

I love my mum because...



2009 VICTORIAN SHORT-LISTED FINALISTS

Pamela Deacon 59, of Southbank, Victoria: (Nominated by her daughter Alice Deacon)

Pamela's love of children and determination to have a large family meant that she underwent 16 years of IVF treatment to have five children – one of whom is blind and has cerebral palsy and needs round the clock care. Seven years ago, during a school excursion to Vietnam, Pamela's daughter Alice contracted an undiagnosed illness and still requires regular hospitalisation. Pamela has also fostered numerous children and is currently trying to organise a social group for young disabled adults who are not able to attend day placements. "Mum has the wonderful ability to turn a negative situation into a positive," says Alice.

Pamela's top tip: "Don't put it down, put it away."



Tara Eagles 34 of Red Cliffs, Victoria: (Nominated by her son, Christopher Eagles)

In the past few years, Tara has endured more tragedy than some people have in a lifetime. A mother of six and step-mother to four she has also lost three children. She has miscarried twice and in 2005 her three-year old son Hayden passed away after a hard-fought battle with Alpers (a rare genetic disorder). During this ordeal, Tara was pregnant with her daughter Tyana who was born 16 weeks premature. Tyana suffers from cerebral palsy, seizures and is deaf but wears a cochlear implant. Tara also cares for a 17-year-old girl with cerebral palsy. In 2006, Tara ended up on life support when a simple operation went terribly wrong. In 2007, the family home burnt down and they lost everything. "When many others would have crumbled my mother has shown strength of character that I truly admire," says her son Christopher.

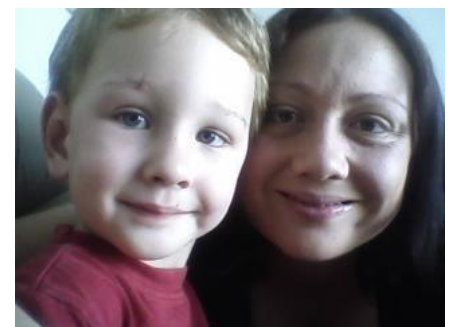
Tara's top tip: "Keep your chin up because there is always someone who has it harder than us."



Samantha Harvey, 28 of Colac, Victoria: (Nominated by her husband Marcus Harvey)

Samantha has lost count of the number of foster children she has cared for but her husband Marcus is confident she has touched their lives whether they stayed for a weekend or for months. "Samantha says you don't need a lifetime to make a difference in somebody's life – all you need is a fraction of time combined with love, respect and honesty," says Marcus. Samantha and Marcus have also undergone several IVF treatments. They tragically lost their first set of twins and then fell pregnant with another set of twins – one of whom Samantha also miscarried. The other twin Brayden was born deaf and with suspected cerebral palsy and needed round the clock care and numerous medical appointments. Brayden is now two and half and Samantha is pregnant again – this time naturally!

Samantha's top tip: "It's not how much you do, but how much love you put in the doing."



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