

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2014

Former boxer gives talk at FLCC on dangers of concussion

A resilient and determined young athlete, **Ray Ciancaglini** ignored his headaches, confusion and fatigue – hallmark symptoms of concussions – and went round after round in the boxing ring.

Now, decades later, he's paying for it. The Geneva native suffers from dementia pugilistica and Parkinson's syndrome, both progressive disorders doctors believe are linked to the neglected head trauma back in the 1960s and 70s.

Over the past several years, **Ciancaglini** has traveled to hundreds of schools and colleges near and far advocating for concussion awareness and management.



Ray Ciancaglini

On Thursday, April 24, he'll bring his message to Finger Lakes Community College, in a talk scheduled for 10 a.m.

Titled "The Invisible Opponent," the event is free and open to the public. It will be held in room B440 on the fourth floor of the main campus, 3325 Marvin Sands Drive, Canandaigua.

"The main message is one of honesty," said Ciancaglini, who lives with his wife,

Patti, in Varick, Seneca County. "It's about immediately reporting and being totally honest about any symptoms of concussion, along with strictly adhering to your school's concussion protocol, and the instructions of your doctor and

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trainer. You will come back another day if you allow a concussion to heal properly. If you challenge a concussion, you will get beat.”

Ciancaglino was forced to retire from boxing at 22. He went to college in hopes of becoming a physical education teacher, but said he was held back by his “foggy” mind. His conditions cause symptoms of dementia, Parkinson’s-like tremors and difficulty with coordination.

Ciancaglino founded The Second Impact, an organization that strives to educate athletes, coaches and parents about the possible after-effects of concussions. His audiences have ranged from National Football League players to lawmakers.

He was instrumental in the state’s adoption in 2011 of the Concussion Management and Awareness Act, which, among other things, requires student athletes suspected of suffering from a concussion to receive medical clearance before returning to play. ABC’s “Good Morning America” featured **Ciancaglino** in an April 2012 segment.

Nowadays, **Ciancaglino** struggles to write his own name and sometimes doesn’t recognize lifelong friends.

“There are good days and bad days,” he said. “You take it as they come.”

He added, “It’s all because in our day we didn’t have the education we have today about concussions. I had this injury and I was trying to battle through it. I was probably getting one concussion on top of another, unhealed concussion.”

The talk is being coordinated by FLCC’s Athletics Department. For more information, contact **Bethany Schlegel**, assistant director of athletics, at (585) 785-1518 or Bethany.Schlegel@flcc.edu.

For more on Second Impact, visit www.thesecondimpact.com.

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