# Mother honours murdered daughter by supporting refugees at Beirut Marathon



# Honouring a Legacy: A Mother’s Tribute to Her Daughter Through Charity

In a poignant commemoration of what would have been Rebecca Dykes' 38th birthday, her mother, Jane Houng, has found a way to turn personal tragedy into a beacon of hope for others. Rebecca, known affectionately as Becky, was tragically murdered in Beirut in 2017 while working on humanitarian projects for Syrian refugees. In a significant gesture of solidarity, Jane marked the occasion by supporting 35 young refugees, along with five teachers from the Bourj Hammoud Adventist Learning Centre, to participate in a 5k fun run linked to Beirut’s annual marathon.

Jane, whose charity Becky’s Button distributes personal safety alarms to vulnerable groups, expressed, “My Becky was the manager of projects for Syrian refugees at the British embassy. Her birthday coincided with the run. I imagine her smiling in heaven.” By covering the children's transportation and registration costs, the charity has facilitated an empowering experience, allowing these young individuals to partake in an event usually inaccessible due to financial constraints.

The significance of this initiative extends beyond the joy of participation; it also serves as a reminder of the obstacles that refugees often face in Lebanon. Many of these children lack even the basic means for day-to-day living, let alone the resources for recreational activities. Alexis Hurd-Shires, the American principal of the Adventist Learning Centre, emphasised this point, stating, “These kids don’t have the funds for basic living – rent, food, medicine – much less disposable income to do something as simple as taking a bus somewhere.”

The Beirut Marathon Association, which orchestrates the run, plays a vital role in unifying a city marked by division. Their ethos, captured in the slogan “One heart, one race,” fosters a spirit of collective hope that transcends communities, allowing participants, including refugees, to experience camaraderie and belonging. For these children, donning a race shirt transforms their identity for the day; they become “simply a runner,” shedding the societal labels imposed upon them.

Rebecca Dykes’ story is not merely a narrative of loss; it is also about the continued impact of her life’s work, which resonated deeply within her community at the British embassy and beyond. Her death sent ripples throughout the diplomatic community, igniting conversations about safety, especially for women in vulnerable situations. Just months after her untimely death, the investigation led to the arrest and eventual conviction of an Uber driver who confessed to the crime. Despite being handed a death sentence, the realities of Lebanon's legal system imply that the sentence may not be carried out, as executions have not occurred in the country since 2004.

In honouring Becky, the charity’s efforts aim to continue her legacy of empowerment, focusing not only on aiding refugees but also on preventing violence against women—a cause she passionately advocated. Jane Houng has expressed her hope that by supporting initiatives like the fun run, her daughter’s spirit will live on, impacting lives in a meaningful way.

As the sun set on May 1, Beirut's marathon celebrated not just athleticism but resilience, reflecting a community coming together in love and remembrance. In doing so, Jane and her charity illuminate a path forward—a testament to the belief that even in the face of unimaginable sorrow, one can create ripples of change that inspire hope and healing.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42401083), [[3]](https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2018/02/21/memorial-service-for-murdered-british-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42401083), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50265748)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling), [[6]](https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2017/12/25/charity-drive-launched-in-memory-of-murdered-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling), [[3]](https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2018/02/21/memorial-service-for-murdered-british-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/), [[6]](https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2017/12/25/charity-drive-launched-in-memory-of-murdered-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50265748)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50265748), [[6]](https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2017/12/25/charity-drive-launched-in-memory-of-murdered-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052347/i-imagine-my-becky-smiling> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42401083> - This article reports on the tragic death of Rebecca Dykes, a British embassy worker in Lebanon, whose body was found near a motorway in Beirut. The piece details the circumstances of her death, the arrest of an Uber driver in connection with the case, and the reactions from her family and colleagues. It also highlights the impact of her loss on the embassy community and the broader humanitarian efforts she was involved in prior to her death.
3. <https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2018/02/21/memorial-service-for-murdered-british-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/> - This article covers the memorial service held in London for Rebecca Dykes, a British embassy worker murdered in Beirut. The service was attended by family, friends, and colleagues, who remembered her passion, energy, and enthusiasm. The piece also discusses the charitable fund established in her memory, aiming to continue her work supporting refugees and preventing violence against women, and the fundraising efforts associated with the foundation.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_El-Khalil> - This Wikipedia page provides a comprehensive biography of May El-Khalil, the founder and president of the Beirut Marathon Association. It details her background, including her near-fatal accident in 2001 that inspired her to establish the marathon. The page also covers the association's history, its accreditation by the International Association of Athletic Federations in 2009, and the growth of the marathon, which attracted over 38,000 runners from 104 countries in 2014.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-50265748> - This article reports on the death sentence handed down to the killer of British embassy worker Rebecca Dykes in Lebanon. It details the conviction of Uber driver Tariq Houshieh, who confessed to raping and murdering Dykes. The piece also discusses the legal context in Lebanon, where death sentences are common but executions have not been carried out since 2004, and the reactions from the British embassy and Dykes' family.
6. <https://www.jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2017/12/25/charity-drive-launched-in-memory-of-murdered-embassy-worker-rebecca-dykes/> - This article discusses the launch of a charity foundation in memory of Rebecca Dykes, a British embassy worker murdered in Beirut. The foundation aims to support her humanitarian causes, focusing on empowering refugees and preventing violence against women. The piece highlights the family's statement expressing their desire to continue Dykes' work and the fundraising efforts associated with the foundation, including a JustGiving page aiming to raise £100,000.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/rebecca-dykes-murder-latest-updates-uber-driver-beirut-murder-lebanon-british-diplomat-uk-embassy-a8116886.html> - This article reports on the confession of an Uber driver to the murder of British diplomat Rebecca Dykes in Beirut. It details the circumstances of her abduction and death, the police investigation that led to the arrest, and the reactions from the British embassy and Dykes' family. The piece also includes statements from Uber expressing horror at the incident and cooperation with authorities.