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Brighton parishioner in running to be Local Hero

On Wednesday 11 October 2023, Paul Miller was voted as the 2023 Westfield Marion Local Hero for his work in setting up the St Judeâ??s Community Meal, open to all comers every Friday from 11:30am. St Judeâ??s will receive a $20,000 community grant to support their work. What follows is the original story we published when he was first nominated.

St Judeâ??s Brighton parishioner Paul Miller is one of three finalists in the Westfield Marion Local Heroes competition for his work setting up and coordinating the churchâ??s community meal, which has been held every Friday for more than a year.

Westfield Local Heroes is a recognition and awards program that shines the spotlight on individuals in Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community or environment.

They are nominated and voted for by their local communities.

As a finalist, Paul will receive a $5000 grant for St Judeâ??s but if he receives enough community votes to become the Westfield Marion Local Hero for 2023, that will be boosted to $20,000.

â??We are all so proud of Paulâ?• says parish priest the Ven Sophie Relf-Christopher. â??He was a big supporter of the Community Meal even at the concept stage, and was willing to step up straight away to be a driving force in the parish to make it a success .â?•

The grants will go towards developing the community meal with the $5,000 earmarked for improved refrigeration.



Click on the image above to download a full-size flyer to help get Paul the votes he needs

â??With our votes he could win $20,000 which would go towards proper commercial refrigeration and outdoor seating capacity for our free food program,â?• Sophie says, â??and this means that we can divert more precious food from landfill and be able to offer seating that is less threatening for people with mental health challenges, and even with doggy companionsâ?•.

The St Judeâ??s Brighton Community Meal caters for more than 100 guests every Friday. Paul manages a large roster of volunteers, cooks and organises donors. On the day he sets up the hall, waits on tables and washes up.

Any leftover food is made available in St Judeâ??s 24-hour pantry.

The lunches are held between 11:30am and 1:30pm with a simple but tasty menu that may include soup, toasted sandwiches, fish and chips, and a dessert, and pastoral care.

AnglicareSA provided a seed-capital grant to launch the project but the ongoing hospitality is very much an all-hands parish initiative with financial support from the community.

Paul is supported in his table service by cheerful, hard-working parish volunteers drawn from a pool of more than 40, that now even includes diners who have become workers as they want to be part of sharing Godâ??s love in the community.

â??At the start we were worried we wouldnâ??t have enough people to fill the roster and the burden would fall too heavily on the few,â?• says Sophie. â??But itâ??s quite the opposite. We have so many people willing to lend a hand that they can forget the training, itâ??s so long between their shifts. However, they always have a friendly re-skilling from Paul, who is there as co-ordinator every single Friday.â?•

You can vote for Paul here.

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