

## MADOW has more good news.

In the newsletter last week, you read about the winner of the Griffith Council's 'Environmental Citizen of the Year'. This was Tennille Valensisi, the Co-ordinator of Hampers of Hope.

MADOW has been sending items for care packs and cash donations for carry bags to Hampers of Hope. Ours is a very small part of a sustaining and efficient program.

In a year that saw their services needed more than ever, the Griffith food charity was faced in 2020 with losing 85 per cent of their volunteers due to COVID restrictions. However, with tremendous support from the wider community, they pulled through managing still to deliver meals to vulnerable elderly, school breakfast clubs, church groups, Griffith refuges and individuals in the community experiencing hardship.

During the year they also helped source and deliver water, food and personal care packages to the NSW and Victorian bushfire victims and drought affected areas.

## And more...

Here's what happens to the clothing, bedding and toy donations that you give to MADOW. Michelle Bordignon founded the Facebook group Griffith Helping Hands in 2017 which sees her source, collect, and distribute tonnes of clothing, bedding and household goods for people in need around the region.

This Australia Day she has been honoured with the Local Hero award, recognised for her endless dedication to helping those in need in the community.

"I was a little shocked to receive a nomination because I won Citizen of the Year back in 2015 when I was running the Carevan and Meals on Wheels. So when I got the nomination the other day it shocked me," Mrs Bordignon said. "It feels beautiful, it's really touching. The work has helped me a lot after losing our daughter."

Two years ago, Mrs Bordignon and her family experienced the nightmare of losing their daughter and sister, Stella, to suicide. "Stella was beautiful, a lovely kid. She had a very kind heart," Mrs Bordignon said. "I had to stop. I stopped for about four months because I couldn't think. But then I have to admit, I decided I'd start again because doing it was a form of mindfulness for me." Mrs Bordignon explained that sorting and organising goods and then delivering them to people who were doing it tough in the region gave her reprieve from her grief and lifted her energy for life again.

"Little things like that lifts your spirit. It doesn't fix your heart but it does lift your spirit," she said.

"There are a lot of people doing it tough out there. You don't see it but there is a lot and I think if we

can help we should."

"What Michelle and her husband have achieved and what they continue to achieve is outstanding. Particularly what they do helping the disadvantaged in the community," Cr. Dal Broi, Mayor of Griffith, said.

"When a child predeceases you the hurt is unbearable. Michelle could've given up, but she didn't, she continued to work for the community." Michelle you deserve it and on behalf of the Council I want to thank you." Mrs Bordignon accepted the honour by thanking the Griffith community for the enduring support and reminding everyone to empathise with others.

"I have to say that I am very proud to be a born and bred Griffith person when we have such beautiful people in this town that help me all the time," she said.

"My mantra is kindness is everything. You don't judge. You just help."

## And another...

Nicole Dehnert and Michelle Bordignon and Tennille Valensisi have been wonderful Griffith locals for MADOW. At the end of January Nicole told MADOW of how things spontaneously get done. (Many organisations share a common huge space – The Hub. So information is shared easily.)

Nicole mentioned to one of the Meals on Wheels staff that she was thinking of delivering bags of Sugar Plums ( 500 kilograms had been given to her from a local farmer) to the local Uniting Independent Living Units (Hyandra Village). And within 2 hours the girls, at Hampers of Hope, had the plums bagged up, labelled, in 30 packs with the name of the donor etc delivered to Uniting's Hyandra Village.

The next morning Nicole was out cycling and the son of a resident from Uniting's Hyandra Village thanked her for arranging the delivery of the plums. His mother was excited to receive such a gift.

Always lots of nice outcomes.

