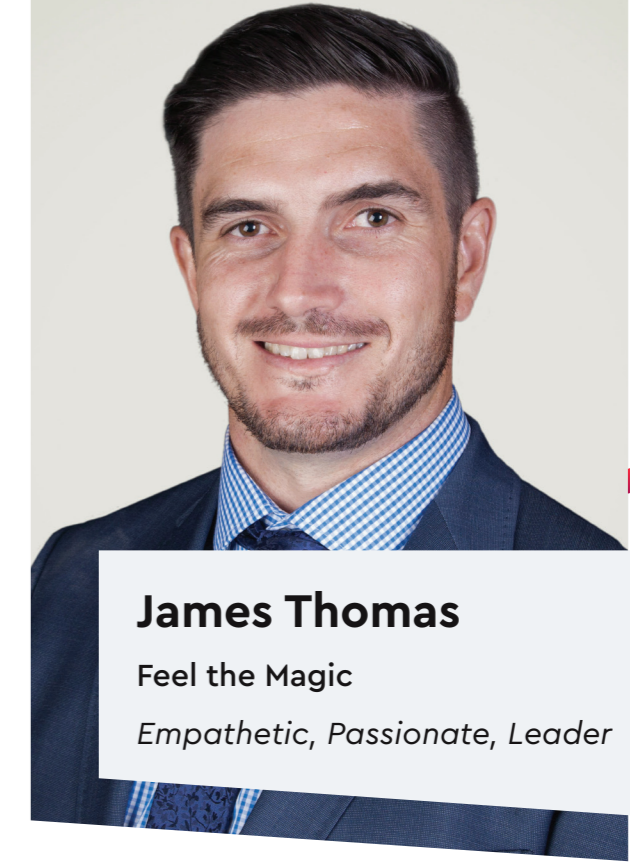
One in 20 Australian children will lose a parent before they reach the age of 18, James says. "To put this into perspective, there is most likely a grieving child in every classroom.

"As a Western society, we haven't learnt how to deal with those who are grieving very well. The children in this situation become the forgotten ones. They're expected to get over it and move on," says James.

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Feel The Magic will use its grant to sponsor 10 mentors and 10 bereaved children or teens to participate in the Camp Magic program.

James's nominator says: "Whilst dealing with the pain of his own grief and loss, James saw the need to support others by providing a service that allows young people to heal and thrive."



James Thomas

Feel the Magic

Empathetic, Passionate, Leader

Creating magic from tragedy

"One in 20 Australian children will lose a parent before they reach the age of 18, James says." To put this into perspective, there is most likely a grieving child in every classroom."



Jeni Hayes

Mission Australia

Dedicated, Inspirational, Humble

Privileged to help

"We build rapport with the young people at risk who frequent this area, provide them with meal vouchers, and offer information about support"

Jeni Hayes feels honoured by the opportunity to have devoted 30 years of her life to community services.

"Journeying with people of any age as they overcome barriers and achieve their goals is a privileged space to sit in," Jeni says.

She is primarily inspired by her work at Mission Australia, where she has been supporting young people at risk of homelessness for more than 10 years. "It is filled with opportunities and unique challenges."

Jeni is known for her genuine warmth and ability to create a space of safety and security for vulnerable young people.

"Our team feel privileged to have assisted many young people to overcome the impact of family breakdown, family violence, school disengagement, unemployment, mental illness, drug and alcohol use, homelessness and recidivism."

The team focus on building strong collaborative relationships and networks across the community services sector to assist young people access the support they need.

For eight years, Jeni has helped to organise Mental Health Youth Forums as part of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Youth Network.

Another initiative is a weekly outreach at the Hornsby mall every Tuesday.

"We build rapport with the young people at risk who frequent this area, provide them with meal vouchers, and offer information about support," Jeni says.

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Mission Australia will use its grant to buy food and travel vouchers and pay for additional staffing hours.

Jeni's nominator says: "Jeni has an inspiring ability to provide young people with hope for the future. She is a valued member of this community, and her compassion is evident in all she does and to everyone she meets."

Nine-year-old Ava has a deep-rooted desire to be inclusive and lives by the motto "No one gets left behind." She supports young people in her community in a number of ways.

For example, she reaches out to younger children who feel insecure at school, and she is forever raising funds and donating her pocket money and toys to good causes.

Ava is particularly passionate about supporting the children with learning disabilities and special needs who attend St Lucy's School. One of those children is Oliver, Ava's close friend. Ava's current fundraising project is to help St Lucy's build wheelchair-friendly vegetable gardens.

Here is Ava's story: "I get to see the kids at St Lucy's all the time. I wanted to do some fundraising for St Lucy's, so I asked some of the nice ladies there what I could do. One of the things they are trying to build is 16 raised veggie gardens for the children to learn how to grow foods and plants.

The gardens will also be educational in other ways for them as they are sensory. The children will enjoy not just watching the flowers and vegetables grow, but they will be able to smell and feel and taste them too!"

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St Lucy's School will use its grant to build, stock and maintain the 16 gardens.

Ava's nominator says: "Ava leads with her heart in everything she does. No matter how hard her life can be at times she thinks of how to do something good for someone else and she is the kindest, bravest, most generous little girl I have ever met."

Ava

St Lucy's School Wahroonga

Courageous, Generous, Selfless

Big-hearted young fundraiser

"No one gets left behind"

Your 2020 Finalists

Thomas (Tom) Dent StreetWork Australia Ltd

When young people in Hornsby find themselves in need of help, they can be sure that StreetWork's Tom Dent is there for them.

Tom leads a team of six youth workers who provide outreach support for at-risk youth.

"We get onto the streets and take a unique approach to building rapport with vulnerable young people to help them overcome their personal barriers."

Tom's colleagues respect him for being a great leader, being driven to help others and for always trying to improve StreetWork's service.

"We use our one-on-one mentoring program Kickstart to help teens set goals to realise their potential and to create real change," says Tom.

Pauline Rogers Raise Foundation

Pauline Rogers is a dedicated mentoring leader at Killara High School and Turrumurra High School.

She manages the Raise Foundation's Ismo (In School Mentoring Opportunity) for students at the schools who need support. Their challenges include anxiety, depression, bullying, sick relatives, self-harm and financial hardship.

Students attend the program voluntarily and under Pauline's caring watch receive one-on-one support from the same mentor every week for 22 weeks.

This helps them engage with their education and improve their relationships, resilience and self-confidence.

Wendy Escott OAM Studio ARTES

Art teacher Wendy Escott OAM was determined to provide adults with disabilities with meaningful opportunities to develop their talents.

She co-founded Studio ARTES in 2000 in a double garage in Hornsby with no funding and a dozen members. Twenty years later, there are more than 260 members and 100 staff across three sites.

"As we grew in numbers, we grew as a community," says Wendy. "Being part of the community prevents feelings of isolation."

The former Hornsby Citizen of the Year says her greatest pleasure has been to witness the growth and achievements at the studio.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Kathy Adams
St Lucy's School

Louise Mahoney
Dreams2Live4 Limited

Dr Mehrassa Farjad
Iranian Senior Women's Association

Cornelis (Con) Pieterse
Variety – The Children's Charity

Brian Engert
Hornsby Connect

Wendy Escott
Studio ARTES

Ava
St Lucy's School Wahroonga

James Thomas
Feel The Magic

Jeni Hayes
Mission Australia- Northern Sydney West Youth Homelessness Service

Pauline Rogers
Raise Foundation

Thomas Dent
StreetWork Australia Limited

Dominique Abagi
Raise Foundation

Shilpa Kulshrestha
Scintillate Pty Ltd

Mark Rushton
Blowfly Cricket Club

Michelle Key
North Shore Mums Smiles2U

Jo Marx
It's About Us

Shirley Kelynak
St Vincent De Paul Society

Alan Hensen
St Vincent De Paul Society

Michelle Chahine
St Vincent De Paul Society

Jodie Davidson
St Vincent De Paul Society

Anna Louise Orchard
Marian St Theatre For Young People

Amanda Rademaker
Raise Foundation

Fiona Jenkins
DCaf Connections

Lauren Hansen
Girl Guides NSW, ACT & NT

Susan Mitchell
Cancer Council

Najibe Khani Keshavarz
Iranian Senior Women's Association

Colin Mckenna
St Vincent De Paul Society

Bradley John Dowling
Children's Tumour Foundation Of Australia

Melissa Knudson
1St Berowra Scout Group

Sofya Chalik
Sofya Chalik

Chantelle Fornari
StreetWork Australia Limited

Sue Byatt
Studio ARTES

Jessica McLaughlin
Terpsichore Dance Company

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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