

Human Rights Week 2020 Tasmanian Awards – Recipients

10 December 2020

Izzy Elliott

When Izzy's uncle Brodie was not much older than she is now, he sustained a brain injury. Brodie died 15 years later. Izzy remembers her uncle and wants her Tasmanian community to remember him too. She wants them to understand more about brain injury. Izzy learnt to make hair scrunchies and founded an enterprise, Scrunch-Iz, to sell the scrunchies and raise funds for the Brain Injury Association of Tasmania. Izzy raised \$1000! In 2020, she turned her hand to making face masks and pencil cases and kept raising money for brain injury awareness. This young lady cared for her uncle. Her care has motivated her kindness to the whole community. We thank her. We think she is just great.

Josh Phillips

Josh is a chef who set up an innovative food van to offer gourmet meals showcasing Tasmanian ingredients to tourists. He'd just bought his van when the pandemic came down like the wolf on the fold and devoured his plans. It could have broken him – but he saw the bigger issue. Josh reached out to his community and used his new bus to transport vulnerable community members to and from the supermarkets for the elderly shopping hour between 7.00 and 8.00 a.m. What he did was inspirational kindness. When he could have been absorbed by his own challenges, Josh used what he had in his power and reach and acted with goodness to others. We give him so much thanks. We honour the beautiful strength of his transforming acts.

Red Cross Emergency Service Volunteers

Did you know that Red Cross volunteers have been making check-in calls to people in hotel quarantine? To connect and chat, to laugh and witness their tears, to enquire how they are coping, provide support and practical help, and connect those in isolation with mental health and financial support. More than 170 volunteers have made more than 22,000 phone calls. They have thought about this hidden-away cohort and then extended themselves to provide connection and care. They've been kind. We offer our appreciation and thanks to the Red Cross and each volunteer for the difference they have made in the lives of isolated people, whose sacrifice of isolation was an essential part of helping us all to be safe.

Kate Sice

Kate Sice is another wonderful human who gives us another example of taking what was in her power and reach and expending herself in mindful care of the wellbeing of others. Kate is the owner of flower shop, Botanical, in West Hobart. When business melted away in March, she used the beauty of her medium – flowers – to send love and kindness all over Hobart. Kate dropped little glass bottles full of flowers in the city and suburbs with notes reading "Take me and smile". The judges just loved reading about Kate's bursting spontaneity and kindness. These living messages of beauty and encouragement were so wholeheartedly given. We thank you Kate. And honour you for every smile you brought, every lightening of heart and expanding of hope.

Grace Williams

Grace is a gentle activist. As Founder of human rights organisation, Citizen Tasmania, she is bringing broad-brush kindness to our world through the awareness she is raising. But she was nominated for this award for a personal kindness she extended to someone having trouble integrating into Tasmania. She invited him to volunteer at Citizen Tasmania and then took personal care to include and support him into opportunities that arose from this. Grace was focused on overarching goals but did not lose focus on the human individual. This is inspiration to do the work in the world that one is called to, but without losing one of those little ones. Thank you, Grace. We thank you and acknowledge your kind work of the heart. – *writ large to society and writ attentively to individuals.*

City of Hobart – Hobart respects all campaign

In March 2020, the City of Hobart launched the *Hobart Respects All* initiative in response to evidence of rising racism. Their messages of kindness, gratitude, and respect appeared on Metro buses, shopping bags, stickers, posters and street banners. The messages empowered bystanders to show kindness to anyone experiencing racism, by supporting them. It is everyone's responsibility to help make our community inclusive and respectful. The judges commend the City of Hobart, and with great honour, that a key agent of government showed the courage to use the language that inspires the deep awareness and tenderness within our beings that dissolves racism – and they did not shrink from calling that empowering quality by its name – kindness

Laura Blackwell

Laura is one of those people we all need in our life. A devoted and caring friend and colleague who constantly puts the needs of others before herself. She embodies kindness and compassion though out every aspects of each and every day. As a Team Leader at Community Corrections Laura is a generous and strengths based leader, who recognises and rewards the efforts of her team. She is the one to remember the birthdays and special occasions of her staff and colleagues and make sure they are celebrated. Within her family she is an extraordinarily kind and compassionate daughter, sister, aunt and granddaughter actively involved in caring and supporting her niece and nephew as well as providing loving care to her grandmother. We thank you Laura for your daily acts of kindness.

Emily Wilkins and Matt Stolp

Emily and Matt are teachers at Sacred Heart College and Guilford Young College who set a great example for their students and all of us this year. Watching the impact of this year's lock down they recognised that there were people in need and others who wanted to give. Together they created the initiative 'Pantry Drive' in support of St. Vincent De Paul, who were struggling to obtain food items due to the panic buying that occurred. Through their networks and social media they encouraged people to leave any extra pantry items on their front porch, then coordinated a team of volunteers to collect and collate the items. They ran two Pantry Drives and filled two trucks with food and other goods at a time when some food items were scarce. We thank you Emily and Mat for your kindness, compassion and support to those in need.

Students Against Racism

This Award recognises the many years of dedicated work by the Students Against Racism in challenging stereotypes and encouraging understanding, compassion and empathy. Students Against Racism (SAR) currently have 30 active members who share their personal stories to various audiences including primary and high school students and police recruits. By telling their stories they help the community understand why people leave their homeland and what it is like to settle in Tasmania as a refugee. Over 13 years SAR have presented to over 14 000 people. This year SAR reached out across Bass Strait to students online in Melbourne who were experiencing an extended lockdown. These connections brought hope, entertainment and inspiration. We thank the Students Against Racism for working toward making Tasmania a place for all.

Show Hope (Wellspring Anglican Church)

Kindness, compassion, caring and hope are entrenched values of those involved in Show Hope at the Wellspring Anglican Church in Sandy Bay. Show Hope recognised that temporary visa holders (including international students) were overly impacted by the arrival of COVID-19. Many lost work, were not eligible for social support and for a range of reasons unable to obtain financial support from their home country, or return there. In March Show Hope was not feeding anyone. By April they were feeding 30 temporary visa holders per week, and by June were feeding over 600 people per week, such was the need and their devotion to support the community around them. However Show Hope became more than a food service, it became a leadership program and an employment assistance program with more than 50 volunteers helping to run the program and support the community. We thank you for recognising the need and giving people dignity through your program.

Welcome Back(pack) Project

The Welcome Back(pack) initiative was born as part of the Tasmanian Leaders Program in 2019 and is undertaken with the support of the Tasmanian Prison Service, Dress for Success Hobart, Share the Dignity and the WD Booth Charitable Trust. The initiative provides practical, immediate support to the approximately 300 women who leave the Mary Hutchins Women's Prison each year. It equips each woman with a backpack, a set of clothing and an information card detailing local support services. The project is an act of kindness and extends a welcome to those returning to the community after completing their sentences. We thank you for contributing to providing respect and dignity to those returning to our communities.

Campbell Remess

Campbell is a self-taught bear maker who spends much of his life bringing joy to those who need a pick me up. But not content with just creating bears for children in hospital, or raising money for charity through the sale of bears, or even teaching others online how to sew the bears, this year he created the Whitaker Kids News channel on YouTube with his sister Erica and brother Dylan. The News channel was their response to COVID-19. The three filmed fake news items, with many serial characters, to entertain all of us whilst we were in lockdown. The news items were witty, entertaining and the perfect antidote at the end of a long day locked in your house with the same people day after day after day. With thank Campbell for his endless caring and compassion for those around him and for those he has never met.

Meals on Wheels Tasmania

The wonderful volunteers from Meals on Wheels have been delivering meals to Tasmanians who have difficulty preparing meals for themselves –the elderly, people with disability and their carers – since 1955. But in 2020, these volunteers, many of them elderly and therefore particularly vulnerable if exposed to coronavirus, could have decided to prioritise their own health and cease their voluntary work. Most of them refused to do so and with profound kindness and compassion, almost 200,000 meals were delivered around the State to needy and vulnerable people – many of them in lockdown and otherwise deprived of human interaction. We thank these volunteers and honour their efforts.

Li Yang

International students lack networks of local contacts and often find it difficult to secure work experience placements during their studies and after graduation. Li, herself a recent graduate, recognized this recurrent challenge and set about changing it. She established her own not-for-profit, the Australian International Youth Association (AIYA) and has worked tirelessly through that platform to provide work experience placements and to help graduates develop contacts and grow in their confidence about the contributions they can make to Tasmanian society. We honour you Li for your hard work and commitment to kindness and compassion for those, like you, who have come from overseas to study amongst us.

Red Cross Tasmania Trauma Teddies

Groups of knitters around the nation make 50,000 teddies for distribution to victims of trauma every year. Since 1990, when the initiative commenced, more than 1,000,000 trauma teddies have been distributed. Right around Tasmania: in Glenorchy, Oatlands, Burnie, Queenstown and St Helen's, dedicated volunteer knitters gather to knit, stuff and sew up teddies to be handed out to children and adults to provide comfort in the face of personal or community trauma – road accidents, youth suicide, major illness, natural disasters. In 2020 many trauma teddies were handed out to communities during and in the immediate aftermath of the bushfires. We thank the amazing volunteer knitters around the State who have worked hard to provide small tokens of kindness and compassion to others in their hours of deepest need.

Will Smith

While working as a police officer Will often found himself arresting the same disadvantaged and disengaged young people again and again. Many of those young people were homeless, living on the streets or in houses that were unsafe. Will dedicated himself to making a difference and in 2019 established JCP Empowering Youth – to work with young people at risk and/or on the fringes of society to inspire and empower them to reach their full potential. Will mentors many young people - driving them to sporting activities, taking them on camps and exposing them to leadership training. In 2020 Will has now graduated a number of cohorts of young men from JCP's intensive leadership development scheme – the 'BEAST Program'. Thank you Will for your kindness and compassion in reaching out to at-risk young people and to developing and delivering a program to help them.

Kirsten Singleton

Having visited asylum seekers locked up in Pontville, Kirsten Singleton decided to act. In 2017 she took out a loan to buy a shop in Moonah with a long term vision to provide employment and training for refugees and asylum seekers. She has transformed the shop into Zafira Fine Foods providing employment for 25 people, delivering training opportunities and social support and serving delicious Afghani cuisine. Zafira Fine Foods has not only exposed many Tasmanians to some of the riches of Hazara culture but it has also facilitated the integration of many Hazaras into the Tasmanian community with grace and dignity. We applaud your vision and your hard work Kirsten and we acknowledge with profound respect your compassion and kindness to those who have come from afar to live among us.

Friends of Zafira

The not-for-profit Friends of Zafira support the efforts of Zafira Café to employ and train members of the local Hazara people and to facilitate their social engagement with and integration into the broader Tasmanian community. Friends of Zafira have established a market garden at the rear of Zafira Café supporting Afghan women to grow vegetables. They also run a community evening every Wednesday where people gather to play board games and practice English. In 2021 the Friends of Zafira plan to open a Men's Shed at the rear of the café and also to start a story telling project within the local community. The judges believe strongly that our ethnic and cultural diversity enriches our communal life in Tasmania. We applaud the kindness and compassion of the wonderful volunteer Friends of Zafira in all they are doing to support the Hazara people and their contribution to Tasmania.

Welcome Gardeners Tasmania

This award honours kindness to community and kindness to our globe. Welcome Gardeners Tasmania welcome new arrivals to Tasmania through a common interest in gardening and growing food. They collect, package and label seeds, produce seedlings, and combine these with other products needed to grow plants in the Tasmanian climate. Then they give their packages away through the Migrant Resource Centre and Red Cross. The work is relational, connected, supportive, caring, and sharing of knowledge and mindful benevolence toward others. Thank you, Welcome Gardeners. You show us all how we might pursue our passions while connecting and spreading kindness. We offer our thanks and gratitude for the work you do to welcome newcomers to Tasmania.