

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

Parramatta

NSW

Single mum Alison Marie Jones has experienced adversity first-hand. A marriage breakdown, unemployment, as well as illness and injury. But she's bounced back, and stronger than ever.

Alison has found her niche at Accessible Diversity Services Inc (ADSI), where she is a youth worker and committed to helping newly arrived refugee youth find education and employment.

Starting a refugee Learn to Swim school is not in Alison's job description, but it is one of her many standout achievements since she joined the service in 2017. The program provides young refugee women with a private and safe space to learn to swim, socialise and improve their physical and emotional wellbeing.

Alison has expanded the program to also cater for boys. Several students have trained as swimming instructors. Fourteen young people have been employed so far through the program and others are completing work experience. For most, it is their first job in Australia.

"My clients motivate me. I am proud to be part of their journey in Australia," says Alison.

"I can see a clear difference in these young people after they take part in the program; they are confident, happier and are able to support themselves financially."

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.

Accessible Diversity Services Inc (ADSI) will use its grant to make the swim school sustainable, provide free training to help young people access employment and buy burkinis for those who cannot afford them.

Alison's nominator says: "Alison is a bright and cheerful person who works tirelessly to support people from disadvantaged backgrounds achieve their full potential and realise their dreams."



Alison Marie Jones

Accessible Diversity Services Inc

Motivated, Compassionate, Genuine

Swimming sensation

"I can see a clear difference in these young people after they take part in the program; they are confident, happier and are able to support themselves financially."



Jason Sotiris

Supertees

Caring, Dedicated, Helpful

Superpowered dad

"We aim to help little heroes fight the big battles," says Jason. His slogan is: "Every superhero deserves a costume."

Tradie Jason Sotiris is giving sick children a boost with free medical-grade superhero garments to replace their hospital gowns.

Not only do Jason's Supertees help the children tap into their internal superpowers, but they are carefully designed to make life easier for bedside parents and nurses.

Jason came up with the idea for the award-winning Supertee when his baby daughter was seriously ill in Westmead Children's Hospital with a rare type of cancer.

It was Jason's way of keeping a promise to hold the invisible monster at bay.

The lovingly designed Supertees are MRI compatible, have a cape that transforms into a bib, side studs to make changing easy and openings for tubes.

"We aim to help little heroes fight the big battles," says Jason. His slogan is: "Every superhero deserves a costume."

The Supertees have captured the imagination of more than 100 fundraisers across Australia who have provided Supertees to almost 3500 children.

Despite working full-time and caring for his family, Jason spent two years designing the garment and convincing hospitals to accept them.

It's been a hard journey, Jason says. "The mountains faced have been huge. But the views from the top of these mountains we're conquering are breathtaking."

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Supertees will use its grant to take the volunteer program to the next level.

Jason's nominator says: "Despite fighting a long, hard, exhausting battle with his own daughter in hospital while working full time, Jason works extremely hard to help other families with sick children through their hospital journey."

Louise Borg has been a dedicated and empathetic volunteer for the western Sydney branch of Make-A-Wish since it started 18 years ago.

Over the years, she has brought joy to many families and children with serious illnesses by pulling out all the stops to fulfil their wish.

Louise has taken on numerous leadership roles and helps welcome new volunteers to the branch.

For the past seven years, Louise has been a member of the committee that brings the Annual Kings Langley Christmas Carols to her area. She plays an active role, ensuring everything runs smoothly and bringing together all the different elements.

Louise has continued volunteering despite the demands of raising two children.

"My life is extremely busy with working, volunteering and kids extra-curricular activities, but the volunteering I do for such a beautiful charity is so incredibly rewarding," Louise says.

The wishes have a profound impact on children and she hopes to be volunteering for the next 40 years.

"My aim is to be the longest serving volunteer in all of Australia one day.

"Receiving a wish from Make-A-Wish complements a child's medical treatment, with the power to calm, distract and inspire at the time they need it most," Louise says.

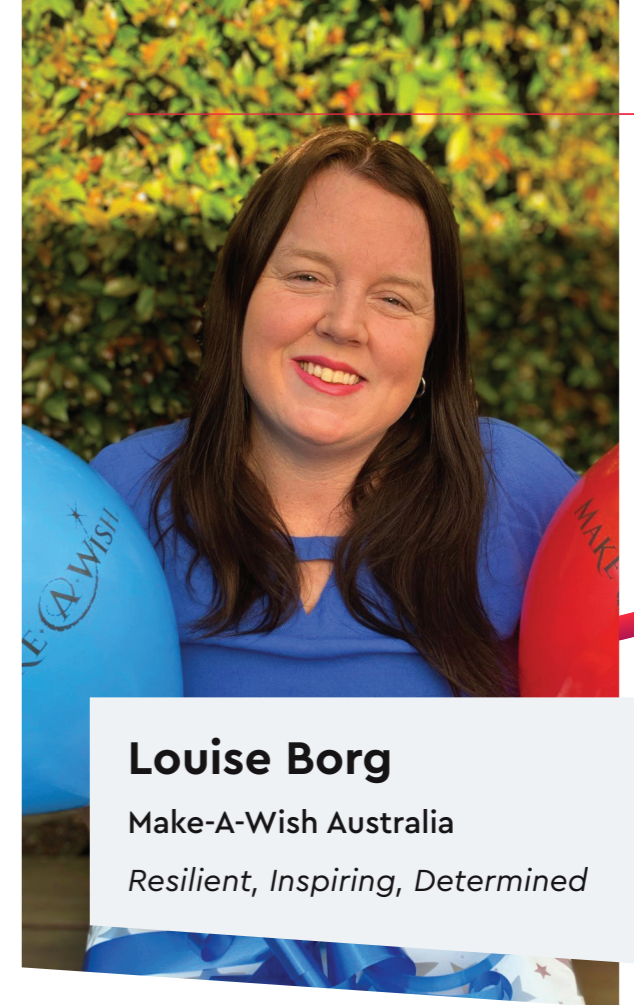
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Make-A-Wish Australia will use its grant to fund wishes.

Louise's nominator says: "Louise inspires everyone she meets to give back to their community and to believe in their own strength to overcome any adversity."

Pulling out the stops

"My life is extremely busy with working, volunteering and kids extra-curricular activities, but the volunteering I do for such a beautiful charity is so incredibly rewarding."



Louise Borg

Make-A-Wish Australia

Resilient, Inspiring, Determined

Your 2020 Finalists

Kevin McSweeney

Michael Hughes Foundation

Parramatta Citizen of the Year Kevin McSweeney oversees one of the largest and busiest ambulance stations in NSW.

He is also a founding director of the Michael Hughes Foundation, a Parramatta-based not for profit whose mission is to turn bystanders into first responders in cardiac arrest emergencies.

Kevin is committed to giving members of the community the confidence and skills to directly save another person's life by teaching them to perform CPR and use a defibrillator.

"Showing the correct techniques and allowing people to practise CPR gives them the confidence to help another person."

Elise Kellett

The Y (YMCA)

Thanks to Elise Kellett, troubled young people are finding their path to a more positive future.

Elise runs youth programs at The Y (YMCA), including outreach for young people dealing with homelessness, mental health issues or those who have come to the attention of the police.

One of her great achievements is a leadership group in which young people create events for others their age.

This allows Elise to work closely with them on skills that will help them find jobs.

"I walk alongside young people, never in front, allowing them to feel empowered, inspired and learn valuable skills."

Sue Wood

ROSE Charity Inc

Former teacher's aide Sue Wood hasn't just raised funds for much-needed school buses for students with disabilities – she also gets behind the wheel to drive them on excursions.

It's just one of the many ways Sue helps students at the William Rose School over the past 26 years, since co-founding the ROSE Charity to raise funds for the school.

Thanks to Sue's passion, the children have iPads, a playground, a sensory garden, interactive classroom equipment and air-conditioning.

Among the most valued contributions are four school buses to take the students on excursions and to activities including swimming and work experience.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Peter John Bodman

Kids With Cancer Foundation Australia

Chris Cleary

StreetMed

Bijinder Dugal

Aasha Australia Foundation

Claudine Alame

Red Frogs Australia – NSW

Olivia Kirillov

Wyatt's Walk For Cystic Fibrosis

Marco Colli

TAD

Mahboba Rawi

Mahboba's Promise

Steven Shah

Mpn-Mate Research Foundation

Dr Michelle Wong

The Children's Hospital At Westmead

Elizabeth Scully

Parramatta Women's Shelter

Melinda Wilson

Western Sydney Direct Action

Kathy Van Oeveren

Western Sydney Local Health District

Alicia Judge

Scribbles And Giggles Childcare Centres

Siobhan Pellegrino

Ronald Mcdonald House Charities Greater Western Sydney

Elise Kellett

The Y (YMCA)

Jason Sotiris

Superteas

Louise Borg

Make-A-Wish Australia

Sue Wood

Rose Charity Inc

Michael Senthilnathan

Young Life Australia

Jennifer Mantakul

Young Life Australia

Kevin Mcsweeney

Michael Hughes Foundation

Alison Marie Jones

Auburn Diversity Services Inc

Lesley Warren

Food For The Soul

Alpha Mendoza

Winston Mall Children's Centre

Paul Moussa

Parramatta Mission

Sayed Agha Jafari

Sadat Welfare And Sports Association And NSW Service For The Treatment And Rehabilitation Of Torture And Trauma Survivors

Marlene Khouzam

Macquarie University

Bruce Meyer

Children's Tumour Foundation Of Australia

Tanya Dominguez

Royal Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals New South Wales

Gul Karaduman

Enable Ability

Ruth Pasi

African Theatres

Kedar Pagaddinimath

Aasha Australia Foundation

Ben Hura

Young Life Australia

Janice Irwin

Women's Creative Hub

Ron Della Vedova

St Vincent De Paul Society NSW

Saira Mohammad

Auburn Diversity Services Inc

Phillip Grech

OLQP Lighthouse Youth

Dean Bainbridge

Toongabbie Legal Centre Inc

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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