

Time Magazine Girl of the Year for Solar Powered Heated Blanket

Scottish schoolgirl has been recognised by TIME magazine as one of its inaugural 'Girls of the Year' after inventing a solar-powered heated blanket to support people experiencing homelessness.



Rebecca Young, a pupil at Kelvinside Academy, first conceived the idea for a solar-powered blanket during the 2022/23 academic year while in Primary 7. She wanted to tackle the challenge she saw in her community, people struggling to keep warm on cold nights without access to electricity. Her solution was both practical and compassionate: a heated blanket powered by foldable solar panels, designed to charge during the day and provide warmth at night.

Primary Engineer

Rebecca submitted her design to the Primary Engineer "If You Were an Engineer, What Would You Do?" competition, which invites pupils aged 3–19 to imagine engineering solutions to real-world problems. She was recognised as a regional winner at the Scotland West awards.

Industry Engagement

Her idea caught the attention of Thales UK, one of Primary Engineer's industry partners. Their Glasgow ProtoTeam, a group of apprentices and graduates, chose to bring Rebecca's design to life as one of six national prototypes. The team worked closely with her throughout

development, ensuring the blanket was lightweight, safe, and included adjustable heat settings. The finished prototype was unveiled in May 2024 at the University of Glasgow. The project went on to win a Silver Medal at the Primary Engineer MacRobert Medal ceremony later that year, as well as a special public commendation – the first of its kind.

In June 2025, Thales announced it would produce and donate 150 blankets to support six homeless charities across Glasgow. The first 35 were delivered to Homeless Project Scotland, providing comfort to people in temporary accommodation.

Rebecca's journey reached global recognition in August 2025 when she was named one of TIME's Girls of the Year, celebrating ten young leaders who are inspiring positive change worldwide. Her story is a testament to the power of empathy and creativity in engineering. Find out more about the Primary Engineer "If You Were an Engineer, What Would You Do?" competition.

Link



"If You Were an Engineer, What Would You Do?"
tinyurl.com/ujt2ytre



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TIME MAGAZINE'S GIRL
OF THE YEAR

Winning Entry and Prototype 'Solar
Powered Heated Blanket' by Rebecca