



# 2017 Richard Stone Award Nominees

## **Joanna Austin - Clemente Fitzroy Program**

Joanna has been volunteering since 2014 as a Learning Partner in the Clemente Fitzroy Program. She has been exceptional in her mentoring of students, and those who have been matched with her have always spoken very highly of her professionalism, clarity of thought and commitment to their learning process. She strives to raise each student's level of belief and confidence in themselves, through an empowering relationship as a Learning Partner.

## **Kirsten Bate - Eltham Refugee Housing and Support Project**

Kirsten has been volunteering with our Eltham Refugee Housing and Support Project since it commenced last year. She has spent countless hours coordinating the collection and delivery of donations, arranging and negotiating storage for goods and has been instrumental in advocating for the program and the refugee community moving in to Eltham.

## **Rose Cincotta - Eltham Refugee Housing and Support Project**

Rose has been supporting the Eltham Refugee Housing and Support Project since it began last year. Her dedication and hard work helping to collect and deliver donated goods, and physically setting up many of the units in Eltham has been instrumental to the project's development. She regularly attends meetings and has assisted with the recruitment of other volunteers in the program. She is a strong leader and passionate about welcoming refugees to our community.

## **Michael Harper - African Dads and Kids Weekend (*Richard Stone Award recipient 2017*)**

Affectionately known as 'Harpie', Michael has been supporting the African Dads and Kids Camps for 5 years. Michael's laid back, easy-going manner helps him quickly build rapport with Dads, and kids alike. He can often be found in a one-on-one debrief with the fathers; listening, supporting and caring. He also connects with the kids just as easily, being known as the 'king of the kids'! He has been so generous with his time and energy, and often coordinates the sessions with the kids, ensuring they are safe, happy and included.

On one of the camps, a paddle boarding session had been organised, and while all the children jumped in to the water after their safety briefing, one little girl was too scared to participate. She could not be convinced. Michael sat and chatted with her on the side of the lake, and about half an hour later, she was standing up on the paddleboard with 'Harpie' paddling. Her arms were stretched out like any great Titanic moment, with a smile on her face worth a million dollars.

Michael does this work not just because of his caring and compassionate nature, but also because he sees it as an obligation to support people in vulnerable situations. He has always been very community minded, volunteering his time back into the community in many different areas, and is trusted and respected by all involved in the program.

## **Ross Jackson - Community Garden Project, Pakenham**

Ross has been responsible for the preparation and continued maintenance of Pakenham's backyard for the Community Garden Project, since 2015. As a consequence of his work, the Community Garden Project was launched last month; he has been instrumental in repairing, renovating and creating spaces for the community garden. He is hard working and community minded, welcomes all people regardless of their background and is generous when sharing his skills to participants and volunteers.

### **Tania Kelaart - Homework Support and Regrowth Group, Wyndham**

Having begun volunteering in 2012, Tania has supported the Homework Support Group for nearly 5 years. She has always been committed and eager to support the children in the group, providing academic and social support to all those involved. In addition to this group, she has recently begun supporting the Regrowth Group where she assists parent participants to build skills to deal with trauma, grief and loss associated with forced migration as well as to build awareness of these issues that impact on their parenting. She is dedicated and committed to the program and participants, and goes above and beyond to help achieve the mission and vision of CatholicCare.

### **Lyndell Kohut - Refugee Settlement Program, Dandenong**

Lyndell has been the volunteer facilitator of the Multicultural Men's Conversation Group in Dandenong for 5 years. She is a skilled communicator and presenter, and has always successfully engaged participants in the program through her compassion and understanding of the issues and

### **Colleen Liddell - HIV/AIDS Ministry Lunch Program**

Colleen began volunteering with CatholicCare's HIV/AIDS Ministry Lunch Program, 13 years ago! Every Monday she prepares, transports, cooks and serves a main meal and dessert to approximately 20 people. She does all the shopping herself and goes to great effort to ensure the meals are nutritious and tasty. She has been described as the heart of the Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry. Her cooking and exuberant personality profoundly enriches the program and she exemplifies the ethos of the Catholic Ministry by displaying an unwavering compassion and acceptance for all.

### **Leanne McKenner - African Dads and Kids Weekend**

Since 2008, Leanne has volunteered with the African Dads & Kids weekend, assisting in the participation, administration and all round support to participants, staff and volunteers. She is imaginative and thinks creatively about needs beyond the immediate event. She is very respectful of the participant's experiences as refugees, and the dads and kids detect her sincerity very quickly with her friendly and gentle approach. She works well with everyone and not only supports the participants but provides wonderful guidance to the team of volunteers.

### **Marita Taylor - African Dads and Kids Weekend**

Also part of the African Dads and Kids Weekends, Marita started volunteering on the camps in 2013, and her commitment and hard work was evident immediately. She engaged with the dads and kids with care and insight, in addition to her practical and administrative skills which has (and continues to) enhance the whole program. She has also supported these camps and Team CatholicCare's participation in Run Melbourne by using her photography skills. She has captured many moments to help celebrate each event and program, helping to promote CatholicCare's work to the wider community. She is very generous with her time and contributes greatly for 'a stronger, more resilient and inclusive society'.

### **Helen White - Event and Administration Support**

Helen has been supporting CatholicCare as a volunteer for 11 years. She began volunteering for the St Mary of the Cross Centre, and was part of a team responsible for the planning and delivery of the Annual SMOCC Fundraising Ball. Her commitment has never wavered and she continues to provide admin and event support for East Melbourne programs and beyond. At all times, her support is at a very high standard – she is a perfectionist in everything she does. She has a strong commitment to volunteering, demonstrated not only by her 10 plus years of support to CatholicCare, but also her continued support of other Not for Profit organisations.

### **Jason Zhu - Homework Support and Regrowth Group, Wyndham**

Jason began his volunteering in 2015 as part of the Homework Support Group in Wyndham. He is innovative in his approach to supporting the participants and helps each student to discover their potential, both academically and socially. In addition to his work in this group, he has been deeply committed and involved in the Regrowth Program and assisted the participants in building awareness of the issues impacting on parenting in a different country and environment. He is greatly respected amongst his peers and student participants and his group is always working amongst a sea of laughter and smiles.