



Westfield

Local Heroes

2021

Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and awards program, designed to shine the spotlight on those people across Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community and environment.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities, with the outcome of a public vote determining the three successful 2021 nominees for every Westfield centre.

Westfield Local Heroes

Now in its fourth year, we have awarded \$4.88 million to 489 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 2021 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make.



Westfield

Plenty Valley

VIC

Gianna Donato is making a significant difference in the lives of marginalised, vulnerable adults and children through her work with the non-profit Encompass Care Victoria.

Gianna organises a team of volunteers who hand out food parcels to people in need every Tuesday and Wednesday. During their interactions, they tell people about the services that can help them out of a crisis. They also make breakfast sandwiches for children at three schools in Bundoora and Mernda. She is involved in liaising with over 50 welfare organisations and sits on Emergency relief committees to help the city of Whittlesea in assisting people.

In addition, the team run a weekly community café where people have a safe place to find a listening ear and enjoy a morning tea or lunch.

Gianna's goal is to make sure everyone who reaches out for help is heard and feels valued. One of her best rewards is seeing

how acts of kindness give people hope when they are down on their luck.

Her team dug deep during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, banding together with other community organisations, local councils, churches and police to raise funds to buy food, to give to those who needed it most.

Gianna is humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I am the reflection of a great organization and team of committed, and this motivates me to keep being passionate about my work. Everyone deserves a second chance or a hand up so they can stand on their own two feet," she says.

*Gianna's nominator says:
"Gianna is a Westfield Local Hero because she has made a significant difference in the lives of many, bringing hope and help any time it is needed."*



Giving food and support

Gianna Donato

Encompass Care Victoria

Passionate, Faithful, Dedicated

"Everyone deserves a second chance or a hand up so they can stand on their own two feet."



Giving back with love

Jill Pope

Big Group Hug

Caring, Passionate, Engaging

"You can't just pretend women escaping domestic violence with their children and only the clothes on their backs isn't happening."

Jill Pope helps children in need and keeps baby items out of landfill as a dedicated volunteer for the Big Group Hug.

Jill is retired and volunteers at least 40 hours a week helping vulnerable children, from newborns to young teens, by providing their families with material aid.

She has inspired the community to get involved, with 81,000 items, including prams, cots, car seats, nappies, toiletries and clothing donated last year. The charity has helped 3143 children while keeping tons of quality goods out of landfill.

The charity works with maternal nurses, women's shelters and asylum resource centres to connect with vulnerable families.

What Jill enjoys most is working alongside like-minded volunteers who love caring for children and families.

Demand surged during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, but

the volunteers were innovative in finding new ways to source much-needed items.

Jill is proud the charity has met nearly every request for help.

She is humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I volunteer with the most amazing human beings who give their heart and soul to this organisation to assist children and families. You can't just pretend women escaping domestic violence with their children and only the clothes on their backs isn't happening," Jill says.

Jill's nominator says: "Jill is a Westfield Local Hero because she is able to inspire young and old to help those around them without judgment."

Firefighter Steve Watts has spent the past four years raising awareness and funds for the 27,000 Victorians Living with Parkinson's disease.

Steve Watts is a Commander with Fire Rescue Victoria and was diagnosed with the progressive neurological condition in 2017 and understands that Emergency Service Workers get ill and injured too.

He was impressed by the support and care Parkinson's Victoria provides and decided to volunteer to support the cause and be a part of the Parkinson's community.

Steve's contribution helps connect people living with Parkinson's with peer support groups and specialists. It also supports the not-for-profits health information line that provides expert advice on medications, symptom management, mobility aids and wellbeing.

Steve is proud that his firefighting connections helped save the day when the COVID-19 pandemic

forced the cancellation of the annual Parkinson's Victoria walk to raise funds for front line services and research. He challenged and mobilised firefighters across 84 Fire Rescue Victoria fire stations to walk on a treadmill, with the support of the Firefighters Charity Fund who matched \$1 for each kilometre walked.

Steve's next challenge is to help Parkinson's Victoria break down employment barriers to ensure people don't suffer in silence because they fear disclosing their condition at their workplace.

Steve is humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "If I can make life better for even just one person suffering from Parkinson's, then it will mean I have made a difference. I hope I set a good example for others," he says.

Steve's nominator says: "Steve is a Westfield Local Hero because he has faced many challenges but continues to work tirelessly to raise awareness and funds for people living with Parkinson's."



Supporting people living with Parkinson's

Steve Watts

Parkinson's Victoria

Protective, Determined, Dedicated

"If I can make life better for even just one person suffering from Parkinson's, then it will mean I have made a difference. I hope I set a good example for others."

Your 2021 Finalists



Julie Malherbe

JABS Joey & Bat Sanctuary

Julie Malherbe has saved the lives of countless joeys, wombats and flying fox pups through her wildlife shelter, the Joey and Bat Sanctuary (JABS). A crucial part of her work is to educate the community about wildlife, including the importance of flying foxes. Julie also runs volunteer training days for anyone interested in helping to rehabilitate injured and orphaned animals.



Gurinder Kaur

Sikh Community Connections

Busy mum Gurinder Kaur swung into action to help keep people fed and supported during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gurinder juggles a full-time job and a ten-year-old child with her volunteer work for Sikh Community Connections, which provides free culturally appropriate food, counselling and a listening ear to 3500 local families doing it tough.



Ian Landy

Northern Pride Netball Association

Ian Landy helped form the Northern Pride Netball Association so children in his community could finally participate in netball competitions. The association has given 400 children the opportunity to have fun, stay fit and make friends during a Saturday morning game of netball.

Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Nick Bean
Mange Management Inc.

Deborah Henry
From Us 2 You Incorporated

Alicia Wilson
Livin Social Adventures

Lyn Mil
Happy pty

Scott O'Brien
**Scouts Victoria – Whittlesea 1st
Scouts**

Joe Khoury
Worldmark Travel

Pastor Cherian Peter
Vittle Feast

Kassie McDonald
Planet Bounce Party Supplies

Karen Wiltshire
Kobe's Angels Cat Rescue

Jaymie Battening
Wollert Fire Brigade

Krysti Severi
Rescue Rehabilitate Release

Cherian Peter
Vittle Feast

Jedda Van Rooyan
Melbourne Muslimahs

Kate Turner
Murrandindi Wildlife Shelter

Julie Malherbe
JABS Joey & Bat Sanctuary

Jasmine Le Tisser
Children's Tumour Foundation

Ian Landy
**Northern Pride Netball
Association**

Gurinder Kaur
Sikh Community Connections

Steve Watts
Parkinson's Victoria

Chris Cobern
Landcare

Bev Carman
Northern Health Foundation

Jill Pope
Big Group Hug Ltd

Gianna Donato
Encompass Care Victoria

**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

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping, rounded shapes in various shades of red and white. The shapes create a sense of depth and movement, with some areas appearing to be in the foreground and others receding into the background. The overall composition is clean and modern.

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

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SCENTRE GROUP