Mikael Saves the Day

The quick thinking of Mikael Greda, aged 11, may have saved the lives of his friends. Faced with a possible life and death situation, Mikael acted instinctively to take control of a coach when the driver collapsed.

"It was really scary," said Mikael, a Year 6 pupil, "but I didn't have time to think what I was doing. It all happened too quickly."

Mr Clive Strong, headteacher of Ipswich Primary School where Mikael is a pupil, explained that the coach had been bringing the class back from a school trip to nearby Stowmarket.

"I saw the driver suddenly take a deep breath and hold his arm," said Mikael. "Then he sort of fainted. I felt the coach swerving and I just reacted." Mikael is no stranger to driving. He started on a quad bike when he was 7 and now drives a tractor on the family farm.

The coach was crossing the Orwell Bridge when the accident was averted. Mikael succeeded in steering the bus into the inside lane and bringing it safely to a halt. By the time he had put on the hazard warning lights, Miss Sarah Fox, the teacher in charge, was already trying to help the driver and Mikael's friend Electra Bisset (age 10) had the presence of mind to call the emergency services.

"Mikael's quick actions undoubtedly saved his classmates from a terrible experience," said Chief Inspector Wiggins, first on the scene. "The situation could have gone in a completely different direction had it not been for Mikael's quick thinking. An accident would have affected other road users and a coach crash could even have damaged the bridge. As it is, no one is hurt and we have a local hero."

Mrs Olivia Greda, Mikael's mother said, "We're so proud of him. He's always been quick thinking. But driving a tractor in the farmyard is different from stopping a coach on a bridge. When I think what could have happened …".

Chief Inspector Wiggins said that the police service would make an award to recognise Mikael's bravery and quick thinking. "I hope he will consider joining the police in a few years' time. We need more young people like him," said the Inspector.

The driver, who has not been named, is in Ipswich Hospital recovering from a suspected heart attack.

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