

MEDIA RELEASE

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Business award finalist inspires global adventures



Ten years ago marketing powerhouse Justine Curtis took a year off to help Tibetan refugees in India start a new life, and since then has raised almost \$5 million for some of Australia's most inspirational charities.

After more than a decade working in the corporate sector, Justine left her job, went travelling and found herself living near the home of the Dalai Lama in northern India, teaching English to newly resettled refugees.

Blown away by their dedication to finding a life free of persecution, big-hearted Justine wanted to find a more permanent way to help the Tibetan community – and when she couldn't find an established avenue to do so, she decided to start her own.

Seven years on, not-for-profit adventure fundraising agency Inspired Adventures has helped more than 1,500 Australians take 130 adventures to all corners of the globe, raising millions for charities as diverse as Kids Helpline, Amnesty International Australia and the Leukaemia Foundation.

Now, Inspired Adventures has been named as a finalist in the Community and Social Services category of the City of Sydney's prestigious Business Awards.

"Volunteering in northern India was the most incredible thing I've ever done – seeing the commitment of these refugees to learning English was inspirational and humbling at the same time, and I knew that I had to find a way to continue to give back," said Justine.

"When I returned to Australia I joined a fundraising agency and raised \$30,000 while climbing the highest freestanding mountain in the world, and this told me that I really could do anything – so I took the plunge and started my own small business.

"At the start it was just me, on my own in my living room at home – but now we've got eight amazing staff in our office in Surry Hills and we've managed to raise nearly \$5 million for an incredible range of life-changing charities and causes.

"It's such a privilege to be a finalist in the City of Sydney awards and to be acknowledged for what we do in the local business community. Even though we've got a global reach, we are still very much a Surry Hills business.

"I hope that our involvement in this year's program raises the profile of Inspired Adventures and makes more Sydneysiders aware that there are so many wonderful opportunities to experience the world and make a difference right on their doorstep."



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Inspired Adventures designs, manages and leads charity challenges, from trekking expeditions in outback Australia to cycling adventures in Vietnam, for people of all ages and fitness levels.

Participants have the opportunity to experience an incredible adventure and give back to disadvantaged communities and important causes at the same time, by fundraising a certain amount for a specific charity.

Some of the adventures run in recent months include the Great Wall of China Challenge raising money for the Black Dog Institute; the Kilimanjaro Challenge for Alzheimer's Australia NSW; and the Sumatran Jungle Challenge for Greenpeace.

Every adventure takes around 12 months of planning and fundraising, with each participant raising an average \$4,500 for their chosen charity.

Inspired Adventures also runs special challenges to coincide with international events – in April, they are helping 100 runners compete in the London and Paris marathons, hopefully raising \$1 million for worthwhile projects by important charities in Australia.

“Over the coming years, we’re going to focus on helping more Australians take part in some of the world’s leading marathons – which is a great way to raise significant funds for our charities,” said Justine.

“We’d also love to start our own foundation so we can select a few projects that we contribute to on an ongoing basis – we really want to be able to leave a lasting legacy.”

Inspired Adventures is one of eight finalists in the Community and Social Services category of this year’s Business Awards – the biggest and best yet, with 640 businesses nominated and almost 67,000 votes across 22 categories.

The winners will be announced by Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP at the 2011 City of Sydney Business Awards Gala Dinner hosted by Lisa Wilkinson on Tuesday, 13 September.

Tickets are available for purchase now: www.sydneybusinessawards.com.au

Media Contacts:

City of Sydney: Keeley Irvin (02) 9265 9106 or kirvin@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Lord Mayor: Matt Levinson 0427 044 768 or mlevinson@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

