



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

Mt Druitt

NSW

There is no such thing as 9 to 5 in the life of Tino (MC Free) Isaia.

She makes herself available to at-risk youth day and night, all while being a dedicated parent to her own children.

MC Free is a Co- Founder of Rap 4 Change, a charity youth organisation that uses music, sports and creative arts programs as a medium to engage and redirect disadvantaged youth to make positive decisions in all aspects of life.

She reaches out runs to vulnerable young people through schools, behavioural centres, community centres, correctional centres and TAFE.

Last year alone, 15 young people who were lost and facing an uncertain future resumed their schooling or started an apprenticeship after attending Rap 4 Changes Leadership Program that MC Free facilitated. "I have always had a passion for helping our youth find a platform to express themselves," she says.

MC Free also provides one-on-one mentoring to young offenders in correctional centres creating pathways to education or employment opportunities for a brighter future once released.

Having experienced a difficult childhood, she connects easily with young people.

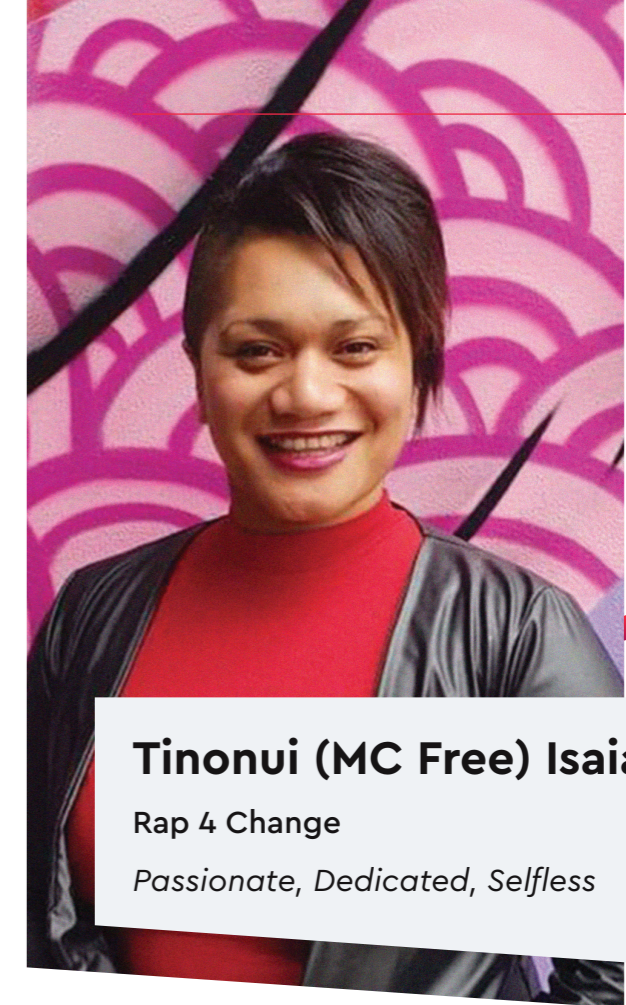
Justice staff report young people are more settled, positive and committed to changing their future as a result of her mentoring.

"I encourage them to reach their full potential by identifying their blocks to life, understanding and being accountable of their own behaviours, sharing their stories and testimonies through music and smashing their barriers," MC Free says.

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Rap 4 Change will use its grant to facilitate a 10 week Express Yourself Workshop, where young people from all walks of life can express themselves through creative arts and music.

MC Free's nominator says: "MC Free takes huge pride in the work she does. She is always available 24/7 to help our young people, and she ensures they are safe."



Tinonui (MC Free) Isaia
Rap 4 Change
Passionate, Dedicated, Selfless

Creating brighter futures

"Justice staff report young people are more settled, positive and committed to changing their future as a result of her mentoring."



Bronwyn (Bronnie) Mackintosh

Girls on Fire

Inspirational, Humble, Influencer

Driving gender inclusion

"Bronnie's Girls on Fire camps introduce 30 local teenagers to the skills used by emergency services and give women volunteers in the services an opportunity to develop as team leaders."

Firefighter Bronwyn (Bronnie) Ngaire Mackintosh has developed an innovative camp to empower at-risk young women and drive gender-inclusion in the emergency services.

Bronnie's Girls on Fire camps introduce 30 local teenagers to the skills used by emergency services and give women volunteers in the services an opportunity to develop as team leaders.

The camps have been running since 2018 and are led by volunteers from Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Rural Fire Service, Airservices Australia and NSW National Parks and Wildlife.

The volunteers teach firefighting skills, wildfire behaviour, road crash rescue, first aid and how to wear breathing apparatus.

YMCA staff help with team building and personal development.

"The camp graduates become conduits for information and skills back to their communities. The hope is they become active in their communities and either volunteer or work with any of these services," says Bronnie, a recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal.

"The team leader roles give women the opportunity to lead and manage small teams, develop people, navigate interpersonal growth and conflict and be exposed to the broader emergency management landscape, says Bronnie, who has 17 years of experience in operational and other roles and is now the Manager for Inclusion and Diversity at Fire and Rescue NSW.

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Girls on Fire will use its grant to fund four additional camps.

Bronnie's nominator says: "Bronnie is providing young women in Western Sydney with the opportunity to develop a skill set that will enable them to build resilience and help their community in times of crisis."

Yousef Abou Ammar helps refugees and asylum seekers on their assimilation journey, smoothing the bumps on the road to their new life in Australia.

The dedicated caseworker with the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA) puts himself in their shoes, to help provide the help they need the most.

Yousef has created several programs to guide people through the challenges they face, including opportunities to practise speaking English, access free driving lessons and further their education.

He assists with housing, explains Australian customs, rules and laws and relieves the burden of filling in confusing and complicated forms.

With Yousef's support, two people a month gain their Australian citizenship.

In partnership with TAFE, he runs gardening classes, which help graduates start their own small businesses.

"I help my clients feel welcome as they adapt to their new life in Australia," he says.

"I enjoy putting a smile on faces and helping them to belong in their community and not feel left out."

Yousef also works hard to encourage new arrivals to do their bit to protect native flora and fauna.

"Lately I've been running a horticulture program and workshops on waste management and how to keep the environment green," he says.

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Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency will use its grant to buy computers and develop educational resources.

Yousef's nominator says: "Yousef is committed to social justice and is passionate about helping his clients achieve their optimal life here in Australia."

Yousef Abou Ammar

Mt Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA)

Passionate, Committed, Humorous

Walking beside refugees and asylum seekers

"I enjoy putting a smile on faces and helping them to belong in their community and not feel left out."

Your 2020 Finalists

Ivanka Pelikan

Graceades Community Cottage

Ivanka Pelikan is so dedicated to helping vulnerable people that she has adjusted her work hours so she can be available in a crisis.

A community worker with Graceades Community Cottage, Ivanka supports the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and isolated in her community.

She has a significant impact on the people she assists, offering practical help, a listening ear and social connections.

"My office door is always open, and I have changed my work hours to fit with the community's hours of need," Ivanka says.

Vicki-Julia (Vicki) Crawford

Next Step Communities

Vicki-Julia Crawford gave up a well-paid job, her house and cars to help the people who are struggling to put food on the table.

"I saw a need in our community that I couldn't ignore," Vicki-Julia says.

She now devotes her time to providing food security, employment training and friendship to people in need through the charity she co-founded, Next Step Communities.

In two years, she has assisted 80,000 people with a hand up.

One of Vicki-Julia's most successful programs is Open Pantry, where people doing it tough can buy groceries and basic items for a small fee, while also receiving free bread, fruit and vegetables.

Gary Pontifex

Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation (The Children's Hospital at Westmead)

Gary Pontifex has been rattling the tin for sick children for over 20 years, giving up his weekends and days to raise as much as he can.

The full-time driver and Rail Protection Officer was inspired to help after visiting The Children's Hospital at Westmead and seeing some of the children's suffering and the hard times parents go through.

Gary raises funds by selling Bandaged Bear merchandise at local shopping centres and train stations and is on track to raise more than \$200,000 this year.

"Raising money for the hospital is a very big part of my life," he says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Alison Eastwood

Mount Druitt Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Rooby Roo

Blacktown Area Community Centres Inc. (Bacc)

Rob Wallace

New South Wales Rural Fire Service

Sandra Hickey

Willmot Public School

Taylah Dvorak

Cancer Council Australia

Qwayne Ybe Guevara

The Hustle

Kerry-Ann Mapperson

Hope Chapel Christian Church Blacktown

Bronwyn Ngaire Mackintosh

Girls On Fire

Gary Pontifex

Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation Fundraising For The Children's Hospital At Westmead

Ivanka Pelikan

Graceades Community Cottage

Vicki- Julia Crawford

Next Step Communities

Yousef Ammar

Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency (MECA)

Ms Tinonui Isaia

Rap 4 Change

Lisa Younes

Pound Patrol Rescue

Haibin Zhu

Chifley Swimming Club, Mt Druitt

Jeffrey Gutierrez

Western Sydney Eagles Basketball Inc

David West

Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation

Gladys Panoncillo

Rooty Hill Multicultural Carer Support Group

Ned Narouz

Rap 4 Change

Warunee Nuij

The Smith Family

Firoozeh Dorranean

Settlement Services International (SSI)

Jaimy Mikhael

Coptic Orthodox Community Outreach Service

Milad Tawil

Coptic Orthodox Community Outreach Service

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
Kidsline: 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