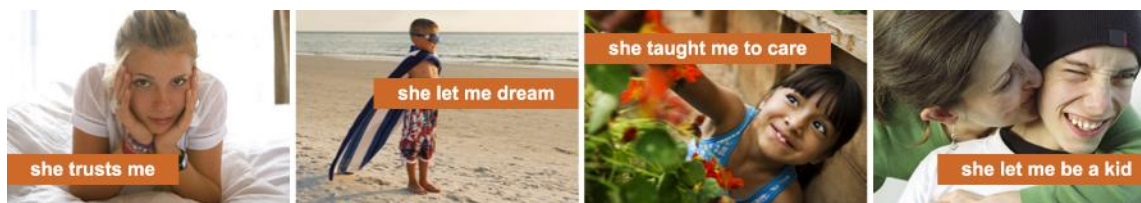


I love my mum because...



Tasmanian shortlisted finalists 2010

Aileen Charles, 65 from Ridgely (nominated by her son Neville Charles)

Having 12 biological children would be enough for most people, however Aileen felt there was always room in her heart and home for many more. She has fostered hundreds of children and currently has six children in her care – one of whom is autistic and another who was uncommunicative and not toilet trained when he came into Aileen's care at the age of four and a half. Aileen has also had her own share of tragedy, losing three of her sons in various circumstances, and then in 1991 her husband passed away. Having grown up on a farm, Aileen instills the values and disciplines of rural life in all her children – hard work, honesty and a good sense of humour. She has been described as “salt of the earth – she calls a spade a spade.” Some of the children she fostered many years ago who are now adults still catch up with Aileen for a hug and a cup of tea and to let her know how much she changed their life.



Nominee's top tip: “Do nothing you would be ashamed to tell me about.”

Jenny Piemontese, 45 from Sandford (nominated by her daughter Tameka Paydon)

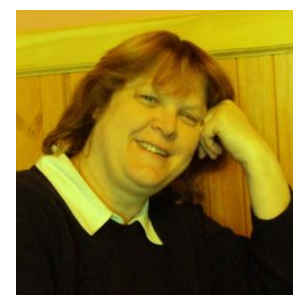
Looking after the most vulnerable in our community is of paramount importance to Jenny. So five years ago whilst pregnant with her third child, Jenny started fostering. Since then she has fostered around 15 children, most of whom were premature babies who suffered drug and alcohol withdrawal. Jenny says it was wonderful to see the babies get stronger each day but it was extremely tough to give them back as most of them had been in her care for at least 12 months. She currently has two foster children in her care – a four year old boy and a seven week old girl. Jenny was also a volunteer for three years for Lifeline, providing counselling and support for another vulnerable section of the community. Last year, Jenny won the Tasmanian and National Pride of Australia medal for “care and compassion.” She says it enabled her to draw attention to foster caring and the importance of building positive relationships for challenged children, their parents and the carers.



Nominee's top tip: “You can never have too many friends and treat others as you would like to be treated.”

Delwyn Polden, 45 from Burnie (nominated by her daughter Janine Polden)

Delwyn has fostered more than 200 children over the past 16 years as well as raising her own three children – Richard, Heather and Janine. Delwyn is also a school teacher, and her expertise is in children with special needs. Hence, many of the children she fostered have intellectual disabilities. “All of us were treated equally,” says her daughter Janine who nominated her. “Even though we shared our home with foster children, Mum always had time for all of us and gave us plenty of love.” Delwyn currently has three foster boys in her care and also does respite care on weekends, generally taking in children with severe disabilities and high needs. Delwyn says caring for so many children has kept her young. “The best thing about being a mum is being able to influence a child's life for the better. It's important not to sweat the small stuff,” she says.



Nominee's top tip: “Always be yourself and be honest to yourselves and others.”

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