

# HEADLINERS

## Be inspired by Beth

### Markus laments the lack of inspirational stories about young people in the news

You are 14-years-old and you come across a serious accident. Would YOU know what to do?



Beth Mccafferty did. Her story involved helping a man who nearly lost his life in a road accident.

And did Beth's brave and inspirational story make the headlines...no it didn't.

That's why Headliners is here – to get stories like Beth's out there. If you asked random youths about their opinion of the media's view of young people it would most likely be negative, but why?

Is it because the news only reports disapproving stories about adolescents? But what about worthwhile young people's organizations? Do they get very little coverage because what they do is not considered hard news?

The media covers so many depressing reports about 'jobs' 'hoodies' and 'pests.' Is it any wonder so many young people end up getting into trouble when they are branded as trouble-makers anyway?

Maybe there are actually young people out there who think the only way to get acknowledged is to create havoc in their community? Could these same young people be craving attention, but know that doing something worthwhile and inspirational just wouldn't cut it?

In a nationwide Headliners research project into how the media portrays young people it was discovered that there is much more bad press about young people than good. Newspapers do not run enough stories about young people that don't spend their time hanging around street corners, fighting, drinking or taking drugs.

Maybe if newspapers told stories of courage, achievement and selflessness more young people would read papers. Communities would benefit because young people would feel appreciated and inspired rather than patronised and invisible.

### Beth's story

At only fourteen, Beth has been involved in [St. John Ambulance](#) since she was around 11-years-old. In her role in St. John's she is a cadet who learns how to apply different types of first aid; bandages, CPR etc. They do all they can until emergency services arrive and attend events such as; concerts, Halloween night, turning on the Christmas lights etc., where large numbers of people attend.

Every year there is an inspection and a competition where cadets compete in their knowledge of methods of applying first-aid. Beth was involved with a serious car and motorbike accident. It took place in Derry. The car had crashed into a motorbike and Beth's first reaction was, "Are they dead or alive?"

The sight of the accident shocked Beth for a few minutes but she knew right away what to do. The people were completely co-operative with her and recognised that she knew what she was doing.

"I guess I was just at the right place at the right time," she said.

This is how she described the accident: "It was serious enough, it was a motorbike accident! I remember a really big bang then a big flash, my friend squealed and I looked down the road and saw the motorbike flying down the road with no-one on it, it was then I knew something was wrong. When I got down there the man was lying there and there was a car in the middle of the road. The driver was really badly shook up and it was him who called the emergency services (the ambulance and the police). I remember introducing myself and I think he said help me please.

"I remember kneeling down beside him, it was raining and dark so it was really hard to see. I put him in the recovery position and kept talking to him. A crowd started to gather. The casualty was able to tell me what had happened and I was able to see where he was hurt."

The emergency services took 10-15 minutes, first the doctor, second the police and then the ambulance. Beth applied basic first aid which made a huge difference to the injured person's survival.

Beth's story makes me proud to be her friend. That night she felt immense satisfaction about helping in the accident. She received many thanks from people at the scene and from friends and family afterwards. If only her story had made the newspaper it could have influenced so many other young people.

Beth shared her thoughts on young people who have made a difference but who don't have a chance to share their story. We asked: Do you feel that more young people like yourself should get to tell their story in the media?

She said: "Yes, I think if they've had a really good achievement or have done something really good then I don't see why they shouldn't tell others about it. It's not like I revived the man or anything. I really just reassured him, calmed him down and helped him get comfortable until the ambulance arrived but I know it made a difference."

### Vox-pop

Even though this magazine will raise awareness of Beth and the work of St. John Ambulance we took her story to the streets to inspire other young people.

Only a few knew about St. John Ambulance and most of them have never had first-aid training but nearly all of those interviewed would want to help in some way if they came across an accident.

There wasn't a selfish 'job' or 'hoodie' among them!

### We asked:

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**1. Do you know what St. John Ambulance is and what it involves?**

**2. Would you know what to do in a serious car accident?**

**3. Have you ever had first-aid training?**

**4. Would you ever consider joining St. John Ambulance? If yes: Why?**

**Aisling (15)** 1. It's a thing for people to go and get first-aid training so they know how to help if they see an accident or someone getting hurt. 2. Ring an ambulance and do what you can to help. 3. Yes. 4. I am already a member and I really like it.

**Carl (15)** 1. No 2. Yes, phone an ambulance. 3. Yes, at cadets. 4. Maybe, because I am a nice person.

**Christen (15)** 1. No 2. No 3. No 4. No

**Christopher (14)** 1. It involves helping people who have been sick or injured on the streets and they give them medical attention and bring them to the hospital. 2. First of all check if the person is breathing, ring an ambulance and put them in the recovery position. 3. I had it twice in school, once in primary school and then in secondary. 4. I would consider it, because I'd like to help people who are injured or if they need any medical help and I like the satisfaction of helping people.

**Dearbhla (15)** 1. No. 2. Ring the ambulance. 3. No. 4. Aye, it sounds fun and my friend does it.

**Gemma (15)** 1. No. 2. Ring an ambulance 3. No 4. Aye, cause it sounds like good craic.

**Jessica (14)** 1. People helping people. 2. No. 3. No. 4. Maybe. I wouldn't rule it out.

**Justin (14)** 1. No. 2. Run away. 3. In primary school I did. 4. No, because I'm lazy and I don't like joining things.

#### **About this article**

This article was written by Markus Pliejzier (14)

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