



Jayne Massey

ST. VINCENT'S SCHOOL

The real life Super-heroes following in the footsteps of John Hulley

In Issue 26 of My Planet Liverpool we featured an article on John Hulley, Liverpool's first Super-hero and connected his story with the 'Fab 4000' comic which emerged from St. Vincent's School for the Visually Impaired, located in West Derby. We talked about one of the school's students, Jayne Massey and as a result we wanted to learn more about the school and its creative curriculum that provided both the skills and opportunities for Jayne to enhance her strengths and follow her chosen pathway to College. What we found out is as extraordinary as John Hulley's achievements

SINCE 1850, St Vincent's has had a tradition of excellence in the education and care of children with a visual impairment. It is a residential specialist school for the visually impaired (VI) which has been part of the local community since its foundation. The school is graded as OUTSTANDING by Ofsted for both school and residential provision and has received both the Freedom of the City of Liverpool in 2016 and a Corporate Award from Liverpool John Moores University. St Vincent's is a unique centre of excellence for teaching, learning, research and innovation and is truly a jewel in the crown for the City Region.

St Vincent's delivers the National Curriculum, mobility and independence teaching and learning, but simultaneously runs an 'ENRICHED' curriculum supporting individual pupil strengths and the signposting of those strengths towards further learning, opportunities and employment. This enriched curriculum is focussed through the creative mediums such as music, art, dance, drama, sport, technology, environmental studies and, indeed, comic writing. Current students have developed their own 'Fab 4000' stories and are sharing them on the schools internet radio station, accessed via the school website www.stvin.com.

This 'enrichment' frames how Jayne Massey, who had suffered bullying at a previous school before enrolling at St Vincent's, was supported and encouraged by the school to become the Young Lord Mayor, sing with the school choir for both Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, alongside St. Vincent Scouts and Duke of Edinburgh pupils, and to also perform at Canada House, London for the 'Never Such Innocence' Great War Commemorations. Furthermore, Jayne also sang with the school choir and Charlie Landsborough at the Liverpool Philharmonic and at the Cavern Club with American band 'East of Eli'. Jayne has quite an impressive CV – and there are more inspiring stories about other St Vincent's 'super-heroes'?

Whilst visiting the school with Robin Baynes of the Liverpool Heartbeat Children's Charity, My Planet Liverpool learnt of the encouraging and inspiring stories of Reanne Rackatoo, who secured her position as a world class and British VI rock climbing champion. We also heard of Jamie Russell-White, who has recently completed his music degree at Liverpool Hope University and of Jane Readfearn, whose own book 'Onions in the Washing Machine', telling of how to deal with sightloss, has just been published. Then there is the amazing

— NEW RECRUITS —



TOM PICKERING



RYAN BINGHAM



LIBBIE BURNS



GEMMA ELLISON



JAYNE LANCASTER



ANNA CUMMINGS

BWM PLACE WELLBEING OF STAFF AT TOP OF AGENDA

Some professional firms are only just catching on to the importance of the wellbeing of their staff, while others cottoned on several years ago and are reaping the benefits.

Peter Taaffe, managing partner of BWM, has long recognised the benefits of making sure his team was happy and motivated and that can only be achieved by taking pro-active steps.

Thanks to his progressive outlook, BWM enjoys a happy working environment and a high rate of staff retention.

Centred around the wellness strategy is a concept it calls 'Lunch & Learn', where staff can attend sessions and seminars featuring external experts on many aspects of professional and personal development and general wellbeing. A diverse range of practitioners have been invited to offer their expertise. One of the more recent sessions featured 'Laughter Yoga', a therapeutic method that has been established in Liverpool for a number of years.

Another recent topic covered was around the importance of your 'personal brand' and how it could help your professional development. Staff have also had the opportunity to sample holistic wellness techniques such as reiki and Indian Head Massage.



Above: BWM Partners and Emer

BWM is also a dog-friendly office and Peter himself often brings his own 'labradoodle' Emer into work with him. He said:

"Key to the wellness process is the co-operation of your team. All the sessions are voluntary because it is important people feel the freedom to choose what is right for them. You cannot create a perfect working environment, there will always be pressure points and professional and interpersonal issues that have to be dealt with. What you can do is create an environment where people feel they

can raise issues as and when they pop up and feel supported in their own development. I think we have really achieved that here at BWM."



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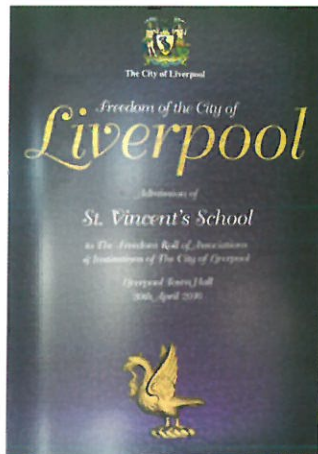
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Students own ceramic creation

Ben Laidler, a teenager who is partially sighted and has Asperger's syndrome. Ben is now set up 'ZAPZ' a business that provides a party bus containing computer games and a host of other fun activities for the enjoyment of children and young people aged from 5 to 18. Last, but certainly not least, we were told the story of the talented **Rainbow Mbuangi**, who has been with St Vincent's since Primary School and has recently secured a position in the British Visually Impaired football squad.



Freedom of the City

In the next issue of My Planet Liverpool we will be learning more about their achievements and the exciting times that lie ahead for all the students at St Vincent's. The "Fab 4000" is expanding, with more real life comic heroes ready to make a difference for the common good of others. With projects such as pop garden and horticulture, students are making a difference, creating their very own garden centre and growing their own produce in order to raise funding to help others.

The 'Fab 4000' story continues. The school's real-life heroes are achieving qualifications in BTEC Life Skills, BTEC Work Skills, BTEC Music, BTEC Performing Arts and many more. Students are exploring the world of work by participating in work placements which will lead to jobs organised by Dave Swanston, the forward thinking and inspiring Head of Enrichment and Head of Post 16. Dave said, "Here at St Vincent's we want to prepare our students for the world of work by giving them opportunities to develop and experience new things. We are showing them that they 'can do' – a message that is embedded in Every Child Matters".

Through the creativity of students the school has reverse inclusion, with students leading and teaching others. Gina Heydon, the Head of Music at St Vincent's, is excited about making connections with All Saints Primary School's Headmaster Jeremy Barnes and Dido Fest's Ruth Gould. Together they will work on new exciting creative projects to encourage reverse inclusion. At St Vincent's,

individual pupil strengths and creativity are nurtured within both the National Curriculum and the enriched curriculum, embracing interwoven vocational strategies. The school encourages individual strength flight paths towards better opportunities and outcomes.

St Vincent's also has a lot of musical talent, which the students share – for example, by creating their own musical CD to sell for Enterprise Day and performing a concert for Sightbox at the Duke of Westminster Estate, with Sightbox ambassador Angela Williams. Students enjoy performing and listening to 'East of Eli' an American band who take time to fly over to Liverpool to visit them. Our super heroes also enjoyed having their own composition about friendship played on BBC radio.

With friends such as Rotary, PALS, The Merseyside Police, Victorian Albert Museum, BBC Tom Walker, past St Vincent's pupils, along with patrons, Lord Alton, Baroness Cox, Dr Tony Harvey, East of Eli and Charlie Landsborough, I am sure you will agree that the future of St Vincent's "Fab 4000" is an exciting one. There is a vast amount of extra-curricular activities on offer at the school. Ceramics, the Ukulele Group, Choir, Vocal Group, Samba Band, Student Bands, Football and Swimming are all popular and students are currently working on the first ever 'irugby' ball, which will allow visually impaired students to play rugby.

None of this would be possible however, without the forward thinking, encouraging words, kind hearted and caring Headmaster of St Vincent's School, Dr John Patterson. These are his words of wisdom:

"We want to share our best practice for all visually impaired (VI) pupils, aligning with the UN sustainable development goals and starting with the Mersey Region. To open up opportunities, we deliver innovative entrepreneurial and creative teaching and learning experiences for all VI pupils to attend each Wednesday across the year. A parent's choice does not have to be mainstream or specialist, a creative mix of the two can offer a way forward to better outcomes and the best of both worlds. Reaching out to visually impaired pupils nationally and internationally with Sightbox, www.sightbox.org.uk twitter @sightboxuk, provides the widest of learning experiences and the added value for our pupils to act as the trainers of Vi pupil trainers internationally. Such creative thinking has in part informed the department for education's decision in awarding St Vincent's, in collaboration with LJM, the right to provide the teaching qualification needed to be a teacher of VI - cementing St Vincent's as a world leader in teaching learning research and innovation for and with VI communities, from which our pupils amass significant learning and opportunity."



Dr John Patterson

St Vincent's is certainly a vibrant school and if you know of anyone with a visual impairment of school age (6 -16 years) it is worth popping down to Yew Tree Lane, West Derby to experience the range of creative and enrichment focussed activities on offer at the schools free summer camp run between 13th and 17th August.

Contact **David Swanston** davids@stvin.com or the school office office@stvin.com to learn more about sessions that include outdoor adventure, swimming, media, sports, cooking, creative writing, ICT and technology, arts and ceramics.

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Follow the school on Twitter @StvincentsL12 and @sightboxuk

THE NEXT BIG STEP

Liverpool Heartbeat proud to be the chosen charity of The Next Big Step

Liverpool city centre Cabaret Lounge, the Green Room,
was the location for Liverpool's largest talent show.

The popular venue hosted the event over three days, with two heats on
the 11th and 12th July producing twelve finalists plus a judge's 'wild card' to perform
at the Grand Final, which took place on Thursday 19th July.

"The Next Big Step" is owned and professionally produced by Nicola Broadley, a popular Liverpool singer and actress, and the competition was open to all artists from 10yrs old to 25 yrs old, with dance groups being asked to keep to a maximum of 10 people per group.

This amazing competition had attracted the 'Best of the Best' of young Merseyside Talent to perform and compete for the fabulous winning prize of £1,000, plus a trophy, along with the unbelievable reward of a 'Guest spot' on one of the fantastic Green Room Cabaret Lounge's future shows and the receiving from industry professionals of staging and production advice prior to their appearance.

A packed house enjoyed a full sparkling night of entertainment, accompanied by a luxury buffet, as an enthralled audience were kept entertained by each of the thirteen finalists, all giving quality performances. The evening also benefitted a deserving local charity, with all monies raised being donated to the wonderful Liverpool Heartbeat Children's Charity.

The thirteen acts that competed in the Grand Final were as follows:

Sam Darby
Abigail Wenton-Parry
The Works Academy
Daisy Colebourn
Girl Talk • Helen Maw
Bethany Hamm
T'mya Fyffe • Astrid
Rebecca Seddon
Ria McCoy
Sarah Spencer • NDTs

The winner of the competition was 11 year-old **T'mya Fyffe**, with Rebecca Seddon being awarded second place and Ria McCoy taking third spot.

A massive thank you has to go to Nicola Broadley and everyone else who was involved with this fantastic event.

The judges; Head Judge Roger Hannah (renowned for his major theatre productions), Joe Spear (from Wack Pack and a former Contestant in Big Brother), Leon J Hudson (Actor and Contemporary Dancer), Mark Hindle (actor in the West End production of the Lion King), Livvy K



T'mya Fyffe (winner)

(singer) and local businessman Ossie Omar, who all gave their time voluntarily. Nicola, Roger Hannah and Mark Hindle also ran a professional workshop on the day of the final, sharing a wealth of entertainment, knowledge and support to all the contestants.

Family members and volunteers from Elektrik Apple Company pulled out all the stops to make it a very memorable evening. The buffet was second to none and the raffle helped to boost the overall takings of the event, with many great prizes being donated on each of the three evenings of the competition.

The host and 'frontman' for the competition was the fantastic Michael Bailey, who performed a spectacular role in entertaining the crowd throughout the evening, with his jokes and singing – surely another 'Bruce' in the making!!!

Cameraman 'Big' Mike Broadley also assisted the artists in setting up their microphones and going through all their sound check-ups, before filming all of the very talented acts as they each performed on stage, while Liverpool Heartbeat's own John Rudd took an alternate set of photos of the evening. The backstage Manager was the lovely Tracey Yoxall, who kept everyone calm behind the scenes, helping the artists contain their nerves and being instrumental in making sure that the show ran smoothly.

The fantastic Green Room also gave the venue for the event free of charge, so helping Liverpool Heartbeat in so many ways. Robin Baynes MBE founder of the charity said, "We at Liverpool Heartbeat cannot thank the

management and staff at the Green Room enough. Their generosity and help was amazing. The donation we received from Nicola's organising of The Next Big Step has help to launch The John Hulley Foundation Fund, which is raising funds to pay for a John Hulley Statue in tribute to the man who gave so much of his time to helping with the health and fitness of Liverpool youngsters during the mid-1800s."



(L-R): Livvy K, Mark Hindle, Abigail Wenton-Parry, Michael Bailey, T'mya Fyffe (winner), Leon J Hudson (partially hidden behind T'mya), Rebecca Seddon, Ria McCoy and Joe Spear.