

I love my mum because...



Victorian shortlisted finalists 2010

Rhonda Rosenow, 63 from Woolner (nominated by her foster daughter)

Rhonda has been fostering for more than 14 years and during that time has taken in more than 150 children in both long-term and short-term care. She currently has seven children in her care and also adopted another boy when he was five months old, who is now five. She is also mum to her five biological children and grandmother to 11. On top of all this she still manages to find the time to care for 20 miniature ponies, dogs and cats. Her foster daughter who nominated her says she is a remarkable woman who treated all her children equally. Rhonda says her motivation to foster is to help as many less fortunate children and families as possible. "It's so rewarding to see the change in these children from where they've come from to what they become. If I can contribute even a little bit to that change then it's all worthwhile," she says. Now 63, Rhonda has no intention of giving up fostering any time soon.

Nominee's top tip: "Not to give up on something that you want so much, go for it."



Gina Scuffins, 49 from Ross Creek (nominated by her adopted son Sam Gibb)

Being a single mum for almost 20 years has not deterred Gina from adopting and fostering children. With one biological son now aged 25, Gina felt she could provide children in need a better life in a stable, loving family. Sam, who nominated her, was adopted from the Phillipines by Gina 21 years ago when he was nine months old and she has fostered many children over the years on both a short and long-term basis. She currently has a 17 year old Aboriginal boy in her permanent care as well as a brother and sister aged six and eight. Gina also runs a 40 acre farm where she breeds miniature ponies and looks after her elderly mother who also lives on the property. In 2003, Gina suffered a severe back injury and was bedridden for six months. Despite her own pain, Gina continued to care for all the children and even took in additional foster children. "Not many people can change the world," says Sam. "Mum changed all our lives for the best. She's my hero!"

Nominee's top tip: "Mum believes that there are so many kids without food, shelter or a family. The best thing she can do is help the helpless."



Kaye Simpson, 46 from Montmorency (nominated by her daughter Prudence Simpson)

Kaye is testament to a mother's strength and determination in the face of disaster. In February 2009, Kaye, 'earth mother' of three, lost her house, her animals and many friends in the Black Saturday bush fires. She'd injected her life savings into her home and regarded it as the nucleus of her family and her community. A year on, she is renting an apartment and is still waiting to rebuild her home so her family can live together as one again. She stays in touch with many in her community and is thankful for the support they provide each other. Her daughter Prudence who nominated her lost two girlfriends in the fire. "Mum supported us with no concern for herself and amongst all the rebuilding and healing she managed to find us a temporary home, put clothes on our backs, food in our mouths and start a new career," she says. (Prudence and Kaye pictured)

Nominee's top tip: "Don't let people tell you who you are, be strong, be the person that I know."



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