

### **Amy Ingram takes out this year's Northern Region Volunteer of the Year award**

There's no better testament to Whānau Āwhina Plunket volunteer Amy Ingram's impact on her local community than the 30 nominations she received for this year's Northern Region Volunteer of the Year awards.

Amy took out this year's awards, held last Friday, 25 June during Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu National Volunteer Week, for her work as the North Shore Chinese Coffee Group Coordinator.

Amy started coordinating and running the fortnightly coffee group at the beginning of last year. But as Whānau Āwhina Plunket Northern Region Community Support Team Leader Katrina Fisher explains, her role has grown far beyond its original scope.

"Amy has been incredibly proactive in overseeing the welfare and safety of the families in the group, continually looking for new opportunities to support the community," Katrina said.

"As well as running the coffee group, Amy oversees two WeChat groups – which include around 770 members – and makes sure new parents are added so they know about local Whānau Āwhina Plunket services and events.

"But beyond that, Amy listens to our local Chinese families and has worked with us to help address their needs. Through her advocacy, we've been able to set up Zoom sessions with a Plunket Health Worker using an interpreter to talk directly to our local Chinese community. And at the start of last year, she began highlighting concerns about COVID-19 to our coffee group well before it was an issue in our community, then made sure parents stayed connected during the lockdowns with Zoom meetups," Katrina said.

But Amy's list of achievements doesn't stop there.

"Amy has also set up local first aid classes in Chinese using interpreter services, and established toddler play group sessions, which she used to run before helping to recruit another volunteer to help support these.

"With all the initiatives that Amy has helped start, she has been very busy working away in the background contacting people, gathering information and making sure everything is well coordinated. We really value the huge contribution she has made."

When the call for nominations went out, the tributes to Amy flowed thick and fast.

"Amy is always very passionate on helping and supporting Chinese mums: whenever you need help, she is there," said one nominee.

“Amy has created a positive community both online and face-to-face where kids can play together and mums can support each other,” said another – and there were many more comments along those lines.

For Amy herself, the work she pours into her community is her way of giving back.

“After our little boy was born, we were taken very good care by Whānau Āwhina Plunket’s nurses. Whenever we needed help, we could always get information from Whānau Āwhina Plunket nurses, PlunketLine, parenting education courses, home visits, coffee groups and play groups – we didn’t feel lonely as parents.

“It’s been wonderful to be volunteering for Whānau Āwhina Plunket in the Chinese community. I’m happy that I’m able to assist Chinese mums in their parenting lives, who actually make me want to keep volunteering.

“I was overwhelmed to get this award, because all the other volunteers are making their amazing contributions to local communities. I feel I have somehow helped the world in a very small way; it’s given me a sense of fulfilment.”

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