

Frances Clarke Memorial Awards 2020**Issue Date:** 25 August**Media Diary: 10am - Thursday 8 October, Government House, Wellington**

The Wellington Down Syndrome Association (WDSA) has announced three recipients for its 2020 Frances Clarke Memorial Awards. This is the 30th anniversary of the awards and we are excited to have **Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield** scheduled to attend.

The Frances Clarke awards recognise special achievements of people born with Down syndrome in the greater Wellington region. They are hosted annually by The Governor-General, Her Excellency the Rt Hon **Dame Patsy Reddy**. In 2020, our guest speaker is: Dr Ashley Bloomfield, the chief executive of the Ministry of Health and the country's Director-General of Health. The Awards were instituted in January 1990 in memory of a special little girl, Frances Clarke. She was born in 1985 with Down syndrome and died four years later from Leukaemia.

This year's three award winners are:

8-16 Year Category: Ava Saba is a fiercely independent and astoundingly creative young woman from **Masterton**. She has a passion for dance. Ava has gained highly commended to level 4 in the Dance New Zealand Made Syllabus in Jazz and Hip Hop. She is an active member of StarJam and also performs in a wide range of creative arts.



16 and Above Category: Michael Holdsworth from **Wellington** received the very first Frances Clarke award 30 years ago and he continues to excel. Michael has been working in the IHC library for the last 26 years. He mentors people who come into the IHC library on work placements and also helps the library team with technology. He started playing the piano as a child and has continued to play throughout his adult life. Michael has played the piano for the Frances Clarke Memorial awards almost every year the awards have been held - 30 years this year. Michael also has a wealth of information about sports and has been very active with Special Olympics.



Community Category: Gordon Cumming believes in providing a hand up for the special needs community --- not a handout. He has been instrumental in assisting the Independence Collective develop a beer brewing micro enterprise called Change Maker based out of **Kapiti**. This successes story was featured in the Unbreakable Documentary on TVNZ. Gordon has plans to replicate this success with collaborations in other parts of NZ and the world.

The Wellington Down Syndrome Association is a non-profit organisation that supports, educates and advocates for families and people with Down syndrome in the greater Wellington Region. WDSA is run completely by volunteers. All recipients and their parents have given permission for their details to be published. Media are very welcome to attend. For more information and to confirm attendance, contact:

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