



David Graham – Naenae

Academy Coach, Naenae Boxing Academy

A new generation is emerging from the legendary Naenae Boxing Academy – led by academy coach, David Graham.

The academy was set up in 2006 by Billy Graham, who holds a Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Local Hero Award, and is a New Zealand lightwelter title holder. The academy has come to the attention of the NZ Police, due to the impact the organisation has had on reducing youth crime in the Naenae area.

As the son of Billy, and a talented boxer, David has seen first-hand how the academy runs and its positive impact on young people.

The main activities of the academy are teaching youth life-skills through participation in and the discipline of boxing and physical fitness. The aim is to turn at risk boys in to champion men.

In his World of Difference year, David will build capacity in Naenae boxing model across other academy communities in New Zealand. He will implement a 'coach the coaches' model – train up men within New Zealand to coach boxing to a level where they can run academies and look after youth in their care.

“The need is there, with caring and able people wanting to contribute and help their troubled youth. The target group are young males, aged from intermediate to secondary school age.

The vision is to reach these boys before they become disengaged, usually at college age but sometimes younger. The boys we attract are often not interested in other sports, community groups or school, so to engage them is a success,” says David.

David has won two consecutive National U18 titles and is the youngest coach in NZ to hold a Level One coaching license.

He will also continue to build capacity within the Naenae Academy; coaching boys - ages 9 to 11 years, taking school classes, developing leadership within the senior group and being a mentor.

