

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

Knox

VIC

Teacher Julienne Rankine is touching hearts and showing children they are never too young to help.

Julienne founded the St Luke's Primary School Mini Vinnies program, which is affiliated with the St Vincent de Paul Society, affectionately known as Vinnies.

Under her guidance, the Mini Vinnies raise funds, cook meals and do other kind deeds for families in need.

Over the past two years, volunteers from prep through to Year 6 have made and donated blankets and scarves during winter, fundraised by running clothing and cake stalls and put together toiletry packs.

Twice a term, they prepare and freeze nourishing meals to distribute to vulnerable families. Last Christmas, they collected and wrapped more than 100 gifts for children.

The students have also held a seniors' lunch, with many participants describing it as one of the best days they have had in years.

Julienne says she started Mini Vinnies to show students how to identify need, provide support and make a difference in the lives of others.

She says her role is to facilitate the group and provide guidance as they plan and implement initiatives.

"This process is very empowering for the students. Their role is voluntary, and their enthusiasm is immense," Julienne 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.

St Luke's Primary School Mini Vinnies will use its grant to fund many more meals for families in need, hold a seniors' lunch and distribute more blankets and toiletries.

Julienne's nominator says:

"Julienne had a vision and acted on it. Establishing the Mini Vinnies team has led to countless acts of selflessness and touched the hearts of many people in the community."



Julienne Rankine

St Luke's Primary School Mini Vinnies

Passionate, Caring, Inspiring

Inspiring young volunteers

"This process is very empowering for the students. Their role is voluntary, and their enthusiasm is immense."



Martina Eaton

CHAMPION – initiative of Temple Society Australia

Kind, Fair, Helpful

Putting food on the table

"Martina is particularly proud that CHAMPION also facilitates much needed social interaction and is a place where people feel welcome and supported."

Martina Eaton set up the CHAMPION community hub to help families put food on their table when she recognised that many people fall through the cracks because they don't qualify for Centrelink or other assistance.

"I decided to start a service that would help these members of the community, not only with food parcels but also support to navigate a way out of the crises they were facing," says Martina, who is the Community Care Worker at The Temple Society of Australia.

Families can also request help with expenses such as schoolbooks and transport vouchers for job interviews.

CHAMPION has been open for seven years and stands for Community Hub and Meeting Place in Our Neighbourhood. It provides support to 300 clients a month.

Martina is particularly proud that CHAMPION also facilitates much needed social interaction and is a place where people feel welcome and supported.

She raised funds to develop a community garden to grow produce and reduce the amount of food scraps and garden matter going into landfill.

"We actively encourage our visitors at CHAMPION to participate in garden events so they have social interactions, are active and benefit from fresh food they have grown themselves," Martina says.

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Temple Society will use its grant to cover staff costs so CHAMPION can open an extra morning or afternoon each week and help more people in need.

Martina's nominator says, "Martina sees the big picture and does what she can to ensure that all members of the community are part of that picture. She is a true example of simply being kind."

Firefighter Allan Small has been a selfless volunteer for the Country Fire Authority (CFA) for more than 50 years, and it's all thanks to his love for his wife and her family.

Allan's brothers-in-law wasted no time in recruiting him to join the local fire brigade when he started courting their sister in the 1960s.

Over the past 53 years, other CFA volunteers in The Basin have become like family to Allan; and keeping people safe has become his passion. Allan is proud that his three sons have also volunteered as firefighters.

"It gets in the blood," he says.

"It's about protecting our own. Not only where I live but right across Victoria and to New South Wales and South Australia. That's where we've been fighting fires over the years."

Always generous with his time, Allan participates in community safety programs, including a fire-safe program for children at local primary schools and kindergartens.

He still attends fires and takes great heart in being able to mentor new members, children and teens in the junior firefighter program.

"Over all of my years in this fire brigade, none of our juniors has ever got into problems in the community," he says.

"I reckon that's really something great."

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Basin CFA will use its grant to set up a digital training facility for volunteers.

Allan's nominator says: "Allan is an inspiration to all the lives he has touched for decades. He is a wonderful ambassador for our community."



Allan Small

The Basin CFA

Kind, Big-hearted, Generous

A passion for protecting others

"It's about protecting our own. Not only where I live but right across Victoria and to New South Wales and South Australia. That's where we've been fighting fires over the years."

Your 2020 Finalists

Merrin Ayton Different Journeys

Merrin Ayton is opening the world up to young people with autism.

A mother of two sons with autism, Merrin was feeling powerless as her eldest son's mental health plummeted in Year 10 because he was being bullied and ridiculed.

After meeting another mum with similar challenges, they came up with an idea for a social group for teens with autism.

Demand has soared, with 500 teens and adults now attending events.

"We hear stories of teens refusing to leave their rooms for two years who are now begging their parents to bring them to the next event," Merrin says.

Melissa Bell Knox and District Toy Library

Without Melissa Bell's dedication, many local children would miss out on high-quality educational toys and a space to meet new friends.

As president of the non-profit Knox and District Toy Library, the mother of two has worked hard to ensure its financial viability and increase awareness within the community.

It has been no easy task, but the membership has grown to a healthy 227.

One of Melissa's most significant achievements has been to secure funding to transform the space with all new shelving and signage.

"I am passionate about promoting the importance of play in children. I want the library to be around for years to come," Melissa says.

Roger Petrucci Ulysses Club, Yarra Ranges Branch

Roger Petrucci is always there to help fellow motorcycle enthusiasts and others in the community in times of hardship.

The treasurer of the Yarra Ranges Ulysses Club, a social club for people over 40 who love motorcycles, spends hours looking after anyone he sees in need.

Roger provides transport and assistance for members with a disability so they can participate in social events and feel appreciated.

"I am particularly interested in helping our members ensure they have somewhere to go and someone to talk to if the pressure of life gets too much to handle on their own," he says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Jodie Harris
Raise Foundation

Tenille Gilbert
Society Melbourne

Chuentat Kang
GJS Intellectual Company
Australia

Samantha Gash
World Vision

Peta Bobbine
Build A Brotherhood

Ruth Lewis
Wellington Care Centre

Kate Austin
Pinchapoo

Eddie Atacador
Knox Community Chess
Enthusiasts (Auspiced By Coonara
Community House)

Kerri Neumann
The Cat Corner Rescue Group

Natalie Wild
Rotary Club Of Knox

Michael Ward
Mind Blank Ltd

Allan Small
The Basin CFA

Melissa Bell
Knox And District Toy Library

Merrin Ayton
Different Journeys

Martina Eaton
Champion – An Initiative Of
The Temple Society Australia

Julienne Rankine
St Luke's Primary School
Mini Vinnies

Bronwyn Roberts
Laughter Clubs Victoria

Jordyn Whittington
Scoresby Primary School

Tristan Rose
Blind Tiger Yoga

Karen Ogilvy
Studi-O Dance School

Ryan Purdie
Traffic Lights For Kinders

Rick Baldwin
Australian Indigenous Women's
Basketball Team

Samuel (Sam) Scanlon
Epilepsy Action Australia

Trish Goodrem
Special Olympics Australia,
Melbourne Inner East Club

Sarah Williams
Footprints Enterprises Inc.

Mario Anders
Children's Tumour 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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SCENTRE GROUP