

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 Jocal 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 Plenty Valley VIC



Maddie Francis was inspired to help other parents of premature babies after her son Ashton arrived 10 weeks early and spent 6.5 weeks in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the Mercy Hospital.

His emergency entry into the world started on Mother's Day, so Maddie understands how exceptionally hard it is to be there on special days.

She created NICU Cheer in 2016 with a goal of bringing some joy to parents spending Christmas Day in the same NICU.

After placing a call-out for donations on Facebook, she created 61 gift bags, filled with items she would have found helpful, such as snacks, toiletries, premature clothing and toys for older kids.

"Being in the NICU is traumatising, isolating and heartbreaking," says Maddie. "We want parents to know they are not alone."

Last Christmas, Maddie delivered 188 gift bags, three huge staff hampers and three Santa sacks to three NICUS. These were full of toys, books and games for the siblings to enjoy.

Donations now flow in from corporate donors, helping Maddie

achieve her aim of providing bags of consistent quality so no family gets less than another.

Her tireless work contacting companies for donations also means the bags have quadrupled in size.

"Although it doesn't pay me wages, I've never been prouder or happier to call this my full-time job," says Maddie.

The team are now in preparation mode to complete 223 Father's Day bags and have added a fourth hospital to their rounds, The Royal Children's.

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NICU Cheer will use its grant to expand its service to all five of the tertiary level NICUs across Melbourne and add more delivery days.

Maddie's nominator says: "Maddie is the first person to jump in and help people feel part of a community and to provide support when they need it most."



Extraordinary, Compassionate, Inspirational

Helping parents of premmies

Jana Ala

"Being in the NICU is traumatising, isolating and heartbreaking," says Maddie. "We want parents to know they are not alone." WESTFIELD 2020 LOCAL HEROES

Josephine (Josie) Minniti OAM

Northern Health Foundation Genuine, Committed, Heartfelt

A fundraising whirlwind

"The funds raised from picnics in the park, a dinner dance, pasta nights and other activities have paid for medical equipment upgrades and oncology treatment chairs and defibrillators." Josie Minniti OAM is a whirlwind when it comes to raising funds to help patients at Northern Health's four public hospitals.

For many years, she has been a dedicated and inspiring volunteer for the Northern Health Foundation, so far raising over \$700,000 to support kidney and cancer services.

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Josie's extraordinary efforts have helped patients undergoing cancer treatments feel more comfortable. Donations include blanket warmers that stave off the cold, one of the side effects of treatment.

The funds have also paid for scalp cooling machines, which can significantly reduce hair loss during chemotherapy.

Josie is always there to support patients who are feeling unwell and vulnerable, despite having health challenges of her own and dealing with cancer in her own family. "Whenever I am fundraising my motto is 'there is always someone worse off than you', so I do all I can to improve their lives," says Josie, who has received an Order of Australia (OAM) for her dedication.

"This year, my target is to purchase equipment for the respiratory unit to help patients suffering from lung cancer."

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Northern Health Foundation will use its grant towards an EBUS machine which will speed up the time for a respiratory diagnosis so treatment can start sooner.

Josie's nominator says: "Josie's impact on our health service is immeasurable. Through her tireless fundraising Josie has greatly improved the comfort of our patients during their treatments."

Three nights a week, homeless people in Melbourne can look forward to a feast of prawns and steak, cooked with love by Deborah Henry and her dedicated volunteers.

Deborah set up her social enterprise, From Us 2 You, nearly six years ago after her community services studies opened her eyes to the struggles people face.

In addition to enjoying meals created from quality food rescued from supermarkets, it's a chance for her clients to connect and have a conversation with each other and the volunteers.

"They call me mum or street mum. I love it," Deborah says.

She has converted a bedroom of her house into a pantry and also offers food hampers to people in need.

Deborah hasn't let the COVID-19 pandemic slow her down. She is as busy as ever delivering meals and food hampers to the hotels at which local homeless people are being housed and to other services. Deborah thinks nothing of using her own money to fund From Us 2 You and traded in her car to buy a van to transport the food.

"I don't need anything. I've got a house and a bed. I like putting smiles on faces" Deborah says.

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From Us 2 You will use its grant to buy food as there is less food available from supermarkets because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deborah's nominator says: "Deborah is kind and giving and puts those in need before her own needs. She cares about her local communitu." Deborah Henry From Us 2 You

Smart, Kind, Selfless

Cooking and giving with love

"They call me mum or street mum. I love it."

Your 2020 Finalists

Nella Palmieri

Whittlesea City Neighbourhood Watch

Nella Palmieri is unrivalled when it comes to volunteering in her community.

She is involved with many organisations and events, including Whittlesea City Neighbourhood Watch.

As a fundraising events coordinator, she organises safety events and speaks to organisations.

It's widely recognised that her efforts have helped reduce crime in the Whittlesea area.

Narelle Draper

Hazel Glen Netball Club

Without Narelle Draper's encouragement, many children would be missing out on the health and social benefits of sport.

She started the Hazel Glen Netball Club to create an environment where all children feel included and can grow in confidence and independence, both on the court and in the community.

In just 12 months the club has surged to 16 teams for 140 children aged 5–18 years. The focus is on being a good sportsperson and building each other up.

"We are focused on giving them the skills they need to find where they fit and do well," Narelle says.

Libby Barker

PRACE (Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education)

Libby Barker has dedicated her life to helping disadvantaged youth, migrants and asylum seekers break the poverty cycle through education.

She works with disadvantaged youth, adults struggling to find employment, newly arrived immigrants and asylum seekers, with 650 students enrolling each year.

Libby takes an innovative approach to engage learners, such as combining literacy programs with sailing and organising activities for children so their parents can learn. She develops relationships with other organisations to help reach and support her learners.



Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Danielle Ramak Raise Foundation

Cathy Williams Team Kill Cancer.Org

Maggie Mcdonnell Melbourne Arboretum

Saadia Mir Hazaar Raise Foundation

Nadia Falvo Lalor Warriors Cricket Club

Maddie Francis Nicu Cheer

Deborah Henry From Us 2 You

Narelle Draper Hazel Glen Netball Club

Josephine (Josie) Minniti Oam Northern Health Foundation

Libby Barker Prace (Preston Reservoir Adult Community Education)

Nella Palmieri Whittlesea City Neighbourhood Watch Amber Grace Second Steps Pty Ltd

Adam Wharton Northern Pride Netball Association

Kevin O'Callaghan Craigieburn SES

Doug Wilson Diamond Valley Lions Club

Matthew Odgers Links Community Group

Prabhat Sangwan Manas.Inc

Jodie Harris 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 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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