



Kids' tribute to suicide bomber

Karate pupils dedicate their success to teacher who was blown up in Iraq



Belters: Melek Mohammed, Ezzadean Hussain, Yousef Atasbahy, Abdullah Salah, and Sammy Noor celebrating achieving their blue belts

Picture: Roger Nisbet

SHEFFIELD youngsters have paid tribute to their "fantastic" martial arts instructor, a man who died in a suicide bomb attack on US troops in Iraq.

Tae kwon do pupils at the Goodwill Community Centre spoke of their much-loved teacher Wail al Dhaleai, aged 22, of Clover Gardens, Wincobank, who set up classes a year ago.

Staff and some pupils at the centre, on Rothay Road, Grimsthorpe, were heartbroken when the martial arts expert blew himself up in Iraq last November.

When his pupils took their first tae kwon do grading exam, they said it was for him.

Sammy Noor, aged 14, of Wensley Street, Grimsthorpe, said: "He was one of the nicest people I have ever met. We had a laugh with him and he made it fun for us so that we wanted to train with him."

"I felt like when I got my grading, I did it for him. When he trained us he used to say 'don't stop, keep training.' He wanted to make us good fighters."

"I was upset because he was a friend to us. I used to see him at prayer at the mosque as well as at the classes."

"We used to joke with him and have a laugh with him, we only found out what happened to him in the newspaper."

Parent Hussein Saleh, 38, paid tribute to the man who "boosted the community" by opening the first martial arts class at the centre.

"He was fantastic and what he did for these kids is what no

EXCLUSIVE

By Jo Rostrom

one had ever done before. We needed Wail. Getting them here after school was getting them off the streets."

"He gave them the determination to carry on and be a black belt. He was such a good teacher. Discipline was his speciality."

His son Ezzadean Hussain, 11, was among the first pupils at the centre taught by Wail. He described the teacher as popular and witty.

Wail was a Yemeni who fled to Britain after clashing with the authorities in his home country three years ago.

He apparently built a new life in Sheffield, marrying and studying on a computer course and teaching at the centre.

Wail was married to British-born Layla and they were expecting their second child when Wail left to go to Iraq.

He had given no hint of involvement with any extreme organisation and it is not clear how he was persuaded to get involved in action.

Centre supervisor Abdallah Abdo said: "He said he was going as a trainer to Dubai, where he said he would earn a lot of money. The kids loved him and they were quite shocked when they found out."

The centre was forced to get CCTV after bins were set fire near the building in the wake of the suicide bomb attack.

"We think it was a reaction to what happened."