

Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood 2025 Community Service Award Nominations

All the four below nominations are recommended for an award.

	Nomination	Activity / Service	Who in the community has benefited from their activity / service?	Length of time involved
1	Gill Styles <i>Nominated by: Clark Alock and Anne Addei</i>	<p>Gill (and a small team) have been volunteering for our coffee and chat community programme every Wednesday where we support local community people who are facing many daily challenges. We provide a space for them to come, have some breakfast and have an opportunity to share the struggles they are facing as well as being able to provide some free food. Many of the people attending have housing issues, homelessness, financial, mental and health struggles.</p> <p>Gill's wife Marilyn volunteered with this over all these years as well and she passed away late last year, and Gill remains continuing to support the community even through his loss.</p>	<p>From the nominator</p> <p>"By providing a safe space for local community members to share their daily challenges and have some connection with other community members as well as share food together. Compassion Trust also looks for ways to help people practically through our Budgeting Service to support them with ongoing issues."</p>	Just over 10 years.
2	Shalina Gupta <i>Nominated by: Sunita Gautam and Seema Gautam</i>	<p>Shalini Gupta – A Champion for Ethnic Communities in the Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood Area Shalini Gupta is a dedicated community leader whose tireless efforts have significantly enriched the lives of ethnic communities in the Waitai Coastal-Burwood-Linwood area. As a passionate advocate for cultural diversity and social inclusion, Shalini has been instrumental in fostering a sense of belonging and unity among migrant and refugee communities.</p> <p>One of her most notable contributions is the introduction of the first-ever "Teej Celebration" in Christchurch, which she initiated at the community hall on 19 St Johns Road. This vibrant festival, celebrated by Nepalese, Indian, and other South Asian communities, has grown into a cherished annual event, bringing people together to celebrate tradition, music, and dance while strengthening cross-cultural connections.</p> <p>Although the Teej celebration organized by Shalini benefits the wider Christchurch Indian, Nepalese, and South Asian communities, the majority of women participating have been from the Linwood and Woolston and nearby areas. Shalini's unwavering dedication and passion for community service make her a deserving nominee for the Christchurch Community Services Award, recognises her lasting impact on ethnic communities and her vital role in shaping a more inclusive Christchurch.</p> <p>If you just type "Teej celebration" on Facebook or visit Shalini's profile, there is plenty of evidence and comments from the community appreciating her work.</p>	<p>Women's Leadership and Participation – By leading and organizing this event single-handedly, Shalini has empowered other women to take on leadership roles, volunteer, and engage in community activities. Many women who participate in Hariyali Teej are inspired to become more involved in local initiatives, boosting their confidence and engagement in wider society.</p> <p>Recognition and Representation of Migrant Women – Shalini's dedication ensures that migrant women's voices and cultural contributions are recognized in Christchurch's diverse community. Through Hariyali Teej, she has brought visibility to South Asian traditions and strengthened intercultural understanding, making Christchurch a more inclusive city.</p>	6 years

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3	Chris Johnston <i>Nominated by: Anne Addei and Gill Newman</i>	Chris has been volunteering as a financial mentor (budgeter) for our service and works one of one with clients who are in financial hardship and assists with budgets, debt management, advocacy, working with creditors and doing kiwi saver hardship withdrawals.	Individuals and families in our community of New Brighton, Parklands, Aranui, Linwood and surrounding areas. He has worked long term with clients to support those who are facing large financial challenges, have achieved to have debt reduced and written off, submitted KiwiSaver applications for approved and assisted people in managing their weekly budgets and work towards becoming debt free.	Chris is a businessman and has been volunteering for 6 1/2 years and has been giving a workday once a week over this period. He comes with a wealth of experience and knowledge.
4	Bangaliana Multicultural Christchurch <i>Nominated by: Sushruti Adhikary and Sunita Gautam</i>	The nominee has been actively involved in organizing Bengali cultural events such as Saraswati Puja, Durga Puja, and Poila Boishakh in Christchurch. These events serve as a platform to bring the community together, fostering cultural awareness and preserving traditions for future generations. Through these celebrations, the nominee plays a vital role in educating young members about Bengali heritage while creating an inclusive space for people from all backgrounds to experience and appreciate the culture.	The nominee's activities have positively impacted a diverse range of individuals and groups within the Christchurch community: Bengali Community – These events provide a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging for Bengalis living in Christchurch. Families get the opportunity to celebrate their traditions, pass down cultural values to their children, and stay connected to their roots despite being far from their homeland. Children and Younger Generations – Through participation in traditional rituals, cultural performances, and engaging activities, children learn about Bengali heritage in an interactive and enjoyable way. This helps them develop a sense of pride in their culture while also fostering cross-cultural understanding among their peers. Wider Christchurch Community – People from various backgrounds are invited to these events, giving them a unique opportunity to experience Bengali traditions, food, music, and festivities. This helps promote multiculturalism, understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures within Christchurch. Local Artists and Performers – The cultural programs provide a platform for local singers, dancers, and performers to showcase their talents, encouraging artistic expression and supporting the growth of cultural arts in the community. Local Businesses and Vendors – The events often feature traditional Bengali cuisine and handicrafts, providing local businesses and food vendors with opportunities to reach a broader audience and support economic activity. Community Bonding and Well-being – By creating a	The nominee has been actively involved in organizing Bengali cultural events in Christchurch since 2020. Each year, they dedicate approximately 15-20 days of their time to planning, coordinating, and executing these events, ensuring their success. Their commitment includes organizing logistics, engaging with the community, coordinating cultural performances, arranging family-friendly activities, and promoting cultural awareness. Their efforts have been instrumental in bringing people together and preserving Bengali traditions within the wider Christchurch community.

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			<p>space for people to come together, celebrate, and socialize, these events foster strong social connections, reduce isolation, and enhance the overall well-being of attendees. The family-friendly atmosphere ensures that people of all ages can enjoy the celebrations, strengthening the sense of community.</p> <p>Through these activities, the nominee has helped bridge cultural gaps, create meaningful experiences, and build an inclusive and vibrant Christchurch community.</p>	
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