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# Boxing can help youngsters, says Nigel Benn on Telford visit

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Wednesday 1st June 2011, 9:46AM BST.



<http://www.shropshirestar.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/SD3816375@LA31BENN-3.jpg>

Boxing champ Nigel Benn at Lee Matthews' gym in Tweedale, with pupils Corey Daley, eleven, back left, Jordan Daley, ten, front left, Chloe Growcott, eight and Craig Growcott, seven.

Boxing legend Nigel Benn believes that teaching children martial arts could help to fight anti-social behaviour problems in Telford.

He said on a visit to the British Military Martial Arts headquarters, in Telford, that youngsters needed something to focus their energy on and something that could help instil discipline.

The 48-year-old former middleweight and super middleweight world champ believes if values are not taught at a young age, children are more likely to become "tearaways".

Benn, known as the dark Destroyer, said: "My sporting accomplishments mean nothing compared with helping people along the right path.

"World titles are what outsiders see and think I want to be remembered by, but for me what happened around the sport, the drugs, sex and rock and roll, are the things I'm trying to repair.

"Kids hanging around on street corners, causing trouble, can get involved in martial arts and learn the discipline needed in all walks of life."

Benn, now a born-again Christian living in Spain, said this was a lesson he had learned from his own son.

"Youngsters have so much energy. If they don't have anything to do then they start looking for trouble," he added. "I know this through my own 15-year-old son. I didn't let him box or practise martial arts because I wanted a different life for him than I had.

"But when he started to get into trouble I took him training. Straight away he was working hard, running, hitting the pads and learning how to control himself.

"Just look at the children here at Lee's academy. Look how focused they are, and look at how much fun they are having."

Benn was in Telford as ambassador of the British Military Martial Arts scheme, which trains ex-service personnel to become martial arts instructors.

Chloe Leigh-Growcotts, an eight-year-old Holmer Lake school pupil, said she loved training at the academy. She added: "I've been doing martial arts for about 13 months now, I really enjoy it. Me and my brother come here three or four times a week."

By Peter Finch

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