

WESTFIELD 2021 LOCAL HEROES

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 Jocal 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 Knox VIC Caring cook Alan Deans has served up over 36,000 delicious and nutritious meals to locals doing it tough in his 16 years of volunteering with non-profit Foothills Community Care.

Alan manages the volunteer kitchen team, which cooks and serves over 100 meals, including dessert, every Wednesday night to people in Ferntree Gully.

The people Alan helps are battling homelessness, addiction, domestic violence, food insecurity and loneliness.

Alan and the team also give fresh fruit and vegetables and additional re-heatable meals to their guests.

Every year, Alan sacrifices Christmas morning with his family to help prepare a festive feast for over 230 locals. Many would otherwise spend the day on their own if not for this generosity.

The highlight of Alan's work is seeing people who would usually fall through the cracks being included in the community. He is also a kind mentor to the younger volunteers and enjoys passing on his catering skills.

Alan is humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I am a small part of a great team of wonderful volunteers and supporters that is making a big difference in the community. I am motivated by my father's advice which was 'if you are going to make an impression on this earth, make it a good one'," he says.

Alan's nominator says: "Alan is a Westfield Local Hero because he constantly gives to his local community, especially to those who are vulnerable and isolated. Each of the 36,000 meals he has cooked has been made with love and care."

# Showing love with food

# Alan Deans

Foothills Community Care Inc.

Dedicated, Giving, Patient

"I am motivated by my father's advice which was 'if you are going to make an impression on this earth, make it a good one."



# Sharing hygiene items

# Kate Austin

Pinchapoo

Warrior, Fearless, Driven

"This has given me a chance to take a breath and realise what we have created is something to be extremely proud of." Kate Austin's bold idea for a social justice movement bloomed into Pinchapoo (pincha-shampoo), a non-profit that delivers millions of personal hygiene items to disadvantaged men, women and children each year.

Kate is a domestic violence survivor. She was hit with a lightning-bolt moment 12 years ago as she washed her hair with a bottle of shampoo she had taken from a hotel during a weekend away.

Her Robin Hood movement now works with over 600 organisations supporting vulnerable Australians and is the nation's biggest nonprofit supplier of shampoos, soaps, deodorants, toothbrushes, sanitary products and other hygiene items donated by the community.

It Kate's vision that EVERY Australian has access to this basic human right essential to our mental and physical wellbeing. It has also rescued 700 tons of stock that was destined for landfill.

Kate is proud that her nonprofit provides volunteering opportunities to people with special needs, helping them become included and embraced within the community.

She feels humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "This has given me a chance to take a breath and realise what we have created is something to be extremely proud of," Kate says.

Kate's nominator says: "Kate is a Westfield Local Hero because of the countless lives she has touched. She bravely inspires thousands of people with her story of survival and mission to create change." Ryan Jacobsen is the volunteer State Emergency Management Manager St John Ambulance Australia and gave his all to ensure the service rose to the challenge during the twin crises of the bushfire disaster in 2019-20 and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ryan is a paramedic and has been volunteering with the charity since he was 15, attending events and providing first aid.

During the bushfires, he led the efficient and safe deployment of 124 volunteers who provided emergency first aid and psychological support to firefighters and the community. At one stage, the team worked for nearly 40 days without respite.

The charity was quick to roll out new initiatives during the pandemic. These included transporting vulnerable people to be tested for the virus, assisting with testing over 6000 people in coronavirus hotspots around Victoria and setting up an urgent care centre at two public housing blocks when they were locked down.

Ryan is thrilled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "December 2019 to late 2020 was a period of extreme stress on myself and my personal life. To have my efforts recognised in this way drives me to continue my volunteering and to drive improvements in the way we deliver our service to maximise our impact," he says.

Ryan's nominator says: "Ryan is a Westfield Local Hero because he selflessly dedicates himself to helping others, supporting the community and saving lives."

# <complex-block>

# **Ryan Jacobsen**

St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria) Inc

Passionate, Dedicated, Selfless

"To have my efforts recognised in this way drives me to continue my volunteering and to drive improvements in the way we deliver our service to maximise our impact."

# Your 2021 Finalists



Margaret Cowin Rotary Club of Knox

Margaret Cowin has given decades of her life to supporting her community. Now she is the driving force behind a Rotary Club of Knox pilot project to help young people gain access to professional counsellors they would otherwise not be able to afford. The program is called Knox Rotary's Simple Steps and allows participants to improve their self-esteem, learn coping skills and develop resilience.



# Johanna Selleck Friends of Glenfern Green Wedge

Johanna Selleck was a driving force behind a successful campaign to save a 10-hectare slice of land on Ferny Creek from being developed for housing. She is a founder of the 30-member Friends of Glenfern Green Wedge, which works to protect land enhance local waterways including Monbulk Creek.



## Meg Yates Trek Learning Centre

Founder and counsellor Meg Yates are planting the seeds for a brighter future for vulnerable children with her therapeutic farming program. Her non-profit Trek Learning Centre teaches organic farming principles, animal care and cooking and barista skills. The handson program is a circuit breaker for the impacts of childhood trauma- violence, neglect and harm and helps prepare young individuals for employment or study.

# Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Chuentat Kang GJS Intellectual Company Australia

Michael Macfarlane 1st Knoxfield Scout Group

Linny Kimly Phuong
The Water Well Project

Mark Pearson Knox City Football Club

Daniel van Bergen Knox Wind Symphony

Valerie Staddon Parkinson's Victoria

Caroline Beks Carolines Creations

Vasilios Pontikis Clayton Church of Christ / Cafe Care Ministry

Robyn Williams Meet Me In The Middle Cafe (Social Enterprise in South Croydon)

Rania Melhem Miss AnonyMS (Blog/ Events) & Multiple Sclerosis Ambassador Alan Waters Country Fire Authority (CFA) Bayswater

Jessica Macpherson OAM **St Kilda Mums** 

Nathaniel Diong Future Minds Network

Alan Deans Foothills Community Care Inc.

Meg Yates Trek Learning Centre

Johanna Selleck Friends of Glenfern Green Wedge

Kate Austin **Pinchapoo** 

Ryan Jacobsen St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria) Inc

Margaret Cowin Rotary Club of Knox 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



SCENTRE GROUP