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What is a Huggable Hero?

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I was recently lucky enough to find out. A few weeks ago one of First Book's longstanding partners, Build-A-Bear Workshop®, invited me to speak with an amazing collection of young leaders who are making profound differences in their communities — and far beyond. Build-A-Bear Workshop defines a "huggable hero" as a young person doing "awesome stuff" to make a difference in their neighborhood, school or community.

I suppose I was asked to speak to these young people because those planning the event thought the kids might learn something from what I said — but the one doing the real learning that day was me. I met so many people making real change, including an inspiring woman named Dallas Jessup, Founder and Spokesperson of the Program. Just Yell Fire is an organization with the sole mission of empowering girls age 11 to 19. Over the past two years they've changed the lives of more than 460,000 girls in 41 countries - great results by any measure, greater still considering that Dallas is just 16 years old.



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Dallas and the other Huggable Heroes reminded me that we can all make a difference — and that people certainly don't need to wait to start making that difference until they are "all grown up". Thank, Dallas, for reminding me of that...not that I plan to ever really grow up anyway.