

Pride of Scotland winners announced

Two of the Pride of Scotland winners who will be honoured at the Awards ceremony on Thursday night are based in Edinburgh.

Sean Donnelly from the Clown Doctors will be recognised with the Community Hero award and Ruth Moss will receive the Special Recognition Award.

Ruth's daughter Sophie Parkinson took her own life at the age of 13. Since then Ruth has devoted her time to raising awareness of the dangers of social media for young people.

The 2023 TSB Community Heroes are the ClownDoctors, a troupe of fun-loving clowns who bring sunshine to children's wards and hospices across Scotland. Their remarkable efforts have had a profound and positive impact on both young and old people during the toughest days of their lives.



CLOWNDOCTORS TSB COMMUNITY HERO AWARD

Proving laughter really can be the best medicine for seriously ill children in hospital

For more than 25 years, a troupe of fun-loving clowns have been helping to bring sunshine to thousands of sick children across Scotland. Dr Cous Cous, Dr Crumble and Dr Wallop are just three of 18 talented performers who currently travel all over the country, raising smiles and bringing comfort to kids in hospitals, hospices and special care.

Wearing bright yellow coats and shiny red noses, the clowns have brought joy to thousands of children during the toughest days of their short lives. The group operates in 27 hospitals, as well as hospices, special schools and care homes across Scotland, raising smiles from Inverness to the Borders.

The charity was founded by Magdalena Schamberger in 1997. She also launched the Elderflower programme for patients with dementia. Austrian-born Magdalena was at theatre school in Paris when she fell in love with clowning and Scottish performers and after graduating, followed them back to Scotland.

Magdalena stepped back from the charity in 2017, but the Clowndoctors are still going strong under new leadership, and have now visited more than 120,000 people in total. The father of seven-year-old Ruaridh, who contracted a brain infection while being treated for flu, said: "He absolutely loves you. You are an amazing bunch of people. You filled us with a belly full of laughter over the last 15 weeks while we were in hospital."



Ruth Moss lost her daughter Sophie Parkinson in March 2014

when she tragically took her own life, aged just 13 years old. Sophie had been self-harming from the age of 12 and had been looking at self-harm and suicide websites. She had also had online relationships with older men and looked at violent pornography. Ruth urges parents to get internet savvy, to put blocks in place on inappropriate websites, and to seek expert help. PHOTO © Dave Johnston

RUTH MOSS SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Mum who lost her daughter to suicide now campaigns and raises money for online safety and awareness

Ruth's daughter Sophie was 13 when she took her own life in 2014. She had been exposed to unsuitable material online before she died, including violent pornography and sites promoting self-harm and suicide.

Despite her own emotional pain, Ruth, 50, from Dundee, has gone on to be a tireless volunteer for the NSPCC – helping educate people around digital safety.

She backed the charity's Wild West Web campaign, raising awareness of the need for social networks to have a duty of care towards young users and speaking to the media at roundtable events and press briefings in a bid to stop other families suffering the loss of a child.

Ruth, a nurse, also runs a tribute fund for ChildLine in memory of Sophie – and has raised more than £19,000.

She says: "There are things on the internet that would never be allowed to be printed in any newspaper or you would never see on the BBC or any other TV station because it could do such harm – so why is it easily accessible online?"

"All children are vulnerable and, as your children get older, it is impossible as a parent to control what they see online. The onus should be on the companies who make billions out of

social media and other platforms to control what is on them in regards to removing harm.

“If speaking about what happened to our family means even one child is protected, then I’m happy to tell our story.”

Awards Ceremony

The TSB sponsor the awards and the glittering ceremony will be held at the Assembly Rooms in the company of Elaine C Smith and Sanjeev Kohli.

People of all ages and from all walks of life will be recognised and celebrated for their awe-inspiring achievements – acts of courage, boundless compassion or tireless campaigning.

Elaine C Smith is delighted to be back at the helm of the Awards. She said “Life is tough and we must grab the happiness when we can. A steady stream of awfulness emerges through 24-hour news and social media but Pride of Scotland highlights the good there is in the world.

“This year’s winners don’t just give those around them a pocketful of happiness, they give them bucket loads and that’s why we need to gie them laldy and celebrate their achievements in style.”

Co-host Sanjeev Kohli said, “I am thrilled to be presenting the 2023 Pride of Scotland Awards alongside Elaine. This year’s winners have truly exemplified the resilience, compassion, and determination that make Scotland proud – it’s going to be a very special night indeed.”

Speaking on behalf of the Awards’ partner TSB, Gary Jones, Customer Delivery Director, said, “At TSB, we’re delighted to support the Pride of Scotland Awards, and it’s been a real pleasure for me to be part of this year’s judging panel. There were so many inspirational stories from all over Scotland, it

was incredibly tough to choose between them.

“The communities we serve are at the heart of what we do at TSB, so we’re particularly proud to support the TSB Community Hero award, and this year recognise the outstanding efforts of the ClownDoctors, who have worked tirelessly for over 25 years to help bring smiles to the faces of thousands of sick children across Scotland.”

The Daily Record Pride of Scotland Awards with TSB will be filmed and available to watch from 28 June, via the official Pride of Scotland social media channels: @prideofscotland. For further information and to stay up-to-date with the latest news and announcements, please visit the official website at www.prideofscotland.org.

This year’s awards will be a star-studded event, with a host of celebrities set to attend on the night to celebrate the country’s heroes, such as David McGowan, Graeme Souness, Ruby Barker, Libby Clegg, Charlene Boyd, Gavin Mitchell, Janey Godley, Joyce Falconer, Laurie Brett, Kirsty Hanson, Martin Dougan, Paige Turley, Laura Anderson, Tallia Storm, Stephen Clegg, Sanjeev Kohli, Elaine C Smith, Fred MacAulay, Gayle Telfer Stevens, Gary Meikle, Richard Whitehead, Kelly-Ann Woodland, Kirsty Hanson, Anna Campbell and Chris Forbes.



PRIDE OF SCOTLAND HOSTS

Pictured is Pride of Scotland Hosts – Scottish Entertainment Legends Elaine C Smith and Sanjeev Kholi showcasing the award

Pic Ross Turpie / Daily Record Sunday Mail Reach PLC