

# Local champions taking it to the ring instead of the streets

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**GRANITE CITY** - A fundraiser to continue boxing for youth in the St. Louis Metro Area was held Saturday night at the gymnasium of Granite City High School.

Promoted by Steve Knogl of Local Boxing Club, Ozark 22, the event was a fundraiser to continue the matches between youth. Knogl said without such fundraisers, youth boxing

in St. Louis would be done. He worked with Joe Marshall, the chief of the boxing officials and math teacher at the high school, to put together a ring at the high school and allow matches between people as young as 10 and as old as 23. Both Knogl and Marshall work to train people at CMMA Fighting Systems, located at 4124 Pontoon Rd. in Pontoon Beach.

Cost to enter the fights was \$10, and that money went to maintaining the registration of officials overseeing the matches, Knogl said. Without that funding, he said the matches could not continue.

The importance of the matches, Knogl and Marshall said, was to give kids an outlet. Without that program, many of the at-risk youth who participate would be left to the streets with poor coping skills for anxiety and anger, which leads to poor decisions, and sometimes crime.

Former Alton mayoral candidate and current Madison County Board candidate, Joshua Young, attended these matches Saturday in an effort to work with Ozark 22 to integrate Altonians into such matches. Young formerly worked with a young man named Brian Newman on a program called "Fists Up, Guns Down," which worked to have people settle disputes with honor and sportsmanship instead of weapons.

Newman was arrested soon after the announcement of that program for gun and drug charges. He was also accused of beating a fellow inmate in the Madison County Jail over a lightning bolt tattoo on the alleged beating victim.

Regardless, Young said he has not forgotten the program, and is actively working to establish it at Deliverance Temple with Jason Harrison. The former program under Newman also received the promise of support from the Alton Police Department once an actual reputable program was created. Unfortunately for Young, Newman's arrest placed a bit of a stumbling block for the program, but training is still being done privately.

"I came to this to help out and find out how things like this are done," Young said Saturday. "I'm trying to meet people in charge of these before we're fully established at Deliverance Temple."

Called "Alton Community Boxing," Young said the program, which is admittedly in its infancy, will feature full-spectrum wellness training for Alton's youth and residents in general. He said it will help people cope with anxiety and anger while training them in boxing.

As of now, Young said the program is accepting donations through Deliverance Temple, and is looking for more contacts to assist with the program. More information can be found by contacting Young through his Facebook or emailing him at [Young7Joshua717@gmail.com](mailto:Young7Joshua717@gmail.com).

Young said even Newman will have a place in the program once he does his time. He said the coaches and instructors with Alton Community Boxing will be carefully vetted when it is fully established. He said the Alton Police Department has supported this community endeavor with as much as \$1,000 for equipment and t-shirts.