



# Ross-shire Journal

## National award as Zoe inspires

*Published: 26 March, 2010*

THE dedicated work of a Ross-shire volunteer who mentors teenagers going through tough times has been recognised with a national award.

Twenty-nine-year-old Zoe Ross from Conon Bridge, who works with Highland charity Day1, has scooped the inaugural award for Scottish Role Model/Mentor of the Year.

The award was presented by the national agency for youth work, YouthLink Scotland.

Zoe, of Conon Brae Close, has been a mentor for almost four years.

"I am so excited," she said. "I've worked with five young people through Day1 so far and it is one of the most rewarding things that I have ever done; spending time with them and seeing them mature and grow in confidence is a privilege. I am thrilled that Day1 nominated me."

Zoe has most recently worked with 17-year-old Dawn MacRae from Inverness to help her carve out a bright future.

"Zoe's been brilliant. It's like having a big sister there to listen to me when I need advice or support. She's guided me through some tough times," said Dawn.



*Zoe Ross... national recognition. Alasdair Allen*

"She's really inspiring and I hope we will always be close. Thanks to a work experience opportunity at Cap Gemini I now have a full time job. There's no way I'd have had the confidence to find that for myself right now."

Day1 offers a year-long one-to-one mentoring service for teens who have had it tougher than most. It encourages young people to stay in education or steers them towards employment and further training.

Ed Ley Wilson who, together with Robert Murray, co-founded Day1 said, "Zoe is without a doubt one of the most talented mentors in the Day1 team. Her straight talking and natural warmth resonates with young people and she has the ability to match this with a clear understanding of the sort of values required to get on in life. Zoe has set a very high standard for Day1 mentoring."

The charity's core aim is to prevent young people from falling into the not in education, employment, or training category, known as NEET. Each mentor encourages their young person to consider what type of job they might want, and then take steps towards achieving this goal.

Zoe is not the only winner within the Day1 ranks. Inverness-based, Corrin Henderson, Day1 co-ordinator and board member, picked up a runners-up medal in the category for Youth Manager of the year.