

North Cornwall teenager uses family tragedy to help the young bereaved

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A North Cornwall Fixer who lost her brother to leukaemia is using her tragic experience to help bereaved schoolchildren.

Jasmine Crayton, 17, says returning to school after her brother died three years ago was an incredibly tough time for her.

Working with Fixers, the national movement of young people 'fixing' the future, she is one of a group of bereaved Cornish teenagers who want schools to better understand the needs of their pupils if they lose a loved one.

A report about their campaign will feature on ITV News West Country on Tuesday, April 9, from 6pm.

When Jasmine, who lives in Trekenner, Launceston, returned to school following her brother Jordan's death, she says she was bullied by other pupils and believes her teachers could have done more to support her.

"After Jordan died I went back to school about a month later," she said. "You don't want to be wrapped in cotton wool but you don't want to be just expected to be normal as soon as you go back.

"A group of children in my class felt that I was getting special treatment. I was bullied because they were jealous."

Losing his battle with leukaemia - cancer of the white blood cells - in April 2010, Jasmine's brother Jordan was 16 when he died.

"Jordan was my best friend," said Jasmine, who has another elder brother called Bradley. "He was the happiest person I know and the bravest person."

Approximately one in 25 young people have experienced bereavement of a parent or sibling - that's about the same as one child in every school classroom in the country, according to charity Winston's Wish.

The Fixers - who have all lost a close family member and have been supported by Cornish bereavement charity Penhaligon's Friends - want to help other bereaved young people by encouraging teachers to be more understanding of what they're going through.

Working with Fixers they're planning to create a magazine for schools, to share their experiences with teachers.

They hope that greater understanding will allow bereaved young people to stay engaged with their studies whilst going through their ordeal.

"It is important that schools take bereavement seriously as it's quite a delicate matter and some teachers don't know what to say in some situations so they don't say anything at all," said Jasmine.

She added: "It would be good for a child who has been through bereavement to have someone in school who they could go to who they could feel safe to talk to," said Jasmine.

Fixers is a charity which supports thousands of young people across the UK to take action and change things for the better, addressing any issue they feel strongly about.

How each Fixer tackles an issue is up to them - as long as they benefit someone else.

The award-winning Fixers project has already supported over 7,000 young people across the UK to have an authentic voice in their community.

Now, thanks to a £7.2 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers aims to work with a further 20,000 young people over the next three years.

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Fixers is a project of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT), a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.

“Fixers started in 2008 as just an idea... an idea given a voice by some 7,000 young people over the past five years,” says Margo Horsley, Chief Executive of PSBT.

“They have reached thousands of people with their work, on a national stage as well as in and around where they live. They choose the full array of social and health issues facing society today and set about making their mark. Fixers are always courageous and their ideas can be challenging and life-changing, not just for themselves.”

Peter Ainsworth, Big Lottery Fund UK Chair, said: “The Big Lottery Fund is extremely proud to be supporting Fixers to engage with more young people to change things for the better. Fixers has a tremendous potential – one young person’s initial idea can be transformed into reality, spread across a community and make a positive influence on a wide range of people. There are thousands of young people campaigning to make improvements in their neighbourhoods and Fixers provides a platform to highlight their voluntary work and many achievements.”

Two photos attached. Captions:

1. Fixer Jasmine Crayton
2. Jordan Crayton who passed away in 2010

For images, interviews or more information, please contact Sarah Jones in the Fixers Communications Team by email sarahj@fixers.org.uk or phone 01962 810970.

There are lots more stories about young people doing great things on the Fixers website, Twitter and Facebook pages:

www.fixers.org.uk
www.twitter.com/FixersUK
www.facebook.com/FixersUK

Notes to editors:

- Fixers started in England in 2008. Now with a £7.2 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers is extending into Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. To date, over 7,000 young people across the UK have become Fixers and created 900 projects.
- The Public Service Broadcasting Trust is a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.
- The Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the largest distributor of National Lottery good cause funding, is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery.
- BIG is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since June 2004. The Fund was formally established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.
- Since the National Lottery began in 1994, 28p from every pound spent by the public has gone to good causes. As a result, over £29 billion has now been raised and more than 383,000 grants awarded across arts, sport, heritage, charities, health, education and the environment.

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