

The winners are...

ARTS/EDUCATION



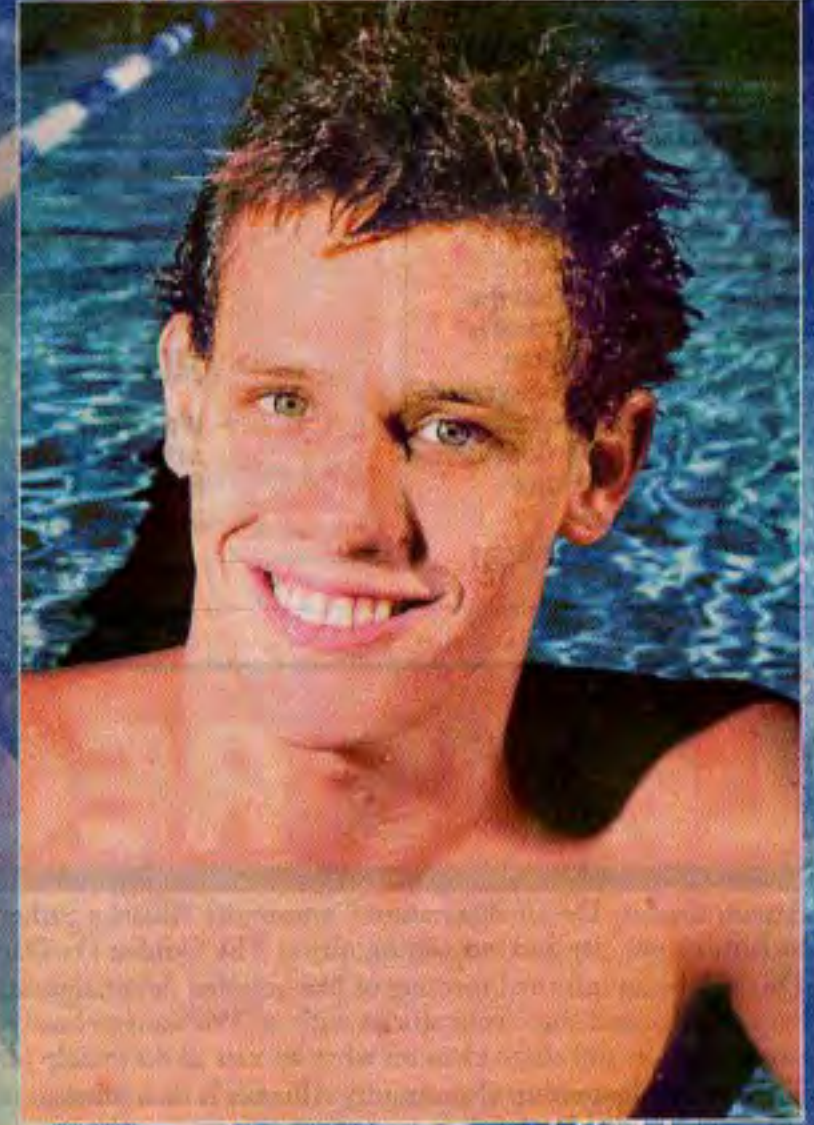
ADVENTURER: Saraya D'Ath

COMMUNITY



CARING: Mitchell Willocks

SPORT



SUPERFISH: Jayden Radler

MITCHELL Willocks has given so much to his community through fundraising, a pilot program at a retirement village, and as a navy cadet. On Saturday he was rewarded with the annual *Redcliffe and Bayside Herald* YoungStar Community award. Environmental adventurer Saraya D'Ath won the Arts/Education award and swimmer Jayden Hadler won the Sport award. Matthew Groves, Brandon Binnie, Yolane Kukla and band Freak Morice won the Quest



OVERALL WINNERS



ARTS/EDUCATION: Brandon Binnie



COMMUNITY: Matthew Groves



SPORT: Yolane Kukla

GROUP WINNERS



FAMILY MUSICIANS: Narangba band Freak Morice

THERE we were in our hundreds last Saturday – mums, dads, grandparents and siblings all dressed to the nines and bursting with pride.

Yet as good as we looked, the footlights and fanfare at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre were meant for others.

Nearly 300 finalists aged between 8 and 18 vied for honour and glory in the annual McDonald's YoungStar Awards in categories such as Arts/Education, Community Involvement and Sport.

As the winners names rolled off the tongues of hosts Leigh Muirhead and Tony Johnston, onlookers were left to walk in the shadows of their astounding efforts.

Take, if you will, Arts/Education winner Brandon Binnie who, at 17, has worked alongside pre-eminent scientists on DNA methylation, which, for the uninitiated, examines possible remedies for cancer.

Or Matthew Groves, whose personal exile in the South Pacific was driven by a desire to help educate Vanuatuan children and landed him the Community Involvement gong.



SHE'S THE VOICE: Solo singer Sophie Perkins wows the crowd at Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre. Picture: JOSH WONING

The Sports trophy went the way of Commonwealth Games gold medallist swimmer Yolane Kukla, who has eyes on even bigger prizes at the world swim titles and

the Olympics next year.

Their efforts were splendid and justly rewarded but Quest Newspapers general manager Mark Elgood was right when he said exploits

of the other 273 finalists also demanded recognition.

McDonald's licensee Adam Dando was more emphatic. "Leave me out of the judging. How can you pick between

such candidates? The talent pool in our youth is just extraordinary and the potential in these people is bright."

Burning bright as any lighthouse, you could say.

Good deeds earn award

MITCHELL Willocks has a big heart which he said was beating "180 beats a minute" when he was named the *Redcliffe and Bayside Herald* Community winner at the YoungStar Gala Awards on Saturday night.

"I went on the Youngstar website and read everyone else's profiles and they were all so good. It was such a surprise," he said.

Mitchell won the award for the work he has done fundraising for flood victims and a sponsored child in Cambodia as well as starting a pilot program at Ballycara retirement village where students play a Nintendo Wii with seniors to bridge the age gap. He has also been selected to go to the US on an exchange with the international sea cadets.

"I love to see the look on people's faces when you assist them with something," Mitchell said.

Arts/Education winner Saraya D'Ath was equally as shocked by her win on Saturday night.

"It was all so quick and I didn't know if I had built up enough evidence (for me to win). I'm very happy and grateful," Saraya said.

The environmental adventurer won the award after she was selected for three overseas expeditions as part of the Young Explorers Program.

"I care about the environment. I want to do whatever I can to preserve it," Saraya said. "Hopefully later in the year I'll be invited on an expedition through Canada's Northwest Passage."

Swimmer Jayden Hadler won the Sport award for his gold-winning performance in the 200m butterfly at the Australian Championships, a fifth placing in the same event at the Commonwealth Games, and three gold at the 2010 Junior Pan Pacific Championships in Hawaii.

He was also selected for the FINA World Championships in Shanghai.



Dancer Rachael Ward.



Amrutha Murali performs.

NEWS PACK

RECORD SEASON

The 2010-2011 YoungStar season was a record-breaker with the highest number of nominations received in the award's eight-year history. Nominations have risen more than 50 per cent in the past three seasons.

TIME FOR MORE NAMES

Time is running out to nominate a YoungStar for May-June - the first bi-monthly award period of the 2011-2012 season. Entries close on July 1. Visit www.youngstarawards.com.au for further details.