

Westfield

Local Heroes

2020

***"It's been amazing. It's been
a game changer for us"***

- Westfield Local Hero Alumni



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



"Girls on Fire program is a platform for us to develop the leadership capability of women and diverse fire fighters on the premiss that you can't be what you can't see."

WESTFIELD MT DRUITT LOCAL HERO 2020
Bronwyn (Bronnie) Mackintosh - Girls on Fire

2020 Participation

more than
1,400
Nominations



more than
140,000
Community Votes



Community Sentiment

The contribution that all our **Westfield Local Hero nominees make to their local communities is significant**. Their work creates positive impact for others in a wide range of ways. By:

- **Nurturing a sense of belonging and inclusion**
- **Helping in times of community crisis**
- **Building community resilience**
- **Promoting positive health and wellbeing**
- **Improving access to community services and groups**
- **Protecting the local environment**

"I felt acknowledged and rewarded for my community work. And it allowed me to make contact with others doing great work in the community." Program finalist

"This program has allowed us to move forward in creating more programs to expand and support more of our local youth." Program hero

"It was very humbling to be nominated let alone be up receiving an award. It has given me a massive boost in drive to reach our goals and help as many as we can along the way!" Program hero

Centres

New South Wales

Bondi Junction	14
Burwood	20
Chatswood	26
Eastgardens	32
Hornsby	38
Hurstville	44
Kotara	50
Liverpool	56
Miranda	62
Mt Druit	68
Parramatta	74
Penrith	80
Sydney	86
Tuggerah	92
Warringah Mall	98

ACT

Belconnen	106
Woden	112

Victoria

Airport West	120
Doncaster	126
Fountain Gate	132
Geelong	138
Knox	144
Plenty Valley	150
Southland	156

Queensland

Carindale	164
Chermside	170
Coomera	176
Garden City	182
Helensvale	188
North Lakes	194

South Australia

Marion	202
Tea Tree Plaza	208
West Lakes	214

Western Australia

Booragoon	222
Carousel	228
Innaloo	234
Whitford City	240

New Zealand

Albany	248
Manukau City	254
Newmarket	260
Riccarton	266
St Lukes	272

New South Wales



NSW Centres

- Bondi Junction
- Burwood
- Chatswood
- Eastgardens
- Hornsby
- Hurstville
- Kotara
- Liverpool
- Miranda
- Mt Druitt
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Sydney
- Tuggerah
- Warringah Mall

Westfield

Bondi Junction

NSW

Sophie Smith responded to the grief of losing her prematurely born triplets by founding a running group that has raised more than \$3.5 million lifesaving neonatal equipment and research.

In 2016, Sophie and her late husband, Ash, became parents to triplets, Jasper, Henry and Evan. Tragically, despite huge efforts to save their lives at the Royal Hospital for Women, they did not survive.

After their babies passed away Sophie & Ash were heartbroken but determined that something good could come from their sons' short lives.

They decided to run a half marathon to raise \$20,000 for one new humidicrib for the hospital. Six months later, their team of 98 ran the SMH Marathon, raising \$80,000, and Sophie decided she wanted to continue to run and fundraise, to give premature babies a better chance of survival.

"Channelling my grief in this way gave me a renewed sense of purpose," says Sophie.

Two years after losing their triplets, when their fourth son, Owen, was six months, Ash was diagnosed with incurable brain cancer. He was only 35.

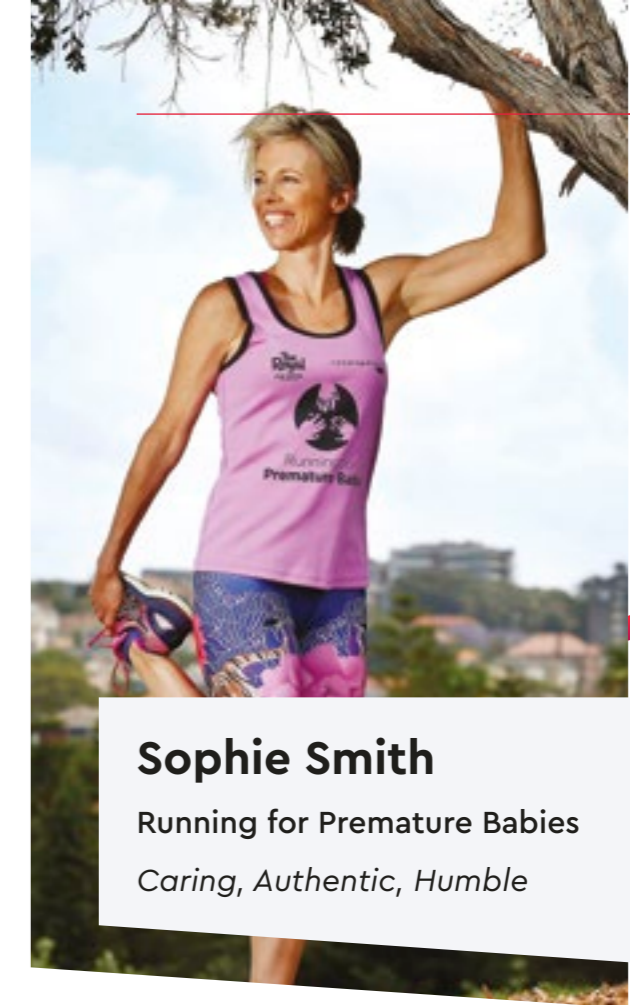
"Focusing on something bigger than our own personal challenges helped us through," Sophie says. Sadly Ash passed away in 2016. Since then Sophie has grown the charity to support hospitals around the country.

So far, her charity has helped approximately 6000 babies, funding critical research and providing 56 pieces of donated equipment.

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Running for Premature Babies will use its grant to grow their running communities and increase funding for lifesaving equipment to give premature babies a better chance of survival.

Sophie's Nominator says "Sophie Smith is a hero because she has overcome true hardship to inspire and save thousands of families and their babies."



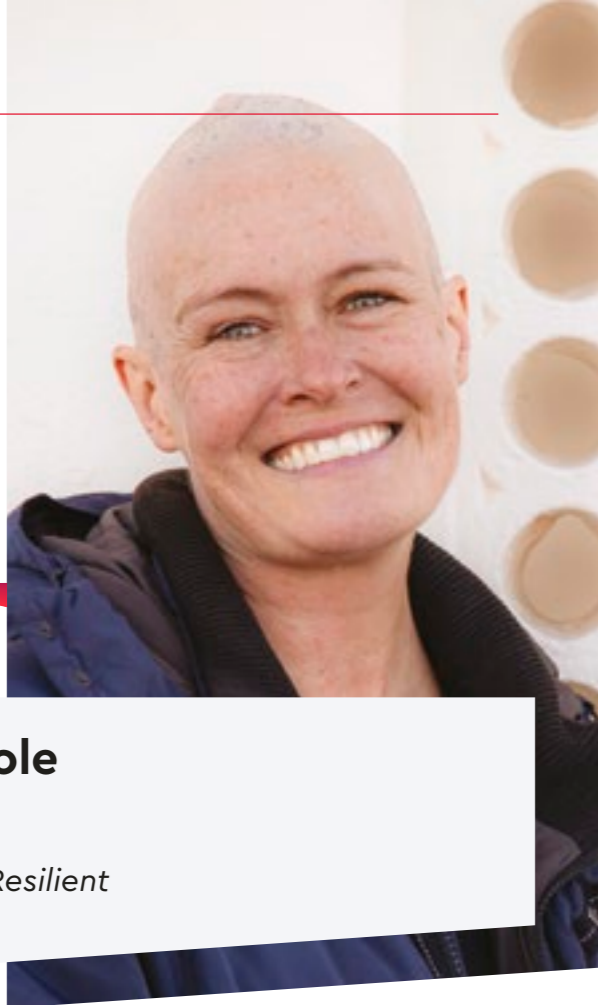
Sophie Smith

Running for Premature Babies

Caring, Authentic, Humble

Running for life

"Channelling my grief in this way gave me a renewed sense of purpose," says Sophie.



Siobhan O'Toole

St Vincent's Hospital

Motivated, Selfless, Resilient

Champion for Exercise Rehabilitation for Cancer Patients

"I am undoubtedly whole again because I had the support and access to free exercise during my treatment."

Siobhan O'Toole is a committed fundraiser and has organised numerous community events to help cancer patients ward off a recurrence of the disease.

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Cancer survivor, Siobhan is passionate about giving other patients access to the same exercise regime that helped her get through gruelling treatments and boosted her odds of staying cancer-free.

In a short time, she has raised more than \$60,000 for the pilot Cancer Exercise Prehab program at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

Each \$25,000 will allow 20 more patients to have physical training integrated into their treatment plans.

"Thanks to exercise, I have 40 to 50 per cent less chance of getting a recurrence," says Siobhan, who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer in 2018.

"I am undoubtedly whole again because I had the support and access to free exercise during my treatment."

During her chemotherapy treatment, Siobhan walked an average 8900 steps a day and lifted weights three times a week.

Exercise improved her mental health and sleep, provided welcome relief from fatigue and restored her muscle mass.

"Traditionally cancer patients are wrapped in cotton wool and as a result their condition deteriorates," says Siobhan.

"However, there is mounting scientific evidence that exercise can help patients endure treatments."

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St Vincent's Hospital will use the grant to develop an online exercise program so cancer patients can work out at home.

Siobhan's nominator says: "Siobhan will stop at nothing to ensure free exercise, nutrition and mental health support is available for all patients fighting cancer."

Our Big Kitchen (OBK) with its familiar red, green and orange logo is one of those feel-good organisations that add soul to a suburb.

The big heart behind the industrial-sized Bondi kitchen is Laya Slavin, who co-founded it with her husband, Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin.

Supported by volunteers from every walk of life, they have turned their wish to do good into a tangible reality that is far bigger than the 70,000 nutritious meals they provide a year.

Mother of eight Laya exudes positive energy and radiates compassion, warmth and non-judgmental acceptance, bringing magic into her volunteer work.

On most days, Laya is either in the kitchen cooking with people of all abilities, delivering food to people in need, visiting someone in hospital dressed up in a costume or being a shoulder to cry on.

Laya has also started a wig library for women who have lost their hair from illness.

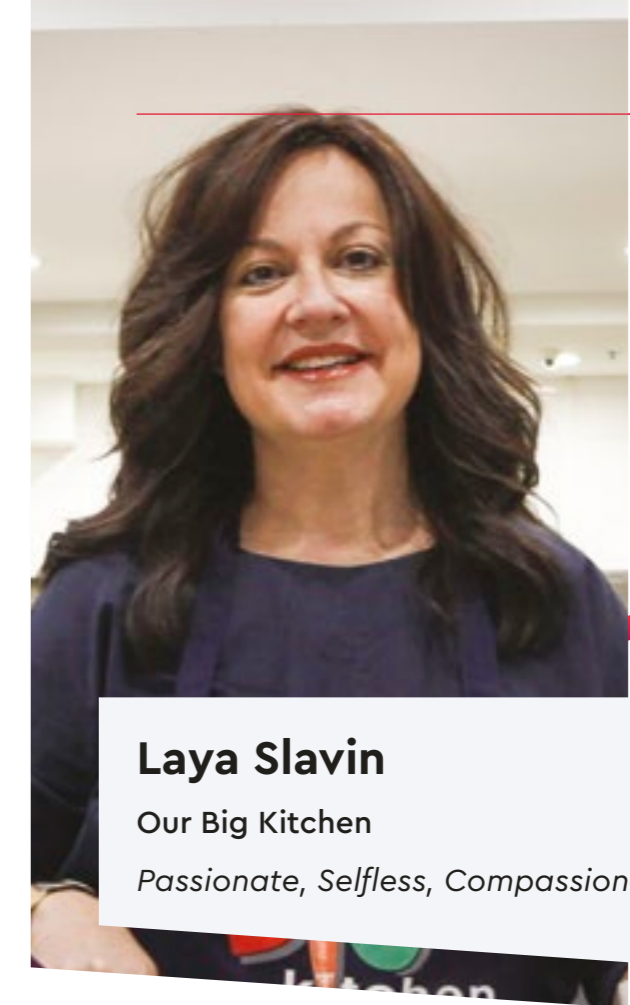
During the recent bushfires, Laya brought together volunteers from a melting pot of suburbs across Sydney to create thousands of personalised biscuits and handwritten messages of thanks, love and compassion for victims and firefighters.

Volunteers poured into the kitchen to help in any way they could. Firefighters also came to express their appreciation.

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Our Big Kitchen will use its grant to buy kitchen equipment and to contribute to delivery costs.

Laya's nominator says: "Laya is a shining example of leadership, love and compassion. She is full of life and spends her energy on helping others. Laya empowers countless individuals to be givers in their own lives."



Laya Slavin

Our Big Kitchen

Passionate, Selfless, Compassionate

Showing love with food

"On most days, Laya is either in the kitchen cooking with people of all abilities, delivering food to people in need, visiting someone in hospital dressed up in a costume or being a shoulder to cry on."

Your 2020 Finalists

Sylvia Hall Holdsworth Community

Sylvia Hall has lived in the same Eastern Suburbs house for 72 years and has been helping to feed frail, ill or socially isolated people in the community for more than 40 years.

She became involved when a neighbour needed help packing meals for Woollahra Meals on Wheels. In 2013, Woollahra Meals on Wheels became part of Holdsworth Home Cuisine, and Sylvia continued helping her clients five days a week.

"I know they enjoy the company and the conversation, and the meals and support help them stay out of the nursing home for as long as possible," says Sylvia.

Carole Schlessinger Kids Giving Back

Carole Schlessinger gave up a lucrative business to launch Kids Giving Back, a charity providing children with unique opportunities to experience the joy of giving.

So far, more than 27,500 children and family members have volunteered, making and distributing over 100,000 meals through Kids Giving Back which she created with co-founder Ruth Tofler-Riesel.

"Our unique and fun programs enable children through hands-on, practical and meaningful activities to support the work of charities, to develop empathy and to experience altruism and a sense of belonging," Carole says. The programs encourage the children to think about "we", and not just "me".

Danny Hui Sameview

Danny Hui developed Sameview to help his family coordinate the 37 people involved in the care of his youngest son, Monty, who has a neurological condition that severely affects his movement.

"It's an online platform that gets everyone from a family's team on the same page, talking to each other, working with each other so that the family's goals can be achieved," Danny says.

He started working on the project fulltime four years ago. Since then, Sameview has won several awards. Following a surge during COVID-19 they now have more than 1000 users, and Danny is delighted that half of them are clinicians.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Nadine Taylor
Hope + Heal

Sylvia Hall
Holdsworth Community

Laya Slavin
Our Big Kitchen

Sophie Smith
Running For Premature Babies

Siobhan O'Toole
St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney

Carole Schlessinger
Kids Giving Back

Danny Hui
Sameview

Will Hawes
Will2Live

Susan Marden
OneOnOne Children's Therapy

Jack Ellis
Goodfellas

Donna Mckiernan
Irish Support Agency NSW Inc

Victoria Rich
Bondi Girls Surf Riders

Lena Le Rolland
Bondi Surf Club

Michelle Lee
Raise Foundation

Carolina Gottardo
Jesuit Refugee Service Australia

Sophie Levy
NSW Friendship Circle

Narelle Moore
Bondi Surf Bathing Life Saving Club

Anita Kolni
Ocean Lovers Festival

Jane Cosgrave
Friends Of Wairoa School Inc

Tanya Duckworth
Endometriosis Australia

Lisa Rubinstein
Arnie's Recon

Joel Pilgrim
Waves Of Wellness Foundation

Tara Hurster
The Tara Clinic

Alan David Joffe
Shalom Gamarada Foundation

Rabbi Mendel Kastel Oam
Jewish House

Charlotte Evans
Splash Without The Trash / Clean Up Australia

Lynette Anderson
Lifeline North Coast (NSW)

Westfield

Burwood

NSW

Jenny Smith has been a Raise Foundation mentor at Burwood Girls High School for three straight years.

She gently encourages students to overcome their barriers by generously sharing her own story of overcoming adversity, including anxiety and depression.

"I love inspiring and encouraging others," says Jenny.

Raise Foundation volunteer mentors give up two hours a week for 22 weeks to help young people become resilient, capable and connected by ensuring that they feel heard, valued and supported.

Jenny grew up in a family with mental illness and was bullied as a child. After leaving school, she endured long periods of unemployment, but completed courses and participated in volunteer work and casual work to improve her chances.

Today Jenny is a respected member of the mental health sector and participates in several organisations that have a direct influence on mental health policy.

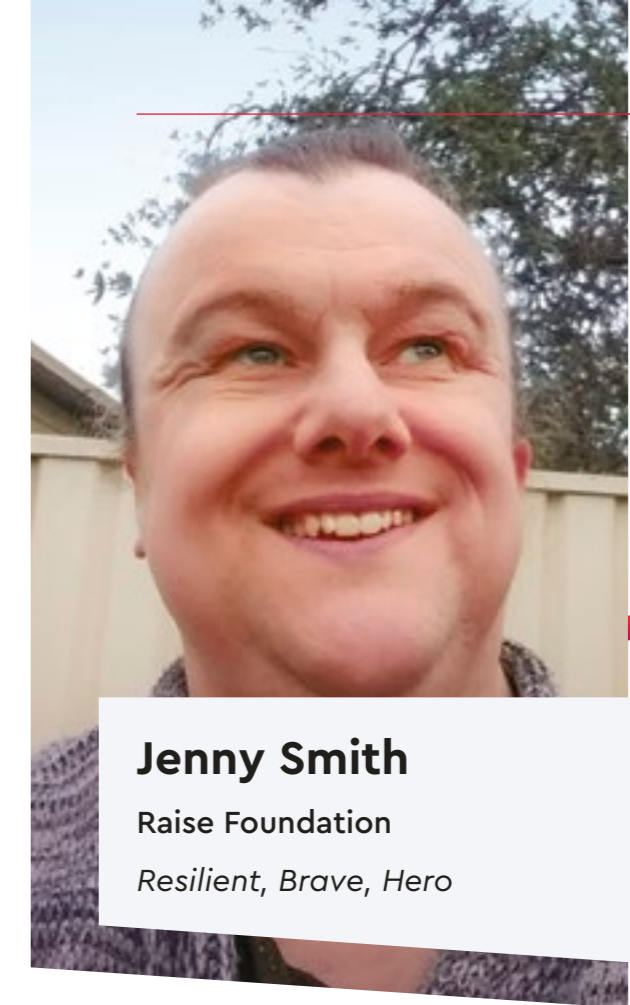
"Everyone in the wider community benefits from my work in the sector, but the young people I mentor within Raise Foundation programs benefit the most from my knowledge and life experience," Jenny says.

"I do what I do because it gives me a sense of purpose and brings me so much satisfaction, especially seeing young people flourish."

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Raise Foundation will use its grant to offer a mentor program to at least five additional students at Burwood Girls.

Jenny's nominator says: "Jenny is fearless, resilient and brave. This woman has achieved so much in the pursuit of breaking down the stigma of mental illness, despite her own battles."



Jenny Smith

Raise Foundation

Resilient, Brave, Hero

Supporting Burwood students

"I do what I do because it gives me a sense of purpose and brings me so much satisfaction, especially seeing young people flourish."



Abla Kadous

Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA)

Incredible, Inspiring, Humble

35 years of service

"IWWA has over 1500 members from 56 nationalities and their welfare has always been my focus," says Abla, who started volunteering 35 years ago.

Seventy-year-old Abla Tohamy Kadous has overcome financial restraints and other challenges to create the Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA).

She leads 50 other volunteers and staff and is active in the activities of the thriving organisation she founded 17 years ago.

"IWWA has over 1500 members from 56 nationalities and their welfare has always been my focus," says Abla, who started volunteering 35 years ago.

The association helps Islamic women feel welcome and participate in their communities. It offers anti-discrimination forums, school-readiness programs, youth camps, cooking classes and events for elderly people.

Abla has also bridged the gap with other religions and organised inter-faith forums in Western Sydney.

One of her most impressive achievements was raising money to buy a state-of-the-art function centre after years of sewing, cooking and sourcing things to sell.

One of the association's most important projects is the provision of food and other essentials to people in need, and people queue at the centre for parcels.

"I have seen the need for food packages grow exponentially," Abla says.

Last year, Abla was named NSW Senior Volunteer of the Year. In 2017 she received the Muslim Lifetime Achievement Award for over 25 years of service to the Muslim Community.

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The association will use its grant to hire a van for the food service and erect a shelter for people in the queue.

Abla's nominator says: "Abla has brought positive change and hope to so many vulnerable women in her community."

Driven by a spirit of compassion, Marcel De Maria has laboured to establish a charity that rescues thousands of surplus bread loaves and rolls every day and shares them with people in need.

He started Gift of Bread in 2007, run entirely by volunteers they supply bread to more than 200 sites, including refuges, boarding houses, nursing homes, community groups, soup kitchens, food vans, special schools, churches and outreach programs.

"We believe it's important to extend the meaning of community, especially during hard times," says Marcel.

"When droughts were affecting our farmers, we supplied excess bread as animal feed. When our nation was ravaged by fires, we delivered useful packs of water, fresh bread and other provisions for the firefighters. With the COVID-19 crisis we are still reaching out to the isolated, the lonely and the most vulnerable in our community"

Marcel is also conscious of the environmental benefit.

Last year, Gift of Bread rescued over 160,000kg of bread from landfill. "The greenhouse gas emissions would be equivalent to 74.4 years of electricity for a home."

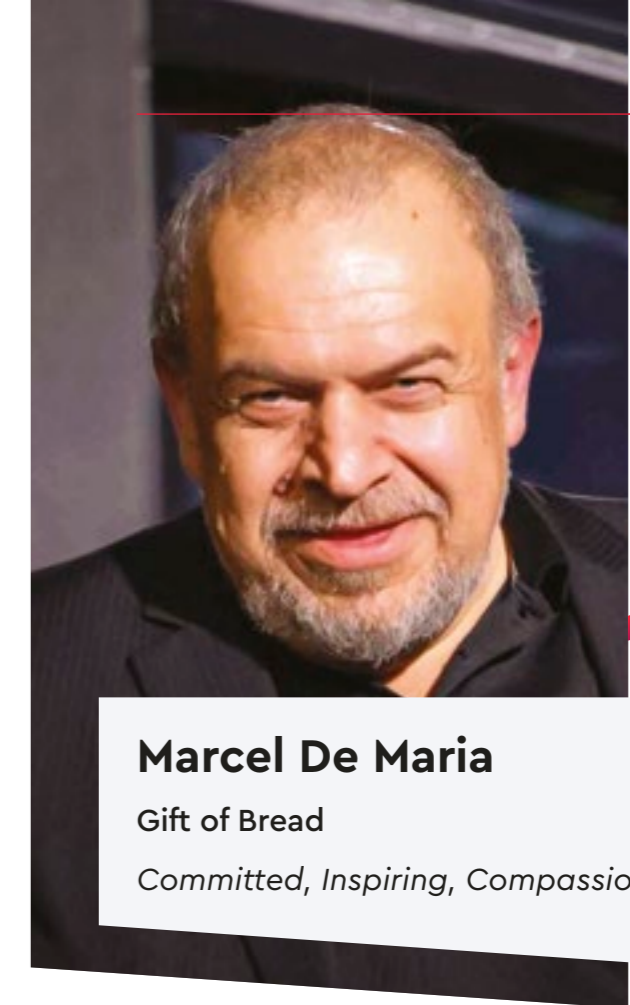
Marcel always leads with innovative solutions. One of the challenges for homeless people is that they may not have anywhere to store a loaf of bread. So Gift of Bread is trialling their Snackbag project to supply manageable portions with a long term shelf life.

The program has proved popular and has growing demand, says Marcel.

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Gift of Bread will use its grant to help cover operational costs.

Marcel's nominator says: "Marcel's determination and willingness to help are an inspiration to all. His kindness resonates with those he interacts with, and he is a wonderful role model for the community, in particular the youth."



Marcel De Maria

Gift of Bread

Committed, Inspiring, Compassionate

Reaching out with rescued food

"We believe it's important to extend the meaning of community, especially during hard times," says Marcel.

Your 2020 Finalists

Carron Johnston

Stepping Out Program

Carron Johnston is driven by a profound desire to help women survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

She lives this every day as volunteer chair of the Stepping Out Program, a small organisation with seven social workers who help survivors overcome the trauma and stigma of abuse.

"Similar to cancer, it is likely everyone knows someone who has been affected by this trauma. However, unlike cancer, no one wants to talk about it," Carron says.

Carron, an accountant, has been on the board of Stepping Out for four years, initially as treasurer.

Cheryl Gabin

Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc

Cheryl Gabin grew up in a family affected by domestic violence and knows the physical, emotional and psychological toll it can take. After 10 years in the corporate sector, Cheryl starting volunteering at Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc. in the Inner West Family Support Service.

She facilitates a program called After The Storm, which provides a supportive and nurturing space for women, affected by domestic violence, to grow their self-belief, become change agents and heal past traumas. "Over the years I have seen participants gain strength to move on and make life changing, empowered choices," Cheryl says.

Rosemary King

St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

If you ask Rosemary King why she goes to great lengths to help others, she'll most likely say: "I do what I do because there is a need, and it's no good just acknowledging a need, you have to act on it if you can. It's the right thing to do."

As a lay minister at the Parish of St Paul's Anglican Church in Burwood, Rosemary makes a seemingly endless list of contributions to the community.

She coordinates the Parish Pantry, the Community Hub and Life Jacket programs, each relying on volunteers to provide essential support to people in need.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Carron Johnston

Stepping Out Program

Abla Kadous

Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA)

Jenny Smith

Raise Foundation

Rosemary King

St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

Marcel De Maria

Gift Of Bread

Cheryl Gabin

Burwood Community Welfare Services Inc.

Ray Sykes

Stepping Stone House

Nabilah Chowdhury

School Strike For Climate And Yatz (Taronga Zoo Sydney)

Dr Leng Tan

Chinese Australian Services Society Limited

Peter Thomas Smith

Rotary

Liam James

Balmain Para Rowing Program

Alice Kang

Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway

Rawah Arja

AusRelief

John Hughes

Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia

Dulce Munoz

Mums4Refugees

Laurelle Wishart

Raise Foundation

Nic Newling

The Champions

Chris Stannage

Hunters Hill Sailing Club

Fiona Patricia Arnold

Reverse Garbage NSW

Bill Crews

Exodus Foundation

Janu Dhayanathan

Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia

Simon Chhoeu

SchoolAid

Mona Mahamed

Community Support Services Inc.

David Rafferty

The Sewing Basket

Yashar Kammoun

Lebanese Muslim Association

Westfield

Chatswood

NSW

Barbara Healy is 80 years old, and she is as passionate today about helping those in need as she was in 1964, when she first started volunteering for St Vincent de Paul Society.

During her long tenure as a volunteer, Barbara has been active in greater Chatswood and served as President of Chatswood Regional Council.

Barbara, a qualified clinical nurse who has worked in Canada, the USA and with the armed forces, is not the kind of person who waits for people in need to find her. She goes out looking for those who may be lonely, depressed or homeless.

She regularly travels to Waterloo, where she has teamed up with nuns and priests to help people in the area.

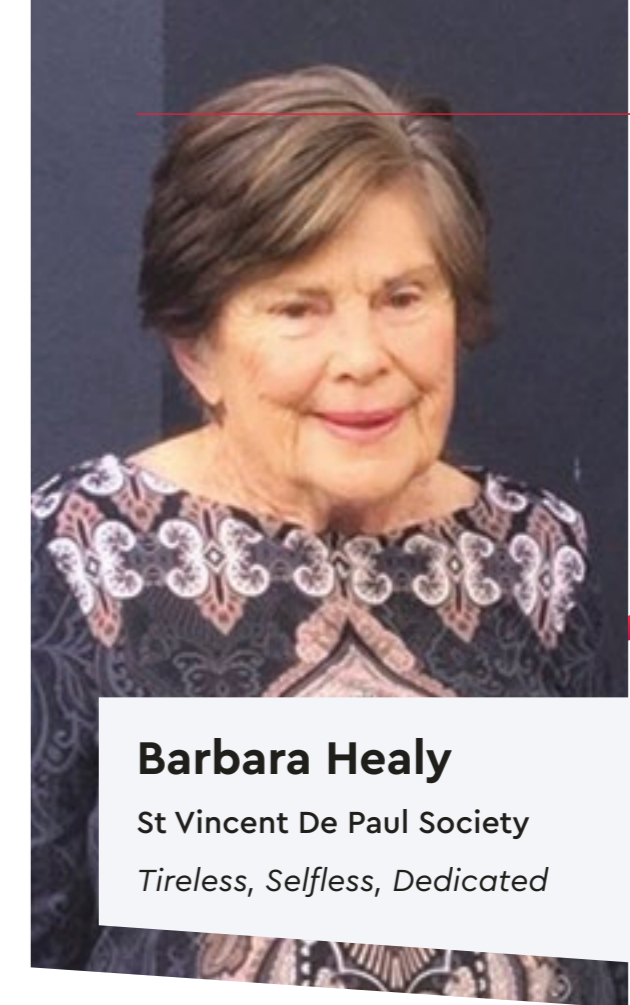
In Chatswood and Willoughby, Barbara worked with the council staff and the Ombudsman to help the poor and the needy. She also worked with the Willoughby Council to launch Bring your Bills Day to help people struggling to keep up with payments.

"I always treat people in the same way I would like to be treated. I try not to judge or discriminate. I feel frustration, sadness and anger when I can't provide them with what they need. I called the Pope to ask for more assistance," says the courageous volunteer.

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St Vincent De Paul Society will use its grant to provide people with vouchers for food, electricity, water and gas.

Barbara's nominator says: "Barbara is always on the run to help where help is needed, to move the establishment into action to help the needy."



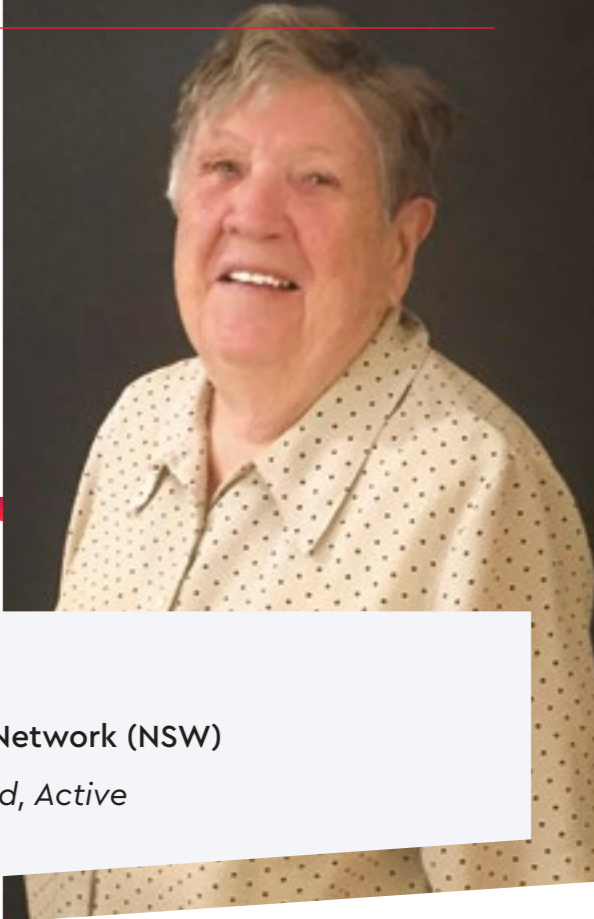
Barbara Healy

St Vincent De Paul Society

Tireless, Selfless, Dedicated

80 years of goodness

"I always treat people in the same way I would like to be treated. I try not to judge or discriminate. I feel frustration, sadness and anger when I can't provide them with what they need. I called the Pope to ask for more assistance."



Cate Turner

The Older Women's Network (NSW)

Indomitable, Engaged, Active

Flagbearer for healthy ageing

"In my long life, I have realised the best way to deal with personal adversity is to get active and campaign for change."

As a volunteer in her early nineties, Cate Turner is a flag bearer for healthy ageing.

She knows from experience what it's like to rely on the aged pension as a result of what she feels is wage discrimination, and interrupting her career to care for her parents.

"This made me aware of the financial vulnerability of older women and motivated me to get active in doing something about it."

Cate has been an enthusiastic member of The Older Women's Network (OWN) since 1994 after retiring from a career in human resources.

She is an office-bearer on all three levels of OWN; local, state and national. Her work includes dementia support and OWN's Aboriginal Support Circle.

Cate is also a member of the Lane Cove Council's Age-Friendly Committee and helps develop strategies for older people in her community.

Cate was the first woman president of the Sydney Lions Club and organises the annual centenarians event at Government House.

"In my long life, I have realised the best way to deal with personal adversity is to get active and campaign for change. I consider myself a fortunate person and find working on improving the lives of others is what keeps me going," Cate says.

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The Older Women's Network will use the grant to upgrade its computer and communications system.

Cate's nominator says: "Cate Turner is a shining example of how to grow old with dignity. She demonstrates every day how giving back to the community enhances people's quality of life. She contributes to respect for older Australians."

Lucy Jones started Neuroblastoma Australia after losing her two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Sienna, to cancer.

The aim was to provide support for others and fund research to protect other people from the grief she had experienced.

Lucy says: "Losing a child to cancer is simply dreadful. Watching them endure so many toxic and painful treatments over many months, and then for them not to be saved is simply heartbreaking. For me, in a modern society, it's not acceptable."

Lucy founded Neuroblastoma Australia 10 years ago to help fund the search for better and kinder treatments tailored to the individual child with the cancer.

"As a small charity, it has been a challenge to grow, get recognised and raise funds, but over 10 years we have raised over \$2.15 million and have supported many families."

Lucy has also recruited three eminent overseas experts in neuroblastoma to be on her scientific advisory board.

Although Lucy was a co-founder of the charity, she now runs it almost single-handedly, with help from part-time employees and a small group of volunteers.

Much of her energy goes towards the charity's main event, Run2Cure, which has grown to more than 3000 runners and raises over \$250,000 for research every year.

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Neuroblastoma Australia will use its grant to fund digital marketing training for two part-time employees and run an advertising campaign to promote the Run2Cure.

Lucy's nominator says: "Lucy has put her own tragedy behind her and worked tirelessly for a decade to help others who are desperate in their fight against childhood cancer."

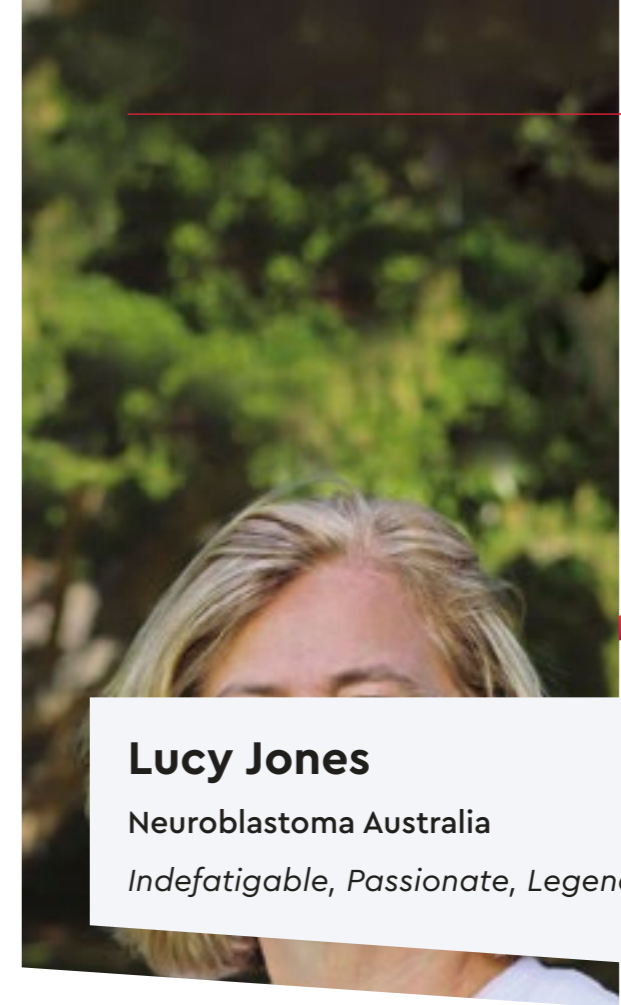
Lucy Jones

Neuroblastoma Australia

Indefatigable, Passionate, Legendary

In search of a cure

"As a small charity, it has been a challenge to grow, get recognised and raise funds, but over 10 years we have raised over \$2.15 million and have supported many families."



Your 2020 Finalists

Caitlin Tanaka

Youth in Motion Incorporated

Caitlin Tanaka received help to overcome interrupted schooling and went on to complete a university degree. Now she is giving back.

Caitlin is grateful for the counselling she received and the sensitive care of the teachers at her private school. In return, she is volunteering as the Director of Operations at Youth in Motion (YIM), a non-profit start-up that helps young people overcome disadvantage.

"I have watched many of our students graduate from high school and move into higher education or employment, motivating me to continue my work," says Caitlin, who is studying for her MBA.

Jesse Ko

StreetWork Australia Limited

As a youth worker at StreetWork, he helps people from all walks of life, including those affected by crime, mental illness, substance misuse, destructive relationships and homelessness.

One of Jesse's talents is making people feel safe and comfortable, which helps them open up about the areas of their life they want to improve.

Jesse has helped young people to reduce substance dependence, improve their performance at work and do better at school.

Paul Francis OAM

Humpty Dumpty Foundation

In the 1990s, Paul Francis OAM started the Humpty Dumpty Foundation to raise funds for vital equipment needed to treat babies and children at the Royal North Shore Hospital. So far, he has raised more than \$6.7 million for 680 pieces of equipment that is saving lives across the hospital.

The foundation's website features a wish list of items to which donors can contribute. These range from a \$76,000 neonatal ventilator to a specialised drill that costs \$670.

Many people in Sydney have participated in Paul's flagship fundraisers, the Balmoral Burn fun-run and the Great Humpty Ball.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Anna Humberstone

Hummingbird Community Choir

Jesse Ko

StreetWork Australia Limited

Cate Turner

The Older Women's Network (NSW)

Caitlin Tanaka

Youth In Motion Incorporated

Barbara Healy

St Vincent De Paul Society

Lucy Jones

Neuroblastoma Australia

Laraine Finlay

Make A Wish

Paul Francis

Humpty Dumpty Foundation

Andrew Geddes

Raise Foundation

Jenny Bennell

Raise Foundation

Nesha Hutchinson

Street Buffet

Timothy Cabbage

Gordon District Cricket Club

Gary Heslin

Artarmon Parklands Community Garden

Mel Howells

1st Chromehurst Scout Group

Libby Jones

Raise Foundation

Janelle Lewis

Raise Foundation

Matthew Browne

Melanoma Institute Australia

Nirmal Singh Hansra

Children's Tumour Foundation Of Australia

Angela Yi

The Movement

Donny Chien

Ywaste

Maria Chen

StreetWork Australia Limited

Denise Tan

StreetWork Australia Limited

Stephanie Dos Santos

SAFE

Carolynne Wawrzyniak

St Vincent De Paul Society

Austin Kim

Fita / Clean Up Australia

Kinga Barron

Hercules House

Barbara Hill

Bold Horizons

Doreen Smith

Cake Decorators Association Of NSW

Westfield

Eastgardens

NSW

It was while working as a social worker that Margaret Skagias recognised the unique contribution of thousands of Australian children who take care of parents or siblings with a disability or illness.

These young heroes are often isolated and may take on housework, shopping, cooking, personal hygiene care, liaising with health professionals and financial matters.

In 2014, Margaret founded volunteer-run CaringKids. She and her team make up toy boxes for young carers so they can feel that their contribution and role is honoured and recognised.

The mental health challenges these children can face are real, with people rarely considering the impact illness can have on the carers in a family.

Any child who is not already connected to ongoing support is connected to a service such as Little Dreamers, Margaret says.

She is proud that the toy boxes contain pre-loved toys that are saved from landfill.

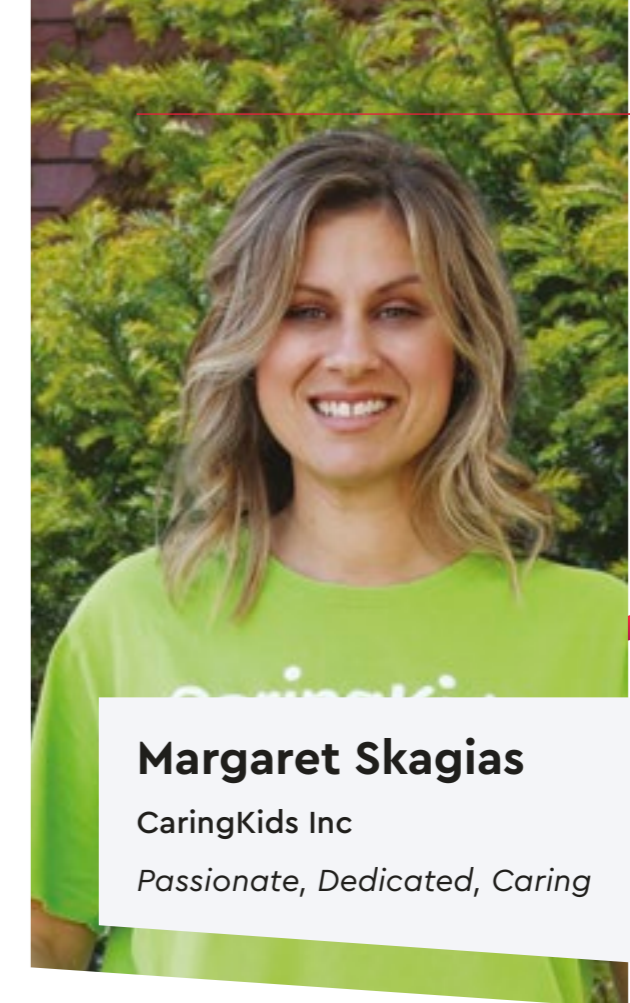
"There are thousands of special needs siblings and young carers in Australia. They are hidden, unsupported and experience social isolation, financial hardship and lower rates of education and achievement than peers who do not have caring responsibilities," Margaret says.

"It is my belief that carers of all ages in Australia need recognition for the unpaid care they provide.

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.

CaringKids will use its grant to fund endeavours including the provision of 200 toy boxes to special needs siblings and young carers and the rehoming of about 8000 pre-loved donation items.

Margaret's nominator says:
"Margaret combines passion and compassion to make a difference for children who care for disabled or chronically ill family members."



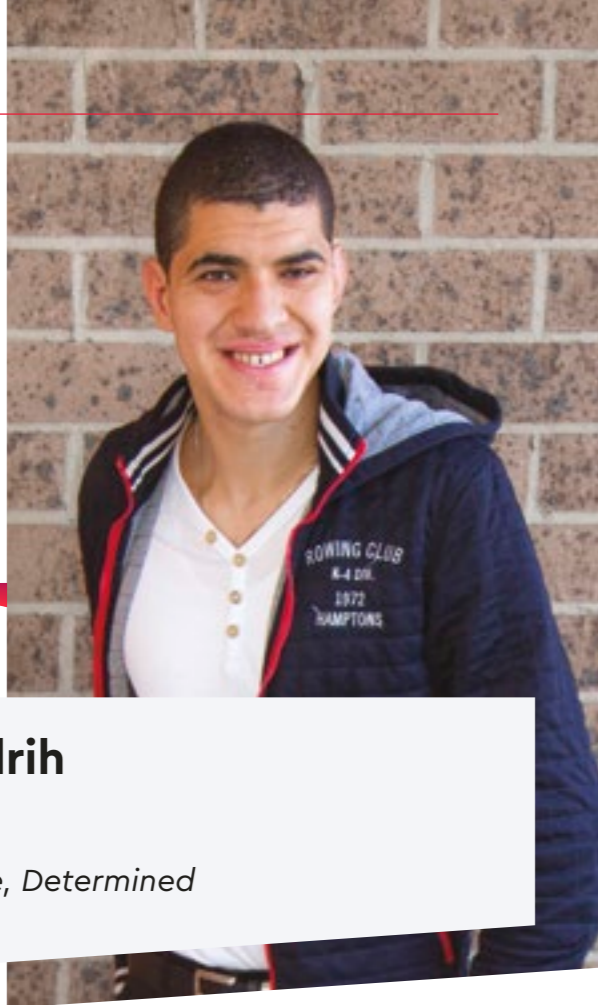
Margaret Skagias

CaringKids Inc

Passionate, Dedicated, Caring

Recognising young champions

"The mental health challenges these children can face are real, with people rarely considering the impact illness can have on the carers in a family."



Richard Habelrih

Autism MATES

Courageous, Positive, Determined

Having his say

"I like to tell doctors and teachers that I can understand what they are saying and I like it when they talk to me, not just to my mum. That's important."

Richard Habelrih has severe autism, and doctors told his parents he would never speak. But he has proved them wrong and has grown up to be a popular public speaker.

Richard is regularly invited to speak at schools and conferences, where he enjoys spreading his message of kindness.

One of the highlights at schools is his Best MATES puppet show.

"I play Tommy the Turtle because he is a bit like me. He didn't fit in, so some of the animals don't like him to join their party. It's important to teach kids about being nice," Richard says.

He has a special reminder when he speaks at medical and teacher conferences.

"I like to tell doctors and teachers that I can understand what they are saying and I like it when they talk to me, not just to my mum. That's important."

He was a keynote speaker at the NSW Independent Schools conference in 2019 and was voted the most memorable and impactful speaker.

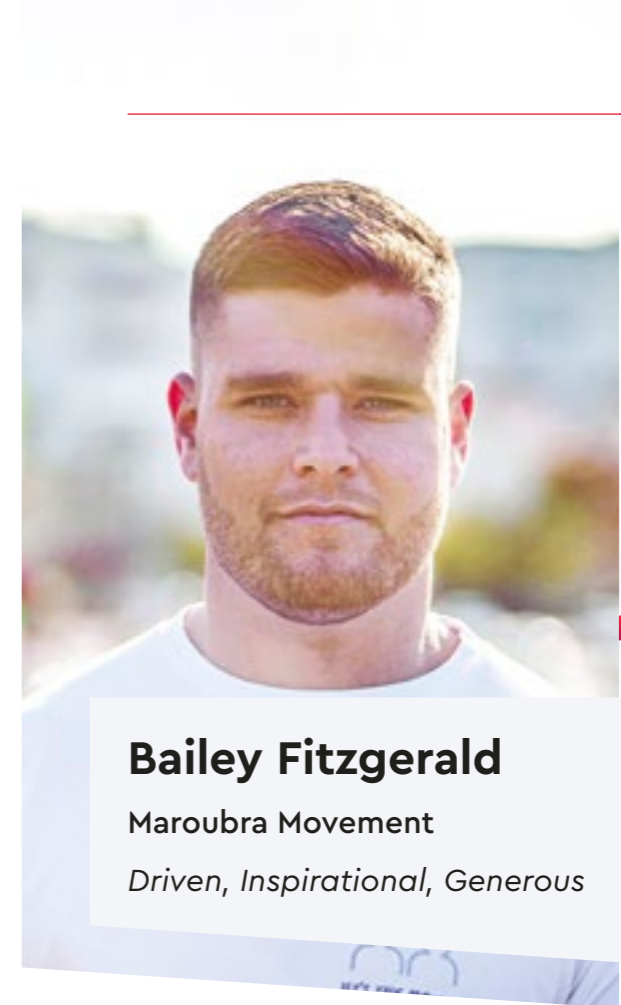
Richard ends each speech with some moving thoughts. "I always say I have dreams like you, I like to have friends, I like to have a job, and I'd like to live in my own place one day."

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.

Autism MATES will use its grant to create an animated version of his puppet show for viewing at schools and on the internet.

Richard's nominator says:

"Richard's story is a beacon of hope and inspiration to so many who have felt the way he does. He speaks from the heart because he knows no other way to communicate."



Bailey Fitzgerald

Maroubra Movement

Driven, Inspirational, Generous

Judgment-free zone

"Bailey has bravely launched the Maroubra Movement, which holds monthly seminars to increase mental health awareness and bring people together in a judgment-free zone."

From the outside, Bailey Fitzgerald looked just fine. He had been vice-captain of his high school, had captained representative footy teams and he had a supportive family and circle of friends.

In reality, he was battling severe anxiety and depression, and he was worried about what people would think if they knew.

But he sought help. And now, aged just 21, he is giving back.

Bailey has bravely launched the Maroubra Movement, which holds monthly seminars to increase mental health awareness and bring people together in a judgment-free zone to create a community in which they feel comfortable to seek help for themselves or friends and family.

"Having gone through years of my own mental health battles, and through being affected by suicide in my friendship circles, I felt I could use my position in the community to put a program together that is relatable and people would gravitate to," Bailey says.

There were two seminars before the COVID-19 disruptions. The first was on alcohol and other drugs. At the second, inspirational speaker Dan Price shared his mental health journey to wellness. R U OK? ambassador Kevin Heath was the MC and there were two psychologists on hand to offer support.

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.

Maroubra Movement will use its grant to market the seminars, provide food for guests and buy branded merchandise.

Bailey's nominator says: "Bailey Fitzgerald has taken the initiative within our local community to create a safe, supportive and helpful space which can be accessed by anyone."

Your 2020 Finalists

Kate Melhopt

South Eastern Community Connect (SECC)

Kate Melhopt's career spans roles as a psychiatric social worker in New Zealand, working with mentally disordered people in London and trauma work in Sri Lanka.

But she is proudest of her achievements in and around Eastlakes as CEO of South Eastern Community Connect, which supports locals of every age.

"I feel my work has positively impacted the local community through the provision of a number of services which simply didn't exist before. These include whole-of-life services, as opposed to simply families and aged care services."

Lorin Muhlmann

Bayside Women's Shelter

Big-hearted Lorin Muhlmann is the Fundraising Director at Bayside Women's Shelter and faces the task of having to raise at least \$200,000 a year to cover rent and operating costs.

That's a big ask for a local shelter. While national organisations can rely on big corporate donors, smaller not-for-profits need to work hard at sourcing many smaller donations.

But Lorin gets the job done.

"I am incredibly proud to be a founding member. Providing short-term accommodation of around three months for women and children leaving violence means we are providing a safe home and potentially saving lives."

Tracey Ayton

Little Heroes Swim Academy

Highly regarded swimming instructor Tracey Ayton founded the not-for-profit Little Heroes Swim Academy seven years ago to provide swimming therapy and aquatic education to children with a disability.

Now she has secured funding for a specialised swim centre where children have access to appropriate facilities and families can be together in a relaxed environment.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Ben Higgs

The Rise Foundation

Darren Tahu

Youth Off The Streets

Ben Folino

The Randwick City Football Club's Purple Hearts

Michele Burridge

Blue Gum Cottage Children's Centre

Tracey Ayton

Little Heroes Swim Academy

Lorin Muhlmann

Bayside Women's Shelter

Kate Melhopt

South Eastern Community Connect

Margaret Skagias

Caring Kids Inc.

Bailey Fitzgerald

Maroubra Movement

Richard Habelrih

Autism Mates

Anthony Vecellio

Randwick Botany Little Athletics Centre

Craig Noble

La Perouse Public School

Fidel Tukul

Youth Off The Streets

Kevin Heath

Dream Time Academy

Amanda Hubbard

Raise Foundation

Victoria Brooke

Raise Foundation

Fabian Heaton

Prince Of Wales Hospital Foundation

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".

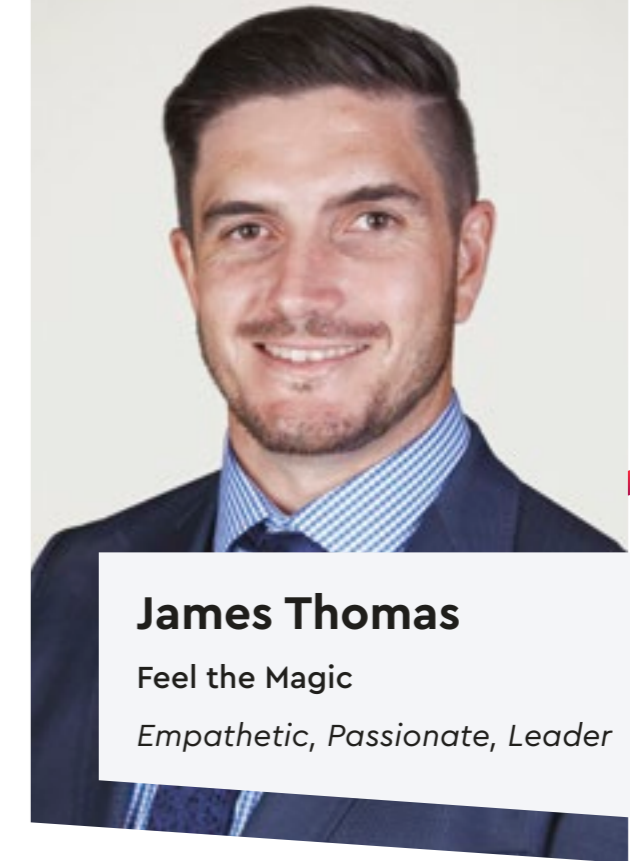
One in 20 Australian children will lose a parent before they reach the age of 18, James says. "To put this into perspective, there is most likely a grieving child in every classroom.

"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."



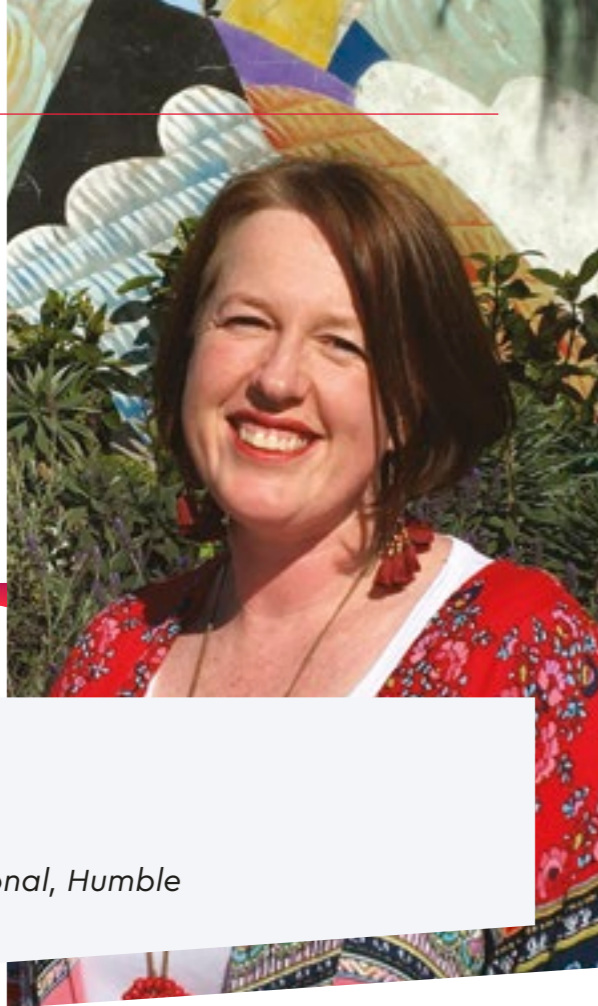
James Thomas

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

Westfield

Hurstville

NSW

When Liz Diab was volunteering at a community food pantry about 9 years ago, she was dismayed that people were turned away because they didn't have a welfare card to show proof of need.

So she started rescuing food to make hampers to ensure nobody falls through the cracks because they don't qualify for government support.

She funded this herself and she began providing generous hampers of fresh, nutritious food, often a treat to anybody in need.

It might be a family who are casual workers, between jobs and suddenly on one income or a person who has fled a domestic abuse; anybody going through hardship.

Not only has Liz supported the community through her hard work, but she has also saved more than 60 tonnes of food from landfill every year.

At first, the group operated as a pay-it-forward Facebook group, but is now a registered charity.

Liz continued the agreements with four supermarkets and two bakeries to collect food daily that has reached its shelf life and nearing the use-by date.

"Households can request a hamper once every three weeks, and all we ask is for a \$3 contribution to help cover our running costs," Liz says.

The volunteers also deliver hampers and bread to a social housing estate in Riverwood and bread and other supplies to community groups and schools in need.

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The Crateful Group will use its grant to rent or buy a refrigerated van, so volunteers don't have to use their own vehicles.

Liz's nominator says: "Liz helps so many in our community and reduces food waste at the same time."



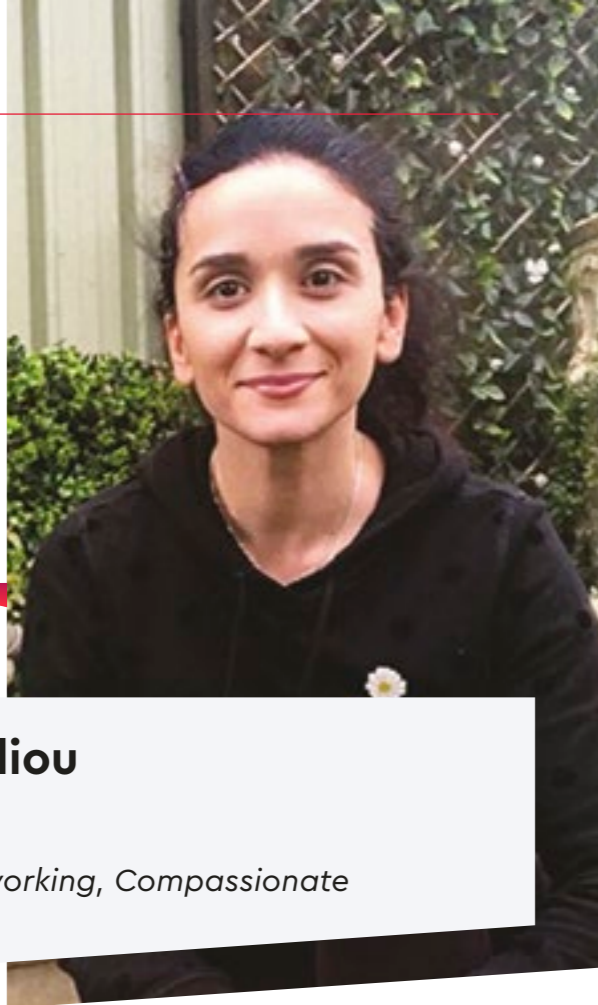
Liz Diab

The Crateful Group

Generous, Non-judgmental, Amazing

Food for all

"Households can request a hamper once every three weeks, and all we ask is for a \$3 contribution to help cover our running costs," Liz says.



Sue-Ellan Vasiliou

little legs foundation

Kind-hearted, Hardworking, Compassionate

For the love of Alegra

"In memory of our beautiful daughter, we raise funds to support research into this disease and also to support patients and their families during the most difficult of times."

Every day is a challenge for Sue-Ellan Vasiliou and her family after losing their beautiful daughter Alegra to brain cancer.

But Sue-Ellan is doing everything she can to help support other families and is raising funds for brain cancer awareness and research.

She does this through the little legs foundation she set up in memory of Alegra, who was diagnosed with brain cancer days before Christmas in 2016 and passed away 10 months later.

"It is knowing that her fight helps others that keeps us going," Sue-Ellan says.

Sue-Ellan engages the community in many charity events, but something that touched people's hearts was when local cafes sold commemorative cups of coffee on Alegra's birthday.

"We aim to raise awareness about childhood brain cancer, a disease that kills more children in Australia than any other disease," Sue-Ellan says.

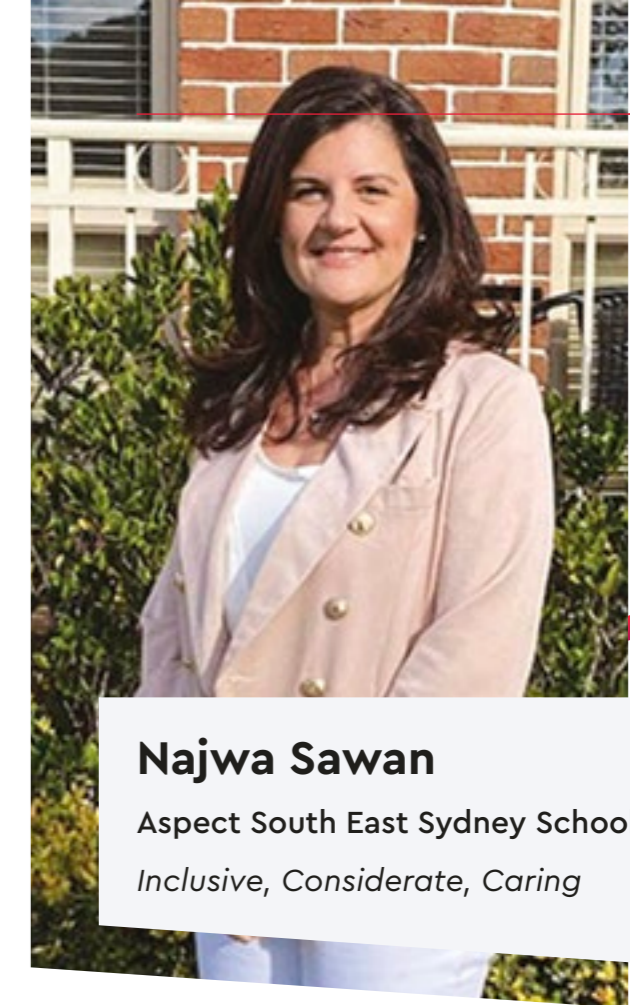
"In memory of our beautiful daughter, we raise funds to support research into this disease and also to support patients and their families during the most difficult of times."

A note to Alegra on the foundation website sums it up: "It was not our choice to survive without you, so we choose to live and to honour you. – Dad & Mum xx"

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.

Little legs foundation will use its grant to help fund hospital equipment and to support families.

Sue-Ellan's nominator says: "Despite the pain carried on her shoulders, Sue-Ellan comes up with innovative ideas and concepts to get the community involved in the foundation."



Najwa Sawan

Aspect South East Sydney School

Inclusive, Considerate, Caring

Raising funds and sharing wisdom

"Your life and the life of your child will be different, but not less."

Najwa Sawan spent several years volunteering at the Aspect South East Sydney School, providing support to other families and raising funds when her son was a student.

After he graduated, the principal offered her a part-time position, and she jumped at the chance to stay on.

"I love the work I do and often say that I don't feel like I'm working, just doing what I love," says Najwa, who has been in the role for five years.

She has continued where she left off as a parent and organises walkathons, trivia nights and comedy nights.

"We have a great school community that gets involved with the fundraising."

As the mother of a young man on the autism spectrum, Najwa also provides advice and support to parents.

Her favourite words of wisdom are: "Your life and the life of your child will be different, but not less."

Najwa says receiving news that your child has a disability can be devastating for many families.

"You are left wondering what your child's future will be like. To have someone guide and advise you in those early days sometimes makes the journey less difficult.

"I love to share my experience with families and provide hope to them."

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.

Aspect South East Sydney School will use its grant to buy literacy kits to support academic progress.

Najwa's nominator says: "Najwa has supported so many families with children on the autism spectrum, making them feel heard and included. She has also raised thousands and thousands of dollars to provide better resources and learning opportunities."

Your 2020 Finalists

Carlee Heise

Shopfront Arts Co-op Ltd

Carlee Heise gives young people an opportunity to find their voice through the arts.

She is passionate about helping kids find their tribe, especially those who identify as LGBTQI, live with a disability or don't fit in at school.

Carlee is dedicated to bringing the arts to youth from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

My passion is bringing creativity, creative expression and joy into the lives of young people through the arts," says Carlee.

"They need to express emotions, explore feelings and investigate uncertainty in a welcoming, safe space."

Dragana Bozinovski

3Bridges Community Ltd

Dragana Bozinovski is changing the lives of people with dementia and helping them to keep their passion for life and stay socially engaged.

The aged care team member at charity 3Bridges Community has persevered against financial challenges to introduce a first-in-Australia dementia program.

People with mild to moderate dementia attend 3Bridges up to three times a week, cooking and eating together, making new friends and participating in tai chi.

Dragana says research has shown the program helps delay admission to residential care.

"In addition, it reduces feelings of burden on family caregivers," she says.

Jennifer (Jenny) Sammut

Kogarah RSL Sub-Branch Youth Club

Jenny Sammut's children have long moved on from the Kogarah RSL Youth Club, but she continues to volunteer as superintendent, a role she took on 25 years ago.

Jenny is on hand every weekday afternoon and evening and every Saturday morning to support the 100 members, who range in age from three to 25.

"It is so rewarding to go into the club and be greeted by so many happy children who are having a great time learning and growing," says Jenny.

"I keep on doing my work at the youth club because I find it very fulfilling."

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Gabriella Celeste

Bankstown Canterbury Community Transport

Kurt Cheng

Georges River Council Youth Advisory Committee (Yac)

Meni Pefkos

Diversity Kids

Bronwyn-Jo Fallon

St George Community Transport Limited

Rukaya Medlej

Medfitness

Dragana Bozinovski

3Bridges Community Ltd

Sue-Ellan Vasiliou

Little Legs Foundation

Carlee Heise

Shopfront Arts Co-Op Ltd

Najwa Sawan

Aspect South East Sydney School

Jennifer Sammut

Kogarah Rsl Sub-Branch Youth Club

Liz Diab

The Crateful Group

Deborah Dworkin

Raise Foundation

Julian Finch

Connells Point Netball Club

Sarah Tetstall

Connells Point Physical Culture Club

Daqi Chen

St George And Sutherland Medical Research Foundation

Warren Raymond Thompson

Men Of League Foundation And Autism Community Network

Kristy Pitman

Raise Foundation

Emma Gilham

Make-A-Wish Australia

Debbie Armanious

Exodus Youth Worx

Ziyad Serhan

Educaid Australia Incorporated

Westfield

Kotara

NSW

Aimee Blacker is filling a huge gap in the lives of autistic children and their families.

As an occupational therapist, she knows that many of these kids are excluded from social and recreational activities. This can have a devastating impact on their wellbeing.

Determined to make a change, Aimee co-founded the not-for-profit Surfing the Spectrum, to allow children to experience the joy of surfing and the ocean.

Seven surf schools have jumped on board. With Aimee's help, they learned the skills needed to teach autistic kids how to surf. Other surfing communities are now eager to get involved.

"Surfing the Spectrum addresses the grave inequity faced by the Autism community, who are being deprived of meaningful experiences," Aimee says.

So far, there have been 12 events at seven beaches along the NSW coast, introducing 350 families living with autism to the thrill of conquering the waves.

It's been challenging for Aimee who has made personal sacrifices to develop the program while working full-time.

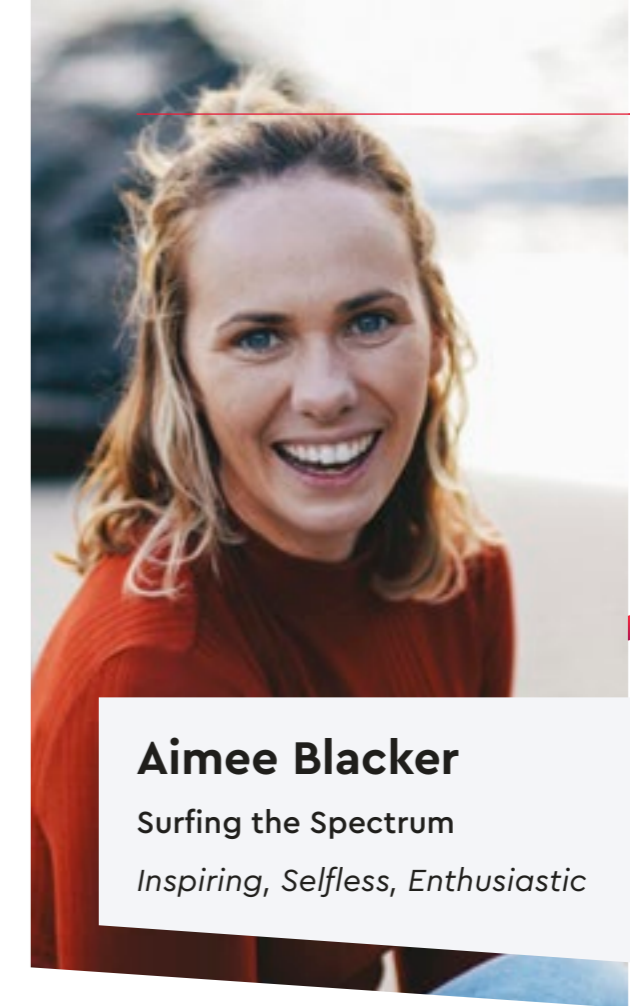
"There were occasions where we faced the challenging decision of whether we could sustain the pace," she says.

"However, the faces of smiling, joyful kids allowed to be themselves and countless letters of gratitude kept driving us in those first hard years."

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Surfing the Spectrum will use its grant to expand the reach to more surf schools of an autism-informed program that Aimee is currently writing.

Aimee's nominator says: "Aimee is inspirational and dedicated to providing children on the autism spectrum an amazing experience that brings joy to all."



Aimee Blacker

Surfing the Spectrum

Inspiring, Selfless, Enthusiastic

Wave of compassion

"Surfing the Spectrum addresses the grave inequity faced by the Autism community, who are being deprived of meaningful experiences."



Lyndsay Walker

Lifeline Direct Ltd

Vivacious, Courageous, Determined

Volunteering for those in need

"My advocacy with Lifeline has touched my passion for a stronger, mentally healthy community," says Lyndsay.

Thanks to Lyndsay Walker, thousands of people know where to turn for help when they are feeling down.

Former professional cricketer Lyndsay is a Lifeline volunteer. Last year, he helped raise \$50,000 for the free counselling service by participating in the Newy100, a 100km run around Newcastle.

In the lead up to the event, Lyndsay gave his time for media interviews, making thousands of people aware of the crisis support and suicide prevention that Lifeline offers.

"My advocacy with Lifeline has touched my passion for a stronger, mentally healthy community," says Lyndsay.

He continues to build on his work with Lifeline and wants to make next year's Newy100 bigger than ever.

In February, Lyndsay took part in a stair challenge, climbing more than 100,400 steps in 24 hours.

Conquering step after step was his way of showing people the challenges others face every day just to keep going through life.

Lyndsay has also taken the time to undertake training with Lifeline and is now a qualified crisis support lifeline volunteer manning the phones for those experiencing sadness, loneliness or crisis.

He is a prolific volunteer and has spent many hours helping Australian Defence Force veterans and the homeless and also coaches school children with disabilities.

"I retired young, and I use my time now to give back to the community," says Lyndsay.

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.

Lifeline will use its grant to fund more than 141 face-to-face counselling sessions.

Lyndsay's nominator says: "Lyndsay connects with people, advocates for better awareness of mental health and wellbeing and sets an exemplary standard through his actions."

When little Connor Gibson developed brain cancer at age five, Monica Halliday was there for him and his family every step of the way.

She founded Fight for Connor to raise funds for the little boy, whom she knew through her daycare business.

Sadly, Connor passed away when he was nine. But thanks to Monica, his family and friends got to make wonderful memories with a special birthday party and fun day at his school.

His wish of seeing his mum marry also came true.

Determined to help other families with seriously sick children, Monica decided to continue Fight for Connor as his legacy.

The not-for-profit supports families in many ways, including presents for the children, meals, garden maintenance and renovations to make homes wheelchair accessible.

Special keepsakes are also organised for the families, including photos, hand molds and jewellery.

"We make memories matter for families with children diagnosed with a terminal illness," Monica says.

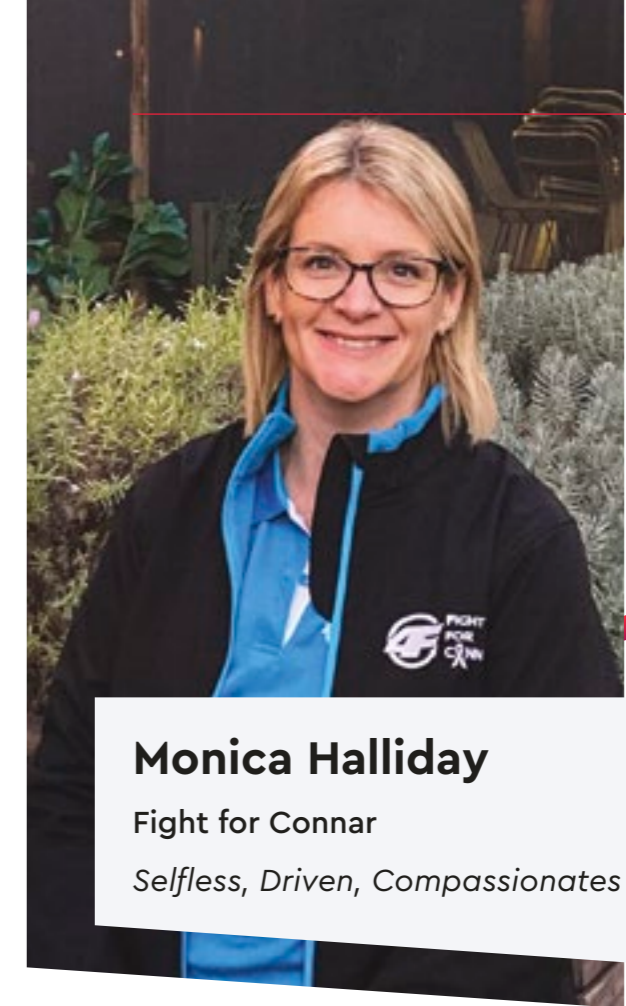
Despite the demands of full-time job, she is always the first person to offer help.

"We knew our journey could not finish with Connor and we would continue to fight in his name to support more families facing the terminal diagnosis of their children," Monica 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.

Fight for Connor will use its grant to buy a mascot and other fund-raising merchandise and fund the cost of registering as a charity.

Monica's nominator says: "Monica took something tragic and used it as motivation to make an amazing difference. She spends weekends and evenings helping families and is always looking for ways to brighten their day."



Monica Halliday

Fight for Connor

Selfless, Driven, Compassionates

A boy's legacy

"Determined to help other families with seriously sick children, Monica decided to continue Fight for Connor as his legacy."

Your 2020 Finalists

Jennifer (Jenn) O'Sullivan Path 2 Change

Jennifer O'Sullivan offers homeless young people a hand up. She is the CEO of Path 2 Change, an organisation that helps young people access education, training and employment.

Jennifer has developed many innovative programs, including a voucher system with local businesses. This means the young people can access goods and services with dignity.

"Ensuring that young people who are homeless are connected and supported with education, training and employment opportunities builds a better community overall," Jennifer says.

Clarice Hamling Respectus Limited

Clarice Hamling stepped up to the plate to make sure vulnerable women and children have safe accommodation.

Driven to address homelessness in her community, Clarice was one of the people to help establish Respectus Limited, a charity that provides safe housing.

Her energy helped drive a two-year renovation of a large old home into a haven for women and children.

Now Clarice has turned her attention to safe housing and mentoring for teenage mums trying to complete their high school education.

"We are helping them break a cycle that they or their family are at risk of falling into after having a child at such a young age," she says.

Rowan Cox Atwea College

Atwea College Executive Director Rowan Cox is committed to helping people become work-ready despite the barriers or disadvantages they might be facing.

Atwea College is achieving an outstanding success rate for the nationally recognised training courses it offers and works hard to connect students with potential employers.

Rowan is known as an advocate for those who need support and has increased the quality of life of many people.

"We try to put the needs of students and the community at the centre of decision-making," Rowan says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Rebecca Jackson
Newcastle City Touch Football

Olivia Hughes
Ronald McDonald House
Newcastle and Nobbys
Surf Life Saving Club

Lisa Greissl
The Big Hug Box

Lisa Hamilton
Hunter Melanoma
Foundation Inc

Timothy Jackson
Timber Productions

Chris Horne
Scouts Australia (NSW)

John Giddens
Dog Rescue Newcastle

Catherine Woodbine
Friends with Dignity Limited

Howard Mole
Bikers For Kids Inc

Sandra Elms
Newcastle Parkinson Choir

Ronald Calman
Marine Rescue NSW
Newcastle Unit

Jayden Hollis
NSW RFS

Anne Williams
Hunter Wildlife Rescue

Karen Harmon
The Under Construction Choir

Sonya Manzalini
Dance Of Life Belly Dance
& Drums

Kirralee Hughes
The Mark Hughes Foundation

Darrell Sparke
Amputee Association Of NSW

Tracey Macpherson
Hmri-Sports Concussion Clinic

Chloe Sutton
The Self Care Sisterhood

Wendy Jenkins
Angel Gowns For Australian
Angel Babies Incorporated

Aimee Blacker
Surfing The Spectrum

Lyndsay Walker
Lifeline Direct Ltd

Monica Halliday
Fight For Connor

Peter Alexander Donald
Novatones Harmony Chorus

Clarice Hamling
Respectus Limited

Jonathon Power
Empowered Community
Services

Rowan Cox
Atwea College

Jennifer O'Sullivan
Path 2 Change

Tracy Jean Ellem
Web Tech Plus Pty Ltd trading
as Creative Cooks Kitchen

Kelly Burgess
Children's Tumour Foundation

Laura Johnson
Mark Hughes Foundation

Sara Nichols
Mulletfest

Linda Campbell
VCFS 22Q11 Foundation Inc

Helena Louise Edwards
Girl Guides NSW ACT & NT
Coastal Valleys Region

Chris Jones
Livefree Project

Bronwyn Gaye Meddows
Dressed for Success

Tricia Martin
She Can

Sue Hermens
Same Waves Program,
Cooks Hill Surf Club

Bryna Butlin
Make A Wish Newcastle Branch

Elizabeth Sprott
Friends with Dignity

Karen Stackman
HAPA (Hunter Academy
Of Performing Arts)

Michelle Faithfull
Hunter Homeless Connect

Bronwyn Thoroughgood
Young Parents' Hub

Candece Bergin-Brown
The Marching Koalas

Kathy Morrison
Youth Insearch Foundation
(Aust) Inc

Geraldine Moran
Centre For Hope

Suzy Trindall
CDAH (Community Disability
Alliance Hunter)

Michelle Shetab
We Love Lake Macquarie

Westfield

Liverpool

NSW

During her working day and after hours, special education teacher Myrna Dominguez tries to improve the quality of life of families living with autism.

Myrna has been working in the disability field for over 20 years and has been with the Autism Advisory & Support Service for 4.5 years. She has achieved several wins in that time.

She uses her knowledge and experience as a teacher to deliver behavioural support and social skills programs to primary and high school students.

Myrna also works with teachers to develop specific learning plans for students with autism and provides mentoring and training to carers, educators and disability staff.

Out of work hours, she supports overwhelmed parents, making phone calls to arrange access to much-needed funding and services.

"I have worked with families who were so desperate for support that the only option for them was to give up care of the children to the state, she says.

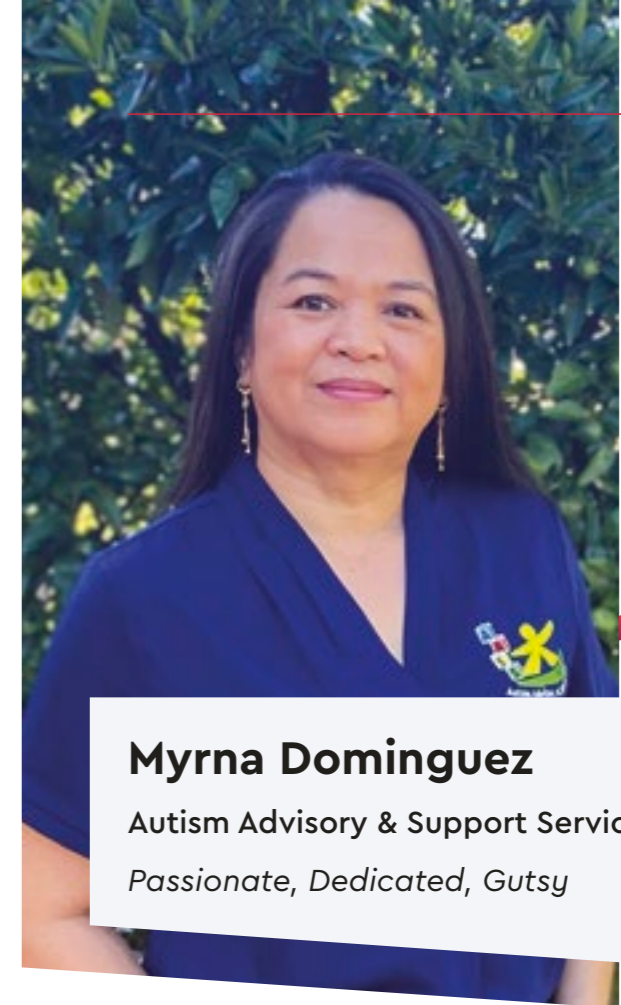
Myrna's passion comes from her own experiences as the mother of a child with autism. She fought hard for an educational package to support her son during his entire school journey, and he now leads a happy and fulfilled life. He is currently studying a Diploma in Music Performance and enjoys making music with his friends.

"The passion that I have for supporting families, carers and individuals comes from having a lived experience of how wonderful and difficult the autism journey can be," she says.

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Autism & Advisory Support Service will use its grant to create a sensory room to provide a calm, relaxing space for children and adults with autism.

Myrna's nominator says: "Myrna is a dedicated and courageous advocate. Her personal and working life is dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with autism and their families."



Myrna Dominguez
Autism Advisory & Support Service
Passionate, Dedicated, Gutsy

Helping families with autism

"The passion that I have for supporting families, carers and individuals comes from having a lived experience of how wonderful and difficult the autism journey can be."



Malaemie (Mal) Fruean

South West Multicultural and Community Centre Inc

Passionate, Selfless, Committed

Community connector

"We encourage people to be proud of their culture but to also engage in the beautiful diversity that we have in NSW," Mal says.

Malaemie (Mal) Fruean thrives on being a community connector and has helped many people during a volunteering and professional career that spans more than 20 years.

Mal is CEO of the South West Multicultural and Community Centre, where she takes a personal interest in everyone who walks through the door.

Mal listens to what people want and guides them into the centre's many programs. If needed, she connects them with her extensive network of trusted social workers, caseworkers and other service providers.

Services at the centre include a mums and bubs group, exercise classes, language lessons, cultural engagement meetings and a seniors group.

Mal is particularly proud of her food hamper program, the demand for which has soared during COVID-19. She is also pleased with the centre's efforts to help released prisoners reintegrate with society.

Mal is committed to multiculturalism, but she is a proud Maori woman and the centre attracts many Pacific people.

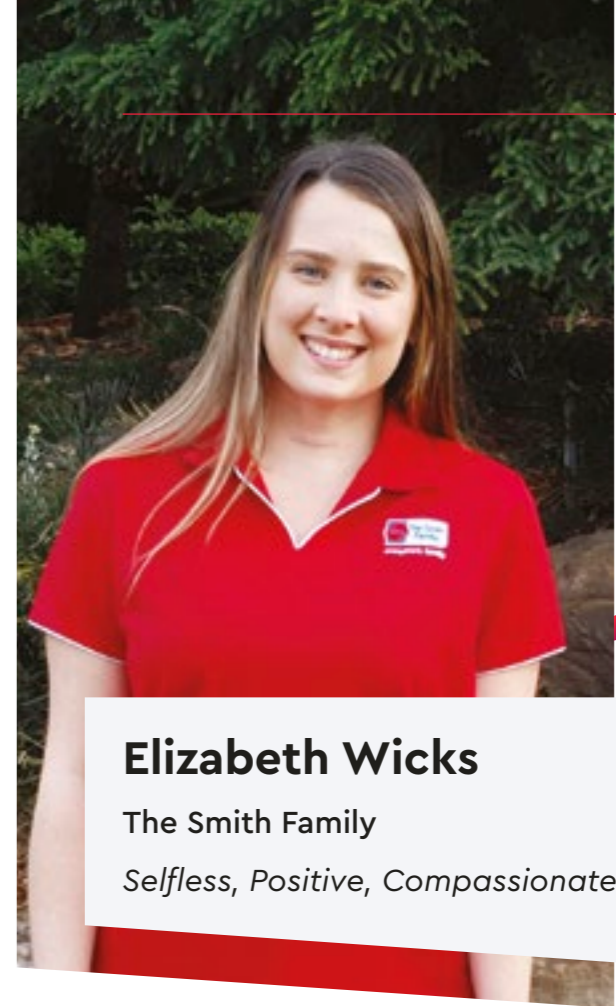
"We encourage people to be proud of their culture but to also engage in the beautiful diversity that we have in NSW," Mal says.

"It is a blessing to do this work, and the reward is being able to open up a pathway for people."

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.

South West Multicultural and Community Centre will use its grant to help cover the costs of trainers, facilitators and ongoing expenses.

Mal's nominator says: "Mal is committed to others and has assisted, supported, mentored and inspired hundreds of people from all walks of life."



Elizabeth Wicks

The Smith Family

Selfless, Positive, Compassionate

Helping students succeed

"I aim to create safe, fun and engaging programs for our students to be excited about being a part of."

Elizabeth Wicks has worked for The Smith Family for many years and goes above and beyond to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds get the support they need to succeed at school.

Elizabeth helps more than 400 students from schools across the local area through the Learning for Life program, which has three long-term pillars: attendance at school, completion of Year 12 and post-school engagement in work, study or training.

Elizabeth embraces the cultural diversity of the area and is mindful of the challenges newly arrived refugees may be facing.

"Working with families from such culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds requires constant training on my part so that I can ensure the programs I am offering are relevant and applicable to the families and take into consideration their unique circumstances," she says.

"I aim to create safe, fun and engaging programs for our students to be excited about being a part of."

Elizabeth often fills in when volunteers are unable to make it and does whatever she can to remove barriers to learning.

"Recently, I delivered a Digital Access Program to families living in Liverpool, providing them with a refurbished computer and a year's worth of internet access to support their schooling."

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The Smith Family will use its grant to establish an after-school program.

Elizabeth's nominator says: "Elizabeth works tirelessly to ensure that students living in disadvantage in the Liverpool area truly have access to the resources and support they need to succeed at school and create better futures for themselves. She is a star!"

Your 2020 Finalists

Stephanie Wait

Core Community Services

Residential youth worker Stephanie Wait goes the extra mile for at-risk youth, including making sure every homeless young person she supports has a gift at Christmas.

Stephanie is a Residential Youth Worker at a crisis refuge run by Core Community Services.

It's not uncommon for young people to lash out because they are afraid, and many have been refuge-hopping for a long time because there is not enough accommodation.

Having experienced homelessness herself, Stephanie says: "I won't give up on a young person, even if they have given up on themselves."

Carla Filipakis

Decorati

Early childhood teacher Carla Filipakis is doing her bit to tackle childhood obesity and put children on the path to healthy eating.

Carla runs a specialised children's events business, Decorati, and uses her educational skills to advocate for healthy childhood nutrition.

She offers healthy cooking classes to children in collaboration with early educational centres, primary schools and the wider community.

"I want to make a change," Carla says. "To give back is so rewarding and means the world to me," she says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Adam Washbourne

Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia (FACAA)

Lisa Buchanan

Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections

Master Paul Mitchell

United Taekwondo

Carla Filipakis

Decorati Kids

Myrna Dominguez

Autism Advisory & Support Service

Elizabeth Wicks

The Smith Family

Stephanie Wait

Core Community Services

Malaemie Fruean

South West Multicultural And Community Centre Inc

Dave Barnes

Navy Cadets

Cameron Elliott

Children's Tumour Foundation

Kylie Pussell

Miracle Babies Foundation

Nikhil Autar

Playwell Ltd

Darlene Mene

Macarthur Adventist College

Caitlin Gallagher

Wombat Care Bundanoon

Donna Sillett

Macarthur Makeovers

Vinita Singh

ANATLA V Pty Ltd

- Thrive Festival

Nadia Loprete

Make-A-Wish Australia

Arash Salehi

Core Community Services

Michelle Legg

Wollondilly Women In

Business Network

Robyn Phillips

Liverpool Girls Physical

Culture Club

Westfield

Miranda

NSW

Bronte Hendricks is helping young adults with mild to moderate disabilities and mental health conditions gain access to the same opportunities as other young people their age.

Bronte and her business partner, Luke Muttton, are achieving this through Stellar Experiences, an enterprise they launched last year to take people aged 16 to 35 on day trips, evenings out and weekends away.

Their guests have all sorts of interests that they are unable to explore without support, says Bronte.

Their experiences include anything from football games, music festivals, sky diving, nights out, weekends away and travel.

"They are at a life stage now where they want to become independent," says Bronte, who has a degree in Inclusive Education and Disability Studies.

Bronte is a firm believer in enabling positive risk and believes people should have access to everything they want in life.

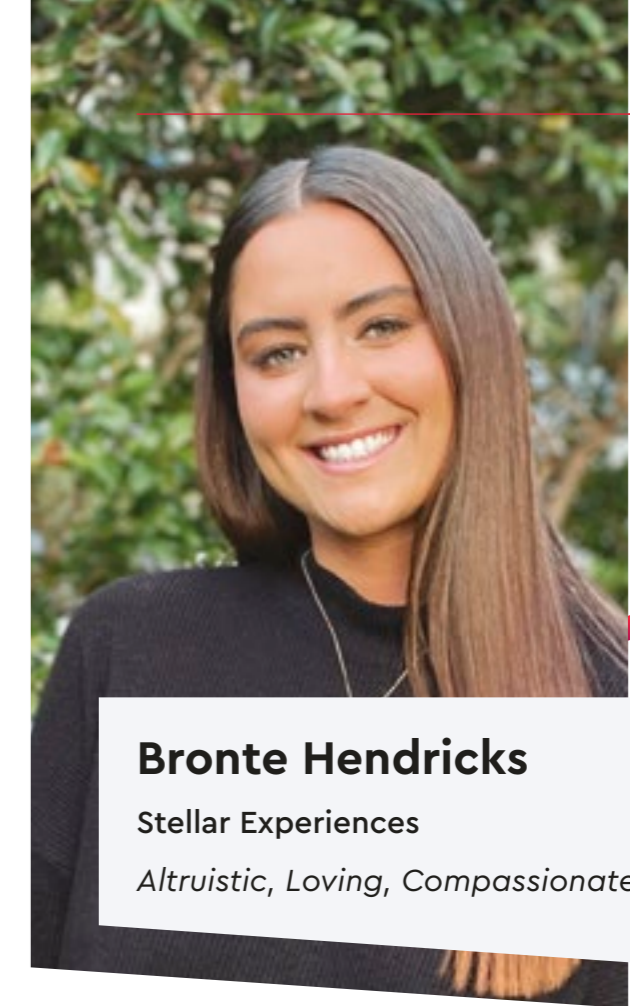
Although many of the guests are seen as higher functioning, they face a range of obstacles, including anxiety about being in crowded and noisy places, challenges with developing and maintaining friendships and difficulties with social skills.

"Unfortunately this can lead to social isolation and young people being somewhat confined to their family networks in terms of their social interactions," Bronte 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.

Stellar Experiences will use its grant to subsidise costs for their experiences to make them accessible for all young people, such as those who don't qualify for the NDIS.

Bronte's nominator says: "Bronte is changing lives and breaking down stereotypes."



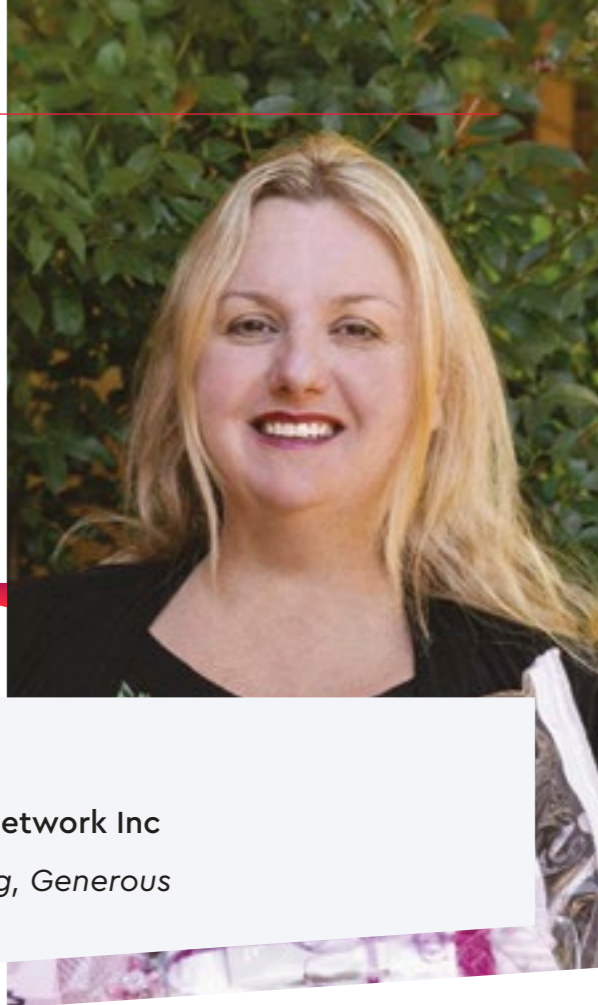
Bronte Hendricks

Stellar Experiences

Altruistic, Loving, Compassionate

Enabling positive risk

"Bronte is a firm believer in enabling positive risk and believes people should have access to everything they want in life."



Sarah Mross

Dandelion Support Network Inc

Hard-working, Caring, Generous

Providing essentials to families

"The families we support may have mental health issues, be experiencing domestic violence, be living with disability, be homeless or at risk of homelessness or may be refugees," says Sarah.

Sarah Mross has her own family to take care of, but still, she finds many hours a month to help others.

Over the past eight years, Sarah has worked and volunteered for the Dandelion Support Network, which provides families with new and preloved cots, prams, car seats, clothes, toys and linen

Sarah, a board member, has had many roles, both day-to-day and strategic, including managing the operational side of the charity, raising funds and nurturing partnerships.

Sarah was there in the early days, helping to grow the client base from 125 families a year to more than 2000.

"The families we support may have mental health issues, be experiencing domestic violence, be living with disability, be homeless or at risk of homelessness or may be refugees," says Sarah.

Much work is needed before a generously donated item can be delivered to its appreciative new owner. The volunteers sort, clean, repair and safety check everything before sending it on.

Importantly, the work extends the lifecycle of goods and saves them from landfill.

"Juggling family with Dandelion has been difficult at times, but my passion for making a difference has kept me focused on Dandelion's goal of making a difference in the community," Sarah 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.

Dandelion Support Network will use its grant to provide 55 families with essential items such as cots, prams, clothes, toys and linen.

Sarah's nominator says: "Sarah has made a generous long-term commitment to the Dandelion Support Network and provides ongoing and passionate support to vulnerable children and families in the local and wider community."

Jason Stanton is a fierce advocate for children with a disability.

Many of these children are excluded from social and sporting activities, so he and his wife, Sarah, set up a program for children of all abilities to connect and learn together.

Skillz4me combines fun with therapy, with volunteers and qualified therapists running the programs. Jason and Sarah personally fund the non-profit and work hard to ensure it remains free of charge.

Over the past four years, the number of children attending has grown to over 80 children per week. "We don't exclude anyone. Our programs reduce isolation, develop children and positively impact families," Jason says.

As parents of two children with autism, one needing constant care, Jason and Sarah understand how tough and isolating it can be to look after children with disabilities.

Skillz4me has established sessions for parents also, where they can connect and speak about common issues, challenges and support each other.

"A growing number of families have a member with a disability," Jason says. "We need more initiatives like Skillz4me to bring our community together."

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.

Skillz4me will use its grant to help keep the program free for families.

Jason's nominator says: "Jason has shown dedication and selflessness in providing a much-needed and valuable service to local families in need, despite facing his own incredible adversity and challenge."

Jason Stanton

Skillz4me

Selfless, Leader, Committed

Providing fun, therapy and connection

"A growing number of families have a member with a disability," Jason says. "We need more initiatives like Skillz4me to bring our community together."



Your 2020 Finalists

Amethyst (Ame) Barnbrook Expanding Influences

Amethyst (Ame) Barnbrook has co-founded the Expanding Influences disability service, where she leads a team of 17 staff in a quest to help others.

Disability is something Ame knows about because she has a rare condition called phocomelia and was born with no arms and half of her left leg.

"Having our own business has provided us with the opportunity to support clients and their families," Ame says.

Despite her disability, Ame has sailed competitively since she was seven, plays the trumpet, has a degree in creative arts, a diploma in community services and an Australian Sports Medal.

Geoff Vickers Special Olympics Sydney South Club

Generous Geoff Vickers dedicates a considerable amount of time and has done in the past 25 years, to driving the success of the Special Olympics Sydney South Club.

As club chair, Geoff is devoted to helping children and adults with intellectual disabilities train and compete in a wide range of sports.

"People with an intellectual disability are often marginalised and dismissed as useless by the broader community. We use sport to provide the benefits of physical activity and social interaction," says Geoff, who has personal experience of disability in his family.

"Sport allows people with an intellectual disability to interact with the broader community," Geoff says.

Sarah-Jo Lobwein Sustainable Organisations of the Sutherland Shire (SO Shire)

As a marine scientist and high school teacher, Sarah-Jo Lobwein believes education is the key to improving the way people interact with the ocean, which is why she co-founded Sustainable Organisations of the Sutherland Shire and Plastic Free Sutherland Shire. She tirelessly gives her time to help locals understand the need for sustainable choices.

"Our beaches, cliffs, rivers, parks, roads and drains are direct gateways to the ocean," Sarah-Jo says. "We support local residents, schools, businesses and visitors to invest in sustainable choices."

The main messages are aimed at reducing the "single-use plastic habit."

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Roy Cowley
NSW SES Menai Unit

Kathryn Wakelin
Levi's Project

Brett White
Bonnet Bay FC

Brianna Macdonald
Rescue And Recovery Resource

George Koulouris
Cronulla Seagulls Football Club

Tony Cranney
St Vincent De Paul Society NSW

Catania Aviles
Shire Music Theatre – SMT

Emma Watts
Daisie Chain

Bronte Hendricks
Stellar Experiences

Ameythst Barnbrook
Expanding Influences

Geoff Vickers
Special Olympics 'Sydney South'
Club

Sarah Mross
Dandelion Support Network Inc

Jason Stanton
Skillz4Me

Sarah-Jo Lobwein
Sustainable Organisations
Of The Sutherland Shire

Russell Smith
Make-A-Wish Australia

Kellie Stubbs
Mates 4 Mental Health

Scott Fisher
Empowered Healthcare

James Kozlowski
Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Jessika Hay
Garie Slsc

Luke Muttdon
Stellar Experiences

Edgar Allan
Push Up For Life

Michael Cooper
Kurnell Men's Shed

Jan Gartrell
Hurstville Rotary

Darian Lenton
We, Future Leaders

Toni Burnham
WIRES

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.

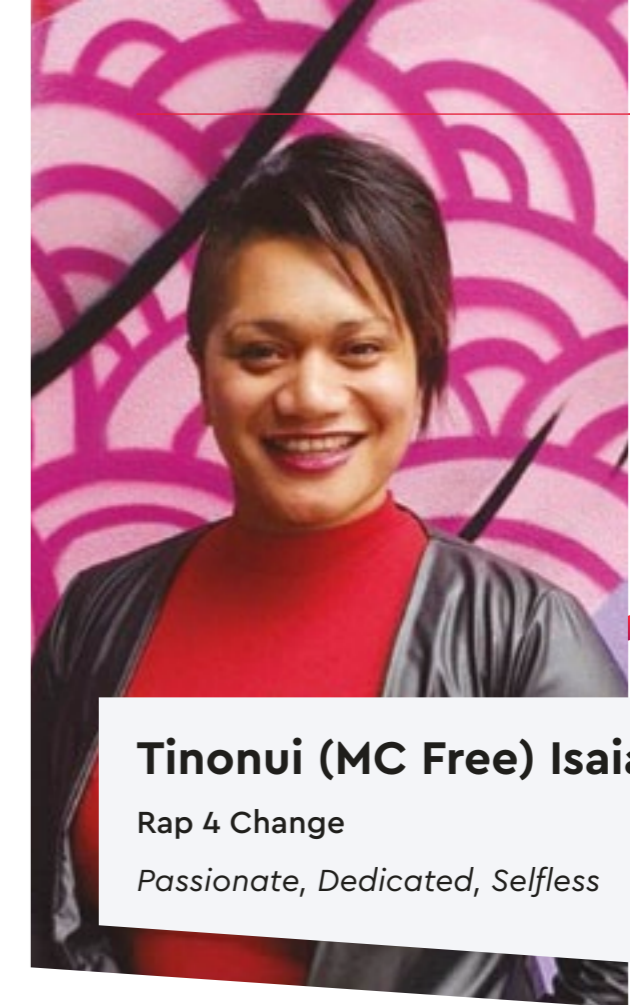
Justice staff report young people are more settled, positive and committed to changing their future as a result of her mentoring.

"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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

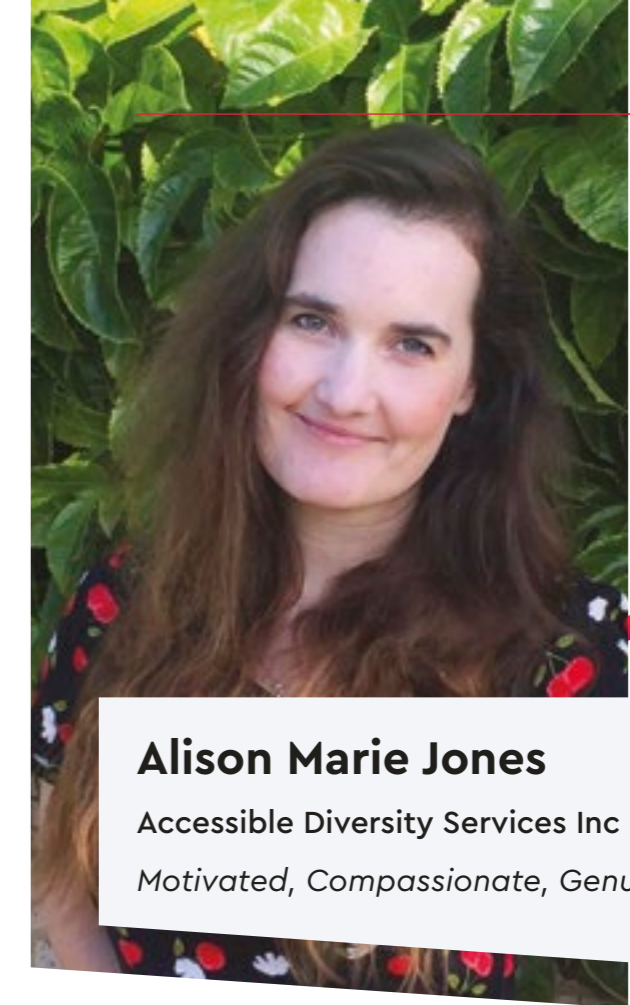
"My clients motivate me. I am proud to be part of their journey in Australia," says Alison.

"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."



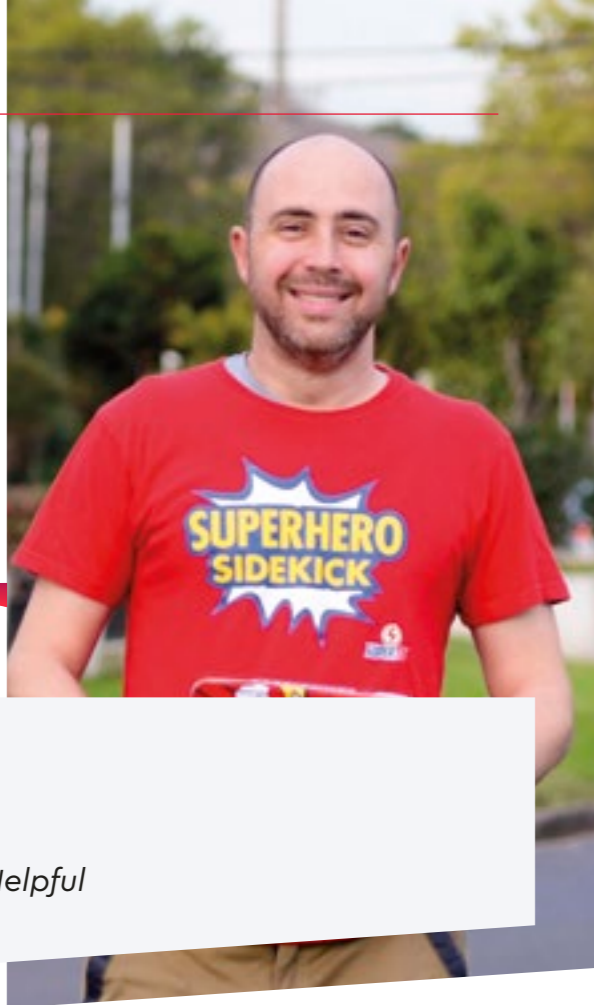
Alison Marie Jones

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

Superteas

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 Superteas 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 Superteas 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 Superteas have captured the imagination of more than 100 fundraisers across Australia who have provided Superteas 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."

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.

Superteas 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.

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.

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

Westfield

Penrith

NSW

Farmer Dave Graham leads a transformational youth re-engagement program based around working with animals as diverse as horses, alpacas, and poultry.

This innovative program has led to extensive reductions in youth crime in the region, re-engagement in education and skills-based training, and a huge decrease in family violence.

At the core of the program are 24 dogs, which each young person bonds with and trains in a wide range of activities which include sheep herding, K9 Ninja, DockDogs, and K9 Super Wall.

"During the program, we see the youth tend to resort to forceful behaviour when working with the dogs, rather than rewarding the animal, and that creates a circle of frustration with their dog," says Dave. "Soon enough, though, they see how being kind is so much easier."

A pilot program last year involving six teenagers achieved a high success rate in turning participants' lives around; reducing their crime and anti-social behaviour and improving their wellbeing.

"My job is to lead them and guide them to make better life choices," says Dave.

"The mums talk about a reduction in negative behaviour, the schools report improved attendance and attitudes, and the police talk about less need for intervention. "Most of all, the community perception of these young people is changed to a positive one."

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.

RuffTRACK Limited will use its grant to help more young people.

Dave's nominator says: "Dave puts everything in his own life aside and devotes significant time to help young people make the right decisions and empower them to live a violence-free and positive life."



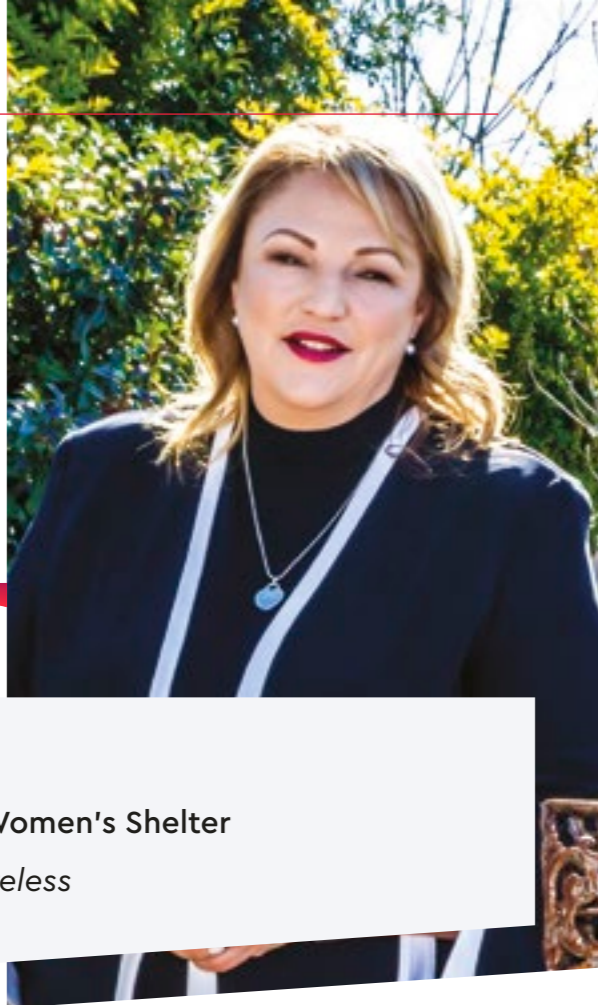
Dave Graham

RuffTRACK Limited

Empowering, Selfless, Giving

Teaching young pups new tricks

"My job is to lead them and guide them to make better life choices."



Tricia Hitchen

The Haven Nepean Women's Shelter

Selfless, Amazing, Tireless

Battling bravely against domestic violence

"Sometimes the images that flash through my mind while I'm speaking have brought me to tears. I worry about the long-term effect of reliving these events but I know that it is making a difference and maybe even saving a life, and that is more important."

Retired police Chief Inspector Tricia Hitchen tells a personal story that explains what drives her to work as hard as she can to keep The Haven Nepean Women's Shelter running.

"I was a junior detective when I met a woman who had suffered a terrible attack from her husband. I spent the day helping her but, in the afternoon, she wanted to go home to her children and promised to come back the next day. There was no next day. That woman's face and her pain are always with me and are why I do what I do."

As a board member, Tricia spends a great deal of time fundraising for the two-year-old shelter.

The real-life stories Tricia tells at community groups, social functions, schools and businesses raise awareness about the many types of domestic violence.

But they take their toll on Tricia, who was awarded several bravery medals in her 25-year police career.

"Sometimes the images that flash through my mind while I'm speaking have brought me to tears. I worry about the long-term effect of reliving these events but I know that it is making a difference and maybe even saving a life, and that is more important."

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.

The Haven Nepean Women's Shelter will use the grant to fund its outreach program for women who have left the shelter.

Tricia's nominator says: "Tricia goes above and beyond in her multiple roles to help whoever is in need. She doesn't ask for kudos or applause. She is an amazing quiet achiever and a beautiful person."

Volunteer firefighter Michael Kovacs joined the NSW Rural Fire Service 30 years ago when he was 14.

A brave and respected leader, Michael was Captain of the Londonderry RFS for 10 years, and his peers have now voted him Deputy Group Captain and assists in coordination and overseeing the management of 6 brigades.

Michael volunteers between 20 and 30 hours a week while continuing to serve as an NSW police officer.

Michael is much admired by his colleagues and feels great pride about being able to help people in their time of need, not only in NSW but also in emergencies in other states.

During the recent bushfire emergency, Michael started fighting fires in August 2019 and did not stop until the end of January.

He and his strike teams put themselves in extreme danger to directly save people and properties. They were trapped by intense fire on more than one occasion.

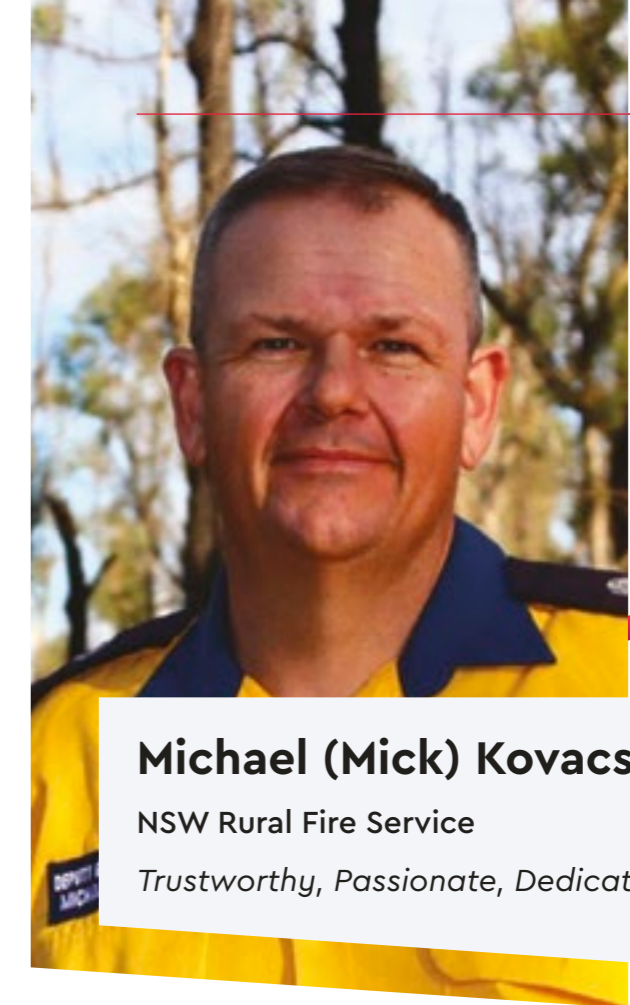
"I personally dragged residents out of burning buildings and escorted them through fire to get them to safety," Michael says.

"It's a great pride in serving the communities in their time of need and assisting them to return to some form of normality".

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.

NSW Rural Fire Service will use its grant to buy a trailer and training equipment.

Michael's nominator says: "Michael has a sense of community, passion and dedication to the service. He is a man I admire and trust with my life."



Michael (Mick) Kovacs

NSW Rural Fire Service

Trustworthy, Passionate, Dedicated

Braving extreme danger

"It's a great pride in serving the communities in their time of need and assisting them to return to some form of normality."

Your 2020 Finalists

Cecily Michaels

Leep NGO

Cecily Michaels is committed to ensuring that nobody in Penrith is left behind by the digital age.

She is the dedicated CEO of a small not-for-profit that enlists volunteers to help disadvantaged people learn computer and internet skills.

Since 2015, Cecily and her team have recruited and trained more than 94 Tech Mates mentors who have supported more than 800 people.

"People who lack digital literacy are literally shut out from society," says Cecily. "Government agencies such as the ATO, Medicare, Centrelink and the NDIS demand that their customers use their online MyGov platform, upload apps and communicate electronically."

Julia Shoesmith

Wentworth Community Housing

Community worker Julia Shoesmith firmly believes everyone has a right to a home.

Julia reaches out to people living rough and does what she can to build trust and help them find support.

Locals may remember an encampment of people sleeping rough in Judges Car Park in Penrith.

As a senior caseworker for Wentworth Community Housing, Julia and her team got to know every person and connected them to housing and health services.

"I feel my work positively impacts the community as a whole as it is not only assisting people into homes and supports but also assisting to restore community facilities to their original purpose," Julia says.

Belinda Leonard

Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy

Belinda Leonard helps heal more than 1300 children and adults a week with evidence-based music therapy.

Belinda has been CEO of Nordoff Robbins for over seven years and is proud it has grown to be the biggest employer of music therapists in Australia.

"I work with people with disabilities, mental health challenges and other difficulties to deliver therapy programs that make a real and tangible difference to their ability to live in the community and participate as fully as possible," she says.

"I have also established a successful internship program, providing employment for five new graduate music therapists a year."

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Luigi Greco

The Australian Man Cave

Joy Innes

Path Inc

Bradley Sheldon

NSW Rural Fire Service

Wayne Earle

CheckYourTackle Charity

Alexus De Latora

Cat Rescue

Jade Helen Boland

Boss Lady Events Co

Linda Lamond

Lions Club Of Cambridge Park

Helen Rann

Penrith Hospital Auxiliary

Claude Buda

Rett Syndrome Association Of Australia

Jennifer Elliott

Children's Tumour Foundation

Belinda Leonard

Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy

Michael Kovacs

NSW Rural Fire Service

Julia Shoesmith

Wentworth Community Housing

Tricia Hitchen

The Haven Nepean Womens Shelter

Nikki Harnoor Singh

Harman Foundation Limited

Sandy Golder

Thrive Tribe & Co

Dave Graham

Rufftrack Limited

Cecily Michaels

Leep.Ngo

Cheryl Mcdonald

Nepean Amputee Support Group

Joshua Gately

Mackillop Baseball Club (Penrith Area)

Lynda Cowen

Nepean Multiple Birth Association

Grace Brennan

Buy From The Bush

Grace Kim

Your Music Incorporated

Paul Wallace

Penrith Men's Walk And Talk

Murray Gracie

Little By Little Inc

Mark Pullen

Penrith Anglican College

Kimberley Meredith

The Smith Family

Katrina De Souza

The Smith Family

Westfield

Sydney

NSW

Max Burt was in a horrific car crash with a London fire engine and needs a carer to help him with many activities of daily living and uses a powered wheelchair to get around.

He moved to Sydney in 2011 with his Australian wife, Justine, and helps councils with their accessibility planning.

Max is deeply concerned about the impact of social isolation on people with mobility issues and the lack of readily available accessibility information.

"Not being fully integrated into everyday life is something which happens, in varying degrees, to people with mobility impairments," Max says.

"It's not only them. It's also everyone who spends time with them. You all get stuck, give up and stay in; everyone becomes excluded."

So he decided to do something about it and in 2018 founded a charity, WheelEasy, which produces a web app to promote mobility.

"It brings together access information on everything from beaches to cinemas to cafes and invites people to share what they know.

WheelEasy has grown to cover the whole City of Sydney. And Max has a council grant for people to come together to map their local area in detail and share useful pictures. But this was interrupted by COVID-19 and social distancing.

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The WheelEasy Foundation will use its grant to expand the Mapping March program that was postponed by COVID-19.

Max's nominator says: "Max is making our local community a better place that is inclusive for all, and he has created an opportunity for the whole community to be better connected and to support each other."



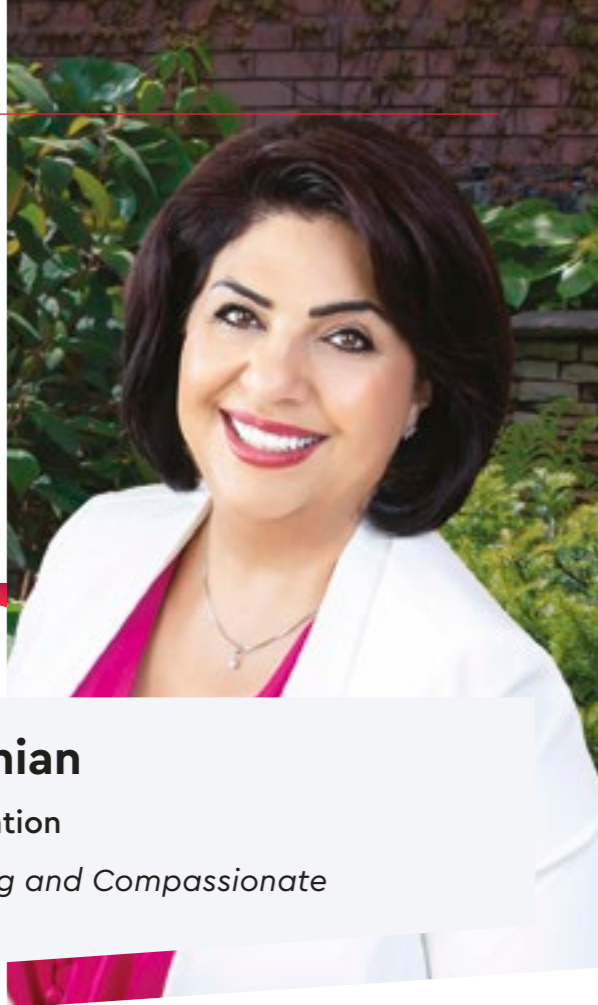
Max Burt

The WheelEasy Foundation

Generous, Determined, Innovative

Mapping for mobility

"Not being fully integrated into everyday life is something which happens, in varying degrees, to people with mobility impairments."



Azita Abdollahian

Shining Light Foundation

Courageous, Inspiring and Compassionate

Brave rescuer

"From that night, I picked myself up, put my shattered pieces together and enrolled in university at the age of 40 to study psychology."

When Azita Abdollahian arrived in Australia as a refugee, her husband was extremely controlling and would not let her integrate.

The young mother and former teenage bride taught herself English by watching the Wiggles.

She stayed in the marriage for 22 years, partly because she feared becoming homeless.

She plucked up the courage to leave when a police officer reached out to her during a visit to her home.

Azita recounts the words of a woman police officer who helped her reinvent her life. "She told me: 'Azita, you deserve to be happy, you deserve to be respected, and you deserve to be loved'.

"From that night, I picked myself up, put my shattered pieces together and enrolled in university at the age of 40 to study psychology."

Azita has launched the Shining Light foundation to support women on the streets of Sydney.

"Once I learned that my wounds are my superpower, I found it easy to connect to the most vulnerable people, especially all the women who ended up in the street due to domestic violence," says Azita, who is a qualified hairdresser.

Azita has worked with homeless people for more than five years, providing them with support, company, conversation, donated goods and haircuts.

From a person who couldn't speak English, Azita is now the author of her own book, encouraging and education others by sharing her own life stories.

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.

Shining Light Foundation will use its grant to buy a van to set up for haircuts and to deliver donated items.

Azita's nominator says: "Azita helps some of the most vulnerable people in our local community, helping them to rediscover their sense of self-worth and gain the skills and confidence to become contributing members of our community again."

Proud dad Ashley Scott has been an active and dedicated member of Rainbow Families since helping to start the organisation in 2015.

Ashley works hard to help Rainbow Families fulfil its purpose of providing support and resources to members of the LGBTIQ+ community so they and their families can live their best lives.

He is part of the glue that keeps the organisation together, keeping the website up to date, helping to organise events, responding to emails and raise funds.

He has also been to Canberra to lobby politicians and successfully brought lesbian and gay parents together to hold joint family events.

But Ashley is most proud of his role in setting up antenatal classes that cater to the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ parents.

After a successful test program, the classes are now run by midwife educators from Sydney Local Health District.

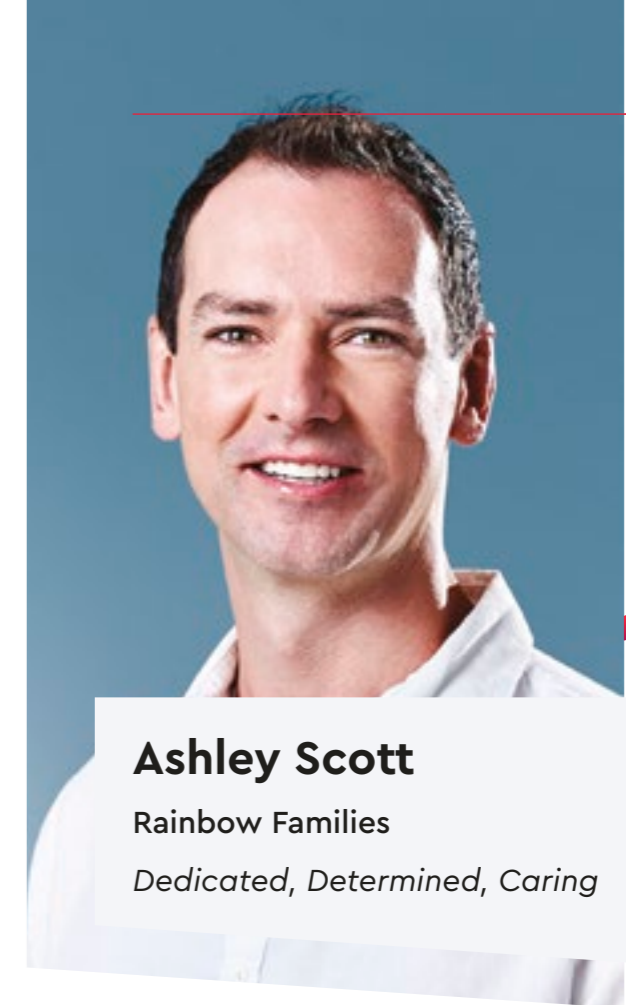
Parents feel safe to ask questions they would not be able to ask in a traditional class, says Ashley.

"When I had my children, there was no class available for gay dads who were expecting a baby. So I was handed a baby with no idea what to expect. Lucky for me, I had a wonderfully supportive family so I was fine," he 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.

Rainbow Families will use its grant to lobby for parenting law reforms and produce a guide for partners who are separating.

Ashley's nominator says: "Ashley had a vision of an organisation that connects, supports and empowers LGBTIQ+ parents and their children. Through his tireless work, dedication and ability to bring the community together, this goal has been achieved."



Ashley Scott

Rainbow Families

Dedicated, Determined, Caring

Supporting LGBTIQ+ families

"Ashley is most proud of his role in setting up antenatal classes that cater to the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ parents."

Your 2020 Finalists

Alison Covington

Good360 Australia

Social entrepreneur Alison Covington is a donation enabler on a grand scale.

She founded Good360 to provide an online platform to connect the brand new surplus goods donated by businesses to charities and disadvantaged schools to help their communities in need.

So far, Good360 has sourced more than \$145 million of goods. That's over 14.3 million items matched to more than 2000 member charities and eligible schools.

"If Australians have the need, our partners have the goods and Good360 has the ability to efficiently connect them," Alison says.

Shazia Mia

Settlement Services International

Shazia Mia knows firsthand why migrants can live in Australia for many years and still speak limited English or lack knowledge about the local community.

She is doing whatever she can to help newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers assimilate into their new world.

As an enthusiastic volunteer ambassador for Settlement Services International's Welcome2Sydney program, Shazia continues to surprise and delight her colleagues with her dedication.

She has worked with more than 100 newcomers, boosting their confidence and practising English.

Anna Jane (AJ) Linke

Seaside Scavenge

Environmentalist Anna Jane (AJ) Linke has captured people's imagination with her novel approach to cleaning up plastic and textile waste.

The charity she started, Seaside Scavenge, organises fun clean-up events and clothes swap events. There's live music, and local businesses give participants ice-cream, coffee and beer in exchange for trash tokens.

So far, 7546 Scavengers have participated in 75 waste education events. A point of pride is that eight out of ten had never previously participated in a clean-up.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Sally Irwin

The Freedom Hub

Tory Archbold

Powerful Steps

Gabriella Holmes

Sir David Martin Foundation

Brittany Bloomer

Pound Paws

Ali Taylor

Listen Up Music

Dr Anne Fulcher

The Shepherd Centre
- For Deaf Children

Selina Thomas

NSW SES Volunteer's Association

Pastor Sam Stamos

Newtown Mission – Jordan Cafe

Kelliagh Jackson

Eyes Front Limited

Julie Moffat

WIRES Inner West Branch

Kamalika Dasgupta

Shequ Group Inc

Hamish Toohey

Kua

Dominique Robinson

Tour De Cure

Anna Shepherd

Woolloomooloo And Inner City
Police Community Scholarship
Foundation (Wicpcsf)

Mary Mortimer

Pymont Community

Lliane Clarke

Voices Of Women

Dea Richardson

Art Gallery New South Wales

Anna Jane Linke

Seaside Scavenge

Ashley Scott

Rainbow Families

Shazia Mia

Settlement Services International

Azita Abdollahian

Shining Light Foundation

David Murphy

Balmain Little Athletics Club

Max Burt

The WheelEasy Foundation

Alison Covington

Good360 Australia

Barry Irvin

Giant Steps Australia

Stella Healy

Ruff Sleepers

Rachael Bowen

Giant Steps Australia

Antonella Lopez

Work Warriors

Westfield

Tuggerah

NSW

Pauline Maniskas is passionate about helping people with disabilities enjoy surfing.

She is volunteer secretary of the Central Coast branch of the Disabled Surfers Association and has dedicated the past 15 years to helping people experience the restorative effect of the ocean.

Pauline is a whirlwind. She helps organise surfing events, sources donations and visits schools to speak about the value of being inclusive.

She also raises awareness of surfing among disability providers.

Pauline is the first contact for families interested in surfing and gives them the confidence to come along and enjoy the events.

"My passion is to nurture a sense of inclusion and belonging for those less able in the community and provide a safe and happy environment for participation in our surfing events," she says.

"This has a far-reaching benefit in the community, raising awareness of those less able and encouraging other organisations to facilitate a more inclusive environment."

Not even breast cancer could keep Pauline away from her volunteering.

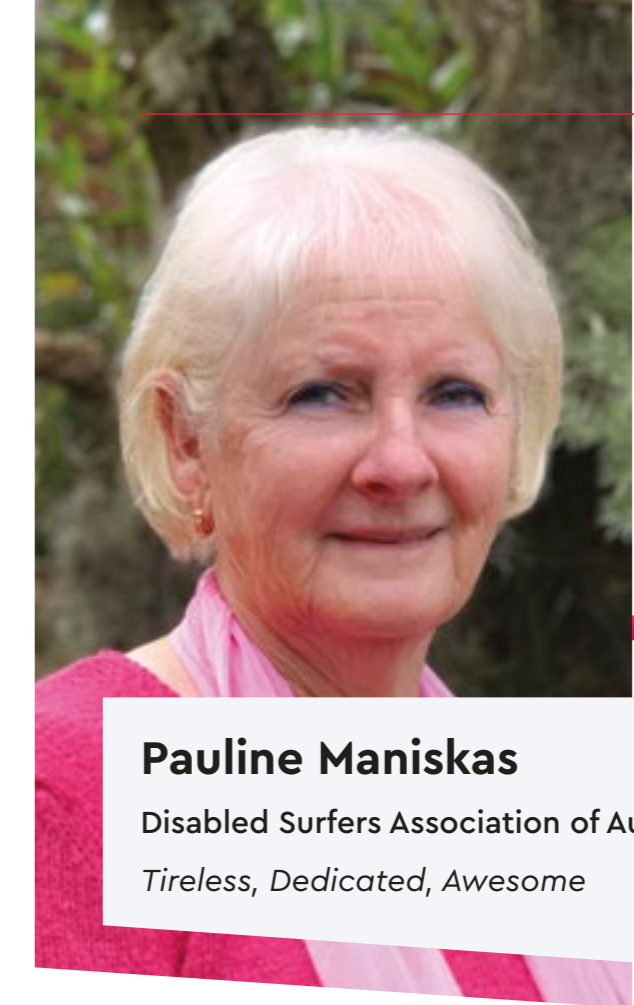
In fact, her regular swims in the ocean to counter the side effects of treatment made her more determined to help.

"I need to share the restorative effect of the ocean with as many people with disabilities as possible," she 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.

Disabled Surfers Association of Australia Central Coast will use its grant to buy a beach wheelchair and other equipment such as rash shirts and surf boards.

Pauline's nominator says: "Pauline lives and breathes diversity and inclusion by giving those with a disability the opportunity to socially engage through surfing in a safe and happy environment."



Pauline Maniskas

Disabled Surfers Association of Australia

Tireless, Dedicated, Awesome

Sharing the ocean

"My passion is to nurture a sense of inclusion and belonging for those less able in the community and provide a safe and happy environment for participation in our surfing events."



Les Smith

Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade

Selfless, Community-minded, Passionate

Protecting lives and property

"There is no better satisfaction than being thanked by someone for what you have been trained to do."

Les Smith has been putting his own life on the line to save other lives and property for 43 years.

He is a much valued and admired volunteer with the Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade, where he currently serves as Deputy Captain.

Les is always there on the frontline during emergencies such as fires, floods, storms and car accidents.

Despite the horrendous conditions on the fire front, and the long, tiring shifts, he has continued to come back to help time and time again over the past four decades.

His commitment to putting the community above his own safety was on show during the recent bushfires where his brigade faced the worst and most dangerous fires in living memory.

"I can honestly say that if I had my time again, I would not change a thing in relation to my service with the Rural Fire Service," Les says.

"There is no better satisfaction than being thanked by someone for what you have been trained to do."

Les is dedicated to training up the next generation of firefighters, passing on his knowledge and acting as a mentor.

"It's been estimated that over the years I have been involved in the training of over 400 members of our brigade," he 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.

Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade will use its grant to purchase safety and protective gear, firefighting equipment and to complete a safety haven for the community.

Les's nominator says: "Every time there has been a serious danger to our community, Les has been there to help. He gives his all to protect life, property and the environment."

As a child, Mel knew what it felt like to go without, so she always goes the extra mile for children and families in need.

Mel volunteers for 20 hours a week at children's charity We Care Connect, putting together packages of clothing, linen and baby items for caseworkers helping disadvantaged local children.

Mel is always cheerful, but can't help feeling touched by the children's stories. She always tries to include special items that meet children's individual needs.

Mel also works outside of the charity's hours, collecting and distributing donated items.

"It's wonderful when caseworkers tell us their clients are so relieved and overwhelmed on receiving the items we gave them," she says.

Such is Mel's dedication that she continued to volunteer even when very stretched herself, after she became the primary carer for her grandson for several months.

Mel overcame her own childhood neglect and qualified as an early childhood educator, a career she loved until she had to retire due to the increasing physical demands required and progression of her arthritis.

"I've now been able to bring my professional background to working with caseworkers; putting together support packages to match children's needs," Mel says.

"I've also known what it's like to be a child in need."

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.

We Care Connect will use its grant to expand their programs to meet the increased need in these difficult times.

Mel's nominator says: "Mel is an anchor stone of the We Care Connect programs, supporting thousands of vulnerable children on the Central Coast."

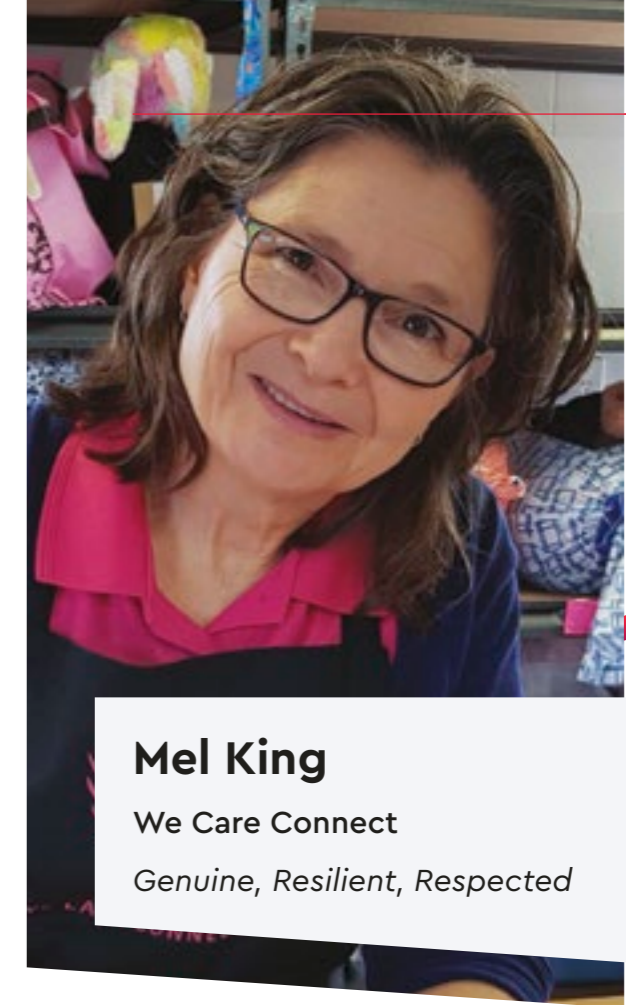
Mel King

We Care Connect

Genuine, Resilient, Respected

Giving with a smile

"I've now been able to bring my professional background to working with caseworkers; putting together support packages to match children's needs," Mel says.



Your 2020 Finalists

Gina Lynn Lemke

Lifeline Central Coast

Gina Lemke has volunteered a day a week at Lifeline Central Coast for 10 years, first as a telephone crisis counsellor and now as a face-to-face counsellor in Wyoming.

Gina knows from personal experience how hard life can be and that recovery is achievable.

Gina completed a degree and has been a foster mum to seven children.

"I've had tough times, but I am very grateful for my journey," Gina says.

If you need support, please phone:

- Lifeline: 13 11 14

Bobby Redman

Central Coast Dementia Alliance

Thanks to Bobby Redman people with dementia on the Central Coast have more support.

After receiving a diagnosis of frontotemporal dementia five years ago, she quickly realised there was a gap in education, support and services for people with dementia on the Central Coast.

Bobby reached out to local organisations and individuals for help, leading to the establishment of the Central Coast Dementia Alliance in 2017.

There are now dementia-friendly cafés and greater awareness in the community and among businesses.

"I am encouraging them to find ways to improve the lives of people living with dementia," she says.

Tanya Macfie

SHINE for Kids

Tanya aims to reduce the risk of young people reoffending as they transition back into the community.

She is the program coordinator for Stand as One mentoring program run by SHINE for Kids.

Tanya matches young people from the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre with a caring adult mentor, starting four to six months before they are released.

After their release, the mentor stays closely involved for up to nine months, when they are at the highest risk of reoffending.

"The program has had massive success in reducing the likelihood of reoffending," Tanya says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Dawn Hooper
Iris Foundation

Kirsty Raff
Central Coast Bombers

Jasmin Hughes
Coast Shelter

Justin Rumore
Morisset Lake Macquarie Show

Joshua Maxwell
Jopuka Productions

Sharyn Burgess
Wyong Neighbourhood Centre

Christine Mastello
Wyong Neighbourhood Centre

Robert Mcgrath
St Joseph's Workshop

Sally Hudson
Happiness Habits Inc

Rachel Peters
Roundabout Circus

Rebecca Forte
Raise Foundation

Jacqueline Batty
Vision Australia

Wendy Mcnamara
Toowoomba Bay Surf Life Saving Club

Dianne Waterhouse
Camp Breakaway Inc.

Brad Cardis
Fixx Events

Michelle Brereton
Bells Echo Animal Rescue

Michelle Fleming
International Pageants

Sally Kable
Raise Foundation

Heather Jones
Wallarah Rural Fire Brigade

Pauline Maniskas
Disabled Surfers Association Of Australia Inc Central Coast

Gina Lynn Lemke
Lifeline Central Coast

Mel King
We Care Connect

Les Smith
Berkeley Vale Rural Fire Brigade

Tanya Macfie
Shine For Kids

Bobby Redman
Central Coast Dementia Alliance

Annette Johnstone
St Vincent De Paul Society

Andy Long
Roundabout Circus

Deborah Walters
The Smith Family

Michelle Shetab
Help Find Missing And Lost People In Australia

Westfield

Warringah Mall

NSW

Angus (Gus) Worland has given up a stellar breakfast radio career to focus on Gotcha4Life, which he founded to promote mental fitness and wellbeing.

He's a respected and down-to-earth role model, and he is helping people understand what it means to be supportive, kind and to get in and make a difference.

"I believe we need to change the rules around what it takes to be a man and woman in this country. We can do this with education. We have programs we support that do exactly that," says Gus.

One of his crucial messages is that it's ok for a man to tell their mate that they love him or that they're not ok.

Gotcha4Life organisation was born out of a Gus's ABC TV series Man Up, which aired a few years ago.

"We are building mental fitness in communities right across Australia. Suicide rates in Australia are a disgrace, and we have to get them down to zero," Gus says.

"It's hard to change people's minds on what it takes to be a man or woman today.

"The box of rules is changing. We have to let people know that it's ok not to be ok," Gus 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.

Gotcha4Life will use its grant to provide free workshops to men and women who wouldn't usually be able to afford them.

Gus's nominator says: "Gus is determined to make a difference and dedicating his life to helping others as well as building mental fitness in Australia."



Angus (Gus) Worland
Gotcha4Life

Dedicated, Genuine, Passionate

Changing rules for men and women

"The box of rules is changing. We have to let people know that it's ok not to be ok"



Malin Frick

Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew

Kind, Caring, Legend

Inspiring people to do good

"The Clean Up Crew shows what Australia is all about – a caring community where everyone chips in for a good cause everyone believes in"

What started five years ago as two friends trying to do a good deed has grown into the popular Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew, with more than 100 volunteers working together every month.

That's largely thanks to co-founder Malin Frick, who spends her time organising, coordinating and running the clean-ups.

She also uses social media to educate people around the world about the impact of waste and single-use plastic and speaks to students at local schools.

The clean-up crew is open to all, with Malin and co-founder Kobie providing the necessary safety equipment.

"The Clean Up Crew shows what Australia is all about – a caring community where everyone chips in for a good cause everyone believes in," Malin says.

"It has grown into a caring, inclusive movement where everyone is seen and appreciated."

One of the exciting features of the crew is how it brings people from all walks of life together.

"On an average clean-up, we have people from over 10 countries, with several languages spoken. But everyone is united and gets along because each and everyone believes in good and doing a good deed for the planet as well as making some new friends at the same time," Malin 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.

Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew will use its grant to buy a trailer as well as gumboots for children.

Malin's nominator says: "Malin not only cares about and brings the local community together, but she cares about protecting the local environment, flora, fauna and marine life."

Peter Watson was inspired to learn to cook and to develop a program that teaches cooking skills to older men, after seeing what a lack of such skills did to his father.

Peter's father married twice and never needed to cook. But he outlived both wives and by the time he passed away was thin and poorly nourished.

After Peter mastered nutritious meals, he set about establishing the Forest Men's Kitchen Association for older men. Most of them were suddenly confronted by their lack of skills after their wife passed away or became incapacitated.

The membership is doubling each year and there is now a waiting list to join.

"We are currently teaching basic cooking skills to about 80 older men on the Northern Beaches who are also making some new friends in the process," says Peter.

"Our catch cry is, 'old dogs, new tricks, great mates'."

After 18 months, most men are dab hands at 50 main courses and desserts.

Most stay on for the company well after they have become competent cooks.

Peter recruited a very experienced chef to coordinate running of the nine cooking sessions each month. The Men's Kitchen team now has 20 cooking instructors, written three cookbooks and has expanded the association to operate across three Northern Beaches locations.

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.

Forest Men's Kitchen Association will use its grant towards operational costs to keep membership fees down.

Peter's nominator says: "Peter has addressed a local community need for men to be able to cook to preserve their good health and wellbeing. He is a significant asset to the community."

Peter Watson

Forest Men's Kitchen Association Inc

Determined, Caring, Supporting

Teaching men to cook

"We are currently teaching basic cooking skills to about 80 older men on the Northern Beaches who are also making some new friends in the process," says Peter.



Your 2020 Finalists

Jane Vincent

StreetWork Australia Limited

Jane Vincent joined StreetWork in 2014 to help with fundraising for an event. But she identified with the organisation's purpose and is now chairperson of the Northern Beaches board.

StreetWork was established 40 years ago on the premise that one supportive mentor is often all that is needed to turn a young life around.

This is a philosophy close to Jane's heart.

"I believe intensive, one-on-one mentoring is the best means of breaking the cycle of disadvantage in our community," she says.

Jane spends many volunteer hours raising funds and advocating for at-risk young people on the in the Manly-Warringah community.

Mel Thomas

KEYUP! Project

Mel Thomas is helping a generation of young women to raise their voices and stand up against domestic violence.

Mel founded KEYUP! Project to give young people practical life skills and tools to keep themselves safe.

More than 10,000 young people across Australia and New Zealand have joined the KEYUP! movement.

"I'm passionate about safeguarding my local community, all of us want to protect ourselves — and our children— from physical, mental, or emotional attack. We want to feel in control, safer, and more knowledgeable so we have the upper hand when it comes to dealing with bad guys and danger." Mel says.

Honae MacNeill

One Meal – It Makes a Difference

Honae MacNeill has managed One Meal – It Makes a Difference on the Northern Beaches virtually since the day she joined as a volunteer in 2016.

She leads a team of volunteers who cook and serve nutritious meals every Sunday evening to 30 or 40 locals, mostly regulars.

"We offer them something to anchor their week to – a consistent set of faces at the same place and time, a safe place to eat a nutritious meal, have a cuppa and some conversation."

Honae also mentors Duke of Edinburgh students and manages the day-to-day operations.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Gwen Korebrits
Dance Health Alliance

Steven Gamble
Man Anchor

Vicki Condon
Raise Foundation

Leon Faulkner
Bayview Golf Club Golf Rocks Kids Academy

Glenn Wysman
Link Community Care

Pix Jonasson
Making Meditation Mainstream

Roxy Rogan
Wild Education

Alissa Smith
School Sunnies Australia

Anona Le Page
Community Northern Beaches

Lawrence (Larry) Smith
Pioneer Clubhouse

Samantha Merriful-King
The Business Education Network

Roland Davies
Emu Parade

Greg Twemlow
Sevenmile Venture Lab

Maryann Tanks
Play Groups NSW

Kerry Gleeson
CCNB

Samantha Callender
One Eighty

Robyn Hinson
Ms Tique

Pam Anderson
Bear Cottage Children's Hospice

Barry Finch
St Vincent De Paul Society

Lauren Shadbolt
Operation Straw

Jack Layard
Youth Health Promotion (Northern Sydney Local Health District)

Rosa Chirillo
Make-A-Wish

Kari Higgins
Fisher Road School

Justin O'Hare
66 Second Challenge / Clean Up Australia

Cathy Webber
Epilepsy Action Australia

Sarah Herriot
Raise Foundation

Amanda Thomas
Raise Foundation

Janeve Freidman
Raise Foundation

Katherine Gill
Fnd Australia Support Services Inc.

Christine Curran
The Burdekin Association

Katherine Fraser
Girl Guides NSW, ACT & NT

Renata Tacadena
Aspect Vern Barnett School

Warren Bingham
Schoolaid

Josie Parata
Lighthouse For The Community

Bruno Spedalieri
St Vincent De Paul Society

John Donnelly
St Vincent De Paul Society

Chrissy Gabor
Streetwork Australia Limited

Malin Frick
Northern Beaches Clean Up Crew

Casey Squires
Toastmasters

Mel Thomas
Keyup! Project

Honae Macneill
One Meal – It Makes A Difference

Angus Worland
Gotcha4Life

Peter Watson
Forest Men's Kitchen Association Incorporated

Jane Vincent
Streetwork Australia Limited

Steve Hills
St Vincent De Paul Society

Antonella Lopez
Work Warriors

Australian Capital Territory

Australian Capital Territory Centres

Belconnen

Woden

Westfield

Belconnen

ACT

Three years ago, Elizabeth Lefevre was on maternity leave with four-month-old twins and was caring for her three-year-old. In her early 30s, she was excited about going back to work, where she had been promoted to a managerial position.

A breast cancer diagnosis turned Elizabeth's world upside-down.

"Before I knew it, major surgery had been booked that, unknown to me, was just the start of an epic breast cancer vendetta to come."

Elizabeth soon discovered a gap in support for younger women with cancer and started an online group that grew into The Young Women's Cancer Support Group – ACT & Surrounding Region.

The group gives women under 50 a safe place to ask questions, vent, socialise and support each other. This complements the work of local organisations like Bosom Buddies ACT, which has provided invaluable support.

Issues for younger women include family responsibilities, career, sexuality and self-esteem.

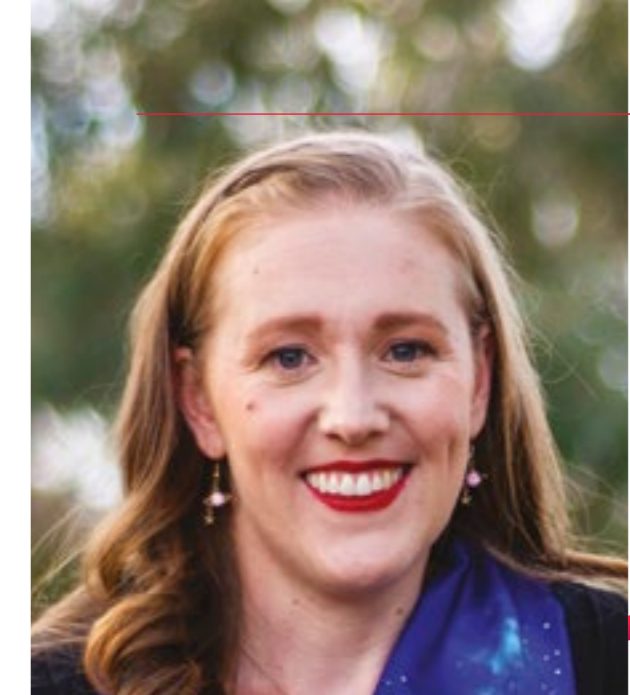
Members raise awareness about challenges, stand up to make a difference and help to ensure people are supported on their cancer journey.

"If you're unable to be proactive, extremely vigilant and advocate your rights, things get missed and can fall through the cracks of the system – which I experienced personally on multiple occasions," Elizabeth 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.

Young Women's Cancer Support Group will use its grant to register as a non-profit and fund networking events and information sessions.

Elizabeth's nominator says: "Elizabeth has done far more than just get herself through cancer treatment. Like Canberra philanthropist Connie Johnson OAM, she has stood up and tried to make a difference to other young women with cancer."



Elizabeth Lefevre

Young Women's Cancer Support Group
- ACT

Determined, Committed, Energetic

Brave advocate and supporter

"Before I knew it, major surgery had been booked that, unknown to me, was just the start of an epic breast cancer vendetta to come."



Tim Miller

Lids4Kids

Passionate, Enthusiastic, Genuine

Inspiring thousands to do good

"We've rescued over 10 million lids and prevented over 22 tonnes of plastic from going to landfill."

In Tim Miller's enthusiasm to do good, he accidentally started a nationwide volunteer project that saves millions of plastic lids from landfill and raises money for children.

Lids4Kids was born when Tim started raising money for charity by collecting the 10c refund on containers. But nobody wanted his three wheelie bins of plastic lids.

Tim was determined to save the lids from landfill and searched for various not-for-profit groups that could use the plastic bottle lids to repurpose into sustainable recycled plastic products to benefit the environment and disadvantaged kids.

Tim wrote Lids4Kids on a plastic bucket and placed it beside his community library in Aranda. He posted a picture on social media, and it went viral.

"We've rescued over 10 million lids and prevented over 22 tonnes of plastic from going to landfill," Tim says.

Tim, a former public servant, has several debilitating illnesses and says he adds meaning to his life by being a devoted dad and looking out for the environment.

"The most rewarding part is working directly with local volunteers with dementia, amputees and kids with physical or mental cognitive challenges. I particularly like working with kids and hosting lid colour-sorting workshops."

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.

Lids4Kids will use its grant to buy a granulator to shred lids, enabling the volunteers to make plastic products that directly benefit local children.

Tim's nominator says: "Tim is a man who adores his family and loves his community. Despite facing serious medical issues, he continues to look for ways to improve his community and help the environment."

The Zone Belconnen is a hive of activity every Saturday morning as the ACT Wizards Tenpin bowlers gather to bowl, cheered on by their families, friends and support workers.

All year round, it's a time for laughter, celebration and encouragement, thanks in a big part to Marilyn Richards, the president of the league that caters for people in the ACT region living with disability.

Marilyn has been involved with the Wizards for more than 20 years and has been president for five years. She attends almost every Saturday session and also accompanies bowlers to interstate competitions.

"I feel great satisfaction seeing the bowlers reach their potential," says Marilyn, who has an adult daughter with a disability.

"I have developed many lasting friendships with other parents of children and young adults with special needs, as well as enjoying the company of the team members themselves."

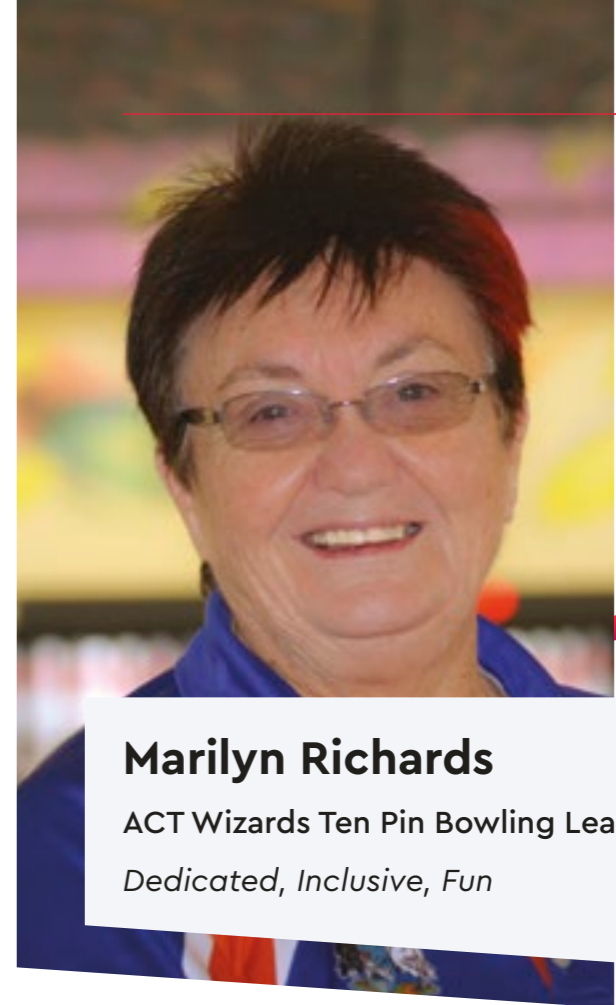
The volunteer-run league caters for bowlers aged 15 to 70. At last count, there were almost 100 participants, with a waiting list of others eager to get in.

"I aim to improve the lives of people with disability through the social, health and self-esteem benefits that are gained with involvement in team sport," Marilyn 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.

Wizards will use its grant to travel to regional tournaments and to attend next year's national tournament.

Marilyn's nominator says: "Marilyn plays an integral part in empowering people with special needs, fostering a caring environment and allowing people of all abilities to be part of a team."



Marilyn Richards

ACT Wizards Ten Pin Bowling League

Dedicated, Inclusive, Fun

Bowled over with delight

"I aim to improve the lives of people with disability through the social, health and self-esteem benefits that are gained with involvement in team sport."

Your 2020 Finalists

Sue White

Scullin Community Group

Sue White is known as a super-connector and is on a mission to transform her suburb of Scullin into a vibrant community.

In late 2018, Sue and neighbour Rachel Howard founded Scullin Community Group. Within weeks they had set up a popular Facebook group, organised a community get-together and canvassed the views of locals about strengthening the suburb's sense of community.

In under 18 months, the group has spearheaded an impressive list of improvements, including the volunteer-run Scullin Traders, murals, garden beds and events for locals.

"I love how connections between residents change our feelings about where we live," Sue says.

Caroline Odgers

GIVIT Listed Ltd

Whether it's warm gear for homeless people, a tent for a family or a toy for a boy who lost his Christmas presents in the bushfires, Caroline Odgers treats all aid requests with kind enthusiasm.

Caroline is the ACT and South East NSW Manager of GIVIT, which sources tens of thousands of donated items for more than 350 charities, including domestic violence services, homeless shelters and bushfire recovery services.

"My role at GIVIT is to help make the lives of these incredible people a little easier, which makes me so incredibly proud of our work," Caroline says.

Sharon Leigh-Hazell

Florey Neighbourhood Watch

Sharon Leigh-Hazell is on a mission to transform Florey into the friendliest neighbourhood in Canberra.

It all started four years ago after Sharon's house was burgled and her car was stolen. The family increased their security, but this made them feel isolated. Fortunately, a neighbour reached out to the community soon afterwards, which culminated in a group of people getting together and forming Florey Neighbourhood Watch in March 2018.

Sharon took on a leadership role and the group has attracted 130 members who meet for regular coffee catchups and community forums.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Kaye Keogh

Australian Small Business Advisory Services

Sharon Leigh-Hazell

Florey Neighbourhood Watch

Sue White

Scullin Community Group

Caroline Odgers

Givit Listed Ltd

Elizabeth Lefevre

Young Women's Cancer Support Group – Act & Surrounding Region

Tim Miller

Lids 4 Kids

Marilyn Richards

Act Wizards Ten Pin Bowling League

David Barrie

Everybody Wins

Chynna Marston

Recycled Racehorses Ltd

Dr Eloise Bright

ACT Pet Crisis Fund

Robyn Thurecht

Artkids Canberra

Elvany Luswanto

Goulburn Cat Rescue

Vanessa Churchill

PIP – Power In People

Sarah McPhillips

Paddy's Pick-Up And Matriarch Hair Studio

Carey Russell

Children's Tumour Foundation

Peter Mcgrath

Peter Mcgrath

Allan Sko

BMA Magazine

Gillian Shaw

Canberra Netball Association

David Wong

Canberra Prosperous Mountain Dragon And Lion Dance

Natarsha Lawrence

Rainbow Paws Program

Lachlan Prien

St Vincent De Paul's Society – Youth Programs

Dennis Yarrington

SchoolAid

Neville Sheather

Friends Of Stranger Pond / Clean Up Australia

Amanda Doelle

Canberra Pet Rescue

Kerrie Griffin

Dragons Abreast Australia

Caitlin Figueiredo

Jasiri Australia

Westfield

Woden

ACT

Michelle Barclay is an empathetic, hands-on-lawyer who goes out of her way to support vulnerable people.

She started at Canberra Community Law as a volunteer, but her charitable work has become her career.

Michelle has led Canberra Community Law's Women in Prison Legal Empowerment Sessions initiative at the Alexander Maconochie Centre. She offers legal information sessions to address problems women in prison face followed by one-on-one legal advice, and she does whatever she can to connect the women with services that can help them.

One of Michelle's wins is helping prevent women in prison from being evicted from their homes. "This has meant that these women have somewhere to be released to and ensures that their children can return to their family home," she says. "I also help reduce debts which removes an additional financial burden for the women upon their release and allows them to focus on re-establishing themselves back into the community."

Another area in which Michelle is making a difference is with people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

She is passionate about providing information and advice in plain and accessible language that people in crisis can understand.

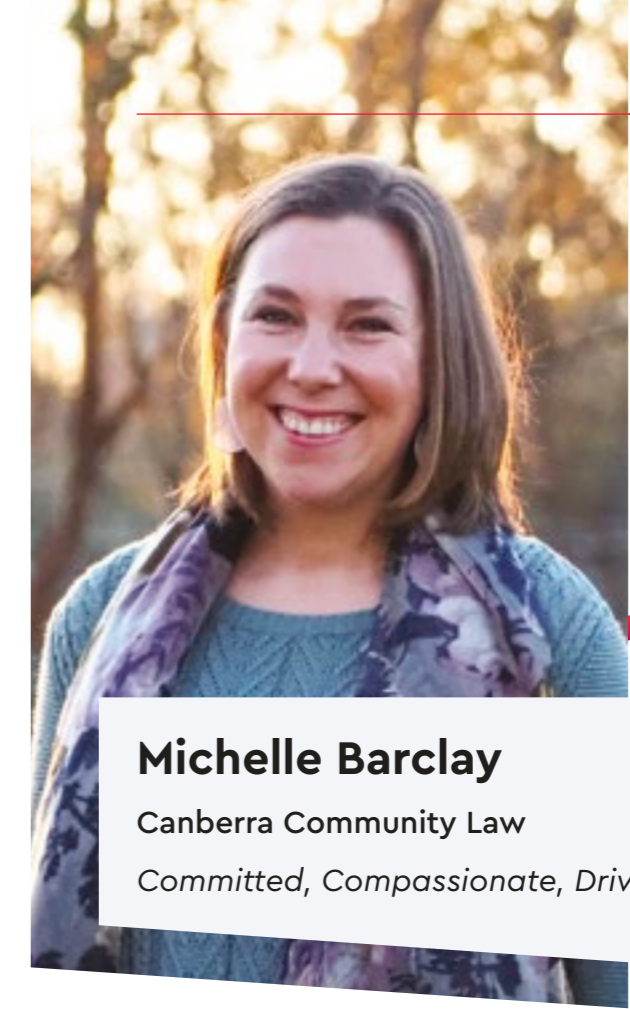
So far, Michelle has helped about 20 people get their birth certificate which can be hard to do when you are homeless and don't have ID. This then allowed them to get a tax file number so that they could work, claim support from Centrelink or access ACT public housing.

"The amazing thing about my work is that it often positively impacts my clients and, in some cases, can be life-changing," says Michelle.

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.

Canberra Community Law will use its grant to keep its prison program running for another three months.

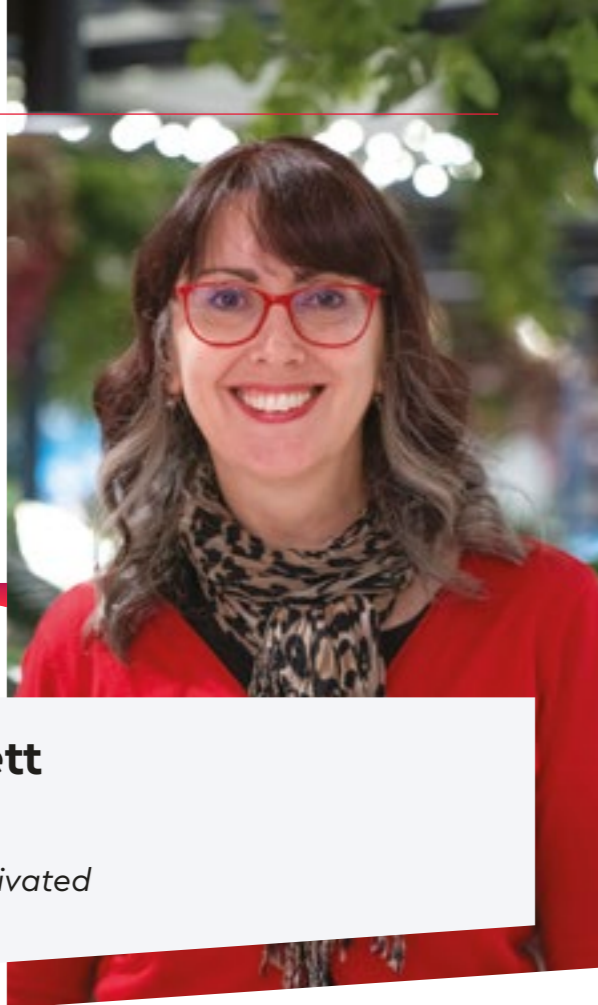
Michelle's nominator says: "Michelle is a passionate, caring and down to earth lawyer, helping some of Canberra's most vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with advice, advocacy, information and other support services."



Michelle Barclay
Canberra Community Law
Committed, Compassionate, Driven

Kind-hearted lawyer

"The amazing thing about my work is that it often positively impacts my clients and, in some cases, can be life-changing."



Kristine Hewett

Adamas Nexus

Kind, Tenacious, Motivated

Helping women heal

"The group helps women to heal collectively by helping others and to reignite positive feelings, passion and power."

Kristine Hewett is known for her big heart and charitable nature.

Despite working full-time, she co-founded the Adamas Nexus to provide long-term peer support for women survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

There are many crisis services in Canberra, but Kristine noticed a lack of support groups to complement the care provided by mental health professionals.

Adamas Nexus has been running for two years and offers two well-frequented groups a month in central and south Canberra.

The group helps women to heal collectively by helping others and to reignite positive feelings, passion and power, Kristine says.

"The aim is for the groups to become self-facilitated, with the group led by the participants for the participants."

Kristine has overcome her own childhood abuse and says the final stage of healing is using one's personal experience to help other people. She acknowledges that becoming open to sharing was the biggest challenge she had to overcome.

Kristine also volunteers for Orange Sky Australia, where she helps people in need to wash their belongings while everyone enjoys a good chin-wag.

It's a trial to find time for everything she needs to do, but Kristine plans to set up groups for men and people in the LGBTIQ+ community.

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.

Adamas Nexus will use its grant to provide an online facility for busy people and others who are not able to attend the group in person.

Kristine's nominator says: "Kristine sees the best in people and wants to help them thrive, so they can pay it forward. She's a real treasure!"

Jessica (Jess) Kercher is a dedicated supporter and fundraiser for Camp Quality, a charity that gives kids facing cancer the chance to be kids again.

After watching her 2-year-old daughter fight for her life against an aggressive cancer diagnosis, Jess knows firsthand the impact Camp Quality has. The children's cancer charity gave her the support she needed in hospital and after returning home and gave her daughter opportunities to laugh and smile again.

For the last 10 years, Jess has been dedicated to fundraising and sharing her own heartbreaking story to help more families just like hers get the support they so desperately need. Jess's bravery has raised enough funds to give hundreds of families facing cancer the opportunity to go on a Camp Quality program.

At this time, Camp Quality is facing severe financial difficulties, but supporters like Jess are determined to help the charity continue to provide its services and programs. These include in-hospital support with the Camp Quality Puppets and Child Life Therapists. Support outside the hospital includes Kids

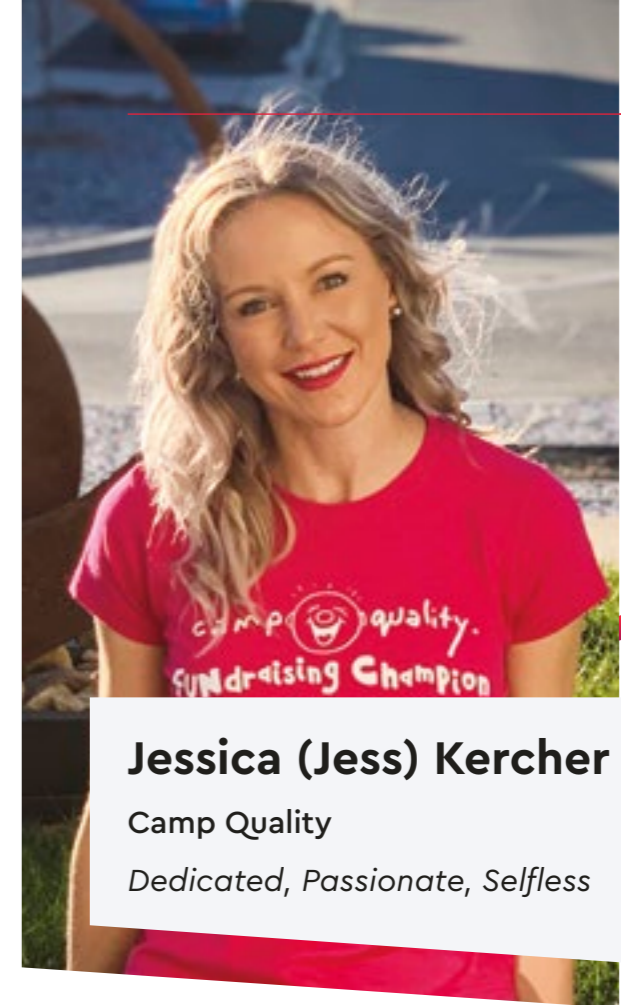
Camps, Family Camps and Family Fun days which give kids and their families a break from cancer and the opportunity to make friends and create new memories. Camp Quality also has a range of online services including the Kids Guide to Cancer app, the New Normal Navigator app, and Camp Quality's Happiness Hub.

"Camp Quality's main focus is creating laughter. We truly believe laughter is the best medicine," says Jess.

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.

Camp Quality will use its grant to give kids facing cancer opportunities to laugh again, on a Kids Camp, Family Camp or Family Fun Day.

Jess's nominator says: "Jess has been instrumental in ensuring the success of the major fundraising events in Canberra. By advocating for Camp Quality, Jess has enabled Camp Quality to continue to offer kids camps, family camps and puppet shows in her local Canberra community."



Jessica (Jess) Kercher

Camp Quality

Dedicated, Passionate, Selfless

Bravely sharing her cancer story

"We truly believe laughter is the best medicine."

Your 2020 Finalists

Lachlan Finlayson

St John Ambulance Australia (ACT) Inc

Registered Nurse Lachlan Finlayson is a single parent and still manages to volunteer to help the Canberra community with St John Ambulance Australia.

He is a natural leader and is always willing to take on extra tasks.

One of the most exhausting but satisfying experiences of his life was being deployed to Narooma and Bega during the recent bushfires.

He and his team were meant to be there for 24 hours but spent five days saving lives and treating injuries.

"I am grateful to St John for providing me with this opportunity to give back to my community," Lachlan says.

Marcia Williams

Women's Centre for Health Matters Inc (WCHM)

Marcia Williams has been a steadfast and influential campaigner for women's rights for more than a decade.

As CEO of the Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM), Marcia is passionate about ensuring the ACT community hears the voices of women, particularly those who are vulnerable or marginalised.

Marcia has made many contributions that are fundamental to promoting women's health, wellbeing and inclusion and ensuring women have reliable health information.

"I have ensured that WCHM has developed a reputation for being the place to go to for evidence and data about women in the ACT and their needs and views," Marcia says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Marg Peachey
Act Wildlife

Russell Fort
Woden Blues Football
And Netball Club

Mick George
Anti Bullying Programme

James Rollo Brett
Farrer Residents' Association

Leni Harris
Angel Gowns For Australian Angel
Babies (AGFAAB)

Nip Wijewickrema
Gg's Flowers & Hampers

Linda Ellabban Berjaoui
Mum's Exercise Group Australia
(MEGA)

Nate Swift
Little Luxton - Coffee For
Community

Naomi Nye
Woden Valley Gymnastics Club

Rob Regent
Everyday Champions

Michael Bransgrove
Make-A-Wish Australia

Nils Lantzke
Alpaca Therapy

Laura Johnston
Valley FM Community Radio

Shannon Narracott
Canberra Suicide Awareness
Ball & Campaign

Lachlan Finlayson
St John Ambulance Australia (ACT)
Inc.

Marcia Williams
Women's Centre For Health Matters
Inc. (WCHM)

Kristine Hewett
Adamas Nexus Support Group

Michelle Barclay
Canberra Community Law

Jessica Kercher
Camp Quality

Victoria



Victoria Centres

Aiport West

Doncaster

Fountain Gate

Geelong

Knox

Plenty Valley

Southland

Westfield

Airport West

VIC

After Mandy Gosetti lost her husband to cancer, she realised there must be other people in the same boat, struggling with loneliness and doubt over how to manage jobs around the house.

Determined, Mandy decided to do something about it and set up I'm Still Learning a Not For Profit, to offer hands on courses in Basic Home Maintenance, Basic Car Maintenance and Cooking for one.

Mandy and her team have directly helped and empowered over 250 participants, with the majority of them being women over 50. She set up the program so that people who have either lost a partner, live alone or care for others in their home can gain new skills and friendships in a social and supportive environment.

Mandy says, 'the best part of my job is getting to know our participants at the courses, watching their confidence grow and seeing them successfully complete projects at home as a result'.

Getting the courses up and running took a lot of hard work, but Mandy's determination paid off, and she was able to secure a grant to purchase tool bags for use at the courses,

build props for use by participants, and finance the first few courses.

Mandy has also learned new skills, today she co-ordinates courses, manages volunteers and participants, transports props and tools, sets up each session, manages finances, and cleans amongst other things.

'My biggest achievement was setting up I'm Still Learning and successfully running the first basic home maintenance course with some people coming back and completing all our programs,' she 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.

I'm Still Learning will use its grant to buy safety equipment and run more courses.

Mandy's nominator says: 'Mandy's courses provide skills, direction, a social environment and support for those who may be struggling with life after the death of a partner.'



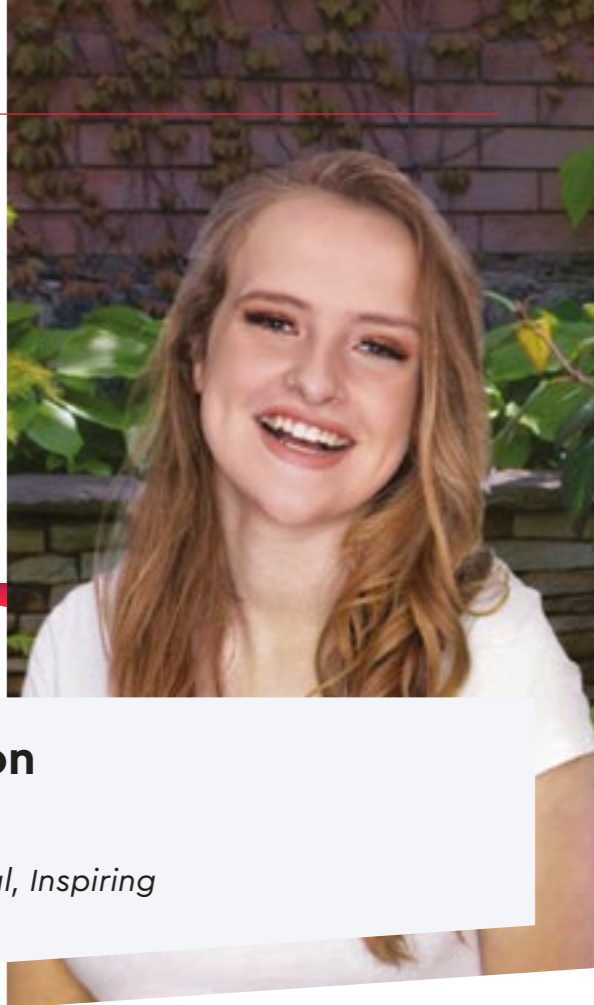
Mandy Gosetti

I'm Still Learning

Passionate, Determined, Supportive

Empowering independence

"The best part of my job is getting to know our participants at the courses, watching their confidence grow and seeing them successfully complete projects at home as a result."



Keeley Johnson

Keeley's Cause

Amazing, Exceptional, Inspiring

Big-hearted achiever

"We have a right to an education as much as anyone despite our disabilities."

At just 13, brave Keeley Johnson set up a charity and raised tens of thousands of dollars to help other kids like her get a good education.

At the time Keeley, who has autism and an intellectual disability, was dealing with depression and anxiety as she struggled to access the technology she needed to improve her learning.

"If I'm given work on a paper, I get overwhelmed. Put that same work on an iPad, and I get it right," she says.

After discovering there is no government funding for iPads for children with autism or intellectual disability, Keeley set out on a quest to raise the money herself through sausage sizzles and donations.

Proud Keeley has so far presented 103 iPads to children who need technology to learn.

"We have a right to an education as much as anyone despite our disabilities," she says.

"If iPads are what we need, iPads are what we are going to get."

Keeley says her success in setting up an organisation shows that children's abilities outweigh their academic limitations.

"We can make our dreams come true," she 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.

Keeley's Cause will use its grant to buy iPads for children with autism or an intellectual disability.

Keeley's nominator says: "Despite her own struggles, Keeley has stood up for the rights of children with special needs. She encourages others to focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities."

Gymnastics coach Natalie Roberts puts her heart into training children of all abilities, in the sport she loves.

The head coach and manager of the Niddrie Gymnastics Club makes it her mission to ensure every child, regardless of ability, feels included at the club.

Natalie understands the needs of children with autism and arranges lessons so they have the gym to themselves.

Natalie also runs a special-needs class, who also have full use of the facility. To meet their needs, she provides more coaches for the lesson and has worked hard to fundraise so coaches can do additional training.

Natalie says its challenging cater for different needs, but the children's happiness makes it all worthwhile.

"I am very proud of all our programs and the happy, safe place that we provide for children in the area."

Natalie has been with the club for 35 years and is passionate about passing on her knowledge to coaches in her club and the wider community.

"For me, being a positive role model is everything. Sport is life and makes people feel a part of something bigger than them," she 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.

Niddrie Gymnastics Club will use its grant to buy much-needed equipment and fund training for coaches.

Natalie's nominator says: "The thing that stands out about Natalie most is her passion for helping others through gymnastics. She is continually looking for new ways to give back to the community through this sport."

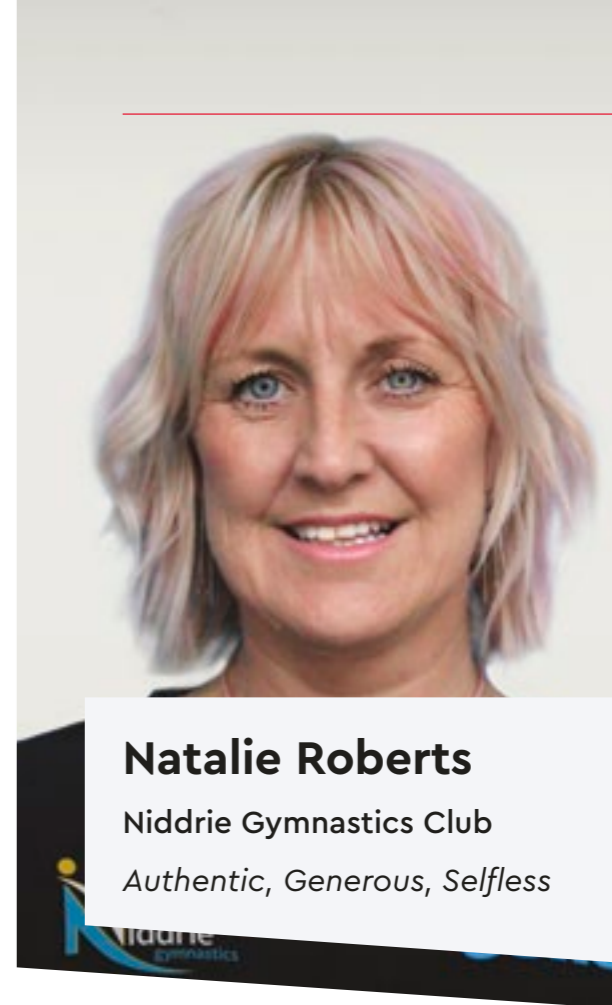
Natalie Roberts

Niddrie Gymnastics Club

Authentic, Generous, Selfless

Striving for inclusivity

"For me, being a positive role model is everything. Sport is life and makes people feel a part of something bigger than them."



Your 2020 Finalists

Terecia Page

Bacchus Marsh Community Radio Inc, Apple98.5fm

Volunteer radio station manager Terecia Page is connecting her community by bringing people live broadcasts of local footy games as well as news and event coverage.

Terecia is also the secretary and sponsorship coordinator at Bacchus Marsh Community Radio, Apple98.5fm. Until she stepped in two and a half years ago, there was just \$1000 in the bank and the station was in danger of folding.

Despite being a busy mum and undergoing cancer treatment, Terecia always shows up for meetings and events with a smile.

"Bacchus Marsh community radio helps to bring the community together," says Terecia.

Bruce Triptree

Hume Men's Shed Craigieburn

Bruce Triptree, the president of the Hume Men's Shed in Craigieburn, has spent the past seven years working to raise money in the community and secure council funding for a much-needed bigger building.

Bruce says he was able to show the Council he was serious about providing a safe, friendly environment for community members to call home. He also rallied shed members to raise funds towards the cost.

Getting councillors involved in the shed, which is a place to socialise, learn new skills and complete projects, was a turning point, Bruce says.

Matthew (Matt) Hay

Youth Insearch Foundation

Youth mentor Matthew (Matt) Hay knows first-hand how helpful it can be for troubled young people to meet peers who have overcome similar issues to them.

When he was 17, Matt struggled with clinical anxiety caused by a difficult home life and being bullied at school for being different because of his type 1 diabetes.

He struggled to leave the house and to go to school.

Matt turned his life around after a counsellor recommended the Youth Insearch Foundation, a mentoring program in which young people help other young people.

Now Matt is thriving, and he's giving back as a volunteer youth leader with Youth Insearch.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Terecia Page

Bacchus Marsh Community Radio Inc, Apple98.5Fm

Natalie Roberts

Niddrie Gymnastics Club

Bruce Triptree

Hume Men's Shed Craigieburn

Mandy Gosetti

I'm Still Learning

Keeley Johnson

Keeleys Cause

Matthew Hay

Youth Insearch Foundation

Ben Roarty

Camp4Cancer

Dean Tellefson

Wrangler Studio Melbourne Inc.

Nathan Higgs

Pascoe Vale United Cricket Club

Michael Keet

Orangesky Australia

Barbara Marino

Raise Foundation

Abid Shuaib

Endeavour Foundation

Sarah Jones

Melbourne Muslimahs

Melissa Wake

Encounter Dance Company

Dina Bassile

Tibi Access

Peter Brookshaw

Craigieburn Corps The Salvation Army Australia Territory

Neal Corcoran

C-Collective

Tuan Nguyen

St Albans Community Footy

Renee Swannack

KCNA2 Epilepsy Alliance, How To Make Lemonade

Derek Atkinson

Footscray Rubbish Runners / Clean Up Australia

Lachlann Carter

100 Story Building (Pigeons Projects Ltd trading as 100 Story Building)

Louise Larkin

Friend In Me

Westfield

Doncaster

VIC

Matt Cronin is courageously campaigning against senseless violence in memory of his youngest son, Pat, who passed away after a single coward punch in 2016.

The loving father has risen above community outrage to be a voice of calm and encourage others to think about their actions to prevent similar tragedies.

Pat, a popular physiotherapy student and sportsman, was only 19 years old when he was hit from behind in a senseless act of violence while enjoying a quiet night out.

Matt and his wife, Robyn, started the Pat Cronin Foundation to end the coward punch

Matt and others from the Pat Cronin Foundation speak to thousands of school students and members of community organisations, sharing Pat's story to change attitudes to violence.

When Matt speaks there is pin-drop silence as 16 to 25-year-olds put down their phones and tune in.

"We are determined that no other family should suffer as we have," he says.

Matt says his work is making a huge difference in the community by encouraging people to make wiser decisions.

"Pat was a normal kid from a normal family. If this can happen to Pat, it can happen to anyone, and this is why we are getting so much support from the community," Matt 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.

Pat Cronin Foundation will use its grant to give 16 presentations at local organisations that cannot afford the usual fee.

Matt's nominator says: "Matt, with his family and community, has found a way to turn the most horrendous tragedy into a positive and empowering force for change."



Matthew Cronin
Pat Cronin Foundation
Tireless, Humble, Astonishing

Courage versus the coward punch

"We are determined that no other family should suffer as we have."



Gavin Blue

Heartfelt

Generous, Compassionate, Of service

Gifting photographic memories

"No family should go home from hospital without a photographic memory of their child or baby."

Professional photographer Gavin Blue is always willing to donate his skills for a good cause, but he goes above and beyond for grieving parents.

After losing his daughter Alexandra to stillbirth in 2006, Gavin founded Heartfelt as her legacy, to provide free photographic memories for families to treasure.

It's been a labour of love, and he has inspired 340 photographers across Australia and New Zealand to volunteer their time. Over the past ten years, they have gifted precious photos to more than 11,000 families who have experienced a stillbirth or who have a seriously ill child.

The photographs capture the beauty, love and pain and enable children to be seen and remembered.

"No family should go home from hospital without a photographic memory of their child or baby," Gavin says.

Heartfelt receives 150 requests each month but stricter volunteer requirements in hospitals, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, have caused some families to miss out.

Always innovative, Gavin has come up with a strategy to recruit hospital staff as photographers.

"To be able to train hospital staff on how to use the equipment and take touching photographs would be of great value at this unprecedented moment in global history," Gavin 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.

Heartfelt will use its grant to produce an online training program, including videos, for new volunteers and hospital staff.

Gavin's nominator says: "Gavin is generous, compassionate and selfless and takes action in his community to make a difference for people, especially those who are experiencing the loss of a child."



Catherine Haining

Giant Steps Melbourne (GSM)

Compassionate, Selfless, Encouraging

Hitting a high note

"In some instances, students who do not speak will sing."

Music therapist Catherine Haining is an innovator when it comes to educating children with autism, combining songs and traditional learning to great effect.

She played a crucial role in establishing Giant Steps Melbourne (GSM), a school for children with moderate to severe autism and intellectual disabilities.

Catherine is Head of Therapy Services at the school and uses music to help the students to understand and retain numeracy and literacy skills.

The structure of music provides calm and reassurance for the students, who may live in a world of anxiety and uncertainty. Overlaying music with instructions for everyday tasks such as tying shoes and putting on sunscreen means they are more willing to try.

And music gives them a way to share how they feel when they can't find the words, Catherine says.

"In some instances, students who do not speak will sing."

Catherine says music is a way for students to connect with others. One student attended a regular music festival with carers and was elated to be able to dance alongside other attendees.

"I love working at GSM. I feel like I am making a difference but most of all I feel like I am part of something bigger than myself," Catherine 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.

Giant Steps Melbourne will use its grant to buy musical instruments and a laptop to produce music.

Catherine's nominator says: "Catherine is the heart and soul of our organisation. She is an impressive professional who is able to work in the most difficult classrooms supporting students and directing staff."

Your 2020 Finalists

Jayne Clarke

Big Group Hug Ltd

Jayne Clarke volunteers about 50 hours a week in her determination to end child poverty.

She has helped hundreds of children from birth to 12 years through the Big Group Hug. The non-profit organisation provides clothing, nappies, prams and other material aid to vulnerable families.

Along the way, Jayne has encouraged schoolchildren to pitch in by collecting items on behalf of the organisation. So far, 500 students from 10 schools have done their bit.

"I believe it takes a village to raise a family and I try to facilitate that wherever I can," Jayne says.

Loretta Bolotin

Free to Feed

After recognising that unemployment, social isolation and discrimination are the most significant issues facing refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants, Loretta Bolotin decided to do something about it.

The former caseworker co-founded the innovative non-profit Free to Feed to provide dozens of newly arrived people with paid training and employment.

Loretta's social enterprise offers training in a variety of hospitality roles, with catered events, pop-up events and cooking classes led by the participants providing the revenue to pay their wages.

Robert (Rob) Pradolin

Housing All Australians

Developer, Robert (Rob) Pradolin, has brought together like-minded business people to launch a volunteer run organisation that cuts through red tape and sets up temporary homes for vulnerable women.

The national initiative is called Housing all Australians (HAA) was launched last year.

HAA negotiates a 3-5 year lease, at nominal rent, for buildings that are awaiting redevelopment approvals or are standing empty and repurposes them into short term "pop-up" transitional accommodation for vulnerable Australians.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Chris Prandi

Alkira Centre Box Hill

Richard Davies

Warrandyte Community Association

Steve Gilbert

Mitcham Thunder Basketball Club

Jasvinder Sekhon

Australian Aphasia Association Ltd

Margie Cerato

Celebrating Abilities Inc

Natalie Walker

Partnerspeak

Krizia Sciessere

The Big Sister Experience

Bianca Sciessere

The Big Sister Experience

Jayne Clarke

Big Group Hug Ltd

Gavin Blue

Heartfelt

Loretta Bolotin

Free To Feed

Catherine Haining

Giant Steps Melbourne (GSM)

Matthew Kevin Cronin

Pat Cronin Foundation

Robert Pradolin

Housing All Australians

Gayle Porter

Cerebral Palsy Education Centre (CPEC)

Coral Reid

The Royal Victorian Eye And Ear Hospital (Eye And Ear Hospital)

David John Ryan

Warrandyte Returned Services League Sub-Branch And Army Reserve

Ryan Holloway

Deaf Basketball Australia

Karin Traeger

The Plastic Runner / Clean Up Australia

George Wakim

Preston Bullants Amateur Football Club

Westfield

Fountain Gate

VIC

Josh Carell is using the power of art to help improve mental health.

Five years ago, he founded Littlefoot and Company with his sister Eden, a qualified art therapist to provide free art therapy to the community.

A range of events and workshops are on offer to young people and adults, including visual arts and spoken word and poetry workshops.

"Making art in the company of others or sharing your art allows for social connection and a sense of being valued. It can allow for healing and growth," Josh says.

Thanks to Josh, many people in the community feel they have more support and social connections, and their well-being has improved.

It's taken a lot of strength and dedication to find organisations and groups willing to share their space for the workshops.

Financial support is also an issue, so Josh coordinates popular outdoor movie nights in Berwick's botanic gardens, which help fund the free art programs.

Josh and the company have worked hard to continue supporting the community during the COVID-19 pandemic through online programs.

"Art therapy is a practical resource for mental health preventative measures and is essential for developing minds to cope and comprehend the challenges we face," he 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.

Littlefoot and Company will use its grant to rent a dedicated space for its free art therapy programs for a year.

Josh's nominator says: "Josh volunteers his own time to promote goodwill in the community and provides positive opportunities for young people to express themselves."



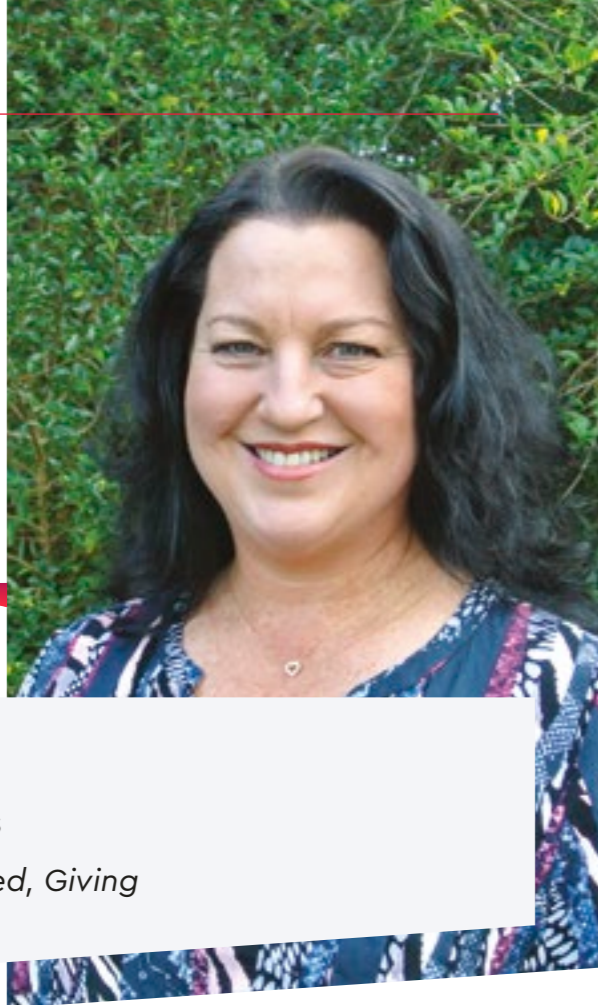
Josh Carell

Littlefoot and Company

Caring, Passionate, Giving

Healing through art

"Art therapy is a practical resource for mental health preventative measures and is essential for developing minds to cope and comprehend the challenges we face."



Sally Beard

Backpacks 4 Vic Kids

Passionate, Dedicated, Giving

Comforting displaced children

"My goal is to ensure the displaced children have clean, appropriate clothing, toiletries and a few belongings of their own."

Sally Beard leads a dedicated team of volunteers that provides much-needed comfort and dignity for vulnerable children entering foster or emergency care.

These children are often taken into care at a moment's notice with nothing more than the clothes they are wearing.

Sally was outraged when she heard many wait up to eight hours in soiled clothing or hospital clothing while waiting for a safe place to go.

She founded the non-profit Backpacks 4 Vic Kids to provide these children with a backpack of essentials and comfort items.

The backpacks contain clean, appropriate clothing, new underwear and comfort items like a blankets, soft toy and a torch.

Other items in the pack include toiletries, stationery, a book, new socks and what Sally calls extra love items such as games, lunchboxes or warm gloves.

"Each pack has several hand-made items like woollen blankets so the children can literally wrap themselves in the love of someone who cares," Sally says.

"My goal is to ensure the displaced children have clean, appropriate clothing, toiletries and a few belongings of their own."

Sally and her volunteers also prepare junior packs, which include baby items such as nappies, formula and a bottle.

"We have now delivered over 7000 packs to displaced children state-wide," she 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.

Backpacks 4 Vic Kids will use its grant to put together 200 ME packs.

Sally's nominator says: "I haven't met many people like Sally. She gives all her time and effort to ensure that she can provide help to the children who need it."

Sukhjit Singh was there to help when the worst bushfires in living memory ravaged Victoria.

The dedicated volunteer spent 16 days at the Bairnsdale relief centre working with Sikh Volunteers Australia's free food van, offering three meals a day to evacuees.

Sukhjit was up at 4.30am to start preparing breakfast and often worked late into the night.

Volunteering is a part of life for Sukhjit, who joined Sikh Volunteers five years ago, in the early days.

The organisation aims to promote peace, harmony and multiculturalism. It believes people are all the same, regardless of age, gender, religion, country of origin or social status.

Sukhjit, a first-generation immigrant who is now an Australian citizen, lives these principles by volunteering at many community events.

"I do this to promote wellbeing and prosperity for everyone," he says.

"It's my responsibility to give back something to the community that has provided my family and me with so many opportunities."

Sukhjit perfectly balances volunteering with his personal life and busy career.

"I mostly do service in our free food van program," he says.

"We not only help people in need but break down barriers and help people come together to make a great multicultural Australia."

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.

Sikh Volunteers Australia will use its grant to replace the oven in its food van and increase food storage capacity to serve more people in an emergency.

Sukhjit's nominator says: "Sukhjit thinks about others first and himself later. He stands first in line to provide services to the Australian community."

Sukhjit Singh

Sikh Volunteers Australia

Dedicated, Committed, Humble

Promoting peace and harmony

"It's my responsibility to give back something to the community that has provided my family and me with so many opportunities."



Your 2020 Finalists

Carrie Archer

Berwick College

Something wonderful is happening at Berwick College, with volunteer youth worker Carrie Archer encouraging previously disengaged students to turn up to school.

Carrie runs a cooking program for at-risk and traumatised 13 to 16-year-olds, and many are now getting the education they deserve.

She always has time to put a smile on a crying face, to notice those who fly under the radar and to listen to those who are often unheard.

"Together we see a combination of life, cooking and social skills emerge and the outcome is amazing," Carrie says.

Karen Janssen

Raise Foundation

When the welfare team at Cranbourne Secondary School became concerned about an increase in mental health issues and bullying among students, they turned to Karen Janssen for help.

Karen is a program counsellor with youth mentoring movement the Raise Foundation and responded to the SOS to establish a program within the school.

She matches each student with a trained volunteer mentor who helps them improve their coping skills and develop hope for the future and belief they can finish school and get a job.

"The power of having someone neutral to talk to, who really listens and hears you, is extraordinary, Karen says.

Darcy Balhas

Youth Insearch Foundation

Darcy Balhas is paying it forward for the help he received to turn his life around.

Growing up, Darcy was bullied terribly because of his Indigenous background. He had a difficult home life and was in and out of foster homes.

Darcy was struggling to cope but managed to bounce back thanks to Youth Insearch, a program that encourages young people to help other young people to rebuild their lives.

Darcy is now an Insearch youth leader and mentor for other young men.

"I show them where I have come from, to where I am as a proud Wiradjuri man," he says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Sue Johnston

Sue's Roos Kangaroo Rescue – Rehab – Release

Jodie Hollis

Cancer Support Angels (CSA)

Bassir Qadiri

Bakhtar Cultural & Publishing Association

Donna Harrison

Casey Relay For Life

Sally Beard

Backpacks 4 Vic Kids

Josh Carell

Littlefoot & Company

Sukhjit Singh

Sikh Volunteers Australia

Carrie Archer

Berwick College

Darcey Balhas

Youth Insearch Foundation

Tracey Elizabeth Ryan

Young Pink Sisters Charity

Tenille Bull

It's My Shout

Selba Gondoza Luka

Afri-Aus Care Inc. and Black Rhinos Club

Ben Macdonald

A Guide To Cardinia

Mellissa McIlroy

KorusConnect

Jacob Pearce

Alive Project

Karen Janssen

Raise Foundation

Westfield

Geelong

VIC

Volunteer Peter Wheeler has created an op shop that offers much more than second-hand clothes and household goods.

With his vision and drive, Uniting Barwon's new Norlane Op Shop is also a safe place for disaffected locals to socialise and seek help.

There are comfy sofas where mums can enjoy a cuppa while their children play in the kids' corner, where they host community engagement events, including community movie nights.

A community garden has been established to provide some of the food used to prepare light lunches for those in need.

Thanks to Peter's dynamic and inclusive approach, there has been a surge in volunteers and shoppers as word of mouth spreads.

"We have community members who, by volunteering and participating, have gained an improved level of self-worth," Peter says.

Peter is driving further initiatives before COVID-19 restrictions, including a community arts program and literacy and numeracy programs.

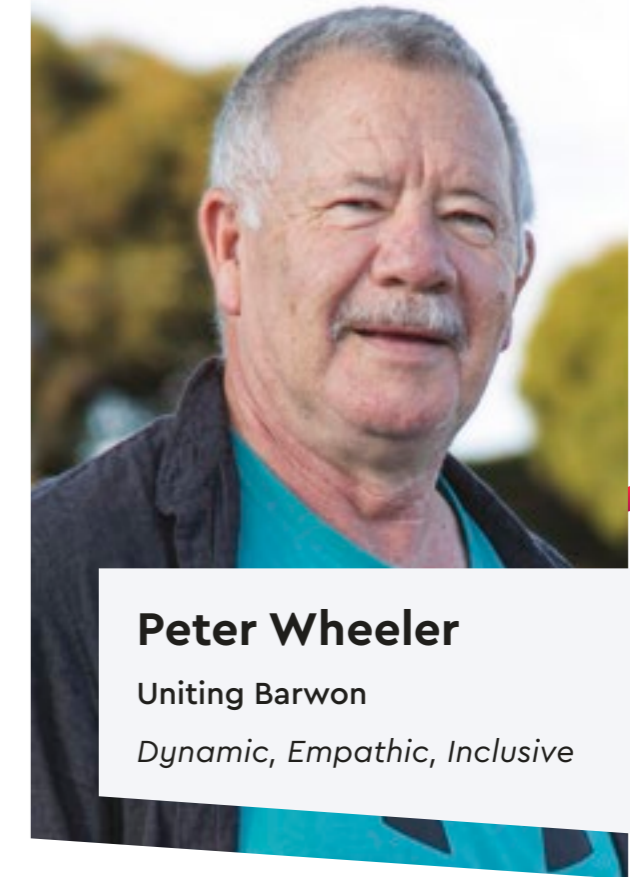
He is proud that the op shop has saved several tons of goods from ending up in landfill each month while helping those in need.

"Any profit made from the shop goes to our Emergency Relief Program for those in greatest need in our community."

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.

Uniting Barwon will use its grant to fund initiatives including a shopfront revamp, a storage shed and laptops for locals to do job searches.

Peter's nominator says: "Thanks to Peter's efforts, Norlane residents now have a safe space open six days a week where they feel welcome, included and safe."



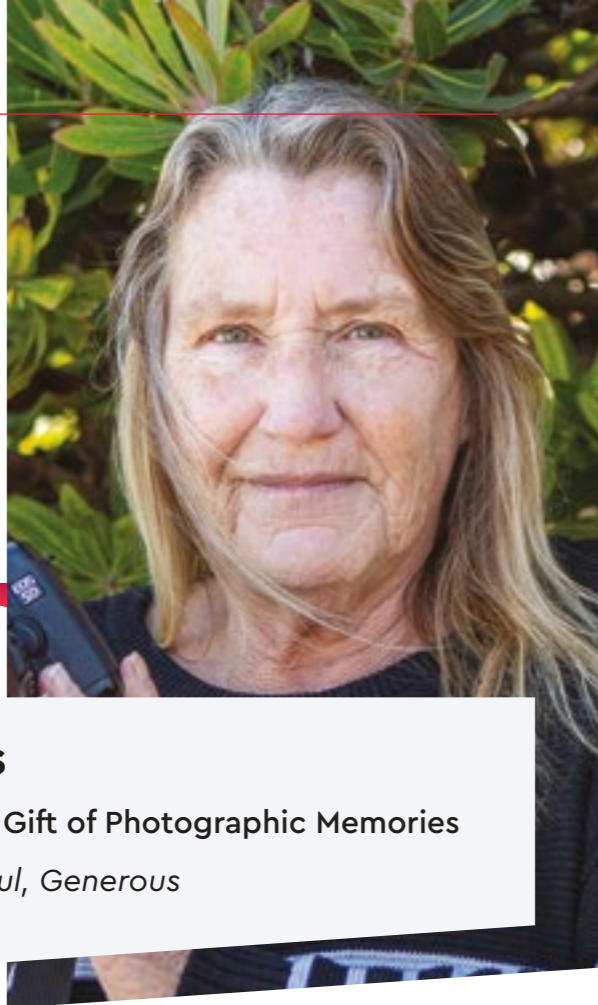
Peter Wheeler

Uniting Barwon

Dynamic, Empathic, Inclusive

Op shop with a difference

"We have community members who, by volunteering and participating, have gained an improved level of self-worth."



Debi McKinnis

Heartfelt: Giving the Gift of Photographic Memories

Respectful, Thoughtful, Generous

Gifting precious memories

"Being with families and creating gentle images of their child is a privilege."

Debi McKinnis gently steps in to help when grieving families are facing their darkest times.

A professional photographer, she volunteers her time with Heartfelt, an organisation that gifts families who have experienced a stillbirth or have a child with a terminal illness with beautiful images of their child.

Over the past seven years, she has provided more than 100 free professional photographic sessions to families, who often consider the images their most treasured possessions.

Debi goes wherever it suits the family, whether it's the hospital or their home.

She is the primary volunteer covering requests from Geelong Hospital but also travels to Melbourne if there is a family in need.

"The images are gentle and often the families have them on display. They create beautiful memories and help families remember their child and allow them to talk about their child," Debi says.

Widely admired for her grace and generosity, Debi sometimes returns to the family to take more pictures, especially if other family members have travelled to be with them.

She feels humbled when a family reaches out to thank her for being there for them and their child.

"Being with families and creating gentle images of their child is a privilege," Debi 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.

Heartfelt will use its grant to cover the cost of 133 photographic sessions and 11 cameras for hospitals to use when Heartfelt is not available.

Debi's nominator's says: "Debi has made a difference to the lives of so many grieving families. Her photos can be a family's most treasured possession."

Jake Janson left a career in construction to become a youth worker, knowing that the opportunity to make a difference, was an important one.

He trained with Ocean Mind, which runs free surf therapy programs for young people experiencing mental health challenges, social isolation and disabilities.

Jake is now the program coordinator for the not-for-profit, and his abundant energy and contagious laughter mean the kids have the best day ever while learning to surf.

He puts in many unpaid hours, taking the time to check in with the young people and provide support, encouragement and guidance.

Jake is passionate about supporting people with mental health challenges and is considered an exceptional role model for the young people and Ocean Mind volunteers.

"Ocean Mind has changed my life. I wake up every day and pinch myself about what I get to do for a living," he says.

"Financially, it was initially difficult, but the reward for following my dream job is beyond worth it."

Outside of work, Jake is quickly becoming a pillar of the community. He volunteers with the Country Fire Authority and each Christmas he helps out at local food kitchens providing meals to the homeless.

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.

Ocean Mind will use its grant to run additional programs, buy equipment and provide transport to the young people who need it.

Jake's nominator says: "Jake is a natural youth worker. The positive regard he has for all people and his ability to make young people feel listened to and supported is incredible."

Jake Janson

Ocean Mind

Inspiring, Energetic, Altruistic

Dedicated to youth

"Ocean Mind has changed my life. I wake up every day and pinch myself about what I get to do for a living."



Your 2020 Finalists

Collin Peebles

Geelong Food Relief Centre

Geelong Food Relief Centre CEO Collin Peebles is passionate about helping people in need. Collin manages about 90 volunteers and works alongside them so that 37,000 people each year have enough to eat. He also spends his own time giving presentations to groups and clubs to boost support for the centre.

Reno Demicoli

EdConnect, Corio

After losing his sons, Reno Demicoli turned his attention to helping at-risk children by volunteering as a school mentor. Thanks to his dedication, the kids now have an encouraging adult to speak to.

Reno says helping members of the community is adding meaning to his golden years.

Marsha Uppill

Arranyinha Pty Ltd

Proud First Nations woman Marsha Uppill is a justice warrior who is striving to close the social and health gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Her strategy is to educate businesses and other organisations, so they understand their potential impact and are inspired to help bring about change.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

David Drayton

Birregurra Football And Netball Club

Shannon Graham

The Empowerment Challenge

Thomas Dunn

Livin

Margaret Manning

Bellarine Community Health

Leann Tremul

Cystic Fibrosis Geelong Inc

Jacqui Bennett

Humans In Geelong Inc

Frank Tripolino

The Palais Theatre, Geelong

Christopher Hall

Wheel 4 MND

Debi Mckinnis

Heartfelt: Giving The Gift Of Photographic Memories

Collin Peebles

Geelong Food Relief Centre

Peter Wheeler

Uniting Barwon

Reno Demicoli

EdConnect Australia

Jake Janson

Ocean Mind

Chris Hall

Wheel 4 MND

Marsha Uppill

Arranyinha Pty Ltd

Andy Brittain

Geelong Youth Engagement

Hilary Holmes

Hilary Holmes Makeup

Michelle Polidano

Raise Foundation

Sharon Rooney

Southern Cross Kids' Camps

Tracey Paech

Hope Bereavement Care

David Burge

Teesdale CFA

Fiona McDonald

Tradeswomen Australia Foundation

Bella Kostadinoff

Bellarine Training And Community Hub

Justin Irwin

Lifeline Direct – Geelong & South West Victoria Region

Glenda Cadden

Standing Tall In Hamilton Inc

Frank De Rosso

Music At The Basilica Incorporated

Margaret Markovic

Road Trauma Family's Victoria

Heather Work

Make A Wish

Ange Liston-McCaughley

The Type 1 Foundation

Louise Larkin

Friend In Meq

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.

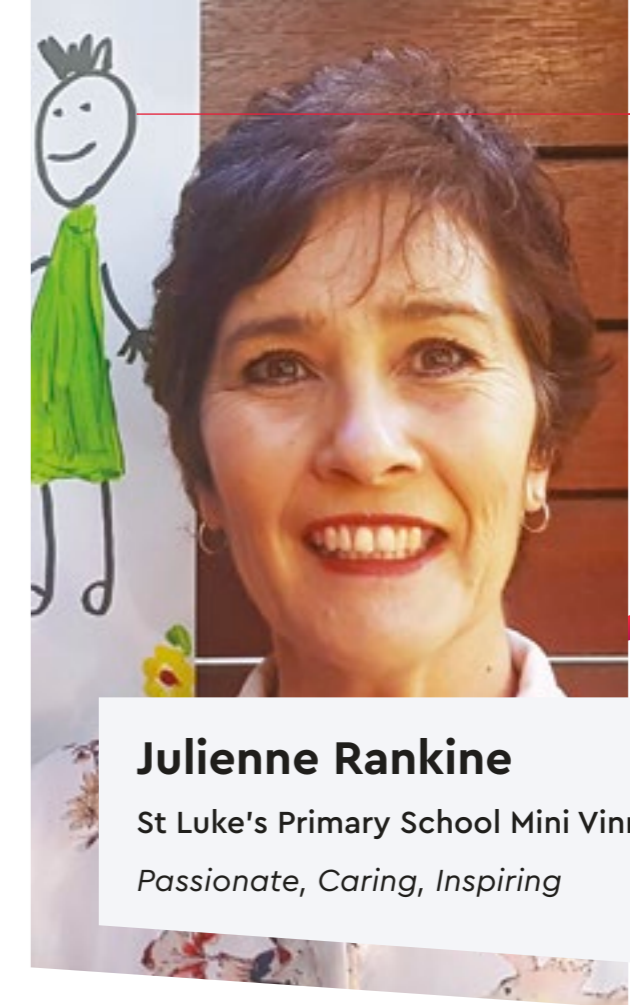
"This process is very empowering for the students. Their role is voluntary, and their enthusiasm is immense," Julienne says.

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.

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.

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.

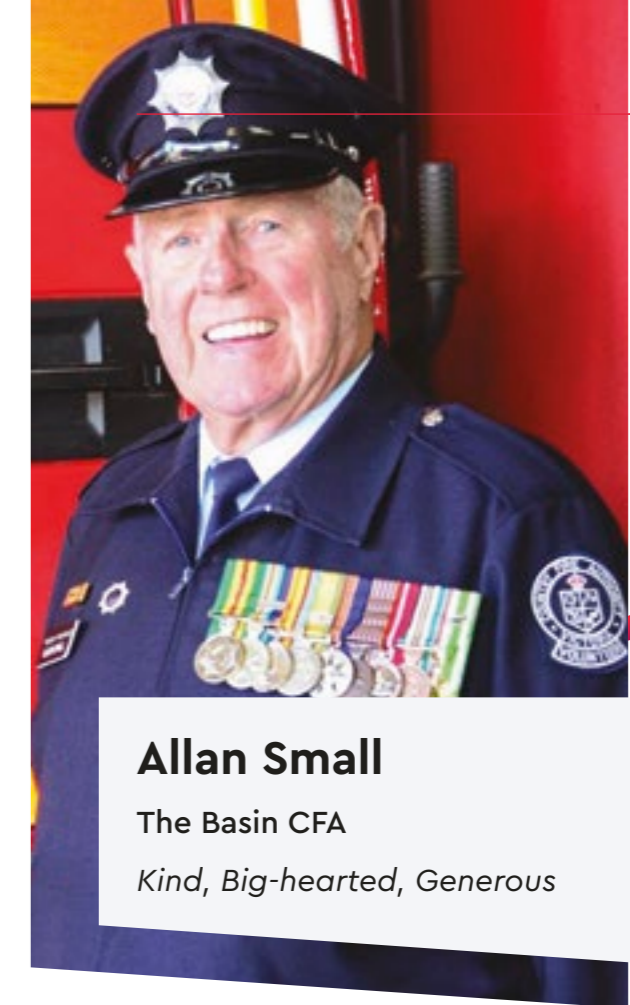
"Over all of my years in this fire brigade, none of our juniors has ever got into problems in the community," he says.

"I reckon that's really something great."

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.

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

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.

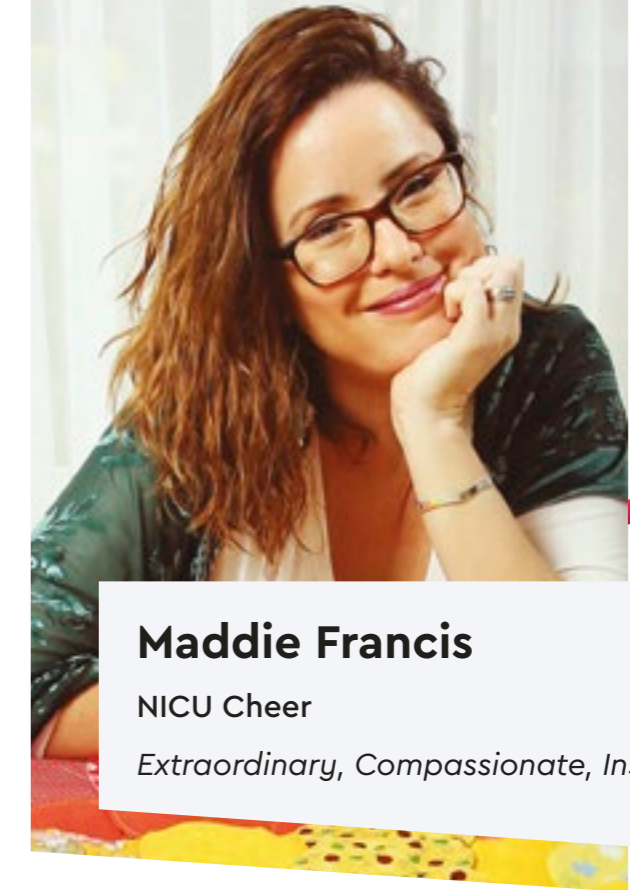
"Although it doesn't pay me wages, I've never been prouder or happier to call this my full-time job," says Maddie.

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.

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.

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."



Maddie Francis

NICU Cheer

Extraordinary, Compassionate, Inspirational

Helping parents of premmies

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



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.

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'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.”

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.

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.

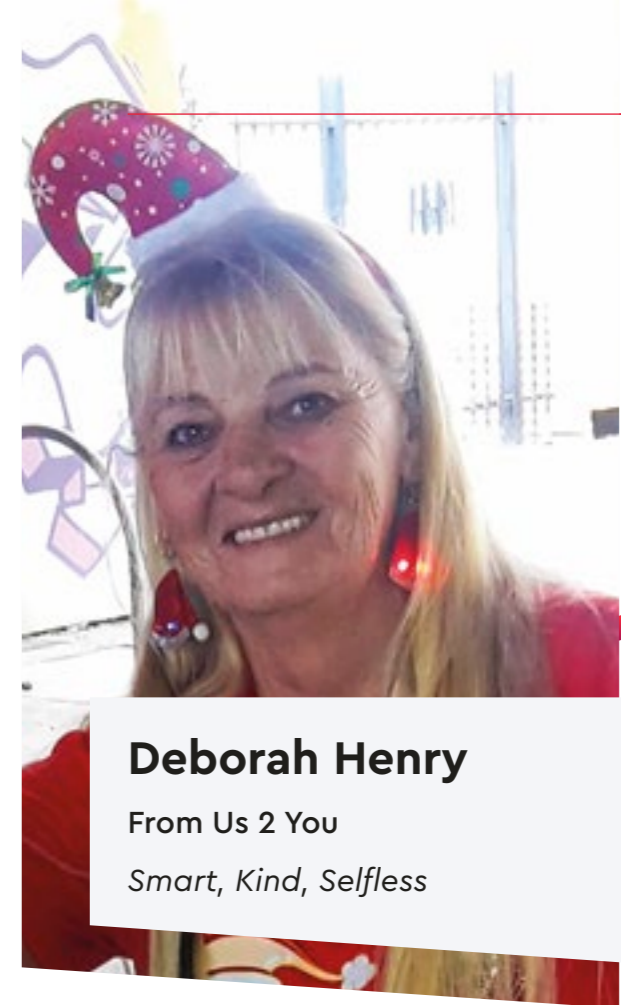
Deborah thinks nothing of using her own money to fund From Us 2 You and traded in her car to buy a van to transport the food.

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

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.

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 community.”



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
Nícu 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

Westfield

Southland

VIC

Matthew Donovan has founded a local charity that grows and rescues food to feed hungry people.

In the four years since its launch, Food for Change has grown and donated more than 135,000 meals and rescued more than 155,000 from going to waste.

The charity piggybacks on existing infrastructure and food is distributed to locals via organisations including Sacred Heart Mission, Matts Place at Cheltenham, the Kingston City Church, BayCISS and Lions club of Sandringham.

"My work aims to help both community health and address food insecurity, as well as benefit the environment by removing edible food from the food waste stream," Matthew says.

A differentiator of the charity is that its food collection is local and small-scale, which complements rather than duplicates the work of larger organisations.

Remarkably, Matthew has found time to get the charity off the ground and

help it thrive despite being a devoted single dad and needing to earn an income.

He couldn't have done it with the support of charity colleagues and friends and family.

The charity has a farm site at Clayton South and partners with other organisations to facilitate growing programs on their land. It produces 10 healthy meals for every \$2 donation.

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.

The Food for Change Foundation will use its grant to buy seed and other necessities to increase its food production significantly.

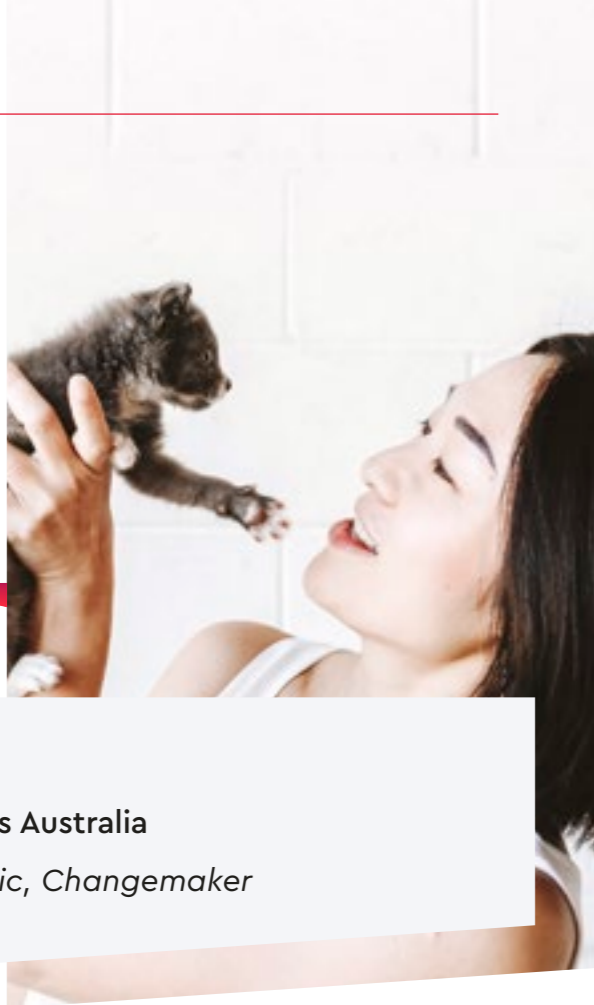
*Matthew's nominator says:
"Matthew inspires so many other people and me to make the communities we live in better."*



Matthew (Matt) Donovan
The Food for Change Foundation
Role model, Big-hearted, Changemaker

Growing and rescuing food

"My work aims to help both community health and address food insecurity, as well as benefit the environment by removing edible food from the food waste stream."



Yvonne Hong

Pets Of The Homeless Australia

Passionate, Optimistic, Changemaker

Force for good

"I believe every human being deserves to experience the unconditional love of a pet, regardless of circumstances."

Yvonne Hong started Pets of the Homeless (POTH) as a self-funded passion project in 2015 to look after the much-loved pets of people facing homelessness.

She started out packaging pet food at her kitchen table. But despite having no experience of running a charity, she has grown POTH into a formidable operation. It has dedicated volunteers, 25,000 supporters on social media and has opened Victoria's first pet food bank.

Each month, POTH helps more than 1000 people care for their beloved pets.

This year, Pro Bono Australia's Impact 25 awards named Yvonne one of the most influential people in the social sector.

Yvonne believes everyone is capable of making a difference and lives by her motto: "If not me, then who?"

She grew up in a small apartment in Malaysia and was moved by the stray dogs she saw living on the streets. In Australia, she shares her home with several rescue animals and has fostered more than 40 animals in need.

"I believe every human being deserves to experience the unconditional love of a pet, regardless of circumstances," Yvonne says. "For many people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, their pet is truly their only friend."

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.

Pets of The Homeless Australia will use its grant to fund starter packs of food and supplies and an essential healthcare check for 20 pets.

Yvonne's nominator says: "Yvonne has a passion for her community and the welfare of others. She is the face and the driving force of POTH."

Robbie Hendry might start his day by helping a young person find accommodation after a family breakdown. Next, he might be helping someone with their resume and coaching them on job interview skills. After that, he might travel to the city to support a TAFE student.

In-between appointments, Robbie will send all his clients their daily SMS to check that they are OK. If they aren't, he might provide grocery vouchers, myki cards and clothes for the workplace.

Robbie runs a TaskForce Community Agency pilot project to support young people into employment after they have left school early or disengaged from the community.

The project offers a 12-month traineeship as well as multiple layers of support to help with mental health, substance misuse, housing, antisocial behaviour and study.

"The people I work with have faced a lot of struggles in life, which can be quite heartbreaking," Robbie says.

"It's really about working to help them help themselves to build resilience and independence."

The reward for Robbie is seeing the young people engaging with their studies and improving their lives.

"When I see what a difference I can make to a young person in need, how could I do any other job?" he asks.

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.

TaskForce Community Agency will use its grant to support young people in various ways, including through crisis support, peer support and possibly a graffiti program.

Robbie's nominator says: "Robbie works tirelessly and selflessly every day, going above and beyond to ensure a bright future for all young people, no matter their needs."

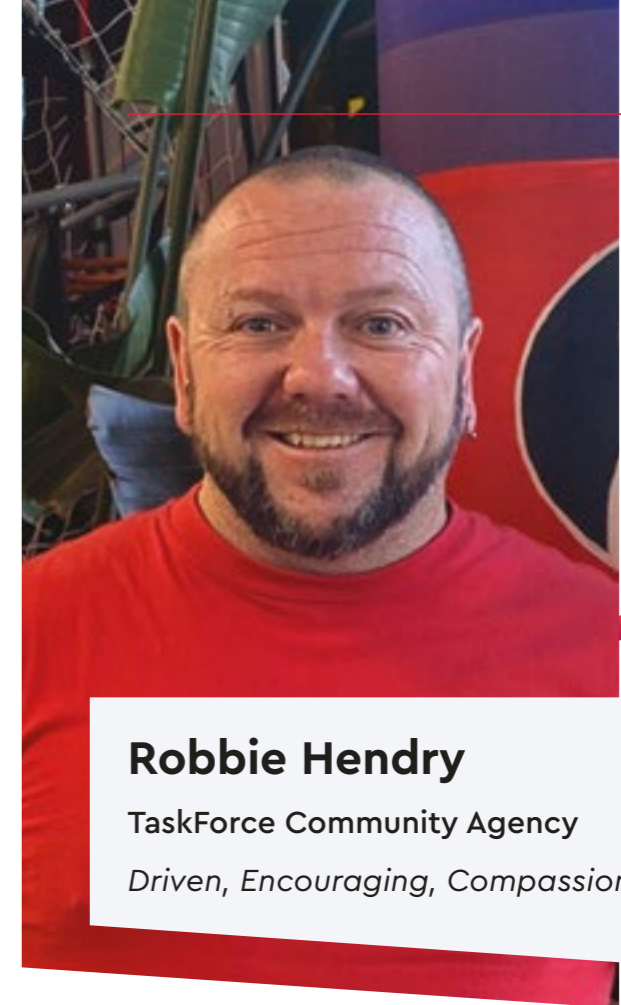
Robbie Hendry

TaskForce Community Agency

Driven, Encouraging, Compassionate

Making a tangible difference

"The people I work with have faced a lot of struggles in life, which can be quite heartbreaking."



Your 2020 Finalists

Kerrie Curtis

Starfish Nippers Hampton Life Saving Club

Kerrie Curtis has created something precious for parents who have children with disabilities – the chance to participate in a fun sport as a family.

Kerrie created the Starfish Nippers program at the Hampton Life Saving Club to include children and young adults with disabilities in lifesaving.

The program quickly grew from 10 to 38 Starfish Nippers, who each have a volunteer mentor by their side.

It runs alongside the traditional Nippers event, enabling families to have fun at the beach together.

"It's the highlight of their week," Kerrie says.

Sam Elkin

Joy 94.9

Lawyer Sam Elkin takes time out from his day job to record weekly podcasts that promote inclusion for the trans and gender-diverse community.

Each professionally produced podcast profiles the life and work of an inspiring transgender person.

"By sharing these stories, we feel we can help to improve the mental health and other health outcomes for transgender Victorians. We provide positive role models and demonstrate that trans people can find meaningful work and integrate and thrive in our broader community," says Sam.

"Doing this radio show has also helped my mental and emotional health immensely."

Simone Anderson

Helping Hands

Behaviour therapist Simone Anderson co-founded Helping Hands to help families bring out the best in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

There are 100 children enrolled at the centre, all being nurtured by an extensive team of health professionals and educators.

Simone has made a significant difference in many lives over the years. For example, coaching children to do things that others take for granted, like using public transport with confidence.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Hayley Cranehill

Freedom For Farmed Rabbits

Madeleine Buchner

Little Dreamers Australia

Dean Cohen

Flying Fox

Louise Neave

Sandringham Primary School

Sarah Morrissey

Little Rockers Radio

Tracey Harris

Dogs For Kids (With Disabilities)

Gladys Amarnath

Black Rock Pre-School

Michelle Harrison

Love To Live

Jeff Shaw

The Give A Care Foundation

Maddison Lee Carroll

Molly The Zine

Alexandra Cole

Ace Dance Studio

Robbie Hendry

Taskforce Community Agency

Yvonne Hong

Pets Of The Homeless Australia

Simone Anderson

Helping Hands

Matthew Donovan

The Food For Change Foundation

Kerrie Curtis

Starfish Nippers Hampton Life Saving Club

Sam Elkin

Joy 94.9

Bridie Roberts

Cleftpals Victoria

Lisa Foran

Sandringham Primary School

Cheryl Macleod

Make-A-Wish Bayside Branch

Mandy Dawes

Cheltenham Youth Club Inc

Simone Hardham

Mindful Makings Inc

Karen Janssen

Raise Foundation

Queensland



Queensland Centres

Carindale

Chermside

Coomera

Garden City

Helensvale

North Lakes

Westfield

Carindale

QLD

Aidan Lamberth delivers 1000 meals a month to families who are unable to leave the bedside of their critically ill children.

Sadly, he knows all too well the difficulty these parents face because he and wife, Renee, spent four months with their desperately ill baby daughter at the Queensland Children's Hospital.

When their daughter passed away from a rare genetic disease, the couple decided to set up the Scarlett May Foundation to provide healthy, high-quality meals to parents in her honour.

Every month a team of volunteers prepares and packs the meals in a commercial kitchen for parents, grandparents and siblings and delivers them to four hospitals.

"Most volunteers are just everyday mums and dads who have realised they can make a significant difference to families who are doing it tough," Aidan says.

The foundation also cofunds a bereavement coordinator at the Queensland Children's Hospital to ensure families have ongoing support.

It also pays for fingerprint jewellery for parents whose child has a terminal diagnosis.

"We were blessed to have family and friends who supported us with meals, purchased our keepsakes and paid for counselling for us," Aidan says.

"We saw firsthand that so many others didn't receive the same support, so we wanted to fill the gap."

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.

Scarlett May Foundation will use its grant to purchase a blast chiller to safely increase the number of meals provided.

Aidan's nominator says: "Aidan has turned his grief and pain into something positive for the community. I have seen families tear up at the sight of a new delivery of Scarlett May meals."



Aidan Lamberth
Scarlett May Foundation
Generous, Driven, Visionary

Feeding families

"Most volunteers are just everyday mums and dads who have realised they can make a significant difference to families who are doing it tough."



Elena Gosse

Women's Legal Service Queensland

Inspirational, Tenacious, Charismatic

Bouncing back to help others

"I try to encourage those who may be perpetrators of violence, both men and women, to connect with their feelings and open up to loved ones or a counsellor before it is too late."

Elena Gosse survived family violence as a child, moved from Russia to Australia, learned a new language, is a parent of two daughters (one of whom has a disability), gained a second university degree as a non-native English speaker and co-owner of her family's thriving swimming pool water disinfection company.

Elena is also a loyal supporter of Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ), which provides legal and welfare assistance to women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Elena is a sought-after speaker and shares her story and message that domestic violence does not choose age, colour, sexual orientation, status or profession, and neither does it have a gender.

In 2016, and again in 2019, Elena swapped the boardroom for the dance floor as part of Dancing CEOs, an event which raises awareness and funds for WLSQ. She has raised over \$120,000 for WLSQ and continues to raise funds for the organisation.

"Through my authenticity, strength, vulnerability and self-belief, I have overcome significant challenges to be a leader, successful businesswoman and family violence survivor," Elena says.

"I try to encourage those who may be perpetrators of violence, both men and women, to connect with their feelings and open up to loved ones or a counsellor before it is too late."

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.

Women's Legal Service Queensland will use its grant to boost its call centre capacity and help more women.

Elena's nominator says: "Elena leads by example, being the change she wants to see in the world and sharing her own stories of personal and professional success and failure in order to inspire others. She continues to advocate against domestic and family violence."



Angela Christodoulou

Queensland Koala Society Inc

Dedicated, Caring, Compassionate

Saving koalas

"Collectively as a community we need to get involved with trying to save this precious species."

Angela Christodoulou has been known to camp under a tree for three days to rescue a koala and her joey.

As a co-founder of the Queensland Koala Society, she gives it her all to protect the local south-east Brisbane koala population, which has been displaced by urban sprawl.

Angela has rescued more than 505 koalas over the years and has recruited local volunteers to help.

"We ensure they get medical treatment and care they need until they can be released back into their natural habitat," Angela says.

Community education is a crucial part of the society's work. "We encourage people to keep their dogs in at night and to drive carefully."

An essential part of community engagement is to invite people to come along whenever the society releases a rescued koala.

"That's when I get a lot of interest from people wanting to volunteer," Angela says.

"Community involvement is vital. People are surprised by the number of koalas we have in this immediate area."

Angela always makes sure people who call the society's rescue hotline can follow the koalas on their road to recovery.

"Collectively as a community we need to get involved with trying to save this precious species," she 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.

Queensland Koala Society will use its grant to build a larger rehabilitation facility.

Angela's nominator says: "Angela is dedicated to protecting native fauna for future generations. She rehabilitates injured, sick or displaced koalas and returns them to their natural habitat as quickly as possible."

Your 2020 Finalists

George Kambouris

SBH (Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus) Queensland

George Kambouris was born with spina bifida and wasn't expected to survive infancy.

He defied the odds and now provides support and hope to other people with the disabling genetic condition, which affects the development of the spine and spinal cord.

In his part-time role with SBH (Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus) Queensland, George tackles this challenge by helping people with the condition to increase their work skills and experience.

He helps them build their resumes and refine their interview skills and advocates for them in the community.

Ken Loftus

The Sunlight Centre

Counsellor Ken Loftus knows there is no time to waste when people are thinking of suicide, so he enables immediate access to crisis support.

In 2017, he founded independent charity The Sunlight Centre to offer free crisis counselling for anyone with suicidal thoughts or self-harming behaviour.

Ken counsels the majority of clients, aged 12 to 79, who can get help without a GP referral or mental health plan.

"We cut out the middleman so clients can get in straight away to get three months of free counselling," he says.

If you need support, please phone:

- The Sunlight Centre 1300 259 724

Christine (Chris) J Rafter

Care Kits for Kids Qld Inc

Sewing dynamo Chris Rafter can make 200 Babies outfits in a weekend, all for a good cause.

She is the president of Care Kits for Kids, which distributes backpacks to children going into out-of-home care.

Each contains two sets of clothes, pyjamas, age-appropriate toiletries, a book and toy and educational items.

Chris whizzes up hundreds of outfits to makeover the Barbie dolls she has collected to distribute through the backpacks.

"We love providing a bridge between a caring community and children in need," she says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Bill Simpson

Spinal Life Australia

Ian Thomson

Ocean Crusaders Foundation Ltd

Ken Loftus

The Sunlight Centre

Elena Gosse

Women's Legal Service Queensland

Angela Christodoulou

Queensland Koala Society Inc

George Kambouris

SBH Queensland

Aidan Lamberth

Scarlett May Foundation

Christine J Rafter

Care Kits For Kids Qld Inc.

Melanie Sennett

Stepping Stone Clubhouse Inc

Sophie Mulheran

Sophia Mulheran Designs

Julia Fenton

Redlands Dog Obedience Club

Lisa-Jane Luck

Community Assist Redlands Enterprises Inc

Jason Fiddes

RedCity Roar Basketball Association

Sarah Jacobs

The Christian Church – Local Community Department

Jeffrey Maclean

Queensland Brain Institute, University Of Queensland

Sabeel Burgess

Open Haven Ltd

Nathaniel Clarke

Small Steps 4 Hannah

Teresa Reed

Mangrove Housing Ltd

Natalie Flood

Maridahdi Brisbane Primary School

Emma Gray

The Nurtured Village

Rachel Grace Pick

Brisbane Basket Brigade

Karen Howe

Fun Farm Limited

Andrew Benton

Radio Lollipop Brisbane

Yvonne Elizabeth Campbell

Specialcare Central Inc.

Alix Russo

Night Ninjas Incorporated

Cherrie Dowling

Horses in Mind

Patricia Jones

Friends with Dignity

Robert Charles Innes

PCYC Breaking The Cycle - Carindale

Deb Simms

Carina C&K Kindergarten

Edith Cooper

Dragons Abreast Brisbane

Allan James Prestwood

Southern Moreton Bay Islands Coastcare

Linda Smith

The Sunlight Centre

Westfield

Chermside

QLD

Tilly (Norma) Brasch dedicates herself to children with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

Every Tuesday for the past two years, the 77-year-old has volunteered at Hummingbird House, Queensland's only hospice for children.

Around 400 children and their families come to the house each year for short breaks, support or end-of-life care.

Tilly works hard to create a home-like environment and is often seen nursing babies, playing dress-ups and games with siblings or providing care alongside nursing staff.

Having lost her only son, Tilly has the most profound empathy for the families and is always the first to respond to a call-out for volunteer assistance.

"I do for them what I would do for my own family," she says.

"I feel the children, their parents, carers and staff are extended family to me."

Nothing is too much for Tilly, who assists at events, memorials and funerals, pitches in with foodservice and clean-up and helps with fund-raising.

"It's all a labour of love for me, whether I am trying to settle an unwell little baby, going down the slippery slide with a child on my lap or scrubbing burnt bits of a saucepan," Tilly says.

"Without Hummingbird House my life would be less."

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.

Hummingbird House will use its grant to support more Queensland children with life-limiting conditions.

Tilly's nominator says: "Tilly brings the heart and hugs of a grandma to Hummingbird House. She brings comfort and smiles to children who are unwell and their families, and I'm sure she is considered an angel by some."



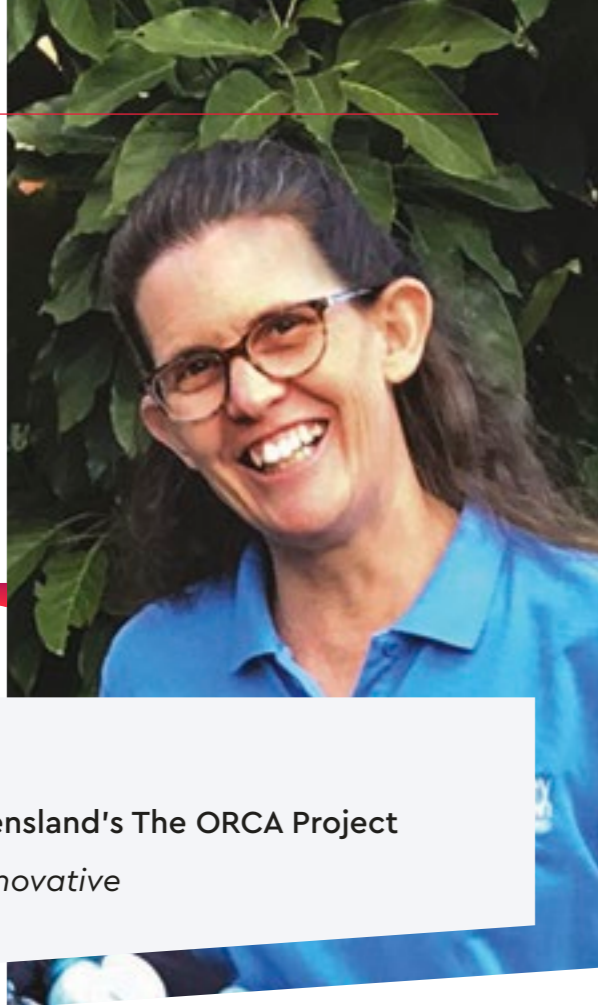
Tilly (Norma) Brasch

Hummingbird House

Committed, Compassionate, Conscientious

Grandmotherly comfort for unwell kids

"I do for them what I would do for my own family."



Alison Cox

Wesley Mission Queensland's The ORCA Project

Positive, Inspiring, Innovative

Creating opportunities

"We work hard with families and the participants to help them to not just recognise work as an option, but to dream about the kind of work they really want to do."

When Alison Cox's daughter Jasmin was nearing the end of her schooling, there were no opportunities for young adults with different abilities.

Alison has experience in community work and took matters into her own hands. She approached Wesley Mission Queensland with an idea for a project to help people like Jasmin become work-ready and enjoy a purposeful and independent future.

That's how The ORCA Project was born. Alison has captured the imagination of local families, and the program has grown from seven participants to fifty in two years.

ORCA adapts to individual learning needs. The program focuses on people's strengths and finding the best ways to engage them.

The program helps people prepare for work with hands-on training in on-site micro-enterprises, including a car wash, an ethical grocery store and a dog biscuit business.

Alison is determined to break down barriers and stereotypes. She has convinced families and potential employers to see beyond the notion

that those with different abilities are able only to complete simple, repetitive tasks.

"We work hard with families and the participants to help them to not just recognise work as an option, but to dream about the kind of work they really want to do," says Alison.

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.

The ORCA Project will use its grant to expand their micro enterprises to provide more opportunities for the young people.

Alison's nominator says: "Alison provides hope and opportunity for young school-leavers living with disability to grow in their skills and confidence, dream big, show their talent to their community and build meaningful futures."

Jack Pool is older than most people he helps. The committee president of Stafford Meals on Wheels is in his late eighties but is always the first to put his hand up to help.

Jack delivers nutritious and healthy meals to people who can't cook or shop for themselves.

He loves to share a joke with his clients and other volunteers and is always happy to help with an odd job.

"As our logo says, 'we are more than just a meal,'" Jack says.

He started delivering meals as a volunteer in 1998 and was elected committee president in 2002.

Jack has worked hard to live up to the Meals on Wheels social values, which include community connection, disability access, mental health and positive ageing.

He has built contacts with other agencies, which led to younger people with disabilities helping to deliver meals, with their carers if needed.

"This has helped with their socialisation in the community," he says.

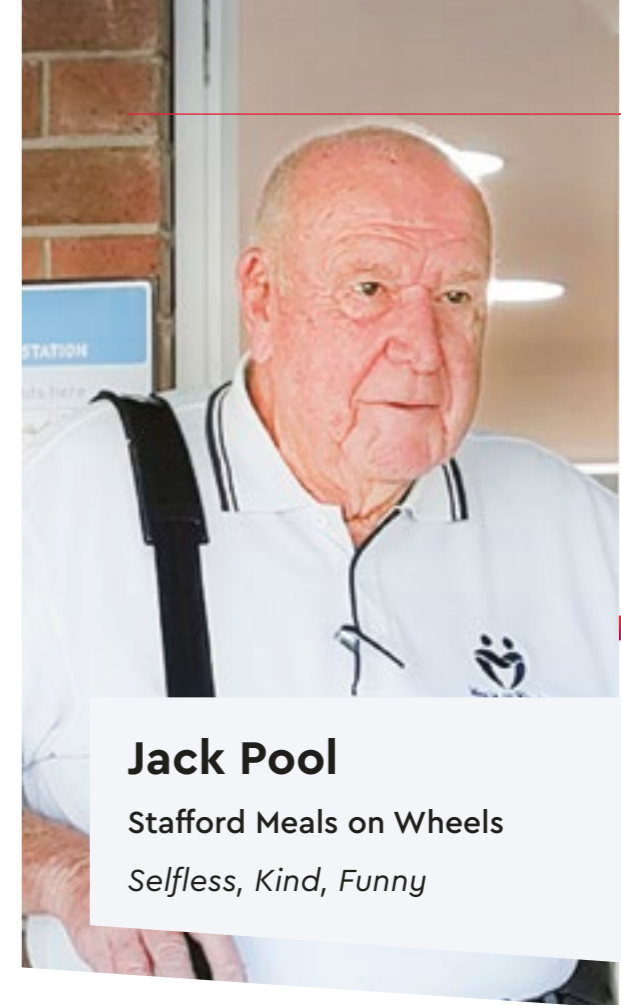
Jack also organised with the local high school principal for Year 10 hospitality students to work alongside the Meals on Wheels chef.

"During my time as committee president we have partnered with other organisations to hold events for the seniors in our community," he 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.

Stafford Meals on Wheels will use its grant to fund groceries, equipment and running costs.

Jack's nominator says: "Jack always puts others first. He makes it really fun to volunteer with him as he gives back to the community."



Jack Pool

Stafford Meals on Wheels

Selfless, Kind, Funny

Delivering food on the move

"We are more than just a meal."

Your 2020 Finalists

Eileen Mary Jane Cooke

Preterm Infants Parents' Association Inc (PIPA)

For more than 20 years, Eileen Cooke has been providing much-needed support to the families of premature babies.

She knows exactly what they are going through, as her eldest son was born 11 weeks early in 1996.

Eileen is now the pivotal volunteer, administrator and parent support person with the Preterm Infants Parents' Association (PIPA), a parent-to-parent support group and charity.

"PIPA bases its activities on friendship. Only a premmie parent can really understand what another prem parent is going through," Eileen says.

"This friendship also helps after discharge with the challenges of raising a child born too soon."

Zoe Rehbein

Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia

Zoe Rehbein is making life less stressful for parents whose children have been diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis (NF), a condition that causes benign and malignant tumours to form throughout the central nervous system.

Through her volunteer work with the Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia, Zoe has been a strong and empathetic advocate for families needing specialised support at the Queensland Children's Hospital

Zoe also founded a fundraising team that has collected close to \$100,000 for the Children's Tumour Foundation.

Carmel Gamble

St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside

Breast care nurse Carmel Gamble has 40 years of experience and knows women with breast cancer need empathy and knowledgeable support from diagnosis until after their treatment is complete.

She ensures she is with every patient every step of the way.

Carmel's phone is always on and she is available to answer questions or tap into her extensive network to help her patients.

Often women receive conflicting advice from many different sources, which adds to their anguish. "I can explain treatments; why, how and when things will happen. I give the information they need at the time they need it."

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Gregory Robet Cree
Project4Change Limited

Rachael Tickner
The Pink Elephants Support Network

Margaret Douglas
Cystic Fibrosis Queensland

Alison Cox
Wesley Mission Queensland's The Orca Project

Jack Pool
Queensland Meals On Wheels

Zoe Rehbein
Children's Tumour Foundation Of Australia

Carmel Gamble
St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside

Eileen Mary Jane Cooke
Preterm Infants Parents Association Inc. (PIPA)

Tilly (Norma) Brasch
Hummingbird House

Phil Lilliebridge
Legacy Club Of Brisbane Ltd

Michael Lorrigan
Team Rubicon Australia

Tracey Price
Get Real Legals

Mathew Casson
The Lodge Youth Support Service Inc.

Dr Stephanie Yerkovich
The Common Good, An Initiative Of The Prince Charles Hospital Foundation

Melissa Redsell
A Brave Life

Heidi Mckellar
Bardon Girl Guides

Yasmin Grigaliunas
World's Biggest Garage Sale

Amy Dawes
Australasian Birth Trauma Association (ABTA)

Catherine Scott
Brisbane Multiple Birth Association Northside

Isabella Bevan
Zephyr Education Inc

Kim Janine Pantano
Bunya Community Environmental Assoc Inc – Guiding The Future Of Kumbartcho Sanctuary – A Flora And Fauna Reserve

Vanessa Page
Raise Foundation

Penny Linton
Raise Foundation

Sharon Dunlop
St Vincent's Private Hospital Northside

Antwanet Rahebeh
Middle Pearl Education Centre

Vanessa Anne Fowler
The Allison Baden-Clay Foundation

Janelle Gamble
Dragons Abreast Australia Ltd

Marion Glover
Vessel Nundah

Jodi Salmond
Reef Check Australia

June Thorn
The Pyjama Foundation

Vonnie (Yvonne) Hastings
Brainchild Foundation

Barbara Kienast
Support Networks Australia

Mathew Townsend
Nature Freedom / Clean Up Australia

Reg Maharaj
Boondall Lions Club Inc.

Ian Venamore
Lung Foundation Australia

Jean Weaver
Vision Australia

Holly Williams
Heartkids Limited

Kelly Willmott
Green Fox Training Studio

Rajvinder Singh Gill
Donateliflife Queensland

Westfield

Coomera

QLD

Nicolle Edwards decided to take-action after hearing about a family in need of help as they fled domestic violence.

Her solution was to create RizeUp, a Gold Coast not-for-profit that has since provided life-changing, practical support to more than 1070 families across Queensland.

Nicolle and her husband started from their garage, putting together packs for families staying in refuges.

RizeUp now has over 520 volunteers and support between five and eight families per week, via strong partnerships with specialist domestic violence services across Queensland.

RizeUp sets up and furnishes homes, where families can focus on rebuilding their lives, and supports children as they start at a new school.

"RizeUp's programs reduce the likelihood that the families will return to the perpetrator due to financial hardship or lack of resources," says Nicolle.

"They also reduce the likelihood of homelessness, provide a stable home environment and increase a sense of belonging and an anchor for recovery."

Many of RizeUp's volunteers have survived domestic violence themselves and believe Nicolle is helping to break the cycle of domestic violence.

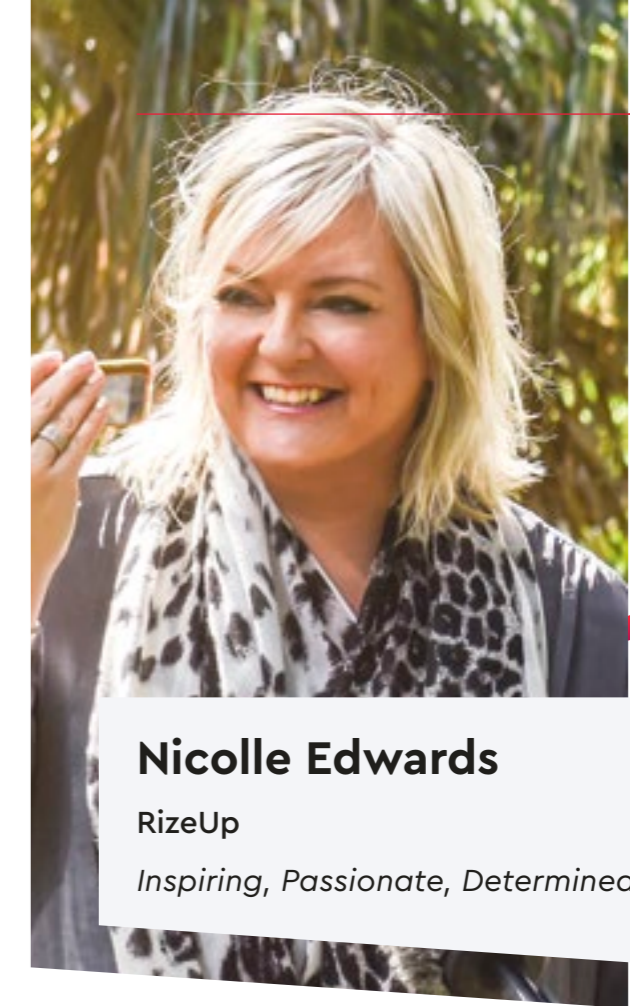
Believing that no one organisation can lead the fight against domestic violence, she mentors other organisations and encourages them to establish additional programs that will help to create safe, sustainable outcomes for at-risk families.

"It is imperative we wrap as much support around these vulnerable families as we can," Nicolle 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.

RizeUp will use its grant to expand its programs and launch a choir to support survivors of domestic violence.

Nicolle's nominator says: "To stop domestic violence, we need to empower a community. To do this, we need strong and courageous women like Nicolle to step up and inspire others."



Nicolle Edwards

RizeUp

Inspiring, Passionate, Determined

Reducing cycle of domestic violence

"RizeUp's programs reduce the likelihood that the families will return to the perpetrator due to financial hardship or lack of resources."



Alexandra (Alex) Wells

Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program

Caring, Passionate, Dedicated

Inclusive sports program

"The main focus and goal of the program is to educate the community that people with additional needs are not different to able-bodied people."

Alex Wells was just 14 when she founded a program to help children with disabilities participate in sport.

It wasn't easy for Alex, who found it tough to access funding and convince adults to take her idea seriously.

But with the help of her school principal, who provided the venue and insurance, the Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program came to life in 2016.

Now hundreds of children with disabilities are able to play sports, modified for their ability, for fun and fitness.

As an added innovation, Alex's program encourages other young people to volunteer to support the athletes. This breaks down stereotypes and creates a culture of inclusiveness.

"The main focus and goal of the program is to educate the community that people with additional needs are not different to able-bodied people," Alex says.

"We should be welcoming to everyone in our community."

Despite the demands of a studying for a degree in journalism and having two part-time jobs, Alex finds the time to create training programs that develop gross and fine motor skills and encourage healthy eating and good sportsmanship.

She also helps train the volunteers, runs sessions and looks after marketing.

"I work closely with politicians and local businesses to help create a more inclusive community," Alex 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.

Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program will use its grant to buy much-needed sporting equipment, jerseys, trophies and medals for the athletes.

Alex's nominator says: "Alex is breaking down stereotypes and helping children with disabilities to be included in all parts of our community. She is educating teenage volunteers to be accepting of all abilities and not judge on appearance."

Xenia Schembri believes people should not need to accept bad behaviour from anyone, and co-founded At The Ark to support victims of abuse and domestic violence.

The charity helps more than 100 families in several ways, including by providing food parcels, help with emergency accommodation and counselling.

"I walk with the families towards healing from the pain they have suffered," says Xenia, who is a qualified counsellor. "I want families and individuals to know their worth."

Xenia aims to help men and women change, to respect the people they live with and to build each other up instead of pulling them down.

"I would also like to get people the help that they need before the violence starts."

Xenia has written the Brave Little Bear series of books to help children and adults recognise and report abusive behaviour.

Xenia's aim is for the books to be made available to every primary school classroom so they can be available for all children, not only those who are known to be at risk.

"The statistics are that one in five children will be sexually abused before they are 18," she says. "We want to see these statistics change."

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.

At The Ark will use its grant to fund preventative programs and to provide material aid to families affected by child abuse.

Xenia's nominator says "Xenia is selfless in her endeavour to see families and individuals set free from the effects of child sexual abuse and domestic violence."

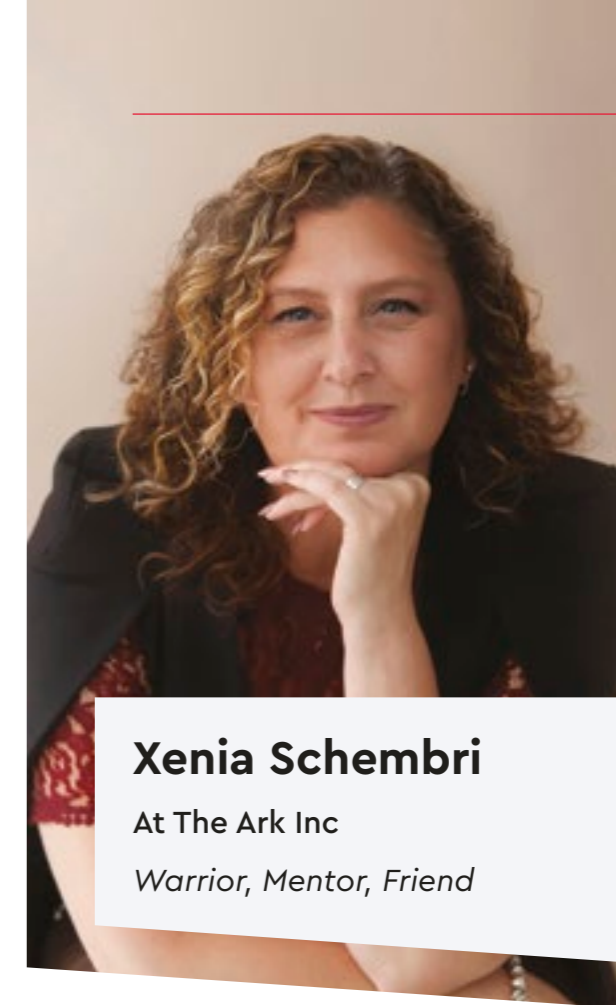
Xenia Schembri

At The Ark Inc

Warrior, Mentor, Friend

Standing up for others

"I would also like to get people the help that they need before the violence starts."



Your 2020 Finalists

Amanda Carroll Gold Coast Youth Service

Amanda Carroll feels hers is the most crucial job in the world.

She works with the Gold Coast Youth Service and advocates for young people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Many are living with trauma from family breakdown, drug addiction, mental illness or domestic violence.

A mother herself, Amanda treats all young people like family and makes no judgment about their past behaviours and life choices.

"Everyone is equal and deserves a safe place to live, with a sense of belonging to the community," Amanda says.

Zoe Scharenguivel Friends With Dignity Australia

Zoe Scharenguivel jumped into action after her pregnant friend lost her life to domestic violence.

The busy mum of three decided to organise a small lunch to raise funds to support an organisation involved in domestic violence prevention.

Thanks to Zoe's contacts and interest in the event, the lunch turned into something much bigger and raised \$5000.

The lunch also led Zoe to another advocate for people affected by violence. Together they founded Friends With Dignity Australia, which transforms houses into sanctuaries for women, men and children.

"I am passionate about making a difference and being a positive role model for my children," Zoe says.

Judy Nyp OzHarvest

Judy Nyp is a powerhouse when it comes to helping those in need.

As a volunteer driver's assistant with OzHarvest, she rescues a whopping 800kg of food from the hospitality industry every day.

The food is high quality and nutritious but is no longer useful to supermarkets and fresh produce retailers. It is redirected to up to 20 charities, including crisis centres, food pantries, women's shelters and drop-in centres.

Judy sees her effort as a win-win. "I suffer from osteoarthritis, and my charity work has helped me to maintain bone mass from all the physical work involved," she says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Dreddyn Bhana
Man Up

Jodie Sippel
Coomera Cubs Baseball Club

Tim Fisk
Complete Men

Rosalinde Brinkman
Gold Coast Catchment Association

Kym Farquhar
Coomera Crushers Rugby Union Club Inc

Ruth Crafter
Peachey Community Garden

Amanda Carroll
Gold Coast Youth Service

Alexandra Wells
Gold Coast Inclusive Sports Program

Judy Nyp
Oz Harvest

Niccole Edwards
RizeUp

Zoe Scharenguivel
Friends with Dignity Australia

Jane Padden
Christmas Presents For Kids In Care

Jamieson Mackenzie
One Vision Productions Pty Ltd

Natasha Price
Invincible Pty Ltd

Sharron Whittingham
The Scout Association Of Qld Helensvale

Laura Kelly
General Wellness Centre

Stacey Hammond
St Josephs College

Rachel Skelton
Children's Tumour Foundation Of Australia

Ngawai Hepi
Instinct Netball Club

William "Blake" Harris
12 Baskets

Ashley Lenehan
Vision Australia

Jaeneen Cunningham
Safe Haven Community

Selina Lee
Saved.org.au

Sue Jenkins
Friends With Dignity Limited

Jane Howe
Saint Stephens College

Michelle Carmel Ryan
Rotary Club Of Coomera Waters

Kimberly O'Neill
AAA Restraints

Michelle Louise Saluja
Body Mind Soul Clinic

Victoria Leadbeatter
Foxwell State Secondary College

Michael Cowling
Weaving Technology Into The Fabric Of The Classroom

Westfield

Garden City

QLD

Chris Boyle is transforming the lives of women and children at risk of domestic violence, with the help of a high-tech watch.

Chris founded the StandbyU Foundation to harness the power of technology to protect vulnerable families and assure them that their calls for help will be heard and will illicit an urgent response.

In a world-leading approach, Chris programs individual safety plans into a \$1000 safety watch.

If a woman or child at risk activates the watch, it starts transmitting audio and their location so that family and friends included in the safety plan can take action, says Chris.

"Our charity is founded on the belief that the most vulnerable among us need protection and should never pay a cent for their safety."

Chris says he has been overwhelmed by calls and emails from social workers requesting the technology for their clients.

He says 75 per cent of women feel safer with the watch and many report being able to leave their home without feeling unsafe.

"The current systems are not addressing the scourge of domestic violence," Chris says.

"We harness the power of families, friends and communities with technology to keep children, youth and adults safe from child abuse and domestic and family violence."

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.

StandbyU Foundation will use its grant to provide 10 watches to vulnerable women and children in the Garden City area.

Chris's nominator says: "Through his innovation Chris is improving the way we protect women and children affected by domestic and family violence."



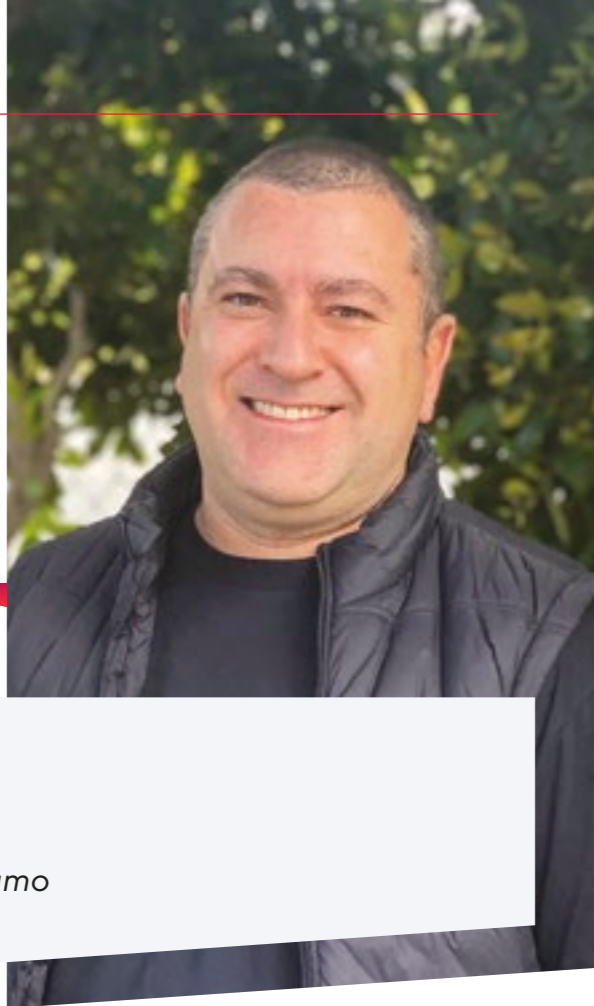
Chris Boyle

StandbyU Foundation

Compassionate, Respectful, Dedicated

Harnessing technology to protect families

"Our charity is founded on the belief that the most vulnerable among us need protection and should never pay a cent for their safety."



Scott Allen

Hillsong CityCare

Caring, Loving, Dynamo

Passion for helping others

"We hope to improve their self-esteem and help them overcome barriers, to fulfil their potential and make positive life choices."

Scott Allen's passion for community work was ignited from the help and support he received from mentors who helped him overcome challenges of substance abuse during his teenage years.

"I felt called to live a life in the service of others," he says.

Scott is the State Manager of Hillsong CityCare in Queensland and the Northern Territory and in his role he has been able to pilot and launch a wide number of programs and services to help vulnerable groups in our community.

Scott is admired for his leadership skills, drive and compassion to help people. One of his first tasks upon taking on this role was to assist with the mobilisation of a volunteer army of 1000 people to help clean up and rebuild after the 2011 floods.

Scott and team have helped 105 women with transitional housing after fleeing domestic violence, collected tens of thousands of items for a Christmas drive and provided food assistance to vulnerable families.

He is proud of the Safe Space program, which gives at-risk youth somewhere safe and fun to hang out.

"We hope to improve their self-esteem and help them overcome barriers, to fulfil their potential and make positive life choices," Scott 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.

Hillsong CityCare will use its grant towards its Youth Safe Spaces program, which aims to connect vulnerable young people to positive adult role models and create a place where they can feel physically and emotionally safe such as after school sports and recreational activities, homework clubs and food programs.

Scott's nominator says: "Scott is a caring, loving dynamo who has changed the lives of many. His leadership has paved the way to a better life for those overwhelmed by life's circumstances."

Betty Taylor has devoted 30 years to preventing domestic and family violence, playing a pivotal role in raising awareness and campaigning for better laws.

As the volunteer CEO of the Red Rose Foundation, Betty raises awareness by holding a Red Rose Rally every time a Queensland woman or child loses their life to domestic violence.

Betty offers women who have fled abuse emotional and financial assistance and supports them through gruelling court cases.

She came up with the idea of building awareness by painting park benches red and attaching a Red Rose plaque calling for an end to domestic violence. There are now about 40 such benches around Queensland sparking conversations and showing women where they can get help.

"I do this work with passion and commitment that domestic violence must stop. We can do this," Betty says.

She is particularly proud of her ground-breaking work supporting women who have been nearly strangled by their abusers, leaving many with lifelong physical injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Betty says non-fatal strangulation is the highest red flag for future domestic violence-related murder, raising the risk of death eight-fold

"This is the only specific service for these women in Australia," she says.

Betty has recently received a Queensland Great Award from the Premier for her work in this field.

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.

Red Rose Foundation will use its grant to fit out its Australia-first strangulation trauma centre in Brisbane.

Betty's nominator says: "Betty works tirelessly to support women and children who have been impacted by domestic violence. She is a role model for everyone who works in the community sector."

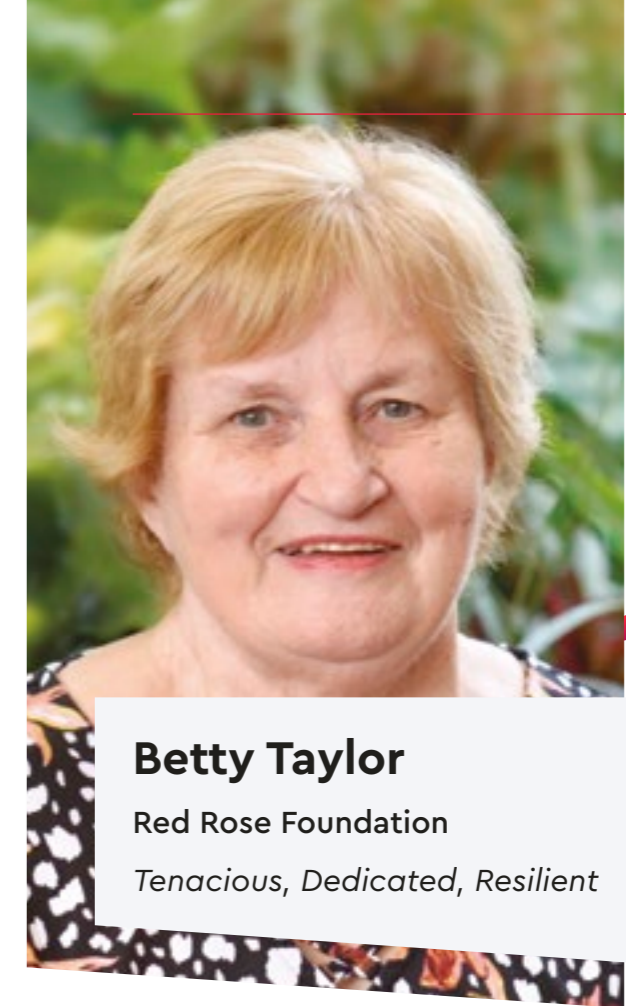
Betty Taylor

Red Rose Foundation

Tenacious, Dedicated, Resilient

Working to end domestic violence

"I do this work with passion and commitment that domestic violence must stop. We can do this."



Your 2020 Finalists

Tamsyn Rosenberg

Alive Project Ltd

Tamsyn Rosenberg believes everyone has the right to thrive and has created the Alive Project to help young people at risk of suicide live with purpose and to create a life they are excited to live.

Building on her 15 years of experience with the Get Real youth organisation, Tamsyn has been delivering the Alive suicide prevention program via schools, sports clubs and other organisations for five years.

"I work with families and young people developing and delivering innovative and transformational programs in mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention," says Tamsyn.

If you need support, please phone:
Lifeline: 13 11 14

Julia McKenna

Friends With Dignity Australia

Like many people, Julia McKenna's life was dominated by career and family, until her cousin lost her life to domestic violence.

At that point, she knew she had to focus on protecting other women, men and children from domestic violence.

Together with two other advocates, she founded Friends With Dignity, a self-funded charity that transforms houses into sanctuaries where they can start a safe new life.

So far, the charity has helped more than 3000 people, unconditionally and for free.

"No other man, woman or child should ever have to face what my cousin did," Julia says.

Cindy Barden

Lil Bug Love

Cindy Barden is working hard to ensure no other children go through the trauma her daughter faced when they fled domestic violence.

Cindy needed to make statement after statement to police and was devastated that her daughter had to hear what she had to say.

She founded Lil Bug Love and has distributed 937 comfort kits in police stations across Logan.

"Over 900 children have not had to feel as distressed or traumatised as my daughter did," she says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Donny Fraser

Australian Skateboarding Federation

Amelia Ayris

Bravehearts

Thane Leofa

1 On 1 – "King Of The Court"

Dimitrios Bellos

Queensland Police Service

Kirron Byrne

St James College

Malakai Tava

Spinal Home Help Incorporated

Scott Allen

Hillsong CityCare

Brydi Saul

Icaniwill

Chris Boyle

StandbyU Foundation

Tamsyn Rosenberg

Alive Project Ltd

Betty Taylor

Red Rose Foundation

Nick Win Law

Hillsong

Narelle Wyvill-Anstey

Lions Club Macgregor Inc

Kay Waters

Fair Go Australia Foundation

Cindy Barden

Lil Bug Love

Julia McKenna

Friends with Dignity Australia

Samuel Glancy

Calvary Christian College

Joanne Ellias

Here On Purpose

Brenda Gooding

Western Districts Netball Association

Laury Bray

DanDaLion Friends

Carmen Litton

Raise Foundation

Tee Taylor

Sisterhood Empowerment-Loganholme

Robyn Hilton

Queensland Brain Institute, University Of Queensland

Robert John Pearman

Lions Club Of Toowoomba West

Danielle Pritchard

Little Village Cafe And Play Centre

Natalie Merino

Children's Tumour Foundation

Yusuf Khatree

Muslim Charitable Foundation

Dee Bloor

Jindalee Districts Australian Football & Netball Club

Kelly Loughrey

Radio Lollipop (Australia) Logan

Susan Howie

Share Shed Inc

Nicholas Win Law

Hillsong CityCare

Corina Bradley

Dragons Abreast Australia

Megan Vevers

Sunnybank Community Preschool & Kindergarten Assoc. Inc

Donna Ryan

Youth Insearch Foundation

Alisha McLuckie

The Smith Family

Linda Smith

The Sunlight Centre

Westfield

Helensvale

QLD

Melanie McKenzie is devoted to supporting mothers who have been given a grim diagnosis during pregnancy.

She founded Harrison's Little Wings in 2010 following the birth of her fourth child, Harrison, who lived for only 28 hours due to an incurable condition.

As Harrison had been diagnosed at his 20-week scan, Melanie and her family faced months of emotional turmoil before this birth.

"Harrison's Little Wings is designed to hold the hand of these families, providing them with compassion, understanding, guidance and friendship," says Melanie.

"Only a Mother who has had a poor or fatal diagnosis in pregnancy, or the uncertainty of not knowing if her baby is going to survive, truly understands the mental and emotional hardship women and their families experience."

Melanie also successfully advocated for the Gold Coast University Hospital to improve its model of care.

The charity offers several levels of support, including free information packs, peer support and practical support with the extra costs including housecleaning, counselling and hospital parking.

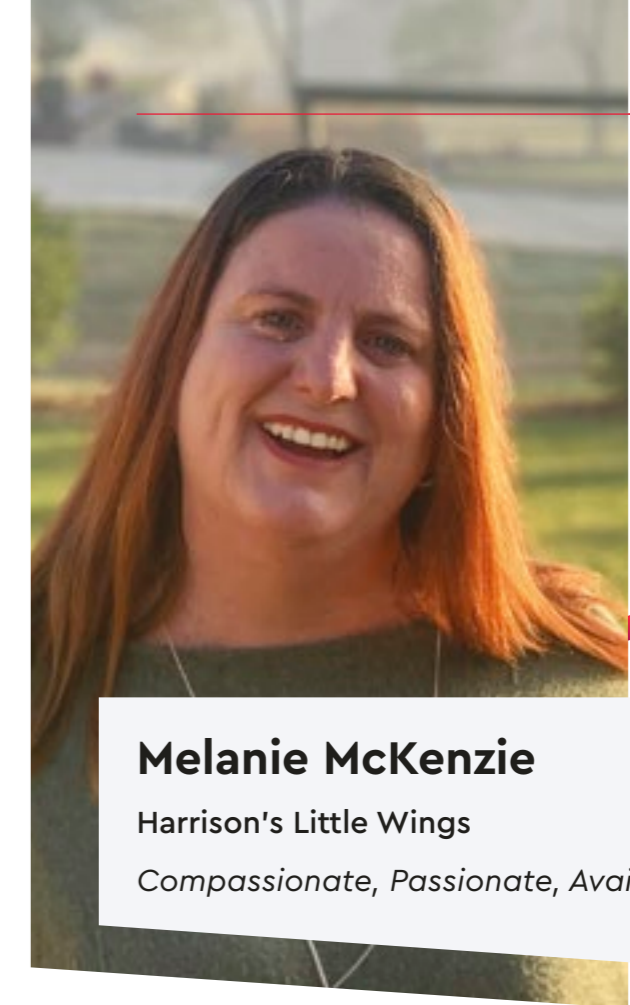
"I have given my life to support mums," says Melanie.

"I travel to the Gold Coast University Hospital regularly to provide peer support, and I also regularly have coffee meetups with the local Gold Coast mums."

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.

Harrison's Little Wings will use its grant to launch a project aimed at providing entertainment packs to mums in hospital. It will also use the funds to cover ongoing costs.

Melanie's nominator says: "Melanie has a huge resource of compassion and understanding. Mel sits among the most devastated, holds their hand and never fails anyone that asked her for help."



Melanie McKenzie

Harrison's Little Wings

Compassionate, Passionate, Available

Helping mums through turmoil

"I have given my life to support mums."



Jane Padden

Christmas Presents for Kids in Care

Inspiring, Hardworking, Dedicated

Remembering the forgotten children

"By providing a gift for them on Christmas Day, we want them to know that someone is thinking of them with kindness and love and wishing them the very best life can give them."

Teenagers in residential care are often the forgotten children of the welfare system and may be longing for a foster home.

While they may be desperate for a family of their own, it's harder to find a foster family able to cope with challenging teenage behaviours.

Jane Padden is doing what she can to ensure that nearly 400 young people feel remembered this Christmas, thanks to her charity Christmas Presents for Kids in Care.

Jane founded Christmas Presents for Kids in Care to ensure they get the thrill of a present that has been specially purchased just for them. They also receive other goodies, including chocolates, pencils, gel pens and a sketchbook.

She works hard to raise money to buy the gifts.

Thanks to her, the number of kids receiving gifts continues to increase, with 301 parcels delivered for Christmas 2019.

While Jane can't meet the kids because of their circumstances, their carers report the gifts are eagerly anticipated and bring huge smiles to their faces.

"We know that our charity is not going to solve the problems that they are facing," she says.

"By providing a gift for them on Christmas Day, we want them to know that someone is thinking of them with kindness and love and wishing them the very best life can give them."

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.

Christmas Presents for Kids in Care will use its grant to buy large quantities of items like headphones, t-shirts and make-up.

Jane's nominator says: "Jane seeks no recognition but has inspired many people; the volunteers who achieve a sense of belonging, and the forgotten children who have been remembered."

Amy O'Rourke's son William has Neurofibromatosis (NF), a condition that causes benign and malignant tumours to form throughout the central nervous system.

In his case, William has a tumour on his optic nerve which requires 6-monthly MRIs under general anaesthetic to monitor and the potential for many more in his lifetime.

As a mental health nurse, Amy's first instinct has been to fight for greater understanding of the condition and to advocate for him and other families living with NF.

Despite being a busy Mum and working full-time for Queensland Health, Amy has taken on a leading role with the Children's Tumour Foundation who represent families with NF.

"I am passionate about our community showing and teaching all children to be kind; teaching them that they deserve to be loved and feel safe", says Amy.

Amy has been able to build a support network for the NF community on the Gold Coast, while also helping to unite families from across the state; promoting inclusion and creating a sense of belonging for NF families.

"I use my time to help others understand NF, to fundraise for a cure and to support families of newly diagnosed children in particular. It is a lonely journey, but I hope my positivity helps others to get through the tough times," Amy says. "I take one day at a time, and commit to enjoying every second that I am privileged to share with my little angel William."

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.

Children's Tumour Foundation will use its grant to create a new patient registry to help identify both adults and children who would benefit from clinical and support services, as well as future research initiatives.

Amy's nominator says "Amy has created a community support network that has changed lives. Through her empathetic nature, she helps people build resilience and volunteers much of her spare time to supporting others and improving access to community services."

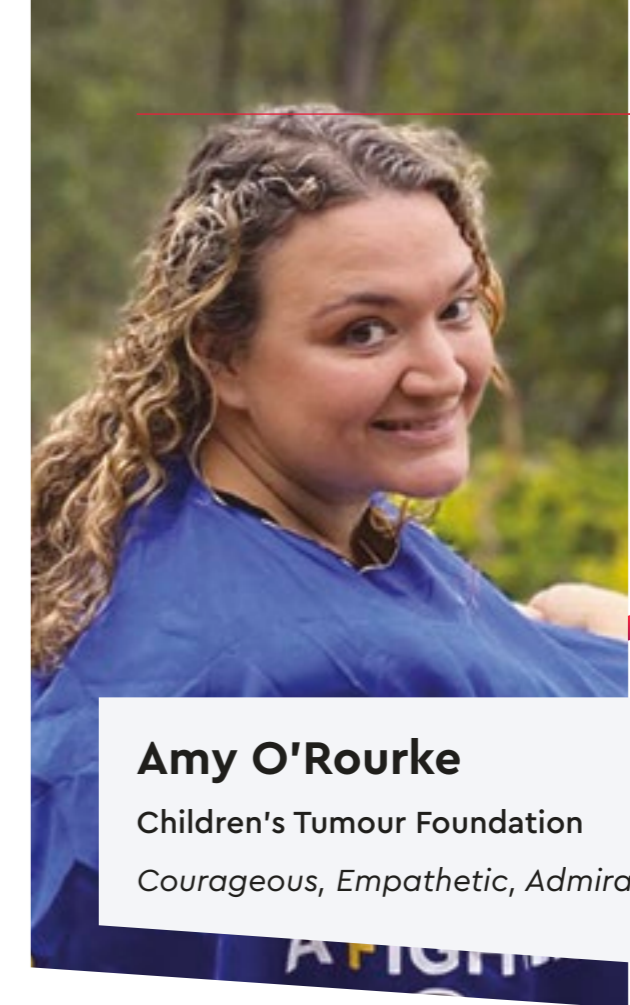
Amy O'Rourke

Children's Tumour Foundation

Courageous, Empathetic, Admirable

Advocating for inclusion

"I am passionate about our community showing and teaching all children to be kind; teaching them that they deserve to be loved and feel safe."



Your 2020 Finalists

Barbara Elizabeth (Barb) Wood

Boob Buddies Inc.

Barb Wood is offering a much-needed service for patients with cancer.

Research shows cancer can spread faster when patients are under stress, so she founded the charity Boob Buddies to provide free, weekly in-home counselling.

Thanks to Barb, patients and their families are relieved of huge levels of stress.

Prior to COVID-19, Barb would give freely of her time to give talks within the community to introduce them to Boob Buddies and encourage donations.

Vicky Rose

Nerang Neighbourhood Centre

Vicky Rose never rests when it comes to helping those in need, living by the motto that if she can help, she will help.

As the coordinator of the Nerang Neighbourhood Community Centre she has plenty to do, but still finds the time for every person in crisis who walks through the door.

Vicky has been known to use her spare time to help those in need, such as delivering food to an elderly couple living in their car who are ineligible for government support.

"I do what I do because I can, and therefore I should," Vicky says.

Simone McKeown

The Sanctuary Refuge

Simone McKeown has opened her heart and wallet to help women and children fleeing domestic violence from all over Australia.

She received minimal government funding and put \$1.3 million of her own money into building the retreat-style refuge.

Simone has designed the refuge so women and children can bring their pets, as she knows leaving animals behind adds to their distress.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Lyn Glover

Spinal Life Australia

Fiona Lamb

Lotus Living Organically Support Group

Linda Newton

Gold Coast Hospital Foundation

Rachel Rive

Wesley Mission Qld – Expanded Horizons Program

Leeanne Butcher

Australian Anti Ice Campaign

Glynis Nunn Oam

Gold Coast Academy Of Sport

Wilhelmina Elsa Ford

Share Abode Pty Ltd

Gwen Woods

Southport Uniting Church – Community Breakfast

Tani Bloudell

Radio Lollipop (Australia)
Gold Coast University Hospital

Mark David Woodhouse

Lynne Richardson Community Centre

Gunchala Fuangfu

Thai Aussie Sisters Support Inc

Nikki Segal

Walk With Us

Lily Grubb

Little Grubbs Orchard

Travis Templar

A.B.Paterson College

Donna-Leigh Perfect

Resilient Rockstar Show

Melanie McKenzie

Harrison's Little Wings

Barbara Elizabeth Wood

Boob Buddies Inc.

Leanne Kyle

Defence Community Dogs

Amy O'Rourke

Children's Tumour Foundation

Vicky Rose

Nerang Neighbourhood Centre

Simone McKeown

The Sanctuary Refuge

Annie Christie

Parkwood Heights Scout Group

Cindy Paterson

Full Circle Formals

Abe Bland

Tribes Adventure Group

Penelope Grandy

Raise Foundation

Adam Garcia

Endeavour Foundation

Dolores Palavra

Raise Foundation

John Holbrook

Animal Welfare League Of Queensland (AWLQ)

Marianne Whalen

Healing Hooves Inc.

Wayne Court

Helensvale Hornets JRLFC

Barb Wood

Boob Buddies

Denise Bills

Musgrave Soccer Club Inc

Sharyn Watson

Rotary Club of Hope Island

Garth Plank

Mentor 4 Me

Sarah Jantos

Green Heroes

Andrew Cullen

PTSD Resurrected Inc

Chloe Wotherspoon

Rotary

Michelle Beattie

Hearts Of Purple

Natalie Contogee

Boots For One & All Community

Luke Mitchell

Youth Insearch Foundation

Manuela Whitford

Friends with Dignity Australia

Jane Padden

Christmas Presents For Kids In Care

Westfield

North Lakes

QLD

Danielle Hannah is using her barber skills to give homeless people dignity through a haircut.

Each year the busy mother of two provides free haircuts for more than 1000 people through the non-profit she co-founded, the Jack Reed Foundation.

Danielle and her volunteers head out into the community with a trailer that has a retro barbershop feel and is designed to ensure homeless people receive quality haircuts.

The volunteers also regularly provide haircuts to people in psychiatric wards who have limited opportunity to access such a service.

Danielle's latest "ambitious yet simple" idea is to transform the lives of disadvantaged young people by offering them barber apprenticeships.

She plans to open a series of non-profit Barbershops made from shipping containers where they can receive on-site training.

Danielle has sourced her first donated container and is reaching out to potential apprentices through the local Police Citizen Youth Club.

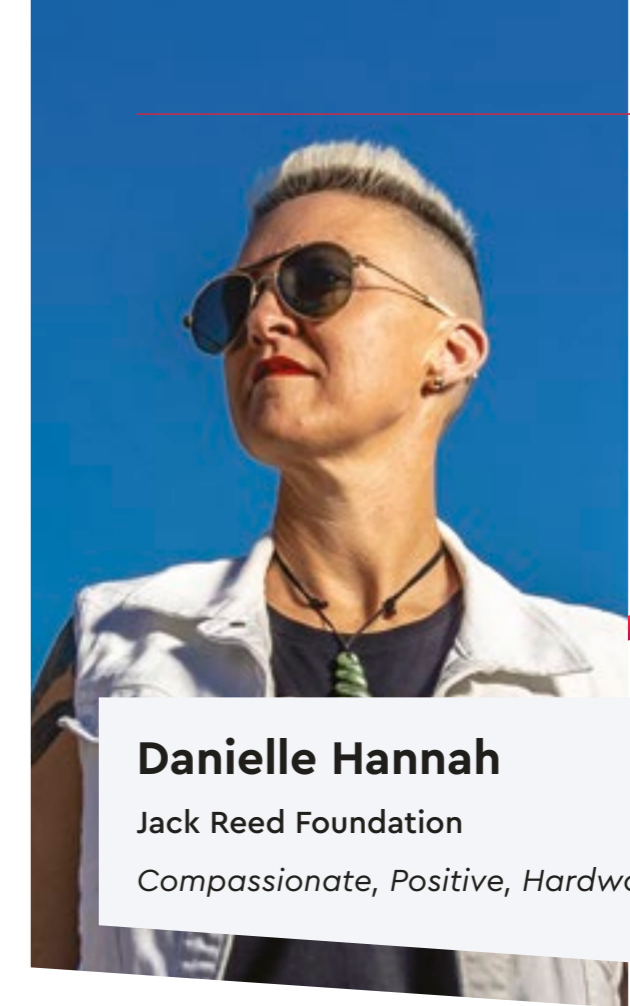
"I believe in the ability of people to turn their lives around, and I am passionate about our youth, who are our future," she says.

"We are dedicated to helping people restore their sense of dignity and finding pathways to making transformational change in their lives."

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.

Jack Reed Foundation will use its grant to fit out its first shipping container as a pop-up barbershop.

Danielle's nominator says: "Danielle believes that having dignity empowers people's ability to change their behaviour. Her pure determination is getting this project off the ground."



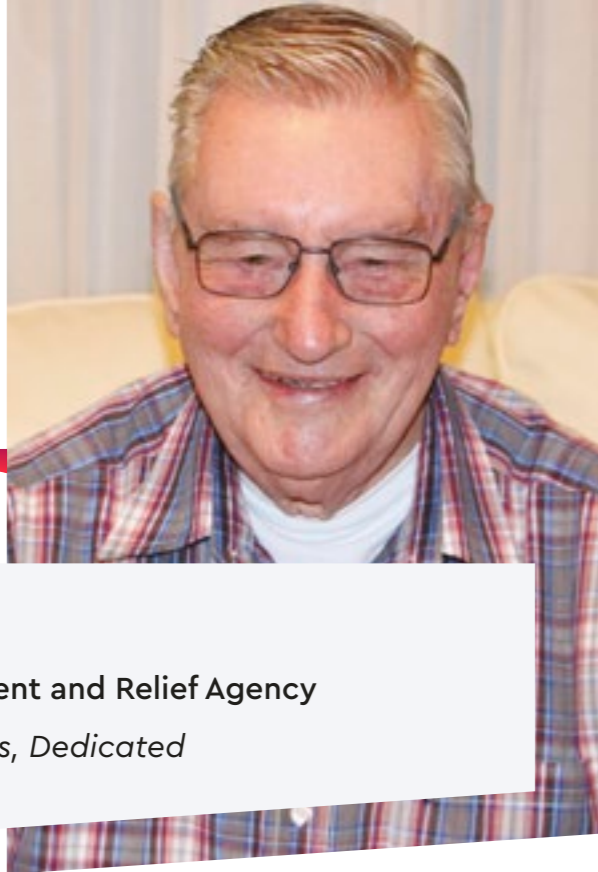
Danielle Hannah

Jack Reed Foundation

Compassionate, Positive, Hardworking

Dignity through haircuts

"I believe in the ability of people to turn their lives around, and I am passionate about our youth, who are our future."



John Taylor

Adventist Development and Relief Agency

Kind-hearted, Selfless, Dedicated

Reaching out with food

“We have been told by many of our customers, that our service has been essential to them,” says John.

John Taylor saw a need for a food parcel service for local families and decided to do something positive about it.

John started helping 17 families in July last year, but the demand is high, and he is now helping up to 80 families a week.

“Our volunteers pick up our food supplies from food-bank Second Bite, and we purchase eggs and margarine from the local supermarkets,” says John, who is a project manager for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency.

The agency is part of a global effort aimed at improving the wellbeing of people in several ways. These include sustainable food, disaster relief, community building and local support services, such as John's food parcels.

Before COVID-19 physical distancing was in place, John's volunteers would invite people in every Tuesday and serve hot drinks, sandwiches and homemade cakes.

At noon, the families collect their \$10 food parcels, which include a basket of dry goods, fruit and vegetables, margarine and some frozen food. Currently the team are providing food parcels to over 100 families.

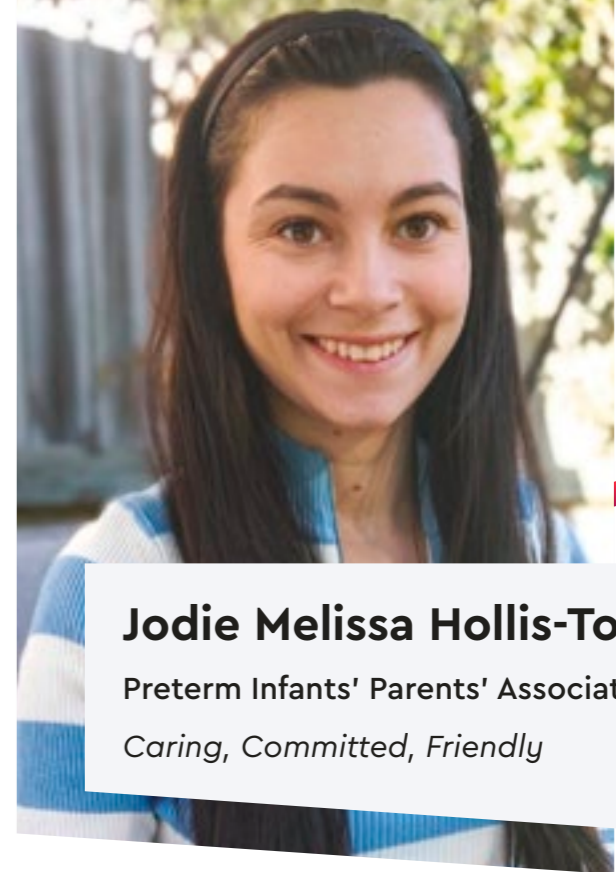
The volunteers also run an OP shop, where people can buy clothes, mostly for \$1 an item.

“We have been told by many of our customers, that our service has been essential to them,” says John.

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.

Adventist Development Relief Agency will use its grant to install a cold room.

John's nominator says: “John is a great, supportive man who leads with passion. John's heart and soul are in the right place, and he gets things done.”



Jodie Melissa Hollis-Tobin

Preterm Infants' Parents' Association

Caring, Committed, Friendly

Supporting mums and dads

“Listening and lending a shoulder for a parent to have a cry on is a very important part of this work.”

As the mother of five children who were born prematurely, Jodie Melissa Hollis-Tobin knows what to say to comfort other parents on the roller-coaster ride that can follow a preterm birth.

She was 19 when her first child was born at just 33 weeks. Another child was born on the edge of viability at 23 weeks, while her fourth child sadly did not make it.

Despite being busy raising her brood, Jodie feels compelled to volunteer to give peer support to other parents through the Preterm Infants' Parents' Association (PIPA).

“Listening and lending a shoulder for a parent to have a cry on is a very important part of this work,” she says.

Jodie's children are thriving after their rocky start, and she works late into the night responding to requests for help after they have gone to bed.

Jodie's biggest challenge is sharing her story of watching her babies struggle to survive after birth and having to wait for weeks to hold them.

“It was a very tough and emotionally exhausting journey, but I do feel there is a reason why I faced and overcame such adversity,” she says.

“If that reason is to help others, I am happy to take on that challenge.”

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.

Preterm Infants' Parents' Association (PIPA) will use its grant to give direct assistance to families in need, such as breast pumps and transport to hospital.

Jodie's nominator says: “By providing emotional support to other young parents with premature children, Jodie shows them there is light at the end of what can be a very dark tunnel at times.”

Your 2020 Finalists

Father Daniel (Dan) Berris The Lakes Anglican Church

Father Dan Berris stands out for his gentle-giant stature, love of motorcycles and tattoos, but also for the good he does.

The Lakes Anglican Church priest runs the Lakes Pantry, where he gives out food to families.

Father Dan can often be seen in coffee shops having a chat with people in crisis, and his phone number is widely available.

He raises money for a domestic violence shelter, offers BBQ dinner on Christmas Day and runs a youth program.

"I have had the privilege of being a part of supporting practical and spiritual growth for the benefit of the local community," Father Dan says.

Maria Williamson Redcliffe State High School

Deputy principal Maria Williamson's efforts to encourage students to respect each other are paying off in spades, both at schools and in the wider community.

Instead of focusing on a negative message, such as anti-bullying, she co-founded a project to help students understand and show respect.

Redcliffe State High School's Respect – Commit to It project has now spread to day-care centres, primary schools, sporting clubs and other high schools.

"The project is developing a community that is respectful of others, despite differences or backgrounds," Maria says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Rowan Arthur James Yates
Northside Concert Orchestras

Maria Williamson
Redcliffe State High School

John Taylor
Adventist Development Relief Agency

Howard Buckley
Deception Bay Community Youth Programs

Danielle Hannah
Jack Reed Foundation

Father Daniel Berris
The Lakes Anglican Church

Jodie Melissa Hollis-Tobin
Preterm Infants' Parents' Association Inc (Pipa)

Jane Standfast
Genies Netball Club Inc

Cam Spooner
Kids In Action

Leichelle McMahon
Qld Animal Advocacy And Owners Group

Marney Perna
Soroptimist International Moreton North Inc.

Chris Paterson
Bamboo Projects

Sean Patrick Gordon
School Aid Nominees Limited

Simon Walsh
Youth Insearch Foundation

Tidan Wright
Ronald McDonald House Charities South East Queensland Ltd

South Australia



South Australia Centres

Marion

Tea Tree Plaza

West Lakes

Westfield

Marion

SA

Thanks to Melanie Tate, kids doing it tough are making happy childhood memories, and thousands of people living in poverty are receiving food.

Eight years ago, she founded the charity Puddle Jumpers at her kitchen table to make a difference in the lives of at-risk children and people living in poverty.

Melanie and her volunteers help in many ways, including camps for underprivileged kids who are living in foster care or with extended family. The kids get to do fun activities and make happy memories alongside positive role models.

Then there is the weekly food night that has made a difference to thousands of families and individuals. In addition to hot meals and groceries, participants are offered free haircuts, homewares, clothing and toiletries.

"When parents are unable to pay for the basic necessities, their children are at much greater risk of being abandoned or removed from their homes," Melanie says.

"We aim to keep families together, while at the same time maintaining safe environments for children to thrive in."

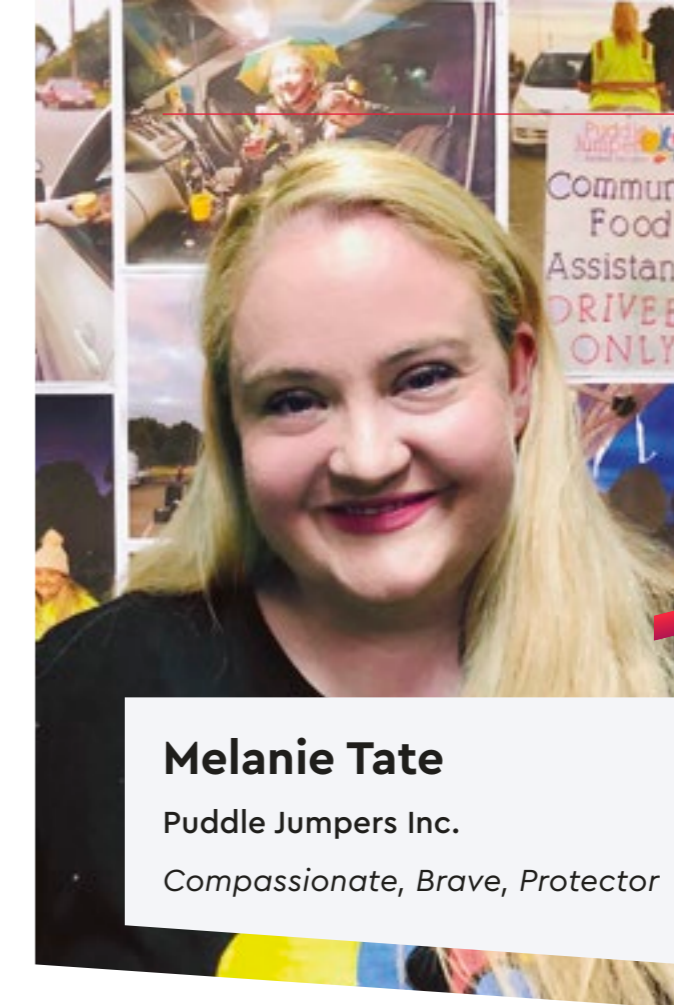
Another successful initiative is the MinTies program, which teaches mentorship and leadership skills to teenagers.

"The children's carers have also benefited, through respite and behaviour management for some of the children," says Melanie.

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.

Puddle Jumpers will use its grant to help hundreds more children with food, clothing and social activities.

Melanie's nominator says: "Melanie is inspiring and will never stop fighting for children to have better lives and outcomes because she believes all kids matter."



Melanie Tate

Puddle Jumpers Inc.

Compassionate, Brave, Protector

Supporting at-risk kids

"We aim to keep families together, while at the same time maintaining safe environments for children to thrive in."



Mish Simpson

Southern Koala and Echidna Rescue (SKER)

Dedicated, Committed, Passionate

Native animal rescuer

"Through education and community engagement, SKER is promoting a harmonious relationship with our native wildlife and empowering the community to actively preserve and protect our unique biodiversity."

Mish Simpson devotes much time, energy and money to rescuing and rehabilitating injured koalas and echidnas, and educating the community about the importance of protecting Australia's unique biodiversity.

She and her husband, Wade, founded the non-profit Southern Koala and Echidna Rescue (SKER). Despite both having full-time jobs, they are on 24/7 standby and often receive calls for help in the middle of the night.

The recent bushfire crisis in South Australia saw them reaching capacity for koalas in their care and having to create temporary accommodation, as well as an influx of orphaned joeys requiring regular bottle feeds to survive.

SKER is based on a 22 acre property in Onkaparinga Hills and is run 100% by volunteers led by Mish and her husband Wade. They rehabilitate wild koalas and echidnas with the primary aim of returning them to the wild.

Another aspect of Mish's work is the promotion of harmonious human relationships with native wildlife.

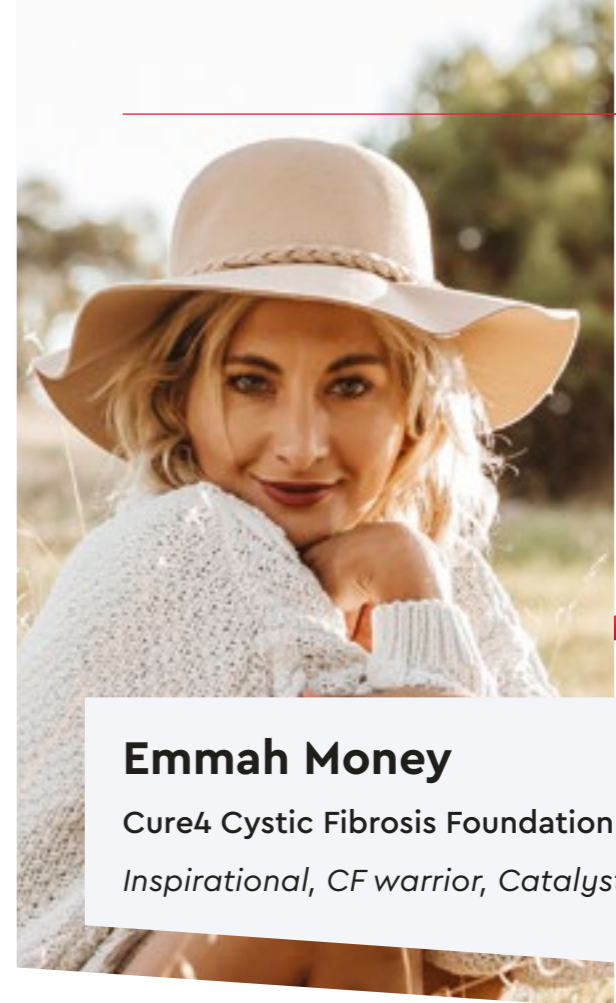
"Through education and community engagement, SKER is promoting a harmonious relationship with our native wildlife and empowering the community to actively preserve and protect our unique biodiversity," says Mish.

SKER also collaborates with other groups and organisations, and the Gemtree winery has accommodated a staged environment where koala joeys can be pre-released to ensure they have the skills to thrive on their own.

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.

Southern Koala and Echidna Rescue (SKER) will use its grant to purchase materials to build more enclosures in preparation for the busy summer rescue season.

Mish's nominator says: "In this me me world, Mish puts the welfare and future of one of Australia's best known and well-loved native animals, the koala, at the forefront of her world, and works tirelessly to ensure their survival."



Emmah Money

Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Inspirational, CF warrior, Catalyst

Brave campaigner

"I seek to empower kids to understand that, despite adversity, they can rise up and make a difference in their own communities"

Emmah Money is a dynamo when it comes to advocating for people with cystic fibrosis, a life-limiting condition that she was born with.

In her role as ambassador for the Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, she has helped raise \$50,000 for research into a cure for the genetic disease.

Thanks in part to Emmah's efforts, people with cystic fibrosis now have access to life-enhancing drugs, including one which was added to the PBS after years of campaigning.

As it stands, people with cystic fibrosis (CF) are not expected to live past the age of 38.

"I am hopeful that in my lifetime CF will stand for Cure Found and I will be able to see my children grow into adults," Emmah says.

She uses her own remarkable story to both shine the light on cystic fibrosis and give hope to children struggling with bullying and other adversity.

Emmah was placed up for adoption after doctors told her birth parents that she was unlikely to survive.

She rose above relentless bullying while she was growing up, and she defied the odds to become a parent.

"I seek to empower kids to understand that, despite adversity, they can rise up and make a difference in their own communities," Emmah 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.

Stellar Experiences will use its grant to subsidise costs for their experiences to make them accessible for all young people, such as those who don't qualify for the NDIS.

Emmah's nominator says: "Emmah uses her remarkable story to inspire others, not only those impacted by cystic fibrosis but anyone facing adversity in their life."

Your 2020 Finalists

Rebecca Aloisi

Supertee

When Rebecca Aloisi's son Cameron was younger, he faced a four-year struggle with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and needed a bone marrow transplant.

Something that cheered him up during his hospital stay in Sydney's Westmead Children's Hospital was a gifted Supertee, which is a special superhero outfit for sick children..

Not only did it make him feel strong, it gave his family and the hospital team a lift as well.

Cameron is now 13, and Rebecca has become the South Australia Supertee champion, raising funds to provide the medical garments to children in the state. They are MRI compatible, have a cape that transforms into a bib and openings for tubes.

Peter Biber

Grandparents For Grandchildren (GFGSA)

Peter Biber moved to Adelaide six years ago to retire and play golf, but it hasn't worked out that way.

Peter has taken on a full-time volunteer role as CEO of Grandparents For Grandchildren.

Peter and other volunteers help an ever-growing number of Grandparents and Kinship Carers keep their Grandchildren out of statutory care.

"Children living other than in their parental homes are the primary beneficiaries of our services, and their extended families are the secondary beneficiaries."

Leigh Aitken

Operation Flinders

Leigh Aitken is dedicated to helping at-risk youth overcome challenging behaviours, digging deep to continue his volunteer work with Operation Flinders while dealing with serious illness.

The charity takes young people aged 14 to 18 on a tough, outback trek to help boost their self-esteem. Leigh encourages them to make positive change.

"It is my role to lead them safely during their journey, to help them cope with the challenges and to encourage self-reflection with a view to positive change," says Leigh.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Craig Westbury

St John Ambulance SA

Arundhati Banerjee

Aida Bharatanatyaved

Kate Videon

Aberfoyle Hub R-7 Primary School

Bev Langley

Minton Farm Animal Rescue Centre

Brett Bryson

Every Day Hero For Beyond Blue

Olivia Jayne Nassaris

Parkinson's South Australia Inc

Peter Marshman

Youth Opportunities Association (SA) Inc

Paul Barnden

Goodwood Saints Football Club

Helen Cutler

Seaford Storm Netball Club

Samuel Charlton

Journey Of Resilience

Emmah Money

Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Melanie Tate

Puddle Jumpers Inc.

Mish Simpson

Southern Koala And Echidna Rescue

Peter Biber

Grandparents For Grandchildren (Gfgsa)

Rebecca Aloisi

Supertee

Leigh Aitken

Operation Flinders

Nicole Young

Girl Guides Australia

Colin Jennings

Forestville Eagles Basketball Club

Jennifer Howard

Safe Pets Safe Families

Steve Turner

Variety – The Children's Charity Of South Australia

Michael J. Boundey

Chimera Medieval Martial Arts

Rikki Cooke

Treasure Boxes Inc.

Kylie Thomas

Aerokids Australia

Austin Edwards

Be The One

Kirsty Whitehead

Children's Tumour Foundation

Lani Kahl

Raise Foundation

Westfield

Tea Tree Plaza

SA

At just 12, Sam Weavers has his own successful online popcorn business, Sam's Popcorn.

Sam also wanted to make a positive difference in people's lives, so he used his business as a base for a fundraising program called Kids4Kids.

Sam works with other children to sell fundraising popcorn pails, and the profits go to the Childhood Cancer Association. The association offers counselling, financial and other support to children with cancer and their families.

Kids4Kids has donated nearly \$10,000 since 2018.

Sam visits as many schools as possible to talk to about the fabulous work of the Childhood Cancer Association, inspiring students to pitch in and to encourage their teachers, parents and friends to do the same.

"I have inspired thousands of children my age," Sam says.

It has taken a lot of courage for Sam to get out there as he was initially nervous about speaking to large groups of people.

When he started Kids4Kids, he also had to convince people he was a legitimate fundraiser.

"This made me work harder to show people I was reliable and professional," Sam says.

"In some cases, people who were initially reluctant have become some of my biggest supporters."

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.

Childhood Cancer Association will use its grant to provide counselling to sick kids and their families via Skype.

Sam's nominator says: "At such a young age, Sam has committed himself to fundraise, inspire and educate others in his community about the invaluable work undertaken by the Childhood Cancer Association."



Samuel (Sam) Weavers

Childhood Cancer Association

Dedicated, Altruistic, Inspiring

12-year-old fundraising star

"I have inspired thousands of children my age."



Jodie Turpin

Lobethal Bushfire Recovery Centre

Selfless, Kind, Hardworking

Empathetically efficient

"I have always loved my community and to be able to help was a very rewarding experience that I will hold close to my heart."

It's heart-warming to remember how the community came together in the Cudlee Creek Fires emergency disaster.

Jodie Turpin was among the many standout volunteers together with the Disaster Relief Australia team. She took on the challenging role of logistics manager at the Lobethal Bushfire Recovery Centre, a one-stop-shop for community members seeking practical support and advice amid the devastation.

Jodie was there to help set up the centre within 12 hours of the disaster, and she volunteered for more than 80 days after that.

At the height of the emergency, Jodie efficiently went about arranging accommodation, food, water and clothing.

"We set up a supply centre where people could come and get what they needed," Jodie says.

She had teams that went house-to-house and farm-to-farm delivering supplies, checking in on people and setting up generators.

Jodie also worked with the ADF, Team Rubicon and locals to arrange tree and rubble removal.

What touched many people, was that she always found time to give a hug and lend a listening ear.

"I have always loved my community and to be able to help was a very rewarding experience that I will hold close to my heart," Jodie says.

"I will continue to check in on the many people affected by this terrible disaster."

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.

Lobethal Bushfire Recovery Centre will use its grant to help fund fencing repairs and other recovery operations.

Jodie's nominator says: "Jodie is kind and caring and gave 110 per cent to the community, but she does not look for any recognition for her outstanding efforts."

Sarah Bisbal was in Year 12 when her mum passed away and her aunt Joss Adele took her in.

Ten years later, Sarah is a public servant with a child of her own. But she has not forgotten her hour of need.

Sarah and her aunt have co-founded a charity that provides teenagers with free outfits for their Year 7 Graduation and Year 12 Formal.

Their charity is called With Love Formal Wear. It brings joy and recognition to people in foster or kinship care, but any vulnerable student is welcome to access her service.

"Our aim is to give young people a moment in time where they feel their best and get to be part of something big," Sarah says.

"It's not just about their Year 12 formal. It's about being included without having to feel guilty about asking their carer to help financially or having to face an inner struggle about how they will afford it themselves."

The young people come in during the school holidays and select their formal outfit, which is donated by members of the community.

They can also participate in a two-hour makeup workshop.

Coffee and cake are provided for the carers, who enjoy a chat while they are waiting.

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.

With Love Formal Wear will use its grant to cover storage costs.

Sarah's nominator says: "Sarah believes kindness is helping the world one person at a time and subscribes to the philosophy that it takes a village to raise a child."

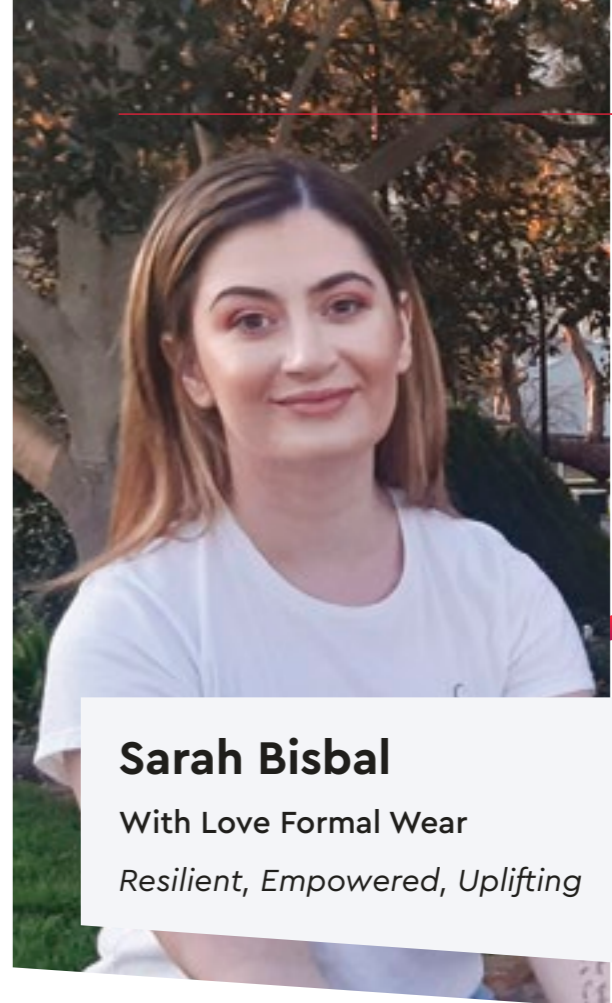
Sarah Bisbal

With Love Formal Wear

Resilient, Empowered, Uplifting

Helping students dress with pride

"Our aim is to give young people a moment in time where they feel their best and get to be part of something big."



Your 2020 Finalists

Kerry Gibbins-Norris

Walk With Wings

Kerry Gibbins-Norris couldn't save her own son, but she has saved many other parents the heartache of losing a baby.

Her infant son Harrison was born prematurely and died in his sleep, suddenly and without explanation, at just eight weeks of age.

After many sleepless nights, she realised she could help other parents of premature babies, who are at increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), by purchasing and loaning out sound and movement monitors.

"The monitors have saved the lives of many infants who neurologically or obstructively could not breathe in their sleep," Kerry says.

Jane Brister

Adelaide Koala Rescue

Jane Brister and her dedicated team of volunteers rescued hundreds of koalas during the recent bushfires.

She established Adelaide Koala Rescue to fill a critical need for koala rescue in the Adelaide Hills and metro areas.

The preservation of the environment and native wildlife is Jane's priority. "Through providing volunteering opportunities and wildlife education programs, we engage people in meaningful activities and instil a sense of care, responsibility and respect for wildlife and the environment," she says.

Jane is now looking for a permanent home for her operation and wants to set up a sanctuary for koalas who have no home to go back to.

Shane Cook

Street Dreamz

Respected Indigenous aerosol artist Shane Mankitya Cook developed his talent when he was 12 and recovering from third-degree burns.

Shane did not have an easy childhood and grew up without a strong connection to his culture. His mother battled kidney disease and Shane became her carer and disengaged from school.

But Shane took charge of his life.

A proud Wulli Wulli and Guwa descendant, Shane is contributing to society through Street Dreamz, his community arts and mentoring service that uses street art and First Nations Australian art to connect with school students and people in the youth justice system.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Kim Jeanes

United Way South Australia

Emma Brooke

United Way South Australia Incorporated

Ella Blackwood-Niklaus

Inkforest Studio

Sharee Goodridge

Miracle Babies Nurture Group

Sarah Lee

Breast Cancer Trials Australia

Melissa Henschke

Archetypes Of Interiority

Sarah Coventry

Salisbury Star Girl Guides

Dan Lester

Dans Gym Australia

Peter Habel

The Spire Community

Jane Brister

Adelaide Koala Rescue

Michelle Kenley

Cudlee Creek Tennis Club

Sarah Bisbal

With Love Formal Wear

Kerry Gibbins-Norris

Walk With Wings

Shane Cook

Street Dreamz

Samuel Weavers

Childhood Cancer Association

Jodie Turpin

Lobethal Bushfire Recovery Centre

Steven Mann

Pembroke Old Scholars Soccer Club

Westfield

West Lakes

SA

Mae Johnson is in Year 12 and is planning to become a doctor.

The brave and inspirational student has cystic fibrosis, a life-threatening disorder that damages the lungs and digestive system. Her wish is to pay forward the care she has received from her doctors.

Mae is a youth ambassador of the Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and has raised more than \$33,000 for research, most recently by holding Mae's Tea Party, which 325 people attended.

She truly shines when she is sharing her story and encouraging others to adopt her positive approach to managing adversity.

Mae has had a lot to deal with at a young age, including the scars from 30 operations.

Another challenge is that people with cystic fibrosis can infect each other with a dangerous bacterium, which means people with the disease must stay apart.

"I had no connection to any other CF sufferer until very recently. This was very hard as I could not talk to anyone who knew and understood what I was going through," Mae says.

The foundation is looking at research into a vaccine against the bacteria.

But Mae's big hope is a cure. "It would mean we could have the same opportunities as everyone else."

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.

Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation will use its grant to fund the creation of an awareness and educational video.

Mae's nominator says: "Mae is leading the charge to defeat cystic fibrosis. It is because of people like her that we can begin to picture a future free of this disease."



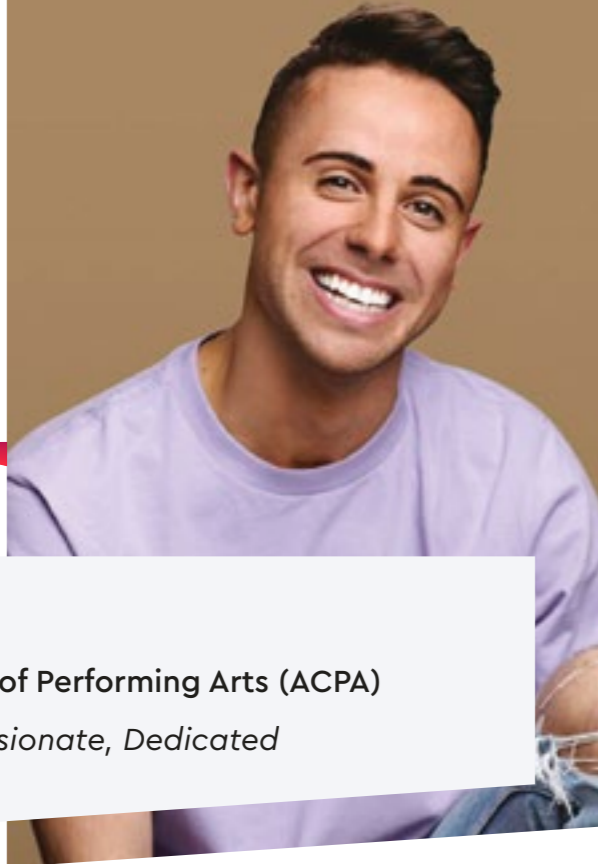
Mae Johnson

Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Selfless, Determined, Compassionate

Brave young fundraiser

"I had no connection to any other CF sufferer until very recently. This was very hard as I could not talk to anyone who knew and understood what I was going through."



Pep Rigano

Australian Company of Performing Arts (ACPA)

Passionate, Compassionate, Dedicated

Normalising dance for boys

"Pep takes a personal interest in each student, even learning sign language to communicate with a boy who is hearing impaired."

When teacher Pep Rigano was young, he was one of few male dancers in his class.

"Although I had a great time, I didn't feel the support I needed from the community," he says.

Pep has been a dance teacher at the Australian Company of Performing Arts (ACPA) for 12 years, and he has normalised dance as something boys can and should do.

At the suggestion of a parent, Pep started a boys' dance class several years ago. "It started with five little superstars and has grown to over 150 boys doing dance in our school," he says. "This is enormous and quite a rarity. "

Pep takes a personal interest in each student, even learning sign language to communicate with a boy who is hearing impaired.

Pep says teaching boys is challenging and rewarding. "They have an energy like no other. Sometimes, I have to work hard to keep them motivated. But that's the best part about being a teacher. The kids teach you so much.

"I guess what I have designed has encouraged boys to develop themselves, their personalities. It also allows them to feel comfortable and supported. It's a passion of mine that I adore being a part of," Pep 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.

Australian Company of Performing Arts (ACPA) will use its grant to fund a boys focussed event, specialised teacher training to have a greater reach and also advance sign language skills to be able to host classes specifically for deaf or hard of hearing people.

Pep's nominator says: "Pep makes a difference in the lives of the young people he teaches and works tirelessly to make sure that every one of his students enjoys their dance journey."

In 2009, Zahra Abrahamzadeh courageously left her abusive marriage and went into hiding with her three children, Arman, Atena and Anita.

On the 21 March 2010, Zahra was killed by her husband in front of 300 witnesses at the Adelaide Convention Centre. It was her 44th birthday.

Five years later, Arman Abrahamzadeh OAM and his two sisters, Atena and Anita, established the Zahra Foundation Australia in their mother's memory.

Their vision is to instil hope and optimism in the lives of women and children and to provide financial and educational opportunities.

Despite the siblings being robbed of their mother and having endured abuse at the hands of their father, they have all achieved success in life.

Arman is an Adelaide City Councillor and has received several honours and awards for his role in community education about domestic and family violence.

The Zahra Foundation financially empowers women who have summoned up the courage to leave their abusive homes, says Arman.

"We help break the cycle of violence by preventing women and their children from returning to their abusive environments. We provide financial counselling, which helps women stay on track."

The foundation also provides grants for women to empower themselves by pursuing their education at university or TAFE.

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.

Zahra Foundation Australia will use its grant to help fund its existing empowerment programs.

Arman's nominator says: "Arman is raising awareness within all sectors of our community that domestic and family violence must not be tolerated; the work Arman continues to do is amazing."

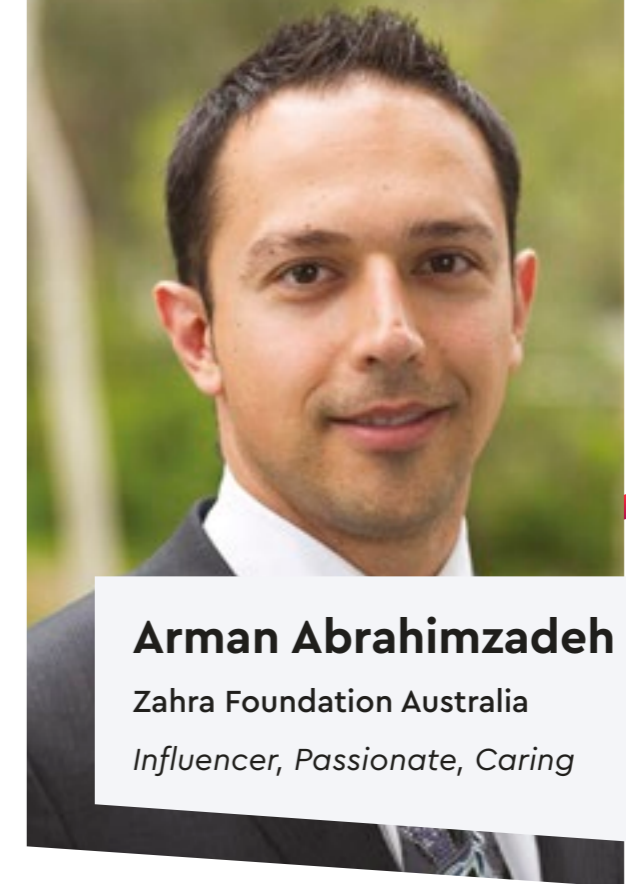
Arman Abrahamzadeh OAM

Zahra Foundation Australia

Influencer, Passionate, Caring

In his mother's honour

"We help break the cycle of violence by preventing women and their children from returning to their abusive environments. We provide financial counselling, which helps women stay on track."



Your 2020 Finalists

Ukash Ali Ahmed

Multicultural Communities Council of SA Inc

Former refugee Ukash Ali Ahmed has a life story, empathy and passion that enable him to engage with at-risk young people in Adelaide and help them turn their life around.

In his three years at the Multicultural Communities Council of SA, he has been instrumental in helping people find jobs, remain in education, return to school, resolve conflicts with parents, become mentors, engage in volunteer roles and connect to the broader Australia community.

He is deeply involved in his Somalian community and leads soccer and social activities for young people. He has also completed a degree at Flinders University.

Louanne Johns OAM

Camp Quality

Louanne Johns OAM has been helping children with cancer and their families at Camp Quality for almost three decades.

She lives the Camp Quality ethos by doing as much as she can to create positive memories, often with grubby new adventures at weekend camps.

One of her most important roles is being Camp Leader at Family Camp.

This means Louanne helps to plan the two-night, three-day experience for families going through a child's cancer journey.

"I am honoured to be a volunteer at Camp Quality," says Louanne. "In a terrible time, we give families a chance to be a family."

Smiler TeAo

Employment Options Inc

Retired tradesman Smiler TeAo is the kind of wise and caring grandfather figure you want around when you are helping teenagers overcome learning barriers.

The big-hearted volunteer has worked with Youth Space at Employment Options for several years – five days a week during school term.

He enjoys teaching new skills, and everyone loves having him around.

"Kids who haven't done well at school feel good about themselves when they get a chance to make things and learn skills they see as important, like fixing their bike, working on a motorbike or making a piece of furniture," Smiler says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Carolina Correa Posada
Portlife Church

Catherine Kewley
Island Care

David McGrath
Semaphore Surf Life Saving

Peter Zemitis
Flinders Park Football Club Inc

Dianne Haufe
Uniting Care Wesley Bowden

Smiler Teao
Employment Options Inc

Michael Hocking
Uniting Care Wesley Bowden

Ukash Ali Ahmed
Multicultural Communities Council Of SA Inc

Mae Johnson
Cure4 Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Pep Rigano
Australian Company Of Performing Arts

Arman Abrahamzadeh
Zahra Foundation Australia

Louanne Johns
Camp Quality

Genevieve Handley
The Cf Pipeline In Conjunction With Cystic Fibrosis Community Care

Lani Kahl
Raise Foundation

Western Australia



Western Australia Centres

Booragoon

Carousel

Innaloo

Whitford City



Westfield

Booragoon

WA

Donna Roberts is a mum on a mission.

She is dedicated to reducing the stigma about the genetic disorder neurofibromatosis, which causes tumours to grow on nerve cells.

Her heart was broken when her daughter, who has the disorder, was bullied for her appearance.

After discovering the Children's Tumour Foundation, which supports families with the condition, she offered to be their spokesperson and manage fundraising events in Perth.

Courageous and fearless, Donna began by connecting families through online support groups and in her local area.

The events she organises have helped bridge the gap between neurofibromatosis families and the broader community.

She is a force to be reckoned with and has helped people with neurofibromatosis feel a sense of belonging in the community.

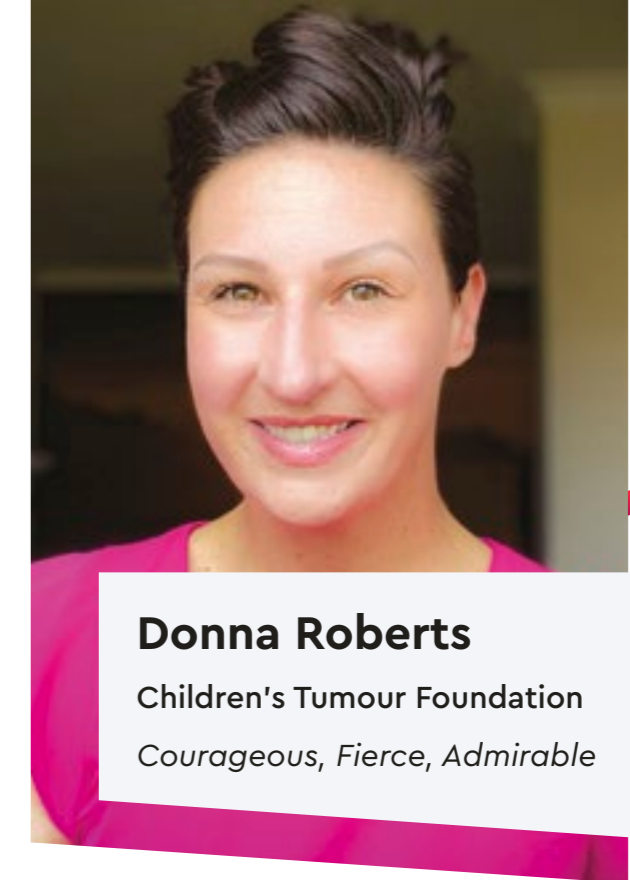
"I volunteer for the Children's Tumour Foundation and advocate for awareness of neurofibromatosis and the general celebration of difference. I want my daughter and other sufferers to live in a world that is accepting, kind and inclusive," says Donna, who is now the peer leader and event manager in Fremantle.

"The events I bring to our area are so important when it comes to eliminating stigma and stereotypes of visible differences."

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.

Children's Tumour Foundation will use its grant to run a camp for kids with neurofibromatosis as well as their siblings.

Donna's nominator says "Donna's advocacy encourages a celebration and acceptance of difference. Her community work is improving the mental and social wellbeing of dozens of families."



Donna Roberts

Children's Tumour Foundation

Courageous, Fierce, Admirable

Mum on a mission

"The events I bring to our area are so important when it comes to eliminating stigma and stereotypes of visible differences."



Brad Karafil

Kardinya Suns Junior Football Club

Supportive, Authentic, Enthusiastic

Coaching team sport and life skills

"I aim to cater for the needs of all involved in our youth program, and everyone feels valued to a point where all players buy into common goals."

On and off the field, volunteer AFL coach Brad Karafil is teaching his Year 11 and 12 players life skills, inclusivity and teamwork.

With his reputation for being hard but fair, Brad has been a respected coach at Kardinya Suns Junior Football Club for 12 years.

The award-winning coach led his boys to premierships in 2016, 2017 and 2018. But it's not all about winning. Brad's mantra is "today's boys, tomorrow's gentlemen".

He promotes cultural diversity and acceptance and sees team sport as a great way to teach teenagers invaluable lessons they can take into their careers and relationships.

"I like to think I facilitate emotional growth and development in young people," Brad says.

For example, he encourages his players to set short-term and long-term goals. Another focus is on helping the boys to become more in tune with their feelings.

"I regularly facilitate mental health sessions in the team. I encourage reflection and gratefulness and our boys are becoming more in tune with their feelings and also identifying the feelings of others," says Brad.

"I aim to cater for the needs of all involved in our youth program, and everyone feels valued to a point where all players buy into common goals."

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.

Kardinya Suns Junior Football Club will use its grant to buy training tops, playing jumpers and shorts for players as well as equipment.

Brad's nominator says: "Brad gives his all to junior sport. He provides a safe and inclusive environment for kids to train and develop, both as players and young men."

As a former speech therapist and mother of a child with additional needs, Chrissy Lee knew more could be done to allow children like her son to participate in the local community.

So, in 2018 she founded Heroes Academy. Heroes Academy runs free and fun event days for children with additional needs and their siblings.

The action-packed event days include jumping castles, silent discos, tower-building competitions and much more!

Chrissy has inspired dozens of professionals, including doctors, therapists and teachers, to volunteer their time at Heroes Academy event days.

Over 100 young 'heroes' have had the time of their lives at the six events that have been held so far, choosing the activities that most appeal to them.

"All of our activities are designed with our 'heroes' in mind, says Chrissy, a mum of two teenage boys. "Individual sensory, physical, medical and behavioural needs are all accounted for in the development of the programs so that all children can participate at a level suitable to them."

Heroes Academy also provides some respite for parents and carers, who can head to the beach or have a nap while their children are expertly cared for.

"Ours is a service for the whole family," says Chrissy.

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.

Heroes Academy will use its grant to create a sensory room to better accommodate the needs of young heroes.

Chrissy's nominator says: "Chrissy believes that every kid is super and has wonderful gifts and abilities to be developed, cherished and celebrated."

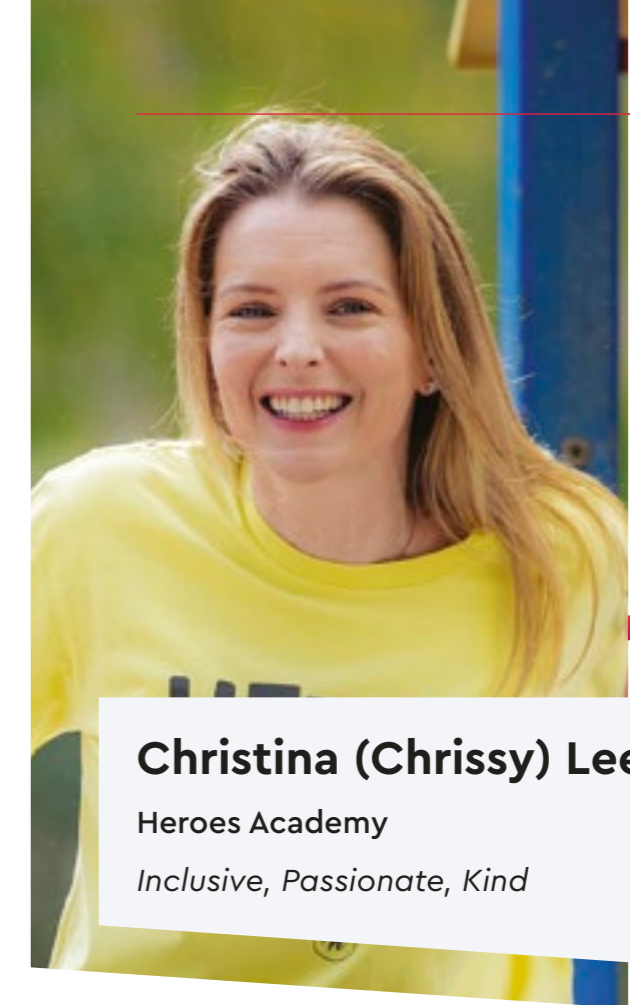
Christina (Chrissy) Lee

Heroes Academy

Inclusive, Passionate, Kind

Celebrating little heroes

"Individual sensory, physical, medical and behavioural needs are all accounted for in the development of the programs so that all children can participate at a level suitable to them."



Your 2020 Finalists

Sharon Irene Young

Lifeline WA

When Sharon Irene Young lost her nephew to suicide eight years ago, she was determined to help others get the support they need. As a volunteer with Lifeline, she has raised close to \$190,000 to train telephone counsellors. She has also established a mental health program at the school where she works.

If you need support, please phone:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Curtis Novacsek

Edmund Rice Camps for Kids WA

Energetic volunteer Curtis Novacsek has helped hundreds of at-risk children as a mentor with Edmund Rice Camps for Kids. He is admired for his willingness to go above and beyond so they can enjoy just being children. The camps always go well when Curtis is involved, thanks to his special bond with the kids.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Jenni Bunce

Beacon Progress Association

Brad Karafil

Kardinya Suns Junior Football Club

Curtis Novacsek

Edmund Rice Camps For Kids WA

Sharon Irene Young

Lifeline WA

Christina Lee

Heroes Academy

Donna Roberts

Children's Tumour Foundation

Wendy Corrick

Friends Of Bull Creek Catchment, Sercul

Gillian Parker

One Achord Community Choir

Hayden Glass

Red Frogs Australia

Stefani Caminiti

The Inner Ninja Foundation

Peter Matera

Matera Foundation

Mandy Bishop

The Foster Share Shed Inc

Fleur Hockey

Cockburn Youth Centre

Kaylene Poon

The Chung Wah Association Inc.

Michelle Carrington

Katanning Squash Club

Westfield

Carousel

WA

Jayde Seed is passionate about giving people with disabilities the chance to keep fit and achieve their full potential, just as he has.

Jayde was left with quadriplegia after a football accident in 2003. But participating in wheelchair rugby helped him get through the dark times and push the boundaries of what he thought was possible after his injury.

For 15 years, he has been proudly volunteering for Rebound WA's wheelchair rugby program to raise awareness of the life-changing sport and is now the team captain and coach.

He is a regular visitor to people undergoing rehabilitation in hospital after suffering a traumatic injury.

Jayde talks about the programs offered by Rebound WA and how wheelchair rugby helped him overcome severe depression after his injury and, more recently, cancer treatment.

"Providing hope and support to others who have suffered a traumatic injury like myself is invaluable to their recovery," he says.

Jayde says the physical and mental health benefits the players reap are enormous.

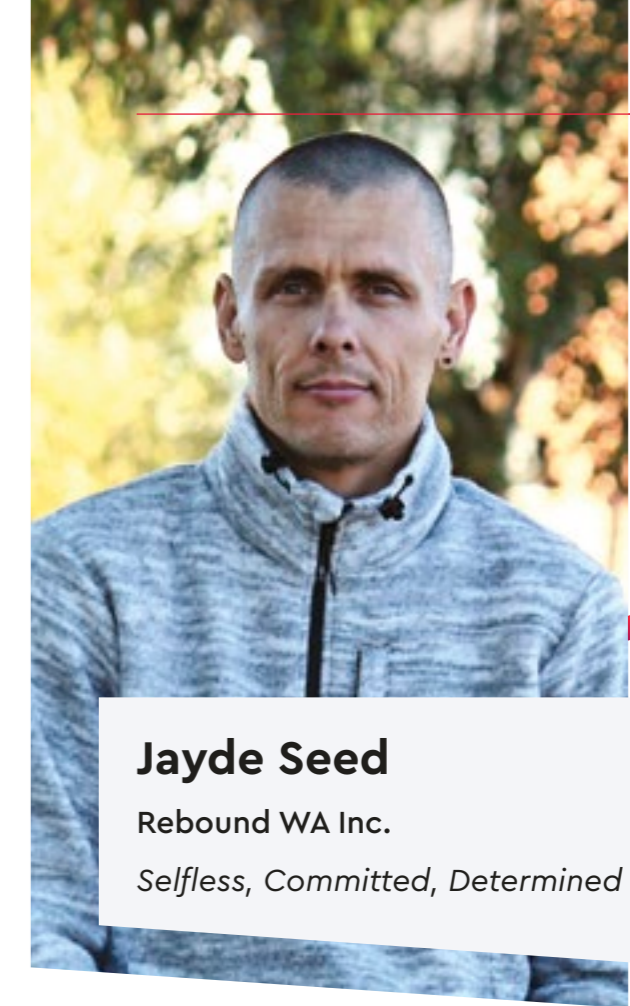
"I feel accomplished when I can introduce new players to this amazing sport," he says.

"I know they are at their most vulnerable and difficult stages of their lives, and I can help them gain confidence and independence through playing sport with their peers."

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.

Rebound WA will use its grant to fund ongoing costs and to repair equipment so players don't need to share chairs.

Jayde's nominator says: "Jayde is passionate about mentoring others with similar disabilities and getting them active. He is often seen going beyond to help others on the court or fundraising to support wheelchair rugby."



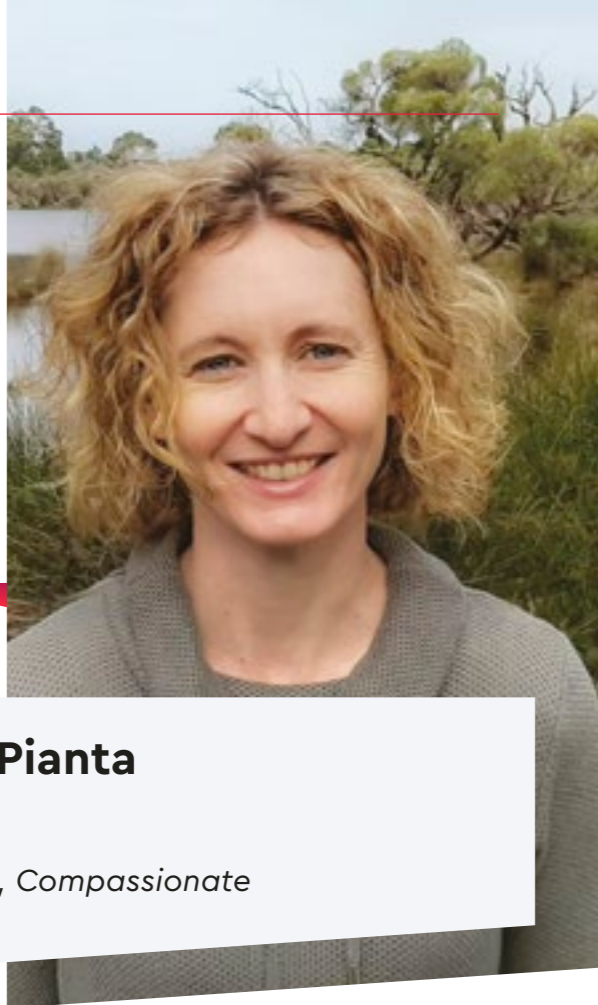
Jayde Seed

Rebound WA Inc.

Selfless, Committed, Determined

Pushing the boundaries

"Providing hope and support to others who have suffered a traumatic injury like myself is invaluable to their recovery."



Jessica (Jess) Pianta

HeartKids

Selfless, Courageous, Compassionate

Enabling safe connection

"All of this helps alleviate some of the anxiety that parents caring for a child with a chronic illness deal with every day."

Jess Pianta has her hands full juggling work, family life and caring for a child with congenital heart disease. Still she finds time to help other families in the same position.

She's a peer mentor with HeartKids, a charity that supports families and raises funds for research, and is always there to connect with families to let them know they are not alone.

She set up a playgroup exclusively for children with congenital heart disease (CHD), who risk becoming seriously ill if they are exposed to bugs that healthy kids at regular playgroups brush off.

Thanks to Jess, CHD children get to socialise with other kids and grow their imagination in a safe environment.

To make sure as many families as possible can participate, Jess runs the free, monthly playgroup at a variety of carefully chosen venues and on different days of the week.

"Having their own specific playgroup gives parents of heart kids the ability to share their experiences and support each other while knowing their children are safe from common illnesses," she says.

"All of this helps alleviate some of the anxiety that parents caring for a child with a chronic illness deal with every day."

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.

HeartKids will use its grant to be able to increase the number of playgroups it runs and help more families.

Jessica's nominator says: "Jess has faced many difficult times and at times her child's life has hung in the balance. Yet she will do anything possible to help others feel safe and less anxious."



Lenny Jacoby

The Essentials Collective

Selfless, Passionate, Hard-working

Bringing back dignity and pride

"It still amazes me the impact such a donation can make."

By providing a few essentials, Lenny Jacoby is making a huge difference to people who are homeless or fleeing domestic violence.

Six years ago, Lenny founded not-for-profit The Essentials Collective, which drops toiletries, sanitary items, underwear and health products at women's refugees and outreach and drop-in centres.

A part-time nurse and mother, she finds the time to organise and facilitate over 30 donation drop off sites across Perth. So far, she has collected almost 190,000 donated items.

Along the way, she has inspired and motivated 50 people to volunteer their time.

More recently, the collective started providing socks to homeless men – 700 pairs to date – after Lenny went out into the community to talk to displaced men.

"I recently heard a woman say that it was the simple things like having shampoo and a toothbrush that made her feel valued when she entered a women's refuge," Lenny says.

"It still amazes me the impact such a donation can make."

Lenny says she won't stop until homelessness ends.

"Most vulnerable people want to look good, to have hygiene and be proud of who they are," she says.

"How can they do that without the basic things in life?"

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.

The Essentials Collective will use its grant to securing permanent storage premises and to purchasing extra toiletries.

Lenny's nominator says: "Lenny is a role model for all of those around her. She is motivating others to give back to those less fortunate."

Your 2020 Finalists

Guy Mead

Stryka Fight Team

Stryka Fight Team is a sporting club with a difference.

Guy Mead established the non-profit mixed martial arts team so at-risk young people can enjoy and even compete in their favourite combat sport for free.

But there is a stipulation: every young person must volunteer in the community, for example by providing firewood and yard maintenance to the elderly or supporting those with disabilities.

"We give local youth a sense of achievement, purpose and community belonging," Guy says.

Chontae Hayden

Earbus Foundation of WA

As someone who struggled with hearing as a child, Chontae Hayden is committed to stamping out ear infections among Indigenous and at-risk children.

At 19 years of age, she is a community role model and an indispensable member of the Earbus Foundation WA, which aims to eradicate middle ear disease in remote communities and Perth.

Chontae, a Noongar woman, manages the clinical information so the team of doctors and nurses don't miss children who are high priority.

"One of the things I love is educating teachers and families so they are aware what symptoms they should look out for," Chontae says.

Julian Pace

Happiness Co Pty Ltd

Julian Pace is determined to do something to make the world happier and combat depression.

He founded Happiness Co, which offers a range of events and online programs to promote connection, kindness and contribution to the world.

Happiness Co has had a positive impact on over 80,000 people in over 10 countries.

Julian has launched several initiatives to help men, young women, school students and parents and their children.

If you need support, please phone Lifeline: 13 11 14

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Rita Kleinfeld-Fowell
Midlas

Perry Kleppe
Willetton Football Club

David Ferguson
PMH Fund + Childrens
Cancer Fund

Leeanne Bates
Hope Community Services

Lachlan Perhavic
Willetton Football Club

Yani Lotsos
Impact Youth Group

Bryanna Warwick
Impact Youth Armadale
Incorporated

Guy Mead
Stryka Fight Team

Jayde Seed
Rebound WA Inc.

Jessica Pianta
Heartkids

Chontae Hayden
Earbus Foundation Of WA

Lenny Jacoby
The Essentials Collective

Julian Pace
Happiness Co Pty Ltd

Cameron Barnes
Red Frogs Australia – WA

Sukhwinder Singh
Byford Multicultural Club Inc

Gloria Miller
Harmoni House

Lyndon Nilsson
SecondBite

Ivan Marcelo
Good Deed Movement

Rachel John
Classic Sounds Orchestra
Association Inc (CSO)

Caris Morris
The Gosnells Toy Library

John Mogridge
Moorditj Maarman Aboriginal
Mens Group

Michele O'Neill
WA Pet Project

Brad Thomasz
Gosnells Junior Football Club

Leah Atkinson
Operation Sunshine WA

Campbell Ballantyne
Curtin University Football Club

Lilyan Smith
Lol And Pete

Westfield Innaloo

WA

Domestic violence survivor Rach Mac won't let others suffer in silence.

Rach founded the Broken Crayons Still Colour Foundation to help women formulate exit plans to escape and relocate.

Once they do, she provides ongoing support.

Rach arranges meals so families won't go hungry, and toiletries, clothing and furniture to help make their new home a sanctuary.

Every year she organises a Christmas drive so every woman and child receives a gift and a large Christmas food hamper.

Rach also provides much-needed emotional support, attending court as the women face their abuser in court.

"I take victims and help make them empowered survivors," she says.

Rach is often up until the early hours helping those in need and uses her own money to organise fundraising events.

"My vision is to raise enough funds to build our own safe haven," she says.

Rach advocates for more legal protection for victims.

Her own abuser was given bail, giving him free rein to stalk and ultimately attack her again.

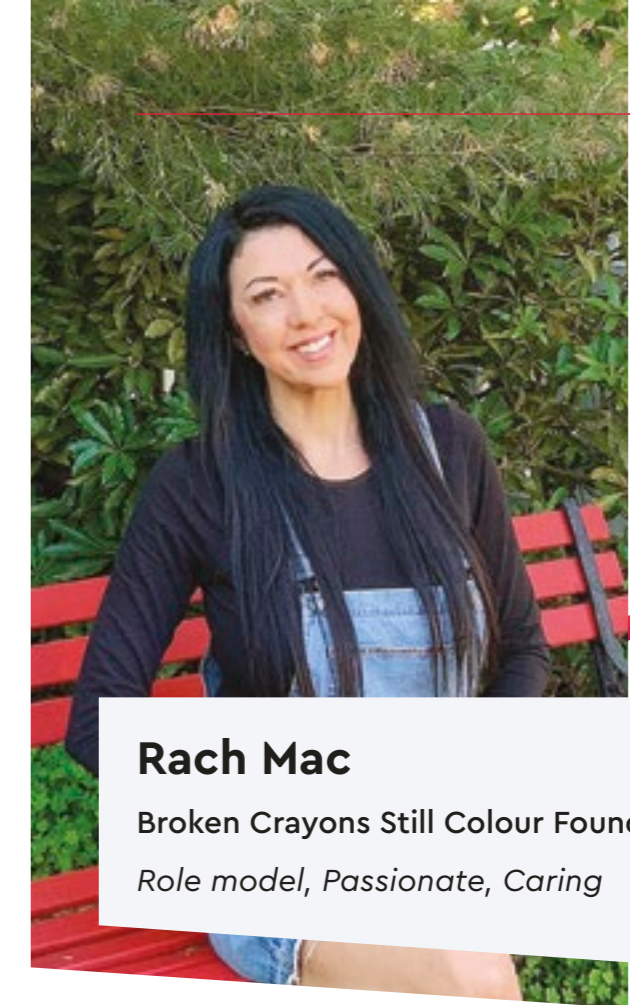
"If I continue to debate and take on our politicians, then hopefully I can get laws changed," Rach says.

"Domestic violence is escalating at a rapid rate. It is unacceptable and can't be swept under the carpet."

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.

Broken Crayons Still Colour Foundation will use its grant to assist more women and children to escape and rebuild their lives.

Rach's nominator says: "Without Rach there wouldn't be as many domestic violence survivors. Many would still be with their abuser or worse."



Rach Mac

Broken Crayons Still Colour Foundation

Role model, Passionate, Caring

Saving lives

"I take victims and help make them empowered survivors."



Michelle Jamieson

Telethon Speech & Hearing

Caring, Compassionate, Empathetic

A shoulder to lean on

"I listen and make this a safe and comfortable environment."

Michelle Jamieson has a personal understanding of what parents may go through when their child is diagnosed with hearing loss or a speech and language delay.

She experienced this journey with her own daughter's diagnosis more than 15 years ago.

Michelle and her family received much-needed support from Telethon Speech & Hearing (TSH), a non-profit that offers essential early intervention and school support services, including audiology, speech pathology, psychology, occupational therapy and specialised language support.

Inspired by her own experience, Michelle wanted to give back and started volunteering with TSH.

She is now the Family Liaison Officer, and guides parents of newly diagnosed children while offering them a shoulder to cry on. She helps advocate for NDIS funding for each child and facilitates education sessions and a supportive parent networking opportunities to encourage connections with other like-minded families.

"The beginning of this journey is the hardest and darkest times in their lives. No one can tell them why their child is delayed, and they face being

judged for their child's behaviour," Michelle says.

"I listen and make this a safe and comfortable environment."

Michelle has gone above and beyond for more than 2000 families over the past 13 years.

She is extremely passionate about seeking funding for scholarships to support the numerous requests from families, including single parents who are experiencing financial hardship and are in need of the vital early intervention services at TSH.

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.

Telethon Speech & Hearing will use its grant to help up to eight families experiencing financial hardship will be able to attend Telethon Speech & Hearing's early intervention program.

Michelle's nominator says: "Without Michelle's enthusiasm, passion and empathy, many parents would continue to feel lost and helpless. She makes them feel confident their child will be receiving the best care."

Rebecca Evans has a disabling condition called Nemaline Myopathy and relies on an electric wheelchair to get around and a machine to help her breathe.

Last year, Rebecca was selected as vice-captain of the Australian Under 21 Powerchair Football team, despite having played for only two years. She is also in the initial Poweroo squad for the 2021 Sydney World Cup.

"Growing up with a physical disability, I never imagined that sport would play a major role in my life," Rebecca says.

Over the past four years, the psychology student has become an integral part of the Perth powerchair sports scene. She is an enthusiastic member of several sports organisations and generous motivator of others. She is also a leader of the Youth Disability Advocacy Network.

Somehow, Rebecca finds time to co-organise a junior league for young athletes who use power wheelchairs.

"I do what I do because helping people with disabilities is what I am passionate about," Rebecca says.

"If it weren't for my disability, I think my life would be completely different, and not necessarily for the better. I wouldn't have met the people I have met, wouldn't be competing in powerchair sports and wouldn't necessarily have become involved in disability advocacy."

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.

Western Australian Powerchair Football Association will use its grant to contribute towards the cost of a special sports wheelchair for children.

Rebecca's nominator says: "Rebecca has a positive effect on everyone she meets and lifts the people around her to be better in all ways. She is a leader and a great role model for her peers."

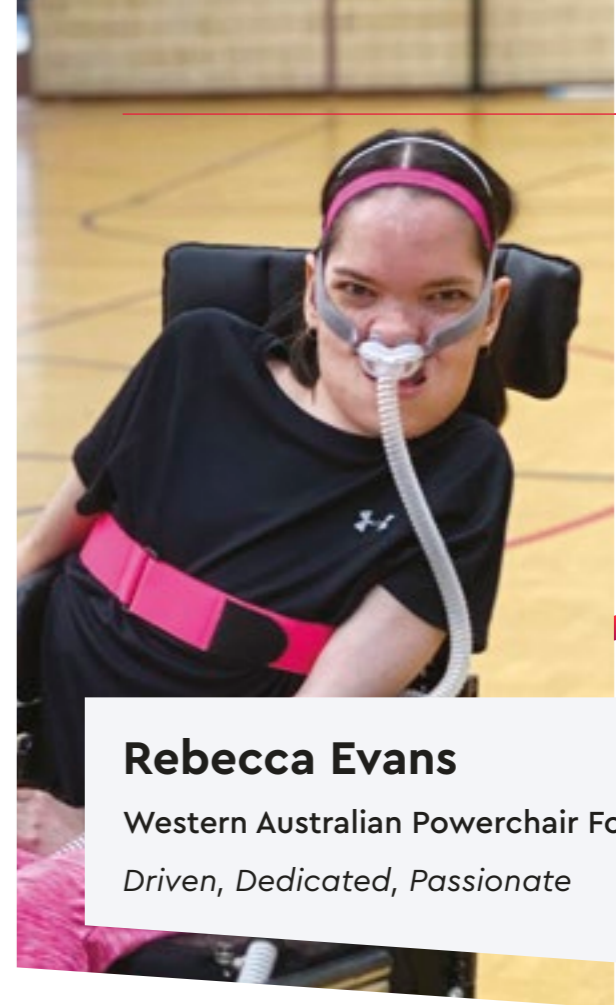
Rebecca Evans

Western Australian Powerchair Football

Driven, Dedicated, Passionate

Giving it all for sport

"Growing up with a physical disability, I never imagined that sport would play a major role in my life."



Your 2020 Finalists

Ashley Moon

Men's Shed, City of Stirling

Prolific volunteer Ashley Moon is helping to break down gender stereotypes by teaching women basic plumbing and car maintenance.

The founding member of the Men's Shed in the City of Stirling is running a 12-month pilot program to teach women these and other useful skills, including plastering.

He also assists with a program for men with a disability and teaches woodworking twice a week.

Unlike some of the men he teaches, Ashley says his women students are not afraid to ask a question if they don't understand.

"Helping others is my current enjoyment," says the grandfather of four.

Kevin Prunster

Cancer Council WA

Volunteer Kevin Prunster is digging deep to make sure cancer patients from country areas get life-saving care.

Every week he spends eight to ten hours calmly driving patients from the Cancer Council WA's accommodation lodges in Perth to their treatment appointments.

This takes the stress of navigating city traffic away from patients and their carers.

It also saves fuel and parking costs, relieving some of the financial burden associated with cancer.

"Being a driver is so rewarding because these people are really unwell and it's nice to feel you are able to help them at a difficult time," Kevin says.

Sam Kaye

Ocean Heroes

Cottesloe café owner Sam Kaye not only collects money for local charities, but he is a standout surfing volunteer for Ocean Heroes, where he is the go-to person for any child that needs extra care and compassion.

Ocean Heroes holds free surfing events for people with autism spectrum disorder. The participants are paired with experienced surfers for an opportunity to experience the thrill of riding a wave.

Sam has been volunteering at Ocean Heroes since 2017 and is known for the connection he builds with the participants, and parents appreciate his caring nature.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Kirstin Button

Saba Rose Button Foundation

Bridget Staude

Teach Learn Grow

Rebecca Guy

WA Classical Music Connect

Alex Wilson

Red Frogs Australia – WA

Joe Georgiades

Marist Football Club

Eleana Breademeyer

Ability Centre And Tuart Hill Primary School

Greg Hughes

The Light For Riley Project

Michelle Jamieson

Telethon Speech & Hearing

Rod Mifflin

Western Australia Gould League (The Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre)

Kevin Prunster

Cancer Council WA

Ashley Moon

Men's Shed – City Of Stirling

Sam Kaye

Ocean Heroes

Kate Kirwin

She Codes Australia

Rebecca Evans

Western Australian Powerchair Football Association

Bro Olly Pickett

Wheelchairs For Kids

Charlene Yates Bishop

Avner Pancreatic Cancer Foundation

Jacqueline Bastaja

Little Things For Tiny Tots

Kellie Hopkins

Perth Broncos American Football Club

Frank Ainsley

Lifeline WA

Elisha Rose

Adopt Change Limited

Stan Crombie

The Ladybird Foundation

Rach Mac

Broken Crayons Still Colour Foundation

Westfield

Whitford City

WA

Surf lifesaver Dara Mills hated watching people arrive at Mullaloo beach only to find they couldn't cross the sand because of their disabilities. So she started campaigning for a beach access mat to be installed.

This meant gaining the support of other Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club members, raising funds and gaining permission to install the mat. It took four years to become a reality.

Her efforts became a rallying point for many club members, who now share her passion for inclusion.

Dara says most people take it for granted that they can go to the beach if they want to, but she wants everyone in the community to enjoy this ability.

Not only does Dara play an active role in our patrolling the beaches and training other lifesavers, she's also a competitor in surf lifesaving and surf boats.

Yet she finds time to champion other initiatives.

She organises beach days for a local organisation that helps dads with limited access to engage with their kids.

Dara was also instrumental in introducing additional water safety measures to Nippers so a child with autism could participate.

"Being a member of the Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club is an honour," Dara 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.

Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club will use its grant to extend the beach access pathway and buy a floatable beach wheelchair.

Dara's nominator says: "Dara always considers the needs of others above her own. With each of her ideas she has shown outstanding resilience to persist and make them a reality."



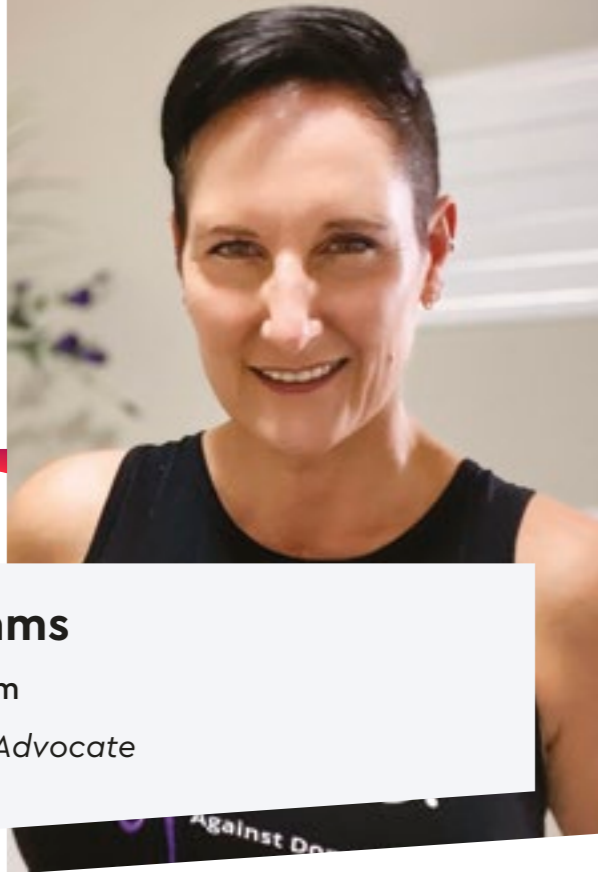
Dara Mills

Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club

Passionate, Energetic, Talented

Opening the beach to all

"Dara was also instrumental in introducing additional water safety measures to Nippers so a child with autism could participate."



Azelene Williams

From Fear to Freedom

Passionate, Honest, Advocate

A mission to end domestic violence

"Over the years I have received numerous messages from people telling me how much my story changed their lives."

Azelene Williams has developed an innovative way to advocate against domestic violence.

After escaping a violent relationship that started in her teens, she became aware of the enormous gap in educating young people about domestic violence.

Azelene wrote a book about her experiences, *BROKEN Breaking the Silence*, and leaves copies in random spots around Perth for people to find.

Inside is a message asking people to advocate against domestic violence, sign the book and then pass it on or leave it for others.

"Over the years I have received numerous messages from people telling me how much my story changed their lives," Azelene says.

"My mission is to give more books away and to collaborate with organisations who can use my writing as a resource."

She also delivers a healthy relationships program in schools for to Years 8 to 12 students in collaboration with WA Child Safety Services.

Azelene says teens and children who are affected by domestic violence don't know how to break free. "For them, growing up this way is normal. This is also why we are sitting with constant bullying in our schools. Early education and community awareness is extremely important"

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.

From Fear to Freedom will use its grant to deliver prevention of Domestic Violence Workshops in schools and in the community.

Azelene's nominator says: "Azelene helps and supports young people to break free from violent relationships through her program and lived experience."

It happens more often than people imagine. Grandparents and others being handed a baby to look after with little warning and not enough time to prepare.

That's where Lorraine Lekias comes in. She founded the Fostering Hope charity to support kinship and foster carers.

Working on the premise that it takes a village to raise a child, Fostering Hope provides material items for children and education for carers.

"We work closely with grandparents raising grandchildren to meet their specific needs," says Lorraine, who has 20 years of experience as a foster mum and has five foster children.

Another area of focus is providing education to carers about childhood trauma and suggestions on how to help newly placed children to settle and feel safe.

Lorraine and her volunteers also offer in-person support and counselling to carers in need.

"We continue to strive forward and grow bigger by the day."

We currently have over 12,500 members of our community group and over 100 volunteers.

"I work seven days a week at Fostering Hope; sorting donations, answering emails and, my favourite, cuddling babies while mums shop," Lorraine says.

"We also help refugee families and women escaping domestic violence. All thanks to our amazing community who support us."

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.

Fostering Hope will use its grant to upgrade its facilities and to fund emergency packs and education.

Lorraine's nominator says: "Lorraine puts love and tireless effort into helping the most vulnerable children in care with basic needs."

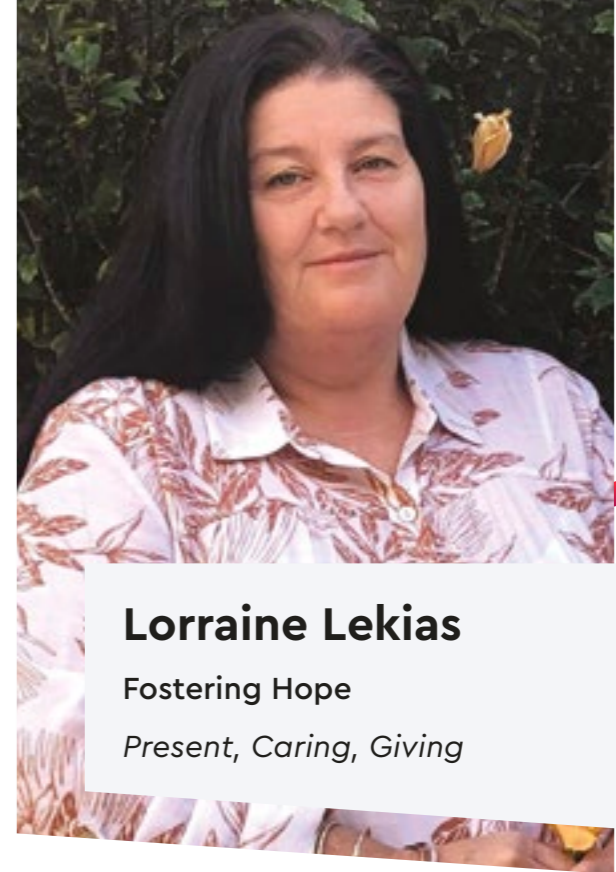
Lorraine Lekias

Fostering Hope

Present, Caring, Giving

Supporting families

"We continue to strive forward and grow bigger by the day. We currently have over 12,500 members of our community group and over 100 volunteers."



Your 2020 Finalists

Patricia Waddilove

1st Mullaloo Sea Scouts Group

Patricia Waddilove saved the 1st Mullaloo Sea Scouts Group.

The 42-year-old group was on the brink of closure because there was no qualified leader to run it.

Patricia, a senior Scout leader, stepped in to allow the scout and cub groups to keep going, bringing boundless energy and positivity.

She also formed a committee to help grow membership and train and mentor new leaders.

Under Patricia's guidance, the scouts have grown from strength to strength, and are volunteering their time with the Mullaloo Beach Dune Restoration project.

Danica Hall

Red Frogs Australia

Danica Hall and her team of Red Frogs volunteers attend festivals and university events to help keep young people safe.

The volunteers encourage them to make healthy decisions, particularly about their choice to drink alcohol or take drugs.

The young people also know the Red Frog volunteers will have their back if something does go wrong.

Danica is the Festival Lead for WA and has played a significant role in building a united and robust team of volunteers.

"We allay parents' fears when they know we will be present at events," says Danica.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Michelle Barbara Spiller

Duncraig Outdoor Girl Guides

Alanagh Tolley Godderidge

Cycling Without Age Sorrento

Danielle Baldock

Soldiers & Sirens

Daniel Bates

Soldiers & Sirens

Carolyn Baird

Carolyn & The Community

Kylie Beveridge

Paint Me A Rainbow – Autism Awareness WA

Karen Huggett

Direction Psychology

Christina Ward

Edmund Rice Centre

Margaret Patullo

Kinross Primary School Parents And Citizens Association

Joy Whyatt

The Spiers Centre Inc

Arthur Sturgeon

Community Vision

Fraser Griggs

P2S Rugbyworks

Kevin Combes

The Pantry WA

Patricia Waddilove

1st Mullaloo Sea Scouts Group

Lorraine Lekias

Fostering Hope

Danica Hall

Red Frogs Australia

Dara Mills

Mullaloo Surf Life Saving Club

Azelene Williams

Kidzucate

Rebecca Forte

Raise Foundation

New Zealand



New Zealand Centres

Albany

Manukau City

Newmarket

Riccarton

St Lukes

Westfield

Albany

NZ

Louise Burnie-Allnut brings joy and comfort to children entering foster care.

She founded the Foster Hope Charitable Trust to provide the children with a backpack full of essentials that give a little bit of light and excitement at an extremely traumatic time.

Many children enter care with only the clothes on their back, so Louise makes sure they have items such as underwear, a soft toy, a book and, in some cases, a quilt to help ease the transition into care.

At times, the children express sheer joy when they realise they have their own toothbrush and don't have to share.

Louise says: "I believe that every child in foster care deserves to know that their community cares about them. Something as simple as a backpack, can have a profound impact on a child when they find out that it's been made for them by a complete stranger"

She had to use her ingenuity to get Foster Hope off the ground as Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Children) initially wasn't convinced that she could help.

She used her business networking skills to reach someone higher up in the ministry who encouraged the idea.

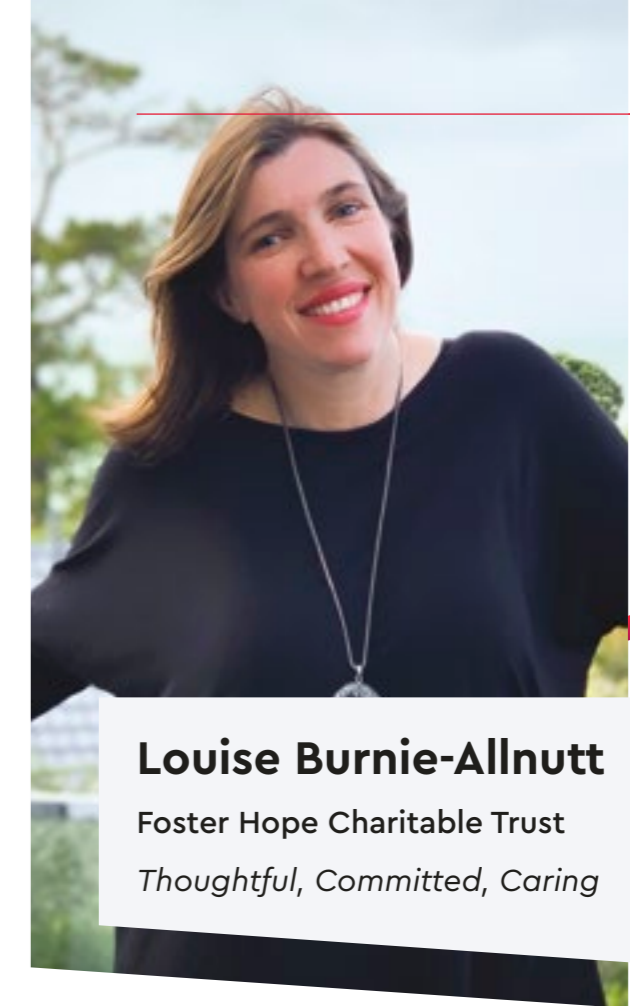
Foster Hope now has eight branches around New Zealand.

"I grew up in a family which had a huge focus on helping others and get a real kick out of it," Louise 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.

Foster Hope Charitable Trust will use its grant to buy backpacks.

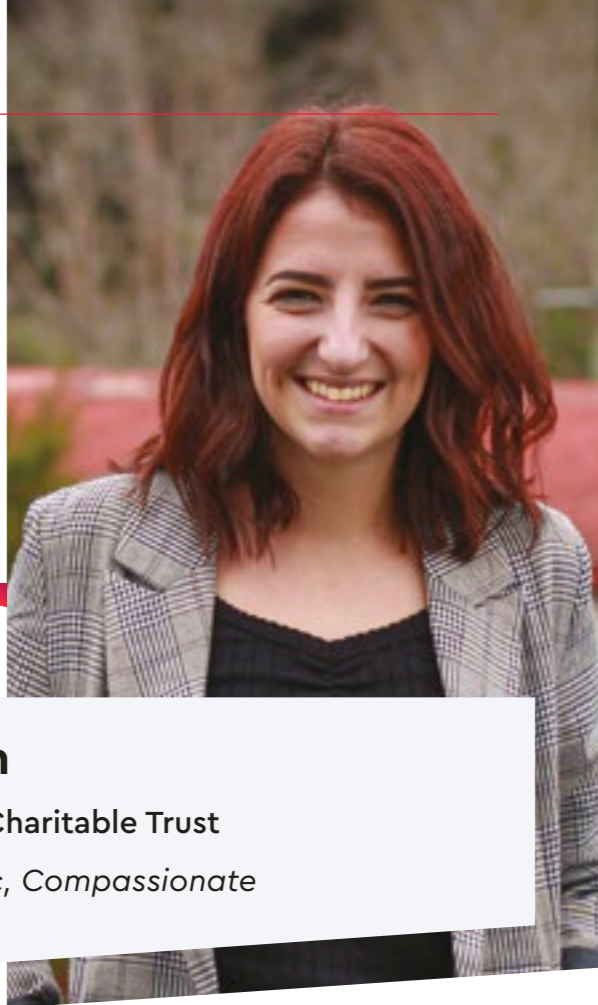
Louise's nominator says: "Louise exemplifies all that is worthy in a role model. She is always the first to step forward and the last to step back."



Louise Burnie-Allnut
Foster Hope Charitable Trust
Thoughtful, Committed, Caring

Supporting children in care

"I believe that every child in foster care deserves to know that their community cares about them."



Holly Simpson

Youthline Auckland Charitable Trust

Resilient, Empathetic, Compassionate

Helping from experience

"So many young people are isolated, and I believe all it takes is having one person who cares, who checks in and who is there for you."

Holly Simpson knows what it's like to feel lost and unsure of her purpose. She discovered she was pregnant at 16, after feeling disengaged at school through her teenage years.

Being a solo mum at a young age felt really difficult, but her life changed when she received a call from Youthline Auckland, a charity that supports young people.

Youthline helped Holly rekindle her interest in studying youth work and inspired her to make something of her life. She began by volunteering with the organisation, taking on a paid role after completing her studies.

Now she leads a team of five youth workers and managing the North Shore Centre. Last year, Holly's team provided more than 2500 counselling and mentoring sessions in the area.

Holly says her life experiences showed her the true value of helping. She considers it a privilege to spend every day helping others.

"Our goal is to give the young people of our community the best opportunities, to advocate for them, to believe in them and to support them to be the best that they can be," says Holly.

"So many young people are isolated, and I believe all it takes is having one person who cares, who checks in and who is there for you."

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.

Youthline will use its grant to pay for triaging staff at its helpline services.

Holly's nominator says: "Every day, Holly and her team are changing the lives of the young people they work with. She has considerable empathy with these struggling, vulnerable young people as it wasn't that long ago that she was one of them."

Armed with specialist post-graduate studies in Family Therapy, a hearty laugh and a steadfast belief in people's potential, Makerita Siaoasi is the ideal person to help young women through times of crisis.

Makerita is the Programme Manager at A Girl Called Hope and offers the residents in her care a safe place that respects each person as an individual and helps them make wise choices.

Makerita has worked at the charity for 10 years and is known as a warm and kind leader. She has built her 19 employees into a professional and caring team.

Together, they support young women with issues including depression, anxiety, suicidal thinking, self-harm, disordered eating and unplanned pregnancy.

"I work with each resident to develop their personalised programme," Makerita says. The aim is for everyone to re-enter society and make a positive contribution.

Makerita draws on her family's struggles with economic hardship and navigating the health system for her mother, whom she lost at an early age, as motivation to help others.

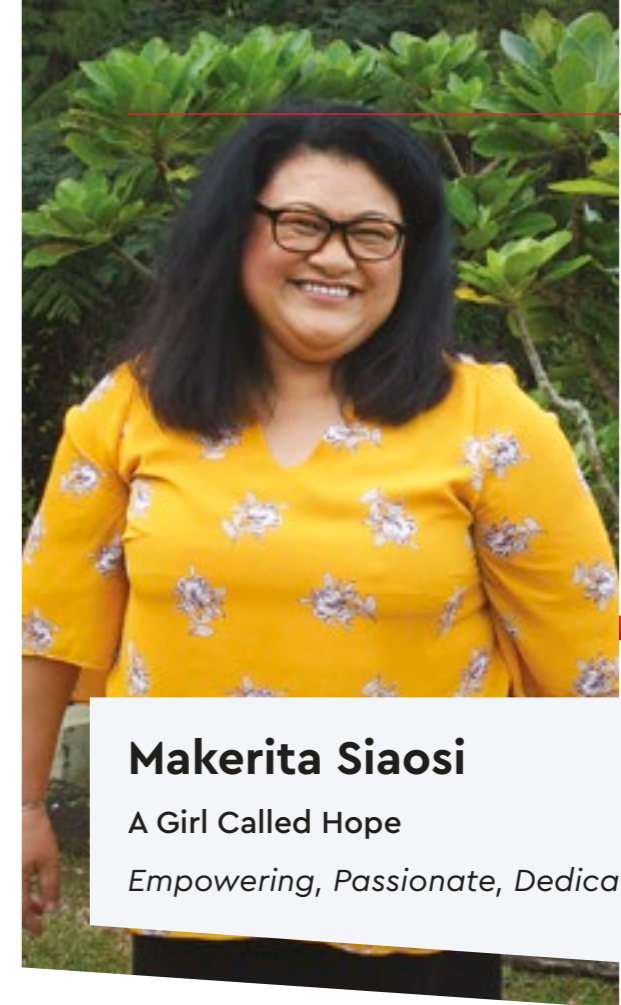
A reward for Makerita is to meet past clients and see they are enjoying life, have paid work, are raising their families or are in voluntary roles.

"Seeing changed lives and people living with purpose helps me know I'm doing my bit for our community and gives me my sense of purpose," Makerita 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.

A Girl Called Hope will invest its grant in training and professional development of staff.

Makerita's nominator says: "Makerita Siaoasi is a voice for the marginalised and the misunderstood, so they are able to take up all the opportunities available to them. Makerita is resilient and never gives up on anyone."



Makerita Siaoasi

A Girl Called Hope

Empowering, Passionate, Dedicated

Helping young women

"Seeing changed lives and people living with purpose helps me know I'm doing my bit for our community and gives me my sense of purpose," Makerita says.

Your 2020 Finalists

Jane Hunter

North Harbour Community Patrol

For years Jane Hunter has been the heart of the North Harbour Community Patrol, a group of volunteers who act as the eyes and ears for the police and help keep the community safe. Now, aged 72, she continues to put in more than her share of hours on patrol and other duties.

As the area coordinator, Jane contributes above and beyond her rostered time on patrol, dedicating many additional hours helping to recruit and train new patrollers.

"The intelligence our patrols gather and share with New Zealand Police assists planning and deployments in the community."

Tracey Swanberg

North Shore Women's Centre

Tracey Swanberg has bounced back from a difficult start by qualifying as a social worker and going on to become the CEO of refuge that keeps innumerable women and children safe.

"Experiences in early in life have helped shape my adulthood and my studies and commitment to working with women and children who deal with a plethora of issues," says Tracey.

She volunteered at the North Shore Women's Centre for 10 years before taking on the CEO role.

"I have spent my entire adult working life as a social worker and doing volunteer work with women and children," says Tracey.

Carol Conte

Blind Low Vision NZ

Carol Conte has volunteered for Blind Low Vision NZ for 29 years.

For 25 years, she diligently visited the same man to read to him. Carol has now started a Coffee Group for Blind Low Vision NZ and arranges monthly outings. She is always looking for more ways to help and has started another group for Browns Bay. She also started a local walking group in Milford.

"It is a privilege for me to be involved with this volunteer work," says Carol.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Chercara Thompson
Care For Families

Nic Russell
Kenzie's Gift

Jane Hunter
North Harbour Community Patrol

Louise Burnie -Allnut
Foster Hope Charitable Trust

Tracey Swanberg
North Shore Women's Centre

Carol Conte
Blind Low Vision NZ

Makerita Siaoosi
A Girl Called Hope

Holly Simpson
Youthline Auckland Charitable Trust

Marian Park
Harbour Sport ActivAsian

Margaret May
Woolfest & Creative Fibre Group

Mitch Boocock
Key To Life Charitable Trust

Des Watson
Kiwis Clean Aotearoa

Jessie Baker
Bees Up Top

Julie King
Love Soup Hibiscus Coast

Chloe Rose Van Biljon
Mothers Helpers

Megan Denize
Helping Paws Animal Rescue Centre

Dr Alana Harper
Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust

Janine Hinton
Saving Hope Foundation

Abbey Fouche
The Mum's Clique

Conin Bowker
YMCA North

Delanie Halton
Wandersearch Auckland Charitable Trust

Jared Sharples
St John And Northland Emergency Services Trust

George Elisara
Immerse Charitable Trust

David Ward
Pinehurst School

Nathalie Billett
The Caring Crew

Rebecca Nelson
Te Kiwi Maia

Gareth Edwards
Giving A Flip

Westfield

Manukau City

NZ

Darryl Evans makes sure struggling families never go hungry by providing much needed food parcel support from their in-house Food Bank.

As CEO of the Mangere Budgeting Services Trust, he runs a food bank that provides 16,000 food parcels and 15,000 grocery packs for families and pensioners.

Darryl has a big heart, who has a reputation for putting children and families first. Each year he organises toys for around 1,400 children, as he believes every child should have a present under the Christmas Tree.

For the past two years he has organised a Christmas lunch for about 400 vulnerable families in partnership with Lone Star, Pukekohe.

"We support several thousand people each year across our three centres, without our help, many would go without the basic essentials." says Darryl

While the food parcels help, Darryl goes the next step to encourage the families to get themselves out of financial strife with the support of a team of Financial Mentors and through education workshops.

His team provide budgeting advice, financial planning and can negotiate with creditors.

1. They also deliver Financial Literacy workshops across Auckland and the North Waikato.

2. "Without sound budgeting advice, our clients would continue to live in debt, he says but through our supports, they often learn to make smarter choices with their personal income.

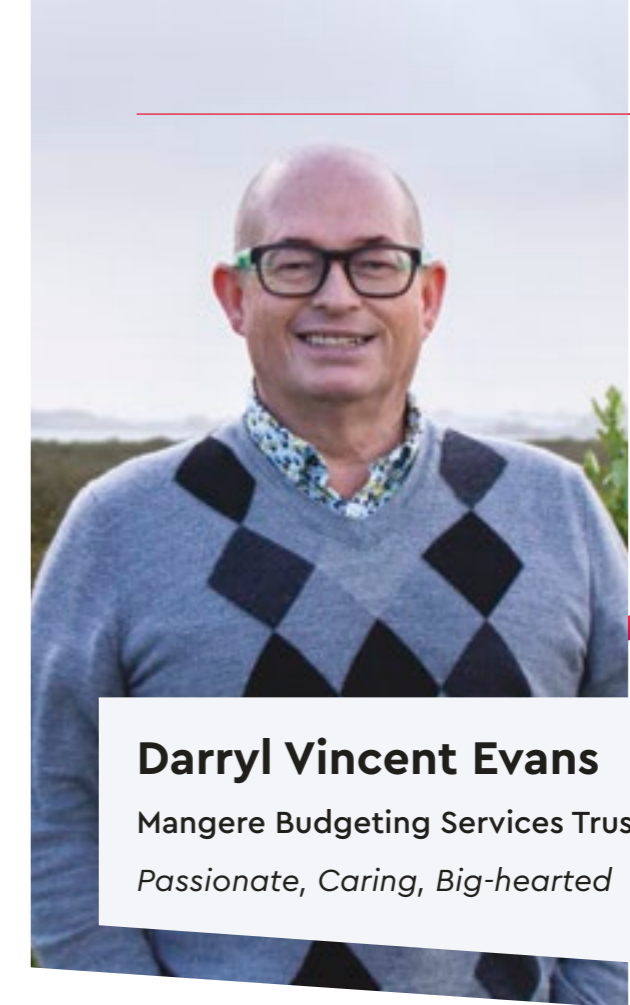
3. "Our mantra is 'you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day but teach him how to fish, and you feed him and his community for a lifetime!'"

Through ongoing support, our families do go on to live healthier, happier and productive lives, says Darryl.

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.

Mangere Budgeting Services Trust will use its grant to cover the cost of the food bank for 12 months and help pay the fuel costs for a delivery van.

Darryl's nominator says: "Darryl goes the extra mile to ensure those without a voice become empowered. He has a great heart and believes every person should be treated fairly with respect and dignity."



Darryl Vincent Evans
Mangere Budgeting Services Trust
Passionate, Caring, Big-hearted

Breaking the debt cycle

"Without our help, many would go without the basic essentials."



Sue Ollerton

Sustainable Papakura

Dedicated, Big-hearted, Community Centred

Fighting waste with edible gardens

"Our workshops help people feel confident to become more sustainable in their homes," Sue says.

Edible gardens are popping up in public spaces all over Papakura, as locals follow the lead of sustainability champion Sue Ollerton.

It's all part of her mission to help the residents of the Auckland suburb cut down on waste to save their wallet and the planet.

Sue weaves her magic at Sustainable Papakura, where she facilitates sustainability workshops in her role as marketing manager.

She teaches people to sew disposable nappies and cloth pads and how to make beeswax wrappers to replace plastic wrap.

Locals also learn how to grow veggies from seeds and prevent food waste.

"Our workshops help people feel confident to become more sustainable in their homes," Sue says.

"This helps them to reduce their waste and the effect it has on the environment, save money by making small changes, repair instead of replacing and grow their own food."

Thanks to Sue, who volunteers 15 hours a week on top of her paid role, many local shops are now supplied with reusable bags, sewn from donated and repurposed fabric.

Her team of volunteers are also responsible for the edible gardens around town, with people encouraged to pick what they need.

"I thrive on helping people," Sue 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.

Sustainable Papakura will use its grant to have precisely the amount needed to employ her for 11 months of the year.

Sue's nominator says: "Sue is my environmental hero. Thanks to her dedication, businesses have coat racks of reusable bags that shoppers can use and then return."



Paul Robinson

Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust

Passionate, Generous, Trusted

Saving lives in challenging conditions

"We now operate the most advanced civilian helicopters in the world and have the highest calibre medical team in the country, Paul says.

For rescue helicopter pilot Paul Robinson, night shifts, extended time away from family and cancelled leave are the norm as he selflessly puts others first to save lives.

Paul has been a pilot with the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust for almost 10 years and also heads up training.

He is admired for his easy-going nature combined with an ability to challenge workmates to perform at the highest level when lives are on the line.

"I am proud of the amazing team I work with and know they have the skills to care for people in need," Paul says.

He plays a vital role in keeping the Auckland Rescue Helicopter service in the air, sharing his story with the media, sponsors and donors.

Without his efforts, there would not be enough funds to sustain the vital and often life-saving charity.

"We now operate the most advanced civilian helicopters in the world and have the highest calibre medical team in the country, Paul says.

"We send them out every day to care for New Zealanders. That makes me pretty happy."

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.

Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust will use its grant to buy a winch and medical equipment that will help save lives.

Paul's nominator says: "Paul takes patients and crew under his wing and ensures their safety in often challenging conditions. He forgoes important family occasion to dedicate his time to others."

Your 2020 Finalists

Emily Luatua

The Cause Collective (Do Good, Feel Good)

In 2016, Emily Luatua was one of 10 young people who came together to discuss how to collectively improve the health and wellbeing of young people in South Auckland.

Four years later, with more than 15,000 hours of volunteer hours to her name, Emily is a leader of Do Good, Feel Good, a youth-led movement under the umbrella of The Cause Collective.

Emily has grown as a leader and works with others to engage local young people in positive and healthy activities.

"I have a sense of pride in what we create and the relationships we have created," says Emily.

Andrea Gaskin

Connect the Dots

Andrea Gaskin uses art to improve the wellbeing of people with dementia.

Through her charitable trust, Connect the Dots, Andrea arranges free art gallery tours for residents of aged facilities and provides art classes to empower them, with a cup of tea and home-baked biscuits as an added treat.

A recent project brought the budding artists together with established artists to co-create and then exhibit artworks.

"These projects are run in community spaces so that our Kaumatua feel seen and respected," Andrea says.

Michele Henry

Burn Support Group Charitable Trust

Burn survivors often struggle with their disfigured appearance and ongoing trauma, but thanks to Michele Henry they don't have to battle through on their own.

As events coordinator for the Burn Support Charitable Group Trust, Michele arranges activities to bring survivors together.

There are survivor retreats, camps for children with burns, buddy systems and inspirational speakers at group meetings.

Burns are traumatic, not only for the change in physical appearance that can occur but the emotional and physiological journey that endures for the individual and their families," Michele says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Tony Lau
Digital Discipline

Modesty Tautuhi
Te Pou Herenga Waka
Ama Club

Alisha Sinclair
9 Lives Orphanage

Natalie Kelly McNulty
Mothers Helpers

David Letele
Grace Foundation

Liz Kiriona
Rawiri Community House

Glenn Tabor
Papatoetoe Adolescent
Christian Trust

Jae Parker
Tuakau Youth Centre

Maureen Fepulea'i
Iq Talanoa

Lorna Fa'Alafi
Elei Dance Ltd

Swaran Katal
Flatbush Cricket Club

Joseph Fa'Afiu
The Gate (Aka Gateway
Community Trust)

Montee (Monique) Stehlin
Heart Kids NZ

Swanie Nelson
The Community Builders
NZ Trust

Melissa Cole
Eight Sisters Ltd

Wendy Matthews
Rest Assured Respite
Charitable Trust

Paul Robinson
Auckland Rescue
Helicopter Trust

Dr Cameron Rosie
Auckland Rescue
Helicopter Trust

Debbie Munroe
Rewa Waka Of Caring

Emily Luatua
The Cause Collective
(Do Good, Feel Good)

Darryl Vincent Evans
Mangere Budgeting
Services Trust

Michele Henry
Burn Support Group
Charitable Trust

Sue Ollerton
Sustainable Papakura

Andrea Gaskin
Connect The Dots

Chantelle Foketi
Te Ara Poutama Aec

Heremaia Rosieur
Manukau Outriggers Canoe
Club Inc

Sally Warrender
Bellyful Franklin

Gary Robinson
Ri International

Trevor Jenkin
The Muscular Dystrophy
Association Of NZ Inc.

Dione Joseph
Black Creatives Aotearoa

Amiria Puia-Taylor
The 312 Hub

Alvin Kumar
Foundation Humanity

Emily Hacket Pain
Paper Pens Pencils
Not-For-Profit Organisation

Caine Warren
Manup

Emma Gillies
Mt Roskill Grammar School,
Odd Family

Trent Faliu
Youthline Auckland
Charitable Trust

Jae Semau
Tuakau Youth Centre

John Fale
Graeme Dingle Foundation
Auckland

Gareth Edwards
Giving A Flip

Westfield

Newmarket

NZ

When it comes to priorities, Emma MacDonald always puts families dealing with the loss of a child first.

For five years she has been a dedicated and compassionate volunteer with Heartfelt NZ.

The charity provides free photographic memories for families experiencing stillbirth or who are about to lose their child to terminal illness.

Heartfelt looks after around 400 families a year, taking photos of children aged from 22 weeks' gestation until 17 years of age.

"We capture the love that is evident in the room, the memories and the details," says Emma.

Last year she met with 150 families: "I am on call 24/7 and it's not unusual for me leave social occasions, family dinners and work when a family is in need. Heartfelt families often take a higher priority than friends, family and down time."

In addition to her own heavy volunteer load, Emma is also the vice-president of Heartfelt and coordinates more than 65 volunteers across New Zealand.

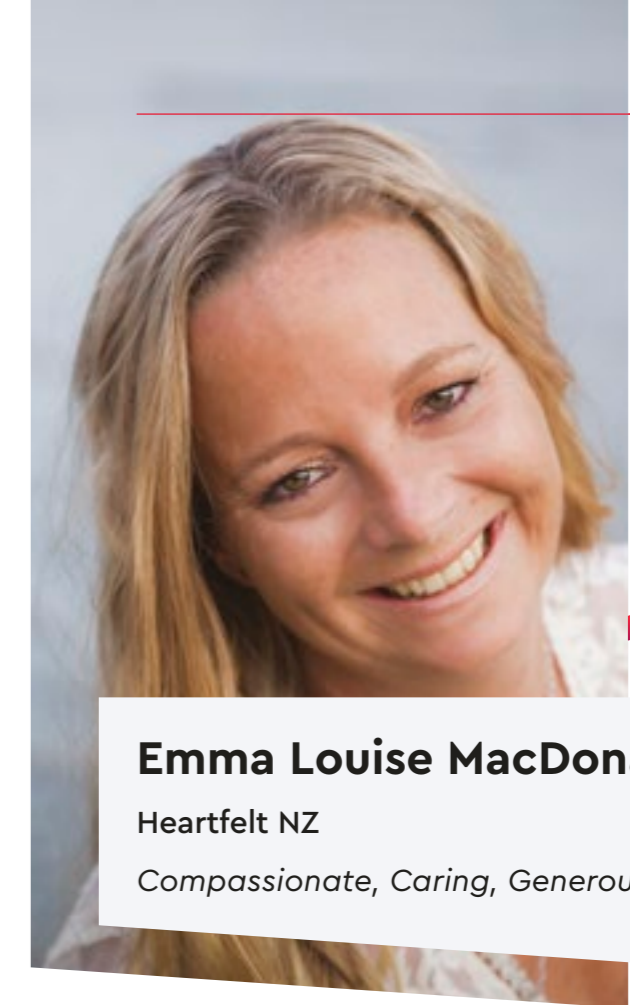
She accommodates requests for home photographs, funeral photographs and coordinates with hospital staff for hospital sessions.

"It is the highest honour to be invited into the darkest hours of the parents' lives to capture everything that grief and pain will likely dull," Emma 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.

Heartfelt NZ will use its grant to help cover the costs of printing photographs.

Emma's nominator says: "Emma Louise enables families to have beautiful memories of their loved ones, which helps them work through their personal grieving processes."



Emma Louise MacDonald

Heartfelt NZ

Compassionate, Caring, Generous

Beautiful memories for grieving parents

"We capture the love that is evident in the room, the memories and the details," says Emma.



Debbie Hoskins

Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Zealand Trust

Nurturing, Inclusive, Devoted

Granting critically ill children's wishes

"She was able to arrange for the child to receive their wish, a racing cart, during the Christmas shut-down period."

Debbie Hoskins is the backbone of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Zealand.

For eight years, she has been the Volunteer and Medical Outreach Manager for Make-A-Wish, which grants the wishes of children aged three to seventeen who are living with a serious illness.

It's thanks to Debbie's support and encouragement that many of the 138 volunteers who work to make wishes come true have remained with the charity for years.

"The situations they walk into as volunteers can be emotionally challenging, so ensuring they practice self-care and knowing that I am always here to talk them through these challenges is a must," she says.

Debbie, who is affectionately known as 'Mrs Make-A-Wish', also goes above and beyond her paid role, and so far has made 64 wishes come true as a volunteer.

Her generous spirit was on display when she came to the rescue when one child's health deteriorated to the point that granting their wish became urgent.

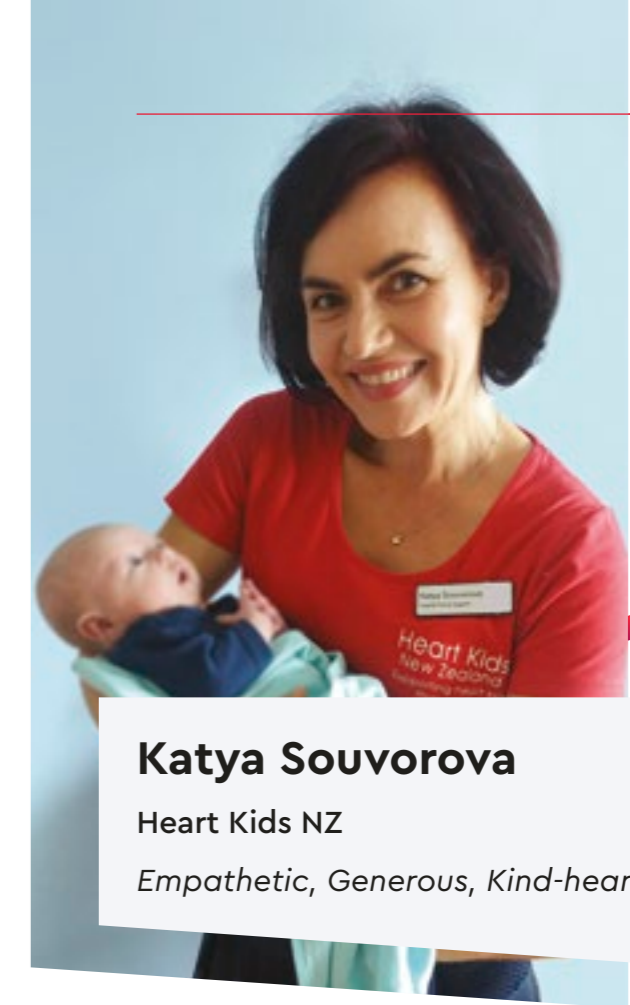
She was able to arrange for the child to receive their wish, a racing cart, during the Christmas shut-down period.

"I've always believed that volunteering is the right thing to do in my role as it keeps me in touch with the challenges that our volunteer team face," says Debbie.

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.

Make-A-Wish Foundation of New Zealand Trust will use its grant to train and support volunteers.

Debbie's nominator says: "Debbie is a dedicated and nurturing wish volunteer and always treats wish children with care and respect. She emanates collegiality amongst her fellow volunteers, colleagues, and wish children and their families."



Katya Souvorova

Heart Kids NZ

Empathetic, Generous, Kind-hearted

Supporting families

"Katya believes her life experience has helped her to connect with families from a range of cultures, religions and ethnicities."

When Katya Souvorova arrived in New Zealand from Russia in 1996, she could not read or speak a word of English.

Over the next five years, she taught herself English by translating books with a dictionary and by attending Playcentre with her children.

Now Katya is the friendly face of Heart Kids at the Auckland Children's Hospital.

As a Hospital Family Support Worker, Katya provides vital emotional support to families while a child is in hospital for a heart-related condition, including open-heart surgery.

She also assesses families to receive petrol, food and coffee vouchers.

Katya is known for putting her soul into her work and builds genuine connections with families, who are often at the hospital for long periods at a time and may need many years of follow-up.

People know she will stop for a chat, listen and be there as a shoulder to cry on.

Although Katya works part-time, scheduled hours don't mean anything to her.

Katya believes her life experience has helped her to connect with families from a range of cultures, religions and ethnicities.

"I am able to empathise with the heart families and provide them the support that they need," she 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.

Heart Kids NZ will use its grant to buy hospital vouchers for parents and subsidise travel costs.

Katya's nominator says: "Katya is the most kind, caring non-judgmental person. She is much loved by all the families she comes into contact with and does much, much more than just her job. She is an inspiration and role model."

Your 2020 Finalists

Donna McCaskill

The Cookie Project

Donna McCaskill is making a difference for people with a disability. Since starting as a volunteer kitchen manager for social enterprise The Cookie Project, she has improved its efficiency. This has opened the door for more people with disabilities to be employed as bakers.

With Donna's help and leadership, the bakers are overcoming their challenges.

"I want them to see they are just as important as anyone else walking down the street. I love that I get to help them grow," says Donna.

Hayden Smith

Sea Cleaners

Hayden Smith set up non-profit Sea Cleaners to preserve Auckland's marine waterways.

His four boats are out on the water every day, removing 160,000 litres of plastic rubbish from the water and shorelines every month.

Hayden educates young people about the importance of disposing of waste properly and recycling.

"Our vision is to preserve New Zealand's Coastline for the benefit of the marine life and for the enjoyment of all users," Hayden says.

Alyson de Marco

Tāmaki Budgeting Services

Alyson de Marco is dedicated to rescuing people on low incomes from financial crises.

As CEO of non-profit Tamaki Budgeting Services, she oversees a program that offers one-on-one mentoring to people who have reached breaking point.

Through one-on-one mentoring, the advisers suggest solutions to the most pressing problems and show how small changes can make a big difference.

Alyson's MoneyMates program, which brings people together to share budgeting tips, is making a huge difference in vulnerable people's lives.

If you need support, please phone:
Lifeline 0800 543 354

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Campbell Hope

Auckland Coastguard Inc

Jamie Robert Johnston

Everybody Eats

Susan Matencio

Puketapapa Community Driving School

Ronnie Navarrete

Expert Cleaning Services Ltd

Jeff Wood

Victim Support – East Auckland

Elizabeth Lau

Wairua Sinfonietta Charitable Trust

Quaid Fletcher Pirihi

Rainbow Youth, Outline NZ, Auckland City Mission

Anna Avery

Sir Ray Avery Foundation

Stacey Balich

Ellers School

Emma Louise Macdonald

Heartfelt NZ

Hayden Smith

Sea Cleaners

Debbie Hoskins

Make-A-Wish Foundation Of New Zealand Trust

Alyson De Marco

Tamaki Budgeting Services

Donna Mccaskill

The Cookie Project

Deborah George

Inzone Education Foundation

Katya Souvorova

Heart Kids NZ

Catherine Elizabeth Comber

Loneliness New Zealand Charitable Trust (Loneliness NZ)

Celia Violet Moore

Centre For Brain Research More Than Words Gavel Club For People With Aphasia

Louise Garbett

Auckland Family Freecycle

Westfield Riccarton NZ

Matt Brown is working hard to end the cycle of domestic and family violence.

He started She Is Not Your Rehab, a movement to encourage men to deal with their own experiences of childhood abuse instead of taking it out on their wives and girlfriends.

"The movement is simply an invitation for men to acknowledge their own childhood trauma and to take responsibility for their healing instead of transmitting it on those around them," Matt says.

She Is Not Your Rehab was launched on TEDx in 2019 and complements Matt's efforts to help men through his barbershop, My Father's Barber.

Matt shares his own story of childhood abuse, which encourages men to be open about their childhood trauma

In collaboration with a family violence service, he hosts anti-violence groups to give men access to free therapy and support.

"Every day we get emails sharing how it is impacting men and their whanau," Matt says.

The number of men seeking help has increased since She Is Not Your Rehab started taking off on social media.

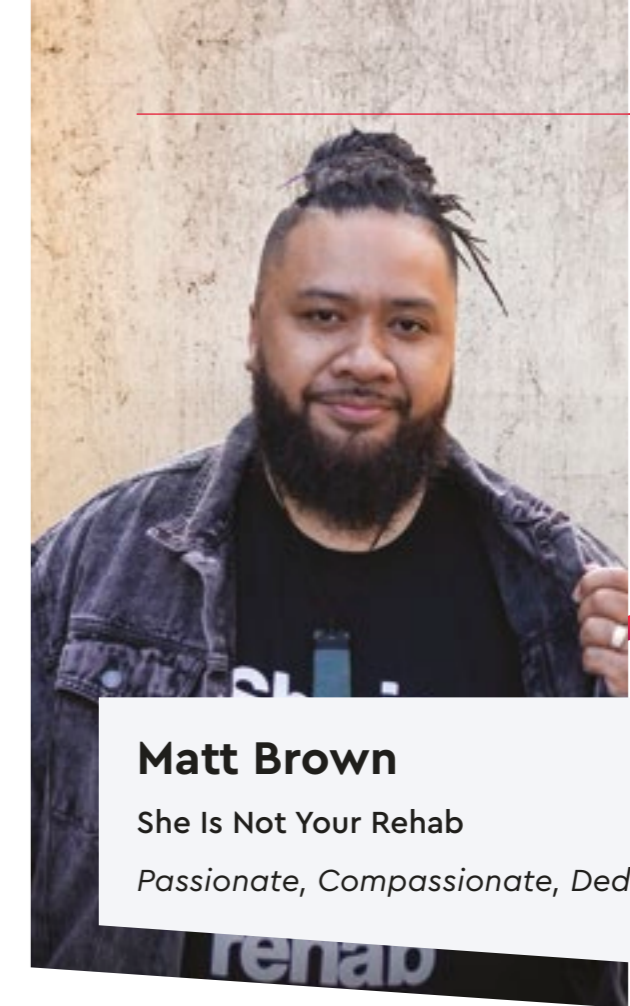
"Men are coming to our group counselling session and making the first step in acknowledging their trauma," Matt says.

"Our communities are crying out for help, support and tools to see these cycles of abuse and trauma come to an end."

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.

She Is Not Your Rehab will use its grant to run more local group therapy sessions for men.

Matt's nominator says: "Matt is an incredibly passionate person who seems to spend every waking moment promoting his message."



Matt Brown

She Is Not Your Rehab

Passionate, Compassionate, Dedicated

Helping men to heal

"Our communities are crying out for help, support and tools to see these cycles of abuse and trauma come to an end."



Bruce Ward

Blue Light Christchurch

Empathetic, Passionate, Dedicated

Big-hearted police officer

"Over the years many participants have contacted me to tell me the difference Blue Light made in their life," says Bruce.

Big-hearted Bruce Ward knows he is making a difference in the lives of youth who have had a rough start.

A police Senior Constable, Bruce has spent the last 11 years working as a Youth Aid Officer.

He has also been a volunteer with Blue Light for 17 years, organising events for young people who have been abused or who are troubled by domestic violence.

His interventions include camps, mentoring, drug and alcohol courses and adventures like rock climbing.

"Over the years many participants have contacted me to tell me the difference Blue Light made in their life," says Bruce.

He helps wherever he can. He made one family's dream come true after he visited on a police matter and realised money issues meant no Christmas that year. He approached local businesses and arranged donations of toys and food to ensure Christmas came.

Last December, Bruce arranged an action-packed week away in Auckland for Muslim boys aged 12 to 17 who were grieving after the Christchurch mosque shootings nine months earlier.

He wanted them to get support while making some new, happy memories.

"This trip was a chance to build relationships with police and for us to give something special back," says Bruce.

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.

Blue Light Christchurch will use its grant to arrange additional camps, including one for the Muslim girls traumatised by the 2019 attack on their community.

Bruce's nominator says: "Being called a hero is probably the last thing Bruce would expect, but we all know he deserves it."

Landing a job as night supervisor at Ronald McDonald House South Island in 2012 was a silver lining for Jan Nottingham after the Christchurch earthquake in 2011 destroyed her home.

She has been giving back ever since; as a caring listener, a shoulder to cry on and a guaranteed hug for any of the 8,500 families who have passed through the doors.

Families from all over New Zealand stay at the house while their child is in hospital. Some are there for six months or more and many visit regularly over the years.

Jan is the reason many families call it a home away from home.

"While they are here, these families become our family. It's my job to make sure they feel as welcome and comfortable as possible," Jan says.

She cherishes her interactions with the families.

"You see people come in here so wrung out. Mum might have had a rough day at the hospital and she'll be in tears. You'd love to say that it's going to be alright, but you can't.

The best thing you can do is give a cuddle and provide a little comfort.

"I'm doing work I love, which means to me it's not work at all," says Jan.

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Ronald McDonald House South Island will use its grant to repaint and refurbish its education room.

Jan's nominator says: "Jan is the glue that holds Ronald McDonald House South Island together and ensures we provide the best care for families as possible."



Jan Nottingham

Ronald McDonald House South Island

Empathetic, Encouraging, Strong

Doing it for love

"While they are here, these families become our family. It's my job to make sure they feel as welcome and comfortable as possible," Jan says.

Your 2020 Finalists

Bariz Shah

University of Canterbury Muslim Students Association

Bariz Shah is determined to embrace negative energy and use it as fuel for positive change.

The leader of the University of Canterbury Muslim Students Association stepped up after the tragedy of March 15th to advocate against division, organise events to enhance understanding and stand firm on spreading a positive narrative.

Bariz co-founded a project called *fiftyone*.

Where he travelled to Afghanistan with his wife and established 51 micro-businesses in honour of the 51 lives lost.

Daniel Eastwood

St John of God Waipuna

Support worker Dan Eastwood goes above and beyond to help young men within the Corrections system.

He works for the St John of God Waipuna, which in partnership with Department of Corrections provides rehabilitation and reintegration programs for young men in prison and in the community.

Six years ago, Dan came up with the idea of an ongoing, weekly support group, enlisting the help of a fellow support worker.

By building relationships with the men, they encourage them to face their challenges, often through activities such as a bike race.

"People thought it would never work, that the men would never come. But they have," Dan says.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Barbara Aitken
Kiwi Family Trust

Katie Joann Burke
Cat Rescue Christchurch Charitable Trust

Graeme Smith
Mnd New Zealand

Aleisha Black
Miscarriage Matters NZ

Dean Le Warne
North Beach Surf Lifesaving Club

Carly Johanna McCall
Fitclub At The Hub

Roy Kenneally
Crossover Trust

Yolanda Soryl
Christchurch Vegan Society Inc.

Peter Currie
Yun Jung Do International

Everett James Sullivan
Familial Trust

Marc Duff
Greater Hornby Residents Association

Jackie Claridge
Canterbury And West Coast Cancer Society

Vicki-Anne Parker
NZ Gifts Of Love And Strength

Eve-Marie Smith
La Vida Youth Trust

Lisa Mead
Social Currency Investment

Susan Bye
Somerfield Community Emergency Response Team (Scert)

Lizzy Eddy (Ne Minish)
Community Development Network Trust

Nicole Stowers
Plus 64 Fitness

Caroline Eastmond
Waiau Community Pool

Andrea Tisch
Delta Community Support Trust

Anna Mcconchie
Belfast Playcenter

Jay Geldard
24/7 Youth, E Tu Tangata.

Barrett Hocking
The Salvation Army, Rangiora

Julia Mclean
Accountability Action

Lucy Gray
Te Iringa O Kahukura (Cashmere High School)

Therese Fisher
The Tamariki Book Festival

Lizzy Minish
Cdn Trust (Community Development Network Trust)

Matt Brown
She Is Not Your Rehab

Jan Nottingham
Ronald Mcdonald House South Island

Bariz Shah
University Of Canterbury Muslim Students Association

Senior Constable Bruce Ward
Blue Light Christchurch

Daniel Eastwood
Sjog Hauora Trust, Waipuna And Te Rangatahi Tumanako Trust

Jill Falloon
Good Night Sleep Tight Charitable Trust

Rebecca Anne Parnham
Giving Seeds Of Love

Westfield

St Lukes

NZ

Professionally, Bernie Harfleet has worked with children and adults with intellectual disabilities for 33 years.

He and his partner, Donna Turtle Sarten, are also well known for their artwork that tackles abuse of women and children, mental health and poverty.

For the past six years, they have harnessed community goodwill with the charity Give a Kid a Blanket, which they founded to embrace children in need with warmth and love.

Every winter the charity collects blankets, pyjamas and other warming items which are given to children and families in need through social workers, public health nurses, the police, refuges and community workers.

The idea is that the people who receive the blankets benefit from both physical and emotional warmth, and feel valued by the community.

"Over the last six years, we have gifted around 100,000 items," says Bernie.

"We never focus on those receiving support as this can be victimising, but rather focus on the community of kindness that has grown around the project."

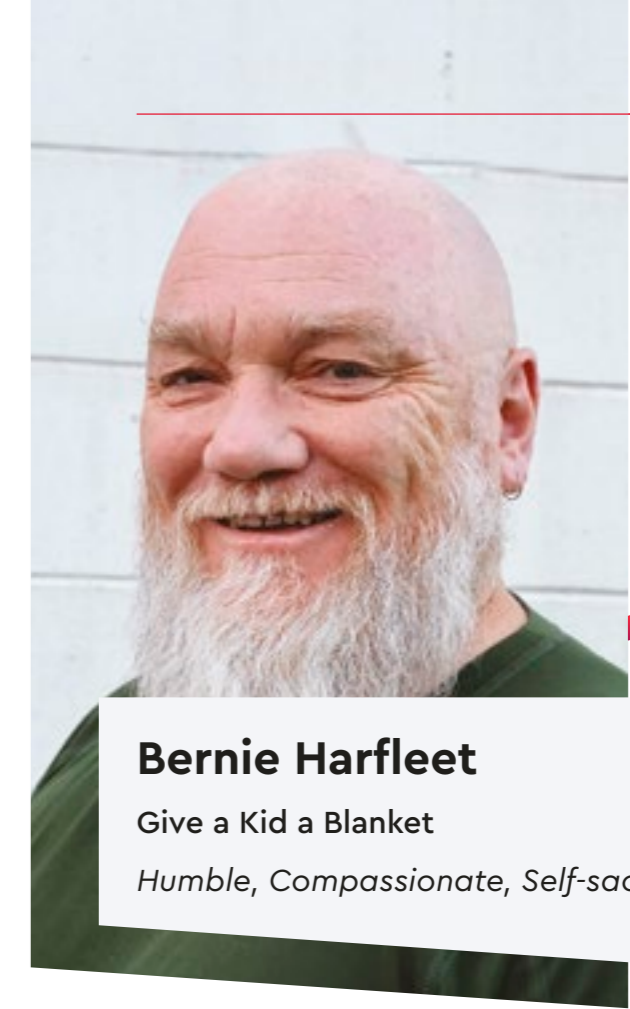
"We also supply family care packs to North shore and Auckland hospital ICU departments.

"I do this because it is possible to make a difference with practical local action and kindness," says Bernie, who has twice been nominated for New Zealander of The Year.

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.

Give a Kid a Blanket will use its grant to buy bedding, mainly duvet inners, covers and pillows following a shortfall of donations due to COVID-19.

Bernie's nominator says: "Bernie is selflessly devoted to the cause, and there is no better cause than children's needs as children are our future. Bernie recognises this and actually does something tangible about it."



Bernie Harfleet

Give a Kid a Blanket

Humble, Compassionate, Self-sacrificing

Sharing warmth and love

"We never focus on those receiving support as this can be victimising, but rather focus on the community of kindness that has grown around the project."



Lydia Hollister-Jones

Gratis Free Store

Compassionate, Selfless, Contagious

Giving food and creating connection

"My life has been changed by the connections I've made."

Lydia Hollister-Jones has achieved something special in her community.

She leads the Gratis Free Store to redirect high-quality surplus food from local cafés to people in need at the local community hall.

The initiative is providing more than Lydia envisaged, with many disadvantaged people relishing the opportunity to enjoy conversation and friendship as much as the food and cups of tea and coffee provided.

The store is open on Monday and Wednesday nights, with people often queuing to get in.

It's a welcome refuge for those who are struggling with loneliness, hunger, homelessness, and addiction.

"We've had feedback about how different it feels to other initiatives, that people who fight outside of Gratis walk in and are at peace with each other," Lydia says.

"We've seen confidence rise in our community because people are genuinely interested in hearing what others have to say. We chat about everything, from our favourite doughnuts to how our mental health is doing."

As store leader, Lydia supports volunteers, orders groceries and, most importantly, makes sure everyone walking through the doors feels seen and heard.

"My life has been changed by the connections I've made," she 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.

Gratis Free Store will use its grant to offer hot food, run special events and provide volunteer training.

Lydia's nominator says: "If Lydia is the future of New Zealand, we are in great shape. She is focused on those who are often unseen or forgotten and puts others before herself with enthusiasm and a smile."

Tayla Jane Nasmith was 12 years old when she started Mummies in Need to help mums of all ages with essentials for their children.

That was in 2012. Tayla was driven to do something positive when she saw a baby in a supermarket wearing nothing but a singlet.

"I started gathering baby items, and I created the platform Mummies in Need. People would contact me if they needed something."

Since then, Tayla has spent much of her time fundraising and collecting, buying, organising and delivering prams, clothes, toys and bassinets and other necessities.

The charity now supports about 170 babies a month.

"I never thought it would get this big. It was just a hobby and huge passion for years until I left school and I was struggling to find my purpose."

Tayla has made the charity a fulltime commitment.

"I decided that if I could make Mummies in Need something amazing, that the time would be now. So my parents agreed, and I've never looked back."

"I absolutely love the work I do and I love knowing that there are babies out there that are safe because of us," says Tayla.

"I believe every baby deserves the same healthy and happy start."

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.

Mummies in Need will use its grant to employ an assistant.

Tayla's nominator says: "Tayla gives countless hours of her time to helping struggling parents by providing them with essentials to keep themselves and their babies safe, happy and healthy."

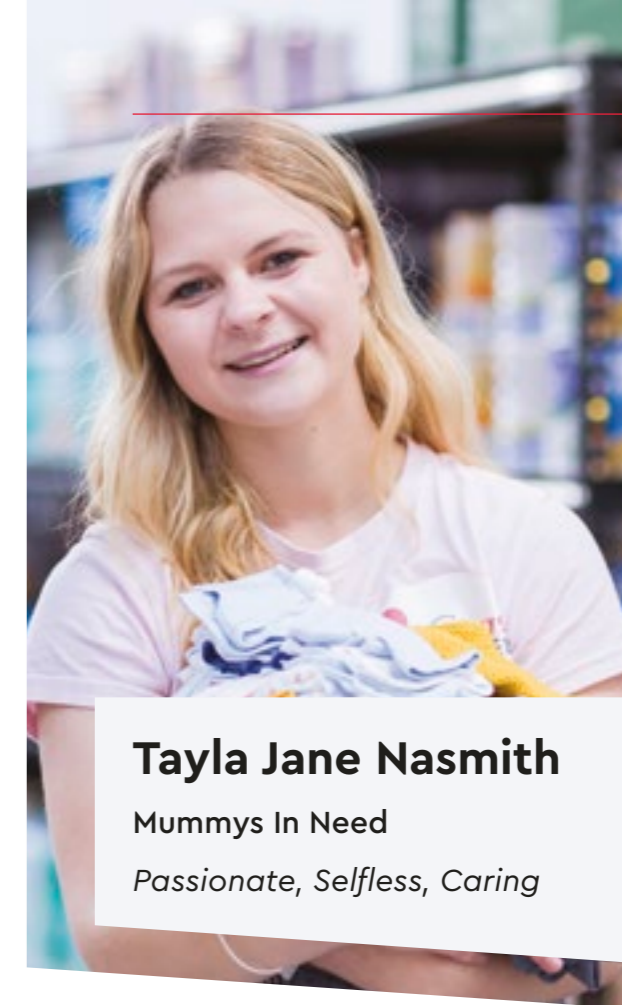
Tayla Jane Nasmith

Mummies In Need

Passionate, Selfless, Caring

Helping hundreds of babies

"I absolutely love the work I do and I love knowing that there are babies out there that are safe because of us," says Tayla.



Your 2020 Finalists

Jennifer (Jen) Birch Autism New Zealand

Jen Birch provides adults with autism with a much-needed social outlet through an Autism New Zealand support group.

Jen received an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis at the age of 43 and understands what it's like to grow up with an unexplained difference.

The group arranges two much-needed get-togethers a month.

"This is a crucial social outlet for many individuals who otherwise may have had few, if any, opportunities to meet other people in an environment of understanding and acceptance," Jen says

She has written a book about her experiences which has helped raise awareness.

Sarah Woollard Anxiety New Zealand Trust

Passionate about connecting people with health and wellbeing support Sarah Woollard was driven to help other New Zealanders dealing with anxiety, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression and mental distress.

Sarah Woollard is passionate about helping connect kids, adults and families with essential mental health education and support.

She is the CEO of the Anxiety New Zealand Trust, a non-profit charity of 40 years, where she volunteers for many hours on top of her busy schedule.

Mac Jordan Youthline Auckland Charitable Trust

Mac Jordan wants to help change New Zealand's high rates of youth suicide, school bullying and child poverty.

For over two years he has been a highly effective helpline mentor with the Youthline Auckland Charitable Trust.

Youthline plays a critical role in early intervention through its 24/7 helpline, which received over 151,000 calls, emails and texts for help last year.

Eager to step up his efforts, Mac has taken on the important task of training and supervising current and new helpline volunteers.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Hana Seddon
The Salvation Army
/Te Ope Whakaora

Sharon Robinson
Kumeu Rackets Club

Janet Marks
Interacting

Veronica Shale
Fair Food Charitable Trust

Jane Hahn
Good Shepherd Church And School Sustainability Action Group, Telford Avenue, Balmoral, Auckland

Cinnamon Whitlock
E Tipu E Rea Whānau Services

Dr Jono Wills
Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust

Marie Jujnovich
Heart Kids Auckland

Raymond Greaves
Physical Disability Rugby League NZ

Donna Turtle Sarten
Give A Kid A Blanket

Kelly Hutchison
Rise

Anna Kate Paterson
Everlasting

Natasha Crosby
Talk Peach

Hannah Young
The Therapy Box

Sarah Woollard
Anxiety New Zealand Trust

Chelsey Harnell
YMCA Mt Albert And Lynfield

Tayla Jane Nasmith
Mummy's In Need

Bernie Harfleet
Give A Kid A Blanket

Lydia Hollister-Jones
Gratis Free Store

Mac Jordan
Youthline Auckland Charitable Trust

Jennifer Birch
Autism New Zealand

Rob And Zee Luisi
Ranui 135

Fleur Tuck
Edendale School

John Ferriss
Panacea Arts Charitable Trust
T/A Mapura Studios

Boubacar Coulibaly
African Film Festival
New Zealand Trust

Ashleigh Ali-Aziz
Eyeview Ethnic Trust

Saten Sharma
Waitakere Hindi School

Tony Yuretich
Graeme Dingle Foundation
Auckland

Rui Xue (Sherry)
Sport Auckland Activasian

Louise Garbett
Auckland Family Freecycle

**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

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes



Westfield
Local Heroes
2020

SCENTRE GROUP