

THE LEGACY CONTINUES...

EXCITING NEW CHAPTER FOR NAENAE BOXING ACADEMY

WITH BILLY GRAHAM

There's a poster on the wall above the office of the newly-extended Naenae Boxing Academy Gym, signed by all who attended the birthday of legendary boxing coach Dick Dunn in 1998:

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was,

The sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...

But the world may be different because I was important in the Life of a Child.

On August 4, 2011, at the opening of the new extension to the Naenae Boxing Academy, Billy Graham told an audience where sports glitterati, MPs, Police and Justice heads rubbed shoulders with Rotarians, Councillors and valued supporters, **he was that child** and in honour of his Mentor Dick Dunn he was realising his dream to carry on Mr Dunn's legacy.

Dick Dunn himself had been inspired in his youth by Wellington City Missioner Tom Fielden Taylor, whose Big Brother Movement aimed to support 1930s youth finding it tough in the central city in Depression days. It too had the backing of Police and the Courts. Fielden Taylor recognised in Dick Dunn the ability to teach and to establish a rapport with young people and encouraged him to do so. As a result, Dick Dunn established himself in Lower Hutt and it was there a troubled young Billy Graham found someone to train and love him – boils and all.

It was showing this kind of love and support for the young men in our society who were the "hardest to love", whose upbringing had been blighted by family circumstances beyond their control, which MP Paula Bennett emphasised in her speech at the opening celebration.

Minister for Youth Affairs as well as Social Development and Employment, she thanked Billy on behalf of New Zealand for his "passion, energy and zest for helping young people" in his own unique way.

"It is unfortunate our society needs you, but it does, and I hear from parents how you have saved their sons and I thank you for loving these boys and showing them how to love themselves."

Among those present was Hoppy Hodges,



Youth Affairs and Social Development Minister Paula Bennett cut the ceremonial ribbon along with Dick Dunn's widow, Chum.

a specially-invited retired Naenae Police Officer from Billy's 'bad old days' whose treatment of the local youth at the time drew their respect and made a difference for the better in their lives.

Deputy Police Commissioner Mike Bush ("I was raised in Naenae north – aka Taita") told of new Police initiatives planned to work with communities "to stop the bad stuff before it happens – to instil a sense of respect and a sense of purpose in our young people."

While he acknowledged there was only one Billy, he wanted to see others take up the challenge:

"We want to replicate Billy's concept all over the country."

It has taken 10 years for Billy's dream to be realised. It has meant selling the family home and moving to a converted church in Naenae, but with wife Kerri always by his side and with the support of his children, the legacy to be important in the life of a child continues.

Or, as MC Keith Quinn put it, "like they said about Christopher Wren, *if you seek a monument to a man's dream, look around you.*" Naenae Youth Charitable Trust trustees are Brian Ross, Tony White and Keith Quinn; Super Volunteers: Graham Clifford and Grant Quinn and Owen Poole.

Naenae Boxing Academy gives thanks to the Pelorus Trust, NZ Community Trust for providing the majority of the finance for making this happen and other major sponsors Vodafone, The Lion Foundation, NZ Lottery Grants Board, Jasmine Social Entertainments, as well as many community groups and businesses and individuals.

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