



Heart of the Port Awards

The Heart of the Port awards are about acknowledging the outstanding achievements of those who work hard and go 'above and beyond' to benefit the local community, and also within the programs provided by Southport Community Centre

Outstanding Volunteer award winners

There are three winners of the Outstanding Volunteer award this year.

Sherryn Danaher has been volunteering for SPCC Waterfront and Port welcomers for 2 years. Over the past 10 months Sherryn has taken a leadership role throughout a variety of Welcomer programs, helping to set up & coordinate the Crew Club which provided support for hundreds of cruise ship crew. She is active in Port Welcomers playing a crucial role in helping to support residents isolated by COVID by providing support to isolated residents within her apartment block and within the wider community. Sherryn is a friendly, outgoing person who is supportive and looking out for all the volunteer team members. She is always willing to help assist in whatever way she can.

Dig In Community Garden committee members Henry, Lynne and Jenny

Dig In Committee members **Henry, Lynne and Jenny** have all done an outstanding job this year. They have adapted to a rapidly changing COVID environment, working with SPCC to transform a large and complex community garden operation, with over 90 members, chooks, bees and fruit trees, to a COVID-safe operation from March onwards. They successfully advocated for the garden to remain partially operational for food security purposes, to assist the gardeners who are relying on it for food, spending a significant amount of time trouble-shooting and dealing with a myriad of enquiries, ensuring over 90 gardeners remain informed, stay safe and comply with changes.

Nic Capes

Nic retired from the position of SPCC Board Treasurer after some 19 years of service. Nic was not only a crucial asset in terms of his skills and experience, but also provided invaluable support and advice to the Board, the Manager, and Finance Officer. We thank Nic for his excellent contribution to the Board and his longstanding and outstanding commitment to SouthPort Community Centre.

Outstanding Student Award winners

There are 3 students receiving this award this year.

Sasha Edwards

Sasha Edwards graduated from ARCS semester one 2020, put her heart and soul into the course. Overcoming many obstacles including the COVID lockdown and home-schooling her children, her enthusiasm and dedication to the course shone through. Her truly outstanding additional project work, leadership, dedication to the young people in the Make Your Mark youth art program made her efforts truly stand out. Her wonderful graduation presentation on Make Your Mark, will be used as an example for future ARCS students going forward.

Shakeela Nizar

Although the ARCS graduate field was extremely strong this year we would also commend Shakeela Nizar. Her commitment to the course was outstanding, her excellent and dedicated project work, accurate assignment work, attention to detail, and her professionally presented response to each of her homework tasks were excellent, despite the challenges of COVID, We congratulate Shakeela on her successful graduation and wish her well in her endeavours.

Rob Hinton

Over the past few years Rob Hinton has completed a number of courses at SPCC including Voices Of the Southside - Speaking Out course and is an active participant in VossaNova Choir and City Of Voices workshops. Rob Hinton has done an amazing job this year with City of Voices and VOSS, overcoming challenges and mastering new skills and technology and always giving his best in sessions, workshops and performances. He's supportive of other people, a great team player, and pushes himself out of his comfort zone. Rob embraced technology for the first time and was able to master zoom and attend many of the online courses that were offered since March 2020. Rob is a kind, thoughtful person and reaches out to others in a positive supportive manner. He is a great ambassador for City of Voices, Voices of the South Side and SouthPort Community centre.

Outstanding Teacher/ Facilitator award winners

This has been an exceptional year with so many outstanding nominees it was impossible to limit the field, so we have a record number of 6 teachers receiving this award in 2020.

Geoffrey Thorsen

Geoffrey has gone above and beyond during 2020, providing one on one support to many older participants from Choir and City of voices struggling with technology, to ensure they can connect with the groups online. The consideration and patience he has shown has been outstanding. Further, Geoffrey's sense of humour, creativity and musicality have given us all a lift in these strange times - he's always ready with a joke, song and funny costume, and his leadership of 'The Experts' character section of our City of Voices sessions has brought a lightness to a sometimes dark year. The characters Geoffrey has created for the Vossanova choir has brought great joy and his ability to infuse enthusiasm into all he does has helped us to embrace on-line courses at SPCC.

Robyn Szechtman

Robyn's commitment to facilitating leadership and self-actualisation in marginalised communities through helping them find their voice is exceptional. Her work over the years with SPCC programs including Voices of the South Side, and Upstart is outstanding. She has used ingenuity and commitment to adapt her programs and continue to inspire vulnerable participants, many of who were significantly isolated during COVID. There are so many stories of transformation, as so many of her VOSS participants present tonight can attest to, with so many finding their own path and going on to pay leadership roles in the community.

Elaine Wilkinson

Elaine's dedication to supporting & empowering a number of vulnerable local communities over the past 10 plus years is admirable. Her work as an ARCS trainer & Literacy teacher at SPCC over the past 12 months has been outstanding, assisting with the adaptation of programs during COVID and motivating and supporting her students, many of whom are highly vulnerable, or from CALD backgrounds, as they face many challenges on their journeys and adapting to life in a new culture. Elaine is universally valued by all at the centre; with one pointing her out for many reasons including her thoughtfulness in remembering a birthday of an isolated student. Elaine was also nominated by one of her students who described her 'as the best instructor I have ever worked with'.

Karen Mcknight

ARCS provides intensive applied customer service training to those facing barriers to employment, education and civic life. In 2019 91% of graduates successfully transitioned to employment, further study or skilled volunteering. Karen had done a truly outstanding job over the past 12 months coordinating and completely revamping the ARCS program from an hands-on applied training course to an online program during lockdown. Karen has shown innovation and commitment, has worked tirelessly to retrain and motivate her trainers group and many students. Karen's wholistic teaching approach and commitment to transformational training has led to outstanding outcomes. There was a 100% graduation rate in June 2020, and 3 of the 8 ARCS port graduates found work in the middle of the pandemic.

Maree Montebello

Maree has been teaching 4 accessible to all ages and abilities exercise classes each week since 2013. These classes are crucial facilitating health, wellbeing and social connections of over 50 participants a week before & during COVID. Marie's warmth, positivity, dedication, and her can-do attitude makes her a deserving recipient of this award. A self-confessed technophobe prior to COVID, Marie embraced the opportunity to master Zoom online training in a matter of days and was running 4 full zoom classes within 2 weeks of lockdown. These groups have provided crucial to the well-being of her many participants – many who are self-isolating and have little other contact with others over the past few months.

Amanda Neville

Amanda is passionate about using creativity and community development and empowering marginalised communities, and very committed to working with marginalised young people in Make Your Mark. Amanda has gone above and beyond this year to develop a range of very popular online art programs at SPCC to keep families and isolated others connected during lockdown.

Community Champion Award Winners

These 3 winners of the Community Champion award exemplify an outstanding commitment to the local community.

Bernadene Voss

Since her nomination for Port Phillip council in 2012 Bernadene has been a champion for her Port Melbourne community. She has gone above and beyond attending thousands of local events and activities no matter how large or small. She has advocated tirelessly for many programs and resources for the local community. She has taken the time to reach out and be across all issues and listen & respond to the many thousands of community enquiries with respect and calm. Thankyou Bernadene the community is stronger and more supported due to your efforts

Bill Tsialtas (pron Sholtus)

Bill was nominated again by multiple people this year. Since graduating from Speaking Out and ARCS customer service in 2015-2016, **Bill** has become involved in a range of leadership roles in the local community. He is an outstanding example of a person who puts 100% into his goals: he is articulate about his journey and continues to pursue every opportunity to further his personal and professional development. Bill is dedicated to making the world a better place for people who are marginalized, he advocates for change and demonstrates this by playing a leadership role and sitting on several committees and boards of management in order to provide a voice to improve policies and processes toward inclusive communities, particularly CALD, disability, and GLBTIQ communities.

Brian Hanlon

Brian plays a key role in local community reactivation since his start as Waterfront Welcomer coordinator in August 2018. He has played an important role in expanding the waterfront welcomer program, and has sat on a number of neighbourhood committees and networks widely to supporting social and economic community building. He has been very active since COVID revamping the Waterfront Welcomers program to provide social & practical support to those isolated by COVID. He has also played a key role in helping to manage Port Talks program attracting over 450 participants to a series of online talks developed to discuss ideas and issues for post-COVID revitalisation of Port Melbourne economic areas. His cheerful, optimistic approach and his efforts to keep his volunteers and participants supported and informed, has been much appreciated especially during this challenging year of 2020.

