



Young Ambassadors

Lions of MD 105 gathered in Dudley recently to honour the truly inspirational young people who were hoping to become the Young Ambassador of the 21st Century. Lion editor, Nicky Rogers, reports.

Held on the same day as the Academy Awards in Los Angeles (but without anything approaching the Warren Beatty/Faye Dunaway bit) the finals of the Young Ambassador of the 21st Century served to remind everyone of just what outstandingly thoughtful, confident, driven and funny individuals some young people are. Remember, all the entrants are aged between 15 and 18. This is an age where the increasing pressure of school work has to be top priority, they are starting to feel their way in the world, form opinions, socialise and try to work out their future paths.

The Young Ambassador scheme operates throughout Europe and aims to recognise, encourage and support young people who are actively involved in the welfare of the community. Candidates are selected by a Lions, Leos or Lioness Club and each Club is responsible for



PICTURED: Lewis Baillie (centre) winner of the Shipshape Award with James Lingfield to his right and Mike Field, one of the judges, to his left

THE 2017 FINALISTS

• Georgia Allison	Crowborough Lions Club	District SE
• Lewis Baillie	Teesdale Lions Club	District NE
• Beth Bowring	Crediton and District Lions Club	District SW
• James Curtis	Milton Keynes Stony Stratford Lions Club	District A
• William Ellison	Retford Lions Club	District E
• Alex Flanagan	Shirley Lions Club	District M
• Chelsea Gibson	Cashel Lions Club	District I
• Susan Hart	Great Yarmouth Lions Club	District EA
• Megan Montford	Gnosall Lions Club	District BS
• Rosie Nicholls	Jersey Lions Club	District D
• Lizzie O'Brien	Thornbury Lions	District W
• Leah Page-Stott	Selby Lions Club	District C
• Victoria Stammers	Birchwood Lions Club	District BN

actively sponsoring the candidate as they progress through the levels of the competition.

So even before they got to this MD final stage, all the entrants had won at Club and District levels; the winner of the MD final goes on to the European final held at Europa Forum.

All finalists win a bursary of £500 and the overall winner receives a further bursary of £1,000. These bursaries are to be used to support the candidates' projects, or for training to develop the candidate's potential to carry out their welfare work. Thanks to a generous, anonymous benefactor on the day, all of this year's finalists were given an extra £100.

There is an additional award in this competition; the 'Shipshape Award'. This award is given by the Jubilee Sailing Trust (JST), a charitable organisation that brings the adventure of four-mast sailing to individuals,





including those with a disability. The JST owns and operates two ships, 'Lord Nelson' and 'Tenacious' and this award is presented to the candidate, who in the judge's opinion, would gain most from a voyage on one of the tall ships.

Following a presentation by the 2016 Young Ambassador, Gurleen Kaur, the group of this year's 13 finalists (representing all 13 Districts) had to make a three-minute presentation to an audience comprising representatives of each of the sponsoring Lions Clubs, judges, guests, parents and Lions from all over the country.

Quotes:

"In my small way, I hope I have helped individuals and my community."

Georgia Allison

"It is very important to encourage young people to talk about bullying."

Lewis Baillie

"I set up a community group on Facebook when I was 12 to renovate a local, run-down park. It has just won a 'Britain in Bloom' award!"

Beth Bowring

"I'm an ambassador for Auditory Verbal UK and we are helping to get 50,000 deaf children in the UK, into mainstream school."

James Curtis

"My little after-school [rugby] club has brought so many people together."

William Ellison

"If I win today, my bursary will go to help a charity that supports children who have lost a parent."

Alex Flanagan

"I am always on duty."

Chelsea Gibson

"I want to raise enough money to buy a dedicated, fully kitted-out car for the Norfolk Accident Rescue Service."

Susan Hart

"I have volunteered for eight years already and I always try to do the right thing."

Megan Montford

"My bursary will help children benefiting from an NSPCC scheme called 'Letting the future in'. It supports those who have suffered sexual abuse."

Rosie Nicholls

"I am passionate about volunteering."

Lizzie O'Brien

"I helped to build a school in the Kruger National Park last year, I want to provide more funds for the children there."

Leah Page-Trott

"I take pride and pleasure in helping children in need."

Victoria Stammers

UNBEARABLE TENSION

All 13 presentations, without exception, were gripping. The enthusiasm, and confidence of the candidates was refreshing, inspirational and infectious. If these passionate young people are encouraged and allowed to fly, the world and its disadvantaged inhabitants will lead better lives, thanks to them.

They are shining examples of just how much can be achieved with compassion, a good, solid plan and encouragement. As the Deputy Mayor of Dudley Council, Councillor Dave Taylor, said in his short speech, "It is so important for adults to nurture youth in the community." And Lion Heather Jeavons, Chairman of the Council of Governors said: "We have heard from the very best young people today – our future is safe in their hands."

"They are beacons and will remain wonderful people all their lives, they will make a real difference to people's lives."

"We applaud you and we are very proud to know you."

As the tension began to get almost unbearable and before the 2017 Young Ambassador was announced, James Lingfield, winner of the 2015 Shipshape Award, sailed through a rip-roaring account of his week aboard the Lord Nelson. Buddied by Heidi Nathan, James had sailed from Lisbon in Portugal to Cadiz in Spain. With very scant grasp of Spanish (he just added a 'a' or an 'o' on to the end of words) and despite finding himself high up on the crow's nest one day, he enjoyed the adventure of a lifetime, the story related with such gusto that he plainly has a career in the offing as a motivational speaker if he doesn't fancy being a sea captain.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Well there were two winners. Firstly, for the 2017 Shipshape Award, (the 'Spirit of Youth') the judges look for someone who is already doing incredible community work and who would benefit most from more leadership training, and the award was given to Teesdale Lions Club's, Lewis Baillie.

The 2017 Young Ambassador Award, the silver rose bowl and a £1,000 bursary went to an outstanding young man, James Curtis.



PICTURED: (L-R) William Ellison with Reg Hunt from District 105E