

Building mental fitness helps kids overcome obstacles

If there's one thing we've learnt this year, it's that New Zealanders are committed to working together to make our country a better place for everyone to live, learn and grow.

That commitment starts with helping our children and young people develop the skills and resilience they'll need to overcome challenges and face the future confidently, values which are at the heart of the exciting partnership between the Graeme Dingle Foundation and New Zealand Rugby (NZR).

Kiwi adventurer Sir Graeme Dingle and his wife Jo-anne Wilkinson founded their not-for-profit organisation back in 1995. They had a vision to improve New Zealand's negative youth statistics by inspiring kids to reach their full potential through programmes that help build self-esteem, promote good values and teach life, education and health skills.

NZR Chief Operating Officer Nicki Nicol says the foundation's mission to make New Zealand the best place in the world for young people and their families is hugely



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inspiring and aligns closely with rugby values. That's why NZR chose the Graeme Dingle Foundation as its official charity.

"As New Zealand's national sport we have a responsibility to do what we can to have a positive influence on the community. Building self-esteem, goal setting and finding

a positive path are challenges many of our players of all ages can relate to," says Nicol.

The Graeme Dingle Foundation works with young people right throughout the country and is woven into community life in the same way that sport is at the heart of many Kiwi communities.

Our top rugby players are role models for kids of all ages in these communities, but many of those players have had to overcome significant obstacles in their path to success. In the same way they've developed life skills through the skills required to achieve in sport, they've benefitted from the support

and guidance from community programmes such as the ones delivered by the foundation.

It's currently working with more than 27,000 five to 18 year olds and the evaluation and feedback shows the work is making a huge difference. Principals says the programmes are changing attitudes, leading to many benefits ranging from a dramatic reduction in bullying, to kids who become motivated in the classroom and keen to learn.

There's no doubt that the world is becoming an increasingly complicated place to grow up in, but the Graeme Dingle Foundation is there for young New Zealanders at key moments including the early years in the school system, the transition to high school, and when kids have to make big decisions about their future. The support of NZR means a greater reach and more children and teenagers learning that what they have inside is greater than any obstacle.

Visit dinglefoundation.org.nz