



Three brave boys who inspire us all



John Hamilton

THERE were three kids up there on stage in the Olympic Room at the MCG yesterday afternoon, the very bravest of the brave.

How could you choose between them, asked an anguished audience on the verge of breaking down.

Men reached for their hankies and women cried into their tissues.

The kids were the three finalists for the Child of Courage medal in the Pride of Australia awards.

The judging criteria: "A child 14 years or under who has helped save, or attempted to save, the life of another or overcome personal adversity through determination and strength of character."

Tate Kemp, Brennan Houghton and Caleb Neyenhuis — all three had fulfilled the charter in spades, and in so doing they have enriched the lives of all those privileged to have met them.

The agonising decision was made: Tate Kemp was declared the winner, but there were no losers on this day.

I met him just before the ceremony as he stood with his yellow walker and his mum Sue, dad John and nine-year-old brother Nash.

John is a self employed electrician and the family lives in Gisborne, where the two boys go to Holy Cross primary.

Tate, blonde haired, blue eyed, and aged six has cerebral palsy. But for the past three years this tiny, gutsy boy has tackled two marathons a year in his yellow walker to raise money to get other children with cerebral palsy up and mobile.

So far he has raised \$20,000 for the Cerebral Palsy Education Centre. And, oh yes, he's in training again.

"The boys have entered the marathon on October 12," said John Kemp, "Tate's got his personal trainer and he's into stretching and walking. And he goes to Auskick, too."

Tiny Tate entered his first marathon to inspire other kids.

"He's always bright and always happy, a very positive boy," says his father.

"From the very first marathon, other kids with disabilities joined in. They don't feel isolated any more.

"They think, 'if he can do it, then we can do it, too'."

And so Tate Kemp surged up to the stage yesterday afternoon with his walker to be joined by two other boys, two more shining examples of hope and courage.

Brennan Houghton, who has had to teach himself to walk and ride his bike again after enduring four months in hospital and eight months of chemotherapy, battling a rare form of bone cancer.

And Caleb Neyenhuis, who

made his way up with his white cane. He's aged just seven and lost both his eyes in a brave battle with cancer four years ago. Yet he has a smile to capture any heart.

When Tate was announced the medal winner, he shot across the stage to reach up to the podium and have his say into the microphone, on behalf of all three boys.

"Thank you," he said, simply and with such feeling.

It was too much for MC Rebecca Wilson, who was crying openly. She turned to Peter Blunden, the managing director of the Herald & Weekly Times.

Two more Child of Courage medals will now be struck.

Because how can you separate three true heroes who can inspire us all?



<p>Outstanding Bravery Medal</p>  <p>Yorin Miller and John Kendrick The CFA volunteers risked their lives to rescue a bulldozer driver creating firebreaks during the Black Saturday fires</p>	<p>Community Spirit Medal</p>  <p>Boris Struk After his son Ryan was diagnosed with the disease, Boris formed the Muscular Dystrophy Association, which has raised more than \$20 million and provided extensive respite care</p>	 <p>Child of Courage Medal</p> <p>Tate Kemp The gutsy seven-year-old with cerebral palsy has inspired thousands of others. He's tackled two marathons a year in his walker to raise money to get other children with cerebral palsy up and mobile</p>
<p>Young Leader Medal</p>  <p>Kate Smith Born with the rare cancer neuroblastoma. In high school and university, she has actively supported environmental, social justice and humanitarian causes</p>	<p>Care and Compassion Medal</p>  <p>George Kannourakis The Ballarat oncologist helps his cancer patients by going to see them, instead of getting them to come to him. Patients say he is always smiling and helpful</p>	
<p>Inspiration Medal</p>  <p>Joanne Larkin The teacher, coach, mentor and role model has helped kids and young adults who have an intellectual disability for 15 years</p>	<p>Fair Go Medal</p>  <p>Eileen Pica Migrant Eileen raised four children while studying and working full-time, and all her life has dedicated any spare time to volunteering</p>	
<p>Serving Australia Medal</p>  <p>Hayden Archibald The pilot moved to the US in an exchange program with the US Army, and a year later was sent to Afghanistan, where he was awarded an American Air Medal for heroism</p>	<p>Environment Medal</p>  <p>David Burrell Known to many as the "Roo Whisperer", David has spent 20 years rescuing and rehabilitating Australia's native wildlife, saving more than 30,000 animals</p>	
<p>Emergency Services Medal</p>  <p>Ian Hamill and Andrew Walker These heroic police officers saved hundreds of people in Marysville during the Black Saturday firestorm, pulling families from houses and persuading dozens to flee</p>		



Honoured: (clockwise from back left) Hayden Archibald, Yorin Miller, Andrew Walker, Ian Hamill, Boris Struk, George Kannourakis, Eileen Pica, Tate Kemp, John Kendrick and David Burrell. Pictures: DAVID CAIRD, CHRIS SCOTT



Champs: Child of Courage nominees (from left) Caleb Neyenhuis, Tate Kemp and Brennan Houghton.



Making us proud to be Australian

Shannon Deery

THEY are the pride of their nation — through their achievements they inspire us to make our communities a better place to live.

And yesterday, flanked by family and friends, Victoria's unsung heroes were publicly acknowledged and honoured at an inspirational ceremony at the MCG Olympic Room.

The event was attended by more than 100 Pride of Australia finalists, friends and family, community and business leaders including Lord Mayor Robert Doyle, yachting great John Bertrand, Herald & Weekly Times chairman Julian Clarke and HWT managing director Peter Blunden.

Ten Victorians were named winners in the fifth annual *Herald Sun/Sunday Herald Sun* Pride of Australia awards, and presented with sterling silver medals.

Many choked back tears. But it was little Tate Kemp, 7, who had the whole room drying their eyes as he collected the Child of Courage award.

Battling cerebral palsy, Tate has inspired thousands. For three years, he has tackled two marathons a year in his walker to raise money to get other sufferers motivated.

Outstanding Bravery medal-

heraldsun.com.au
 Watch our touching video tribute as Pride of Australia winners receive their medals at yesterday's ceremony

lists Yorin Miller and John Kendrick said in a year that had seen the bushfires, our worst natural disaster, many shared their acts of bravery.

"It is an amazing privilege and honour to have been nominated, and now to have won, but there are many others out there as well," Mr Miller said.

Community Spirit medallist Boris Struk dedicated his medal to his son, Ryan. He started the Muscular Dystrophy Association after Ryan was diagnosed with the illness at three.

In 20 years the association has raised more than \$20 million and provided more than 350,000 hours of respite to those affected by the disease.

"They told us he'd live until 14, the prognosis was just terrible," he said. "Ryan turns 30 next February and has defied all the odds. He has been the motivation, strength and very reason I am here collecting this award today.

"But these awards are an affirmation that there are a lot of people that do very extraordinary things," he said.

Mr Blunden said each of the 28 finalists, out of more than 700 nominations, were winners.

He said in a year that Victoria had faced the worst natural disaster in history and a tough global economic environment, finalists' selflessness and community spirit was inspirational.

"In these difficult times this is an uplifting occasion," he said. "The people nominated today are a powerful affirmation of the decency and goodwill that is paramount in our community of Victoria."

Pride of Australia supporter and former judge Sarah Murdoch said some winners and nominees would appear in a documentary series, *Pride of Australia with Sarah Murdoch* to be screened in October.

"We've just finished filming the series for Foxtel and I can't wait to bring some of the amazing heroes and their incredible stories to a television audience," she said.

"I've been travelling around Australia for the series and, once again, I've been brought to tears listening to these remarkable stories from people who do what they do purely out of the goodness of their hearts . . . they are like a ray of sunshine, truly inspiring people."