



Early intervention is vital

IT WAS a great honour to be the High Sheriff of the East Riding of Yorkshire last year. The most relevant advice I received was ‘to encourage and thank people but most importantly listen and learn’.

I realised that I’d lived in a ‘bubble’ and had a very fortunate life, but as High Sheriff I met young people facing enormous challenges. For those few lucky identified children from dysfunctional, wrecked families three support systems that offer them hope are schools, charities and the police.

Schools are involved in so much more than educating children. They also provide pastoral care, counselling and life skills for all the family.

Charities need volunteers and funding to do their vital work. In the East Riding of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, High Sheriffs, the Police and Fire and Rescue Service have formed the Tribune Trust which provides small but essential

grants. It was a particular privilege to see the hard work and commitment of those volunteers, mostly unseen and unacknowledged, who work with young people. The charitable sector is critical to the smooth running of the country and, in particular, to the lives of disadvantaged vulnerable young people.

The Humberside Police run various projects to engage young people: Lifestyle is a summer activity where children help their communities; Night Challenge is a 13-mile night walk, which motivates and boosts a young person’s self-esteem; the Police Early Intervention teams in Hull and Bridlington help vulnerable disadvantaged young people on the cusp of offending.

The police cadets are extremely successful at engaging with young people. Angel Roberts, my High Sheriff’s cadet, is an excellent example of how the cadets can inspire and develop a young person.



Photo: Hull News

With Deputy Chief Constable Chris Rowley, Humberside Police, and Angel Roberts, High Sheriff’s police cadet

Angel hopefully will fulfil her ambition to become a police officer.

Stacey’s story is an example of schools, charities and the police working together to help a disadvantaged young person, with a successful outcome: Stacey was 13 and came from a severely dysfunctional family. She self-harmed, offered herself on dating websites and went missing for days. Stacey’s case was referred to a youth worker, Gemma Wallace, by the missing persons team at Humberside Police, whose main concern was child sexual exploitation. Gemma got to know Stacey and applied to the Tribune Trust for a small grant to cover the cost of buying two bikes for Stacey and her mum to get to army cadet meetings. Buying the bikes had a dramatic and positive effect on the wellbeing of Stacey’s family. She attends two cadet meetings a week and has returned to school full-time. She has not gone missing for months, an encouraging outcome.

At the High Sheriff’s Awards ceremony, I was able to thank and acknowledge the volunteers and the emergency services whom I had met during the year. Most importantly, I congratulated members of the Early Intervention teams and Gemma Wallace for making such a difference to the lives of vulnerable children.

My most compelling impression is that early intervention can dramatically change disadvantaged young people’s lives, so reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

◆ Deborah Rosenberg
High Sheriff of the East Riding of Yorkshire 2018-19



Photo: Hull News

With Gemma Wallace, East Riding Voluntary Action Services