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An inspiration to us all

It's one of life's great ironies that beautiful things often come from great tragedy.

The small town of Kyogle was rocked last year when three young boys were killed in a car accident, a tragedy that left 18 year-old Trevina Walker and three of her close friends reeling.

The incident inspired the four friends to establish Kyogle Youth Ventures (KYV), a group that provides everything from camping trips to friendship and advice for local young people in need of a little direction.

"We were all real close to the boys that died in the accident and it made us realise how important it is for young people to have positive experiences and people in their life," Trevina said. "We could see people crying out for help and in a small town like Kyogle we all have to help and support one another. That's what community is all about."

The Northern Rivers community honoured Trevina for her vision and hard work on Tuesday night, when she was named winner of the Indigenous Youth Support 13-18 Years category at the 2004 Kids in Community Awards.

"I was shocked and amazed when they read my name - I couldn't stop shaking," Trevina said. "This award is for everyone who has helped us develop KYV and for our three friends who died. This will always be a reminder of what they inspired."



Winners of the 2004 Kids in Community Awards with guest speaker John Coutis (centre) and ex-Wallaby Ben Darwin at the awards presentation on Tuesday night. Inset: Kyogle's Trevina Walker, who won the Indigenous Support 13-18 Years category, with John Coutis.

As well as being a founding member of KYV Trevina helped run an Edmund Rice Camp in Penrith

for disadvantaged young people from Sydney's west. She also assisted at a similar camp in Mebbin late last year with nine Kyogle youngsters, all of whom she still mentors today.

Whilst her community work is her passion, Trevina is also a keen artist, studying computers and art at TAFE, whilst also making Aboriginal art with her Bundjalung father.

Trevina's story is indicative of the calibre of young people

who were recognised at the awards on Tuesday night. Her experience also has parallels to that of guest speaker John Coutis, who was born with a disability that rendered his legs useless. He defied medical, refused to die, and today is a happily married father of one who travels the world inspiring others.

Like Trevina John's achievements came at great personal cost, and on Tuesday

night his exhilarating speech, peppered with deeply moving and humorous anecdotes of his life, left the room speechless.

"You have to believe in yourself and know that anything is possible if you put your mind to it," John said. "Motivation is for a moment and inspiration is for a lifetime. If I can inspire just one person tonight, then I've achieved what I've set out to do."

→ Full list of winners page 4.

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