

Media release 3 June 2015

## Father of son killed in ‘one punch’ attack honoured

A South Australian father whose son was killed as the result of a single punch, has been honoured for his efforts to turn the tragedy into an awareness campaign highlighting the dangers of drug and/or alcohol fuelled violence.

Neil Davis' 17 year-old son, Sam, was killed at a friend's party in May 2008, as the result of a single punch, in an unprovoked attack.

Mr Davis is among five finalists in the Unsung Hero category of the 2015 HESTA Community Sector Awards. The Awards recognise those in the community sector who made an exceptional contribution to social justice in Australia, by enhancing the wellbeing of disadvantaged individuals and communities.

"In one moment, with one incomprehensible decision, Sam's life ended and I had to face the loss of my son at such a young age and the reality that no offender would ever be punished," Mr Davis said.

"We faced months of court processes but while going through this and supporting Sam's friends I was able to help them to understand that retribution was not the answer.

"Supporting others became the only way to make Sam's death even remotely comprehensible and for the past seven years I have been attempting to make sure drug and/or alcohol fuelled violence plays no part in any other family having to watch their son or daughter pass away."

As Executive Director of the Sammy D Foundation, Neil Davis leads a team who have impacted more than 50,000 South Australians who have now heard Sam's story.

"We introduce starting points for parents to talk to their children about death, loss, this tragedy and the reality of losing someone from a single punch," he said.

"The story leaves a lasting impression because Sam, as well as the person who took Sam's life, could have been anybody. This is a story every person needs to hear because the possibility of it happening is so real and the result so tragic."

Neil Davis began the Sammy D Foundation with his wife Nat Cook — from their home in Woodcroft — as a small, volunteer organisation, that has grown to include mentoring young people who may be struggling to cope with violent backgrounds.

"We link these young people to sports or community clubs and try to support them in other ways, as many don't have family support, are foster children or have limited social networks," he said.

"We want to ensure that young people learn from Sam's death and that the Foundation, named in his honour, continues to raise awareness about the risks of that one, deadly punch."

The Unsung Hero Award winner will receive \$5,000 in a **ME EveryDay** Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant. There are two other categories — Social Impact and Organisation. The Social Impact winner will also receive \$5,000 in a **ME EveryDay** Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant. The Organisation winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant, also courtesy of proud awards sponsor **ME**.

Finalists will be flown to Sydney for the awards dinner on 25 June 2015, where the winners will be revealed.

The HESTA Community Sector Awards are presented in partnership with the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) as part of the ACOSS National Conference 2015 and have been sponsored by ME since they started in 2012.

Learn more about the awards at [hestaawards.com.au](http://hestaawards.com.au)

**MEDIA CONTACT: Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901 or Aileen Muldoon 0419 112 503**

**HESTA is the super fund for health and community services, with more than 800,000 members and \$32 billion in assets.**

Issued by H.E.S.T. Australia Ltd ABN 66 006 818 695 AFSL No. 235249 Trustee of Health Employees Superannuation Trust Australia (HESTA) ABN 64 971 749 321.