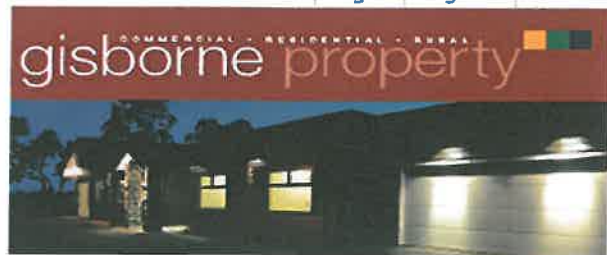


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Inspiring role model and 'selfless with his energy'

June 22, 2017 9:30 AM

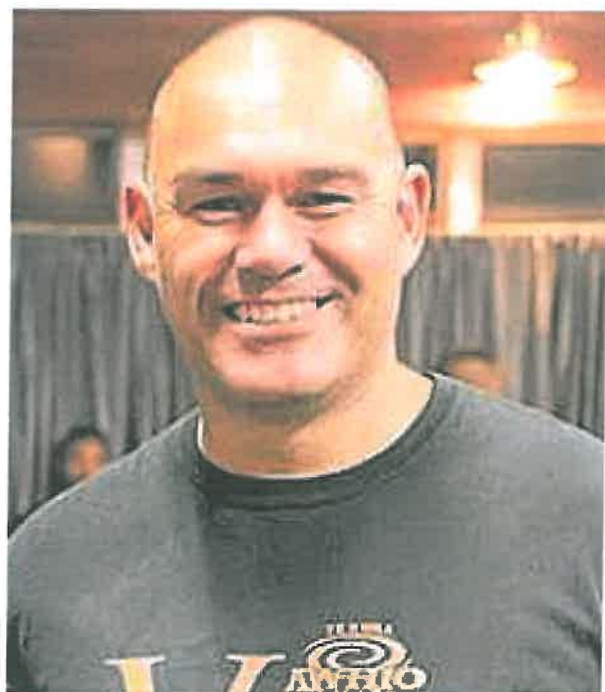
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THE Tairawhiti Men of the Year Awards showcase and celebrate positive male role models in the Gisborne community. In the lead-up to the awards ceremony on June 23, The Gisborne Herald is running short profiles on each of the nominees.

TE KURA Awhio Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) academy has nominated club coach Barry Kingi-Thomas as one of the Tairawhiti Men of the Year.

Te Kura Awhio and extended whanau acknowledge the work Mr Kingi-Thomas has done in the community, with his hapu Te Whanau a Taupara, iwi Te Aitanga a Mahaki, and the New Zealand Fire Service.

“An advocate and a role model, generous, selfless and the epitome of humility, are a few words from students, friends and whanau honoured to have been coached and supported by Barry Kingi-Thomas,” his nomination says.



Barry Kingi-Thomas

“Many parents and whanau who have brought their children and young people to him over the years to learn mixed martial arts, self-defence and fitness have come away with more than what they bargained for.”

Those parents put together some messages for him.

“Humble, hardworking and giving. An awesome role model for young men (terrible at singing though),” said an adult student.

“Whanau-driven, who wants the best for the people that he comes in contact with. Especially those he trains. His door is always open. Supportive, safe, honest, reliable, considerate, passionate and devoted,” another adult student said.

“I have seen him build so many kids up to truly believe in themselves and to become better human beings through the efforts he has put into this community.

“Baz helped not only myself but my family and extended family. Truly love and respect this man with all my heart,” said 2016 MMA middleweight amateur world champion and former student, Byron Chivers.

“He has instilled a belief within our tamariki that being the ultimate warrior is in fact being the ultimate you. We value your guidance and your kindness,” a parent said.

“He has been there for me and my whanau not only as a matua but an uncle too. Always humble and his door is always open for a korero. I’m thankful for all the work he does with my children and continues to do so,” another parent said.

“He rangatira ia (he is a chief),” was a message from his marae whanau.

“Brings out the confidence and self-esteem in all the children,” a parent said.

“Teaching my son new skills in the after-school programme to compete and to keep himself safe. He is no longer bullied at school.”

“Matua Baz is a great man,” a Te Kura Awhio black belt said.

“He selflessly gives his time, expertise and energy to all he comes in contact with.

“He believes there is good in everyone and with this in mind he provides an environment where teaching and learning can be achieved in a kind, caring, loving, inclusive and safe way.”

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