



*Westfield*

*Local Heroes*

2021

***"The Westfield Local Heroes program was an incredible opportunity to connect and engage with my local community."***

*– Danny Hui, Westfield Local Heroes alumni*



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*

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# *Local Heroes*

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In the four years since the program began, we have awarded \$4.88 million to 489 community organisations.

Every year, we recognise more than 120 Westfield Local Heroes and provide \$1.26M 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.



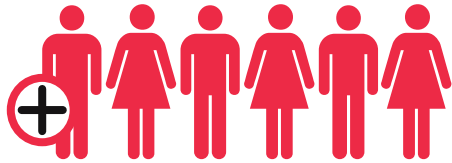
**"I think it's really valuable that we really care for each other."**

Kind. Selfless. Accepting.

**WESTFIELD INNALOO LOCAL HERO 2021**  
*Joanne Beedie - Helping Little Hands*

## 2021 Participation

more than  
**1,400**  
Nominations



more than  
**143,000**  
Community Votes





# Community Sentiment

**Westfield Local Heroes are positive community role models who work in a diverse range of sectors and with a varied degree of experience. They include environmentalists, innovators, community volunteers and leaders, welfare service providers, first responders, essential workers, health and medical experts, educators, social entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs.**

*"Being recognised is amazing as it will mean more people will see the work we do and get involved."* –  
**Sarah Page, Westfield St Lukes Local Hero 2021**

*"To have my efforts recognised in this way drives me to continue my volunteering and to drive improvement in the way we deliver our service."* –  
**Ryan Jacobsen, Westfield Knox Local Hero 2021**

*"A great opportunity to further reach and inspire more young champions to recognise the strength of who they are."* – **Matt Runnalls, Westfield Doncaster Local Hero 2021**

# South Australia

## SA Centres

Marion

Tea Tree Plaza

West Lakes



*Westfield*

**Marion**

SA

**Widowed dad Nick Lee has devoted 10 years of his life to educating the people of South Australia about the early detection and prevention of bowel cancer.**

He does this through the Jodi Lee Foundation, which he set up in memory of his wife, Jodi, who was diagnosed with bowel cancer when she was aged 39. He has personally raised over \$700,000 for bowel cancer.

Nick focuses his education efforts on corporates. He tells his story to motivate younger people to find out their family history of bowel cancer and encourage people older than 50 to use the test that the Department of Health sends in the mail.

Most people ignore the test, but the vast majority of bowel cancer cases can be successfully treated if detected early.

"I know first-hand the impact that bowel cancer can have on family and friends, having lost my wife to bowel cancer," says Nick. "My main motivation when

I established the foundation was to try to save lives and prevent suffering."

Nick says it is rewarding to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "We know we can save lives through our initiatives and improve the health and wellbeing of the people we reach in the community."

*Nick's nominator says: "Nick is a Westfield Local Hero because he has devoted the last ten years of his life to preventing people from experiencing the pain he endured after his wife passed away from bowel cancer."*



**Life-saving message**

## **Nick Lee**

Jodi Lee Foundation

*Passionate, Innovative, Empathetic*

**"I know first-hand the impact that bowel cancer can have on family and friends, having lost my wife to bowel cancer."**



## Saving cancer kids from isolation

### Matthew Townsend

Lion Hearts Learning

*Humble, Selfless, Dedicated*

**"There are so many children and families in the same position as us, and I just want to ensure we can help them to receive support."**

**Devoted dad Matthew Townsend and his wife, Jolyn Phillips, started Lion Hearts Learning to give children in South Adelaide a free super-hygienic place to interact with others while undergoing cancer treatment.**

The charity is like a second full-time job for Matthew, whose daughter Codee-Jo was diagnosed with leukaemia at the age of two. One of the challenges was that she could not attend a regular playschool because children undergoing cancer treatment have severely compromised immune systems and must be kept physically distanced from others to prevent infection.

Lionhearts provides free playgroups to cancer children and their siblings. All toys are cleaned before and after every session, and nobody attends if they are unwell.

"There are so many children and families in the same position as us, and I just want to ensure

we can help them to receive support," says Matthew.

"Lion Hearts Learning is a place oncology kids can come to learn, have fun and play with their friends.

"I feel proud to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. It makes me just want to do more and get the Lion Hearts Learning name out there so we can continue to help children and families in need," says Matthew.

*Matthew's nominator says: "Matthew is a Westfield Local Hero because he works hard and tirelessly for the good of others, always there to lend a hand when needed and never asks for thanks. Lion Hearts Learning would never have evolved without him."*

**Blackwood Action Group volunteer Pauline Dodd is a driving force behind projects that help people feel they live in a caring community where people look after each other and the environment.**

Pauline coordinates events like the much-loved Christmas Tree Festival and co-convenes local history group activities as part of the work of Blackwood Action Group which also improves Blackwood visually through streetscaping projects, care of train stations and the Stobie pole mural painting project involving local artists.

"Our activities provide opportunities for people with a diverse range of interests and capabilities to contribute to the community, connect with others and feel a sense of belonging," says Pauline.

Money raised through BAG's Community Links activities supports struggling families and other local charities whereas the

history group supports CFS and Legacy.

Pauline is an avid supporter of an effort to make the group more appealing to younger people and to involve youth groups, school children and parents in events.

"Engaging people in community service from a young age helps develop a sense of social responsibility," she says.

Pauline is pleased to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "Personal recognition of my efforts hopefully inspires others. Community involvement and volunteer service are richly rewarding."

*Pauline's nominator says:  
"Pauline is a Westfield Local Hero because she is an outstanding and dedicated member of our community who creates massive special events that contribute back to local charities."*



## Caring for her community

### Pauline Dodd

Blackwood Action Group

*Energetic, Passionate, Caring*

**"Engaging people in community service from a young age helps develop a sense of social responsibility."**

## Your 2021 Finalists



**Craig Scott**

### **Goodwood Saints Football Club Inc**

Goodwood Saints Football Club President Craig Scott has added to competitive success by making the club a stand-out achiever off the field. Craig is the driving force behind the club's female teams and promoting good mental health for players. He also drove the development of SA's Inclusive League for players with disabilities.



**Leigh Aitken**

### **Operation Flinders**

For the past 11 years, Leigh Aitken has devoted most of his free time to volunteering for Operation Flinders Foundation. In that time, he has led 14 expeditions and directly helped 140 young at-risk people become the best version of themselves. Each eight-day expedition involves a 100km trek.



**Emma Georgiadis**

### **Enlighten Education**

Radio presenter Emma Georgiadis uses her experience as a school teacher to connect with young women and build their confidence. She's doing this through Enlighten Education in-school workshops that help girls decode the mixed messages they receive and through her podcast, Empowerhouse, to help build attitudes of self-love, self-worth and self-belief.



# Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Jennifer Howard  
**Safe Pets Safe Families**

Sabrina Davis  
**Hospital Research Foundation**

Lynette Joy Barnes  
**Believe Educate Empower**

Jacinta Clark  
**The Pinnacle Foundation**

Vivien Matthews  
**Southern Cross Care  
(SA, NT & VIC) Inc.**

Mark Blagrove  
**Hub Gymnastics Club**

Krystle Dale Woollard  
**Gloria Jeans Coffee Cafe**

Bernadette Cagney,  
Formal Friday – Suit Up  
**Beyond Blue**

Robert McFarland  
**Rotary / RYDA Road Safety  
Education**

Melissa Pearce  
**KIDS Foundation**

Jo McDonald  
**Move Through Life Dance  
Studio**

Kim Mead  
**Childhood Cancer Association  
& Still Aware**

Moira Were AM  
**Hen House Coop**

Brigid Koenig  
**Sammy D Foundation**

Mark Vawser  
**Country Fire Service**

Kelly Johnson  
**Aberfoyle Hub R-7 School  
Fundraising Committee**

Petina Walsh  
**OmMade Meet The Maker**

Melanie Tate  
**Puddle Jumpers**

Robin McBride  
**Somerton Surf Life Saving Club  
Incorporated**

**Christies Beach  
Surf Lifesaving Club**

Lisa Totani  
**Circuit Excel Association South  
Australia**

Erika Fuller  
**Treasure Boxes Inc**

Steve Turner  
**Variety – The Children's  
Charity of South Australia**

Rachael Firns  
**Puddle jumpers**

Bridget Hogg  
**Wellbeings Foundation**

Anne Stewart  
**Move Through Life Dance  
Studio**

Freya Charlotte Simpson  
**Glengowrie Netball Club**

Stacy Allan  
**Kapara Residential ACH Group**

Rikki Cooke  
**Treasure Boxes Inc.**

Rebecca Aloisi  
**Supertee**

John Denholm  
**SA Brothers**

Clarisse Semler-Hanlon  
**Treasure Boxes Inc**

Pauline Dodd  
**Blackwood Action Group**

Bailee Phillips  
**Puddle Jumpers Inc**

Craig Scott  
**Goodwood Saints Football  
Club Inc**

Emma Georgiadis  
**Enlighten Education**

Nick Lee  
**Jodi Lee Foundation**

Matthew Townsend  
**Lion Hearts Learning**

Leigh Aitken  
**Operation Flinders**



*Westfield*

**Tea Tree Plaza**

SA

**Volunteer Kate Pastro is a passionate advocate for LGBTQI+ mental wellness and has taken the initiative to develop a program to support young people while they are on the waiting list to see a psychologist.**

Kate has played a crucial role at Talk Out Loud for three years, where she has risen to the position of Camp Captain for the quarterly youth empowerment program.

In addition, Kate has developed a popular one-on-one program called REAL Talk, with REAL standing for Relaxed Environment of Active Listening.

"REAL Talk gives youth a sense of belonging and lets them know they are not alone and have someone to talk to," says Kate.

She is proud that the sessions have grown in popularity and that she has been able to move them online during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Seeing youth come in anxious and depressed and hardly able to voice what they are going through and then seeing their transformation after only a few sessions is what keeps me going," she says.

Kate feels humbled and honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "It means the absolute world to me by showcasing the important work I do for Talk Out Loud, and the impact Talk Out Loud has on so many of our young people."

*Kate's nominator says: "Kate is a Westfield Local Hero because she is a passionate and kind-hearted volunteer who aspires to change the way people think. She helps them to be confident enough in themselves to take risks, even though the outcome might not be clear."*



**Giving LGBTQI+ youth a voice**

## **Kate Pastro**

Talk Out Loud

*Passionate, Empathetic, Inclusive*

**"REAL Talk gives youth a sense of belonging and lets them know they are not alone and have someone to talk to."**



## Walking beside parents

### James Norris

Walk With Wings

*Inspirational, Selfless, Humble*

**"Knowing we can change another family's world in Harrison's honour is something wonderful."**

**James Norris has volunteered countless hours for seven years to support parents of premature babies and those who have lost a child.**

James and his wife, Kerry, co-founded the Walk with Wings charity in memory of their son Harrison, who passed away unexpectedly in 2013. They provide peer support, preemie support packages, free AngelCare baby monitor hire and free hand and foot impressions of children who have passed away.

None of this would be possible without James. He is available day and night seven days a week to speak to parents. No topics or challenge is too difficult, from consoling a dad who feels left out of the NICU journey to taking an impression of a child's hand or foot for bereaved parents.

When not working directly with parents, James is a dedicated fundraiser. He has walked 80km from Paralowie to Port Wakefield in 16 hours five times to raise money for his charity.

"Knowing we can change another family's world in Harrison's honour is something wonderful," says James.

He feels overwhelmed to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I do what I do for the love of doing it, not so much to be in the spotlight, but the feeling of knowing I have been nominated is truly amazing."

*James' nominator says: "James is a Westfield Local Hero because through the heartbreaking and sudden death of his own son, he has shown resilience, strength, courage and determination to ensure that he is able to support another family who is walking the same path that he is, so they do not feel alone."*

**Nicola Bennett dedicates her days to helping people engage with their community and continue employment after a spinal cord injury.**

Dedicated and empathetic, Nicola is a Spinal Nurse Advisor at PQSA (Paraquad South Australia), where she builds strong connections with patients and their families.

Nicola understands that people often experience depression and feel unmotivated following a spinal cord injury. She is so focused on helping them get on with their lives that she often works in her own time to give them the care they need.

"My main goal is to support and educate my clients to develop not only the health outcomes they deserve but to give them a strong sense of independence," she says.

Nicola has more than 30 years of experience with spinal cord injuries. She travels around South Australia to assist clients with education, continence management, skin issues and the

social and psychological impact of their injury.

Nicola is proud and honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I love my role in the community. We don't do what we do or go that extra mile and put in countless hours for awards. However, this nomination is wonderful, and if it raises awareness about what we do for the disability sector, it'll be a bonus."

*Nicola's nominator says: "Nicola is a Westfield Local Hero because of the difference she makes to people living with a spinal cord injury."*



**Helping people  
with spinal injuries**

## **Nicola Bennett**

PQSA

*Dedicated. Hardworking, Passionate*

**"My main goal is to support and educate my clients to develop not only the health outcomes they deserve but to give them a strong sense of independence."**

## Your 2021 Finalists



**Kirsty Whitehead**

### **Children's Tumour Foundation**

Brave mum Kirsty Whitehead advocates and raises funds for children with neurofibromatosis (NF), a genetic condition that causes tumours in the nervous system. Kirsty is a dedicated volunteer for the Children's Tumour Foundation (CTF) and runs a South Australian online support group for those living with the condition. In addition, she has raised more than \$11,000 by shaving her head to support a clinical trial for drugs to shrink tumours.



**Warren Hicks**

### **South Australian State Emergency Service Volunteers' Association Incorporated**

SES volunteer Warren Hicks is a first responder and a steadfast advocate for other South Australian SES volunteers. Warren is chair of the SES Volunteers' Association, where he promotes the health and wellbeing of 1500 volunteers across 64 units in the state. Warren campaigns to the State Government and is also on call all day every day to support individual volunteers as the need arises.

# Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Sawsan Zadeh  
**Pinnacle College Parents and  
Friends Committee**

Rachael Zaltron  
**Backpacks4SAKids**

Nicoma Fryar  
**Backpacks 4 SA Kids**

Craig Mousley  
**Golden Grove Tennis Club**

David MacDonald  
**Kersbrook Trail Maintenance**

Michelle Kenley  
**Cudlee Creek Tennis Club**

Steve Lubcke  
**Lifepoint Care**

Stacey Alexander  
**Wise Employment Modbury**

Marissa Elsworthy  
**Noarlunga Figure Skating Club**

Janelle Neave  
**Absolutely Autism Au**

Brett Raymond  
**YP Field Archers**

Travis Devine  
**Tea Tree Gully - State  
Emergency Service**

Brooke Brown

Kirsty Whitehead  
**Children's Tumour Foundation**

Danielle Borg  
**Talk Out Loud**

Kate Pastro  
**Talk Out Loud**

Angela Lloyde  
**Tango Netball Club Inc**

Warren Anthony Hicks  
**South Australian State  
Emergency Service Volunteers'  
Association Incorporated**

Stacey Mousley  
**Talk Out Loud**

James Norris  
**Walk With Wings**

Nicola Bennett  
**PQSA**



*Westfield*

**West Lakes**

SA



**Grandmother Katerina Iliopoulos is giving back as a passionate and generous fundraiser for families affected by congenital heart disease.**

Over the last three years, she has raised nearly \$20,000 for the charity HeartKids by baking and selling mountains of Greek shortbread.

HeartKids aims to give every child diagnosed with congenital heart disease a fighting chance of leading a long and fulfilling life. The charity funds research, advocates for people with the disease and offers guidance, information and support throughout their journey.

Katerina was inspired to support the charity after her granddaughter benefited from their support to travel to Melbourne for surgery.

Thankfully, Zoe made a quick recovery and is now a healthy and active little girl. But some children require multiple surgeries and trips to Melbourne. HeartKids also provides the families with peer

support once they return home, which is often the hardest period.

"Being able to support others, while in turn receiving support, has created a strong sense of community and reduced the feeling of being alone when it comes to caring for a heart kid," Katerina says.

She is surprised to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "I am delighted to do my part, alongside many other supporters and volunteers," she says.

*Katerina's nominator says: "Katerina is a Westfield Local Hero because her passion for supporting families during their child's heart surgery ensures they receive information packs as well as the practical, financial and emotional support they need to navigate their heart journey."*



## Showing love through baking

### **Katerina Iliopoulos**

HeartKids Limited – South Australia Division

*Inspiring, Passionate, Giving*

"Being able to support others, while in turn receiving support, has created a strong sense of community and reduced the feeling of being alone when it comes to caring for a heart kid."



## Supporting hospital families

### Colleen Billows

Ronald McDonald House South Australia

*Dedicated, Committed, Caring*

*"I am always amazed to observe the strength of parents in overcoming their children's health problems and the capabilities of children in accepting their situation and surviving."*

### **Inspirational 85-year-old Colleen Billow has been supporting families with seriously ill children for more than two decades.**

Colleen is a dedicated volunteer at Ronald McDonald House (RMH) South Australia. The house looks after out-of-town families while their children receive treatment at the nearby Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital. She treats all visitors like family and is known as Nana Colleen.

"I am always amazed to observe the strength of parents in overcoming their children's health problems and the capabilities of children in accepting their situation and surviving," she says.

Colleen runs the dinner program twice a week, where she leads the volunteers who cook a meal for the families. She also visits on weekends, cheering up families with her famous cupcakes and slices.

In 2019, at 83 years of age, Colleen abseiled down the 33-storey Westpac building to

raise money for RMH. "Everyone said you're crazy, but I had decided it was nothing compared with the turmoil some of our families face," she says.

Colleen feels humbled to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "As a volunteer at RMH for 21 years, I am sure that I have learnt much more from our families than I have ever given. The families we support are my inspiration and motivation to continue as a volunteer."

*Colleen's nominator says: "Colleen is a Westfield Local Hero because despite being 83-years-old, she always puts the families she supports first, no matter how tired or busy she may be. She makes a huge difference to families going through great hardship and brightens up their day."*

**Alana Giaccio uses dance and cheerleading to give people with disabilities an opportunity to enjoy exercise.**

She started her All Abilities Cheer and Dance studio so people in Adelaide have an opportunity to enjoy inclusive and accessible sports. Her 92 students are aged three to fifty-five.

"I'm proud to offer a unique sport to people who might not have had the chance before," says Alana.

"It's amazing to see parents and carers watch their loved ones participating, making friends, developing new skills and, most importantly, having fun."

The confidence-boosting classes help her students build their communication skills, balance and spatial awareness and learn how to work in a team in a safe and supportive environment. They can progress to competition classes and participate in the disability section of mainstream dance and cheerleading competitions.

Alana's studio is inspired by her two younger brothers, who have Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability.

She was a generous sister and supported them when they grew up, but she knew they were missing out on opportunities for fun and exercise.

Alana is delighted to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "It means my dream is recognised as valuable in the community. It means my lifetime of disability experience is benefiting the community. It has confirmed my career purpose and has motivated me to expand."

*Alana's nominator says: "Alana is a Westfield Local Hero because she has always shown compassion and kindness towards her brothers and the wider community. She has a strong sense of inclusion and fairness and is a passionate disability advocate. Alana is a wonderful role model through her selfless personality and love in her heart for all."*



## Dancing with her stars

### Alana Giaccio

All Abilities Cheer and Dance

*Inclusive, Selfless, Genuine*

"It's amazing to see parents and carers watch their loved ones participating, making friends, developing new skills and, most importantly, having fun."

# Your 2021 Finalists



**Ella Stratton**

**HAS Foundation**

Ella Stratton makes the most difficult times a little gentler for families of children with serious illnesses. She is the founder of the HAS Foundation, which she created in memory of her son Hunter, who passed away when he was 12. Her mission is to raise awareness about paediatric palliative care and give practical support and memorable gifts to families across South Australia.



**Marigold White**

**Uniity**

Marigold White is dedicated to building intergenerational connections in her community and helping people to feel a sense of belonging. As a migrant to Australia, Marigold knows first-hand how important family-like connections are. This inspired her to co-found Uniity, a not-for-profit that runs events and activities where people can make lifelong friends.



**Amy Rowe**

**Project Potential Adelaide**

Altruistic therapeutic educator Amy Rowe provides a well-rounded education to people with intellectual disabilities so they can live an independent and fulfilling life. Amy founded Project Potential Adelaide in 2019 to provide one-on-one lessons to help people navigate their world. She teaches students of all abilities general life skills that are not always covered in school education, like catching a bus, cooking or borrowing a library book.

# Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Stephanie Breden

**Semaphore Surf Lifesaving Club**

Keith Ridgway

**Falje Volunteers**

Genevieve Handley

**Cystic Fibrosis Community Care**

Behzad Pourdarab

**Henley Surf Life Saving Club**

Wilson Kelly

**Seaton High School**

Dinah Thomasset

**Villagehood Australia**

Christine Robertson

**Lost Pets of South Australia**

Amy Rowe

**Project Potential Adelaide**

Nasir Hussain

**Muslim Australian Connections  
of SA (MACSA)**

June Isabel Duthie

**Osborne Over 50's**

Eman Rahim

**Heart & Soul Group**

Tricia Flowers

**Enlighten Education**

Colleen Billows

**Ronald McDonald House South  
Australia**

Liza Jankowski

**SIDS and Kids South Australia**

Colin Williams

**Rotary / RYDA – Road Safety  
Education**

Kerry Machado

**Wildlife Nurse SA**

Ella Stratton

**HAS Foundation**

Alana Giaccio

**All Abilities Cheer and Dance**

Claire Foord

**Still Aware**

Marigold White

**Unity**

Katerina Iliopoulos

**HeartKids Limited –  
South Australia Division**

**If you or anyone you know would like more information  
on what support is available:**

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**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 are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from a bright, vibrant red to a deep, dark red, with white areas that appear to be cutouts or highlights within the composition.

[westfield.com.au/local-heroes](http://westfield.com.au/local-heroes)

[westfield.co.nz/local-heroes](http://westfield.co.nz/local-heroes)



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SCENTRE GROUP