

The Invisible Sports Injury with Tragic Consequences: PA Family Stresses Importance of CTE Awareness Day on January 30

Chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) is a progressive brain disease which is believed to be caused by repeated impacts to the head.

PITTSBURGH, PA, USA, January 28, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The family of Patrick Risha will once again be honoring their lost loved one by declaring the fifth national [CTE Awareness](#) Day on January 30. Thanks to Senator Steve Santasiero and Representative Shelby Labs of Pennsylvania, the importance of this day will be announced at the Capitol in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. All across the country, other families will be doing the same thing in their state. Patrick Risha's family joined other families at the Houston Super Bowl in 2017 to kick off the first CTE Awareness Day. Since that time they have been fierce advocates of recognizing this event on January 30 each year.

“

Science is showing that CTE is 100% preventable. Once a child's brain becomes inflamed and hit repeatedly, the damage starts.”

Doug Zegel, Patrick Rish CTE Awareness Foundation Board Member

“This is a day to reflect on those lost to CTE, how to help those suffering with the disease, and most importantly how to stop the disease”, said Karen Zegel, President of the Patrick Risha CTE Awareness Foundation. The StopCTE.org website, formed by the foundation after Patrick's death, is full of helpful information and research, treatment discussions, and prevention strategies.

The goal is to prevent the heartbreak of losing someone like Patrick to the disease CTE. It is a progressive brain disease which is believed to be caused by repeated impacts to the head. This insidious disease slowly and painfully destroys your brain. And it destroys the person in the process. Sadly today on midget, middle school, high school, and college fields everywhere in this country, aspiring young athletes are training and practicing and playing, so often oblivious to the danger they face. Each collision, each tackle, and each “hit” jars the brain. These impacts add up.

This danger is all too real for the Risha family that lost Patrick in September, 2014. His autopsy revealed widespread CTE. He was an All-Conference running back at Elizabeth Forward High

School, a star post-graduate at Deerfield Academy, and a dedicated teammate at Dartmouth College. Patrick never played professional football. But throughout high school, prep school and college, this tough young running back received enough blows to the head to essentially seal his fate. Patrick developed CTE.

One mission of the Patrick Risha CTE Awareness Foundation is to provide parents of school age children (who have very susceptible brains) with information about the dangers of sports which involve head trauma. Football is at the top of the list, and pretty much involves players repeatedly taking hits to the head. But the list is long, from bull riding to cheerleading and beyond.



Representative Shelby Labs of Pennsylvania pictured with Karen Kinzle-Zegel and Doug Zegel of the Patrick Risha CTE Awareness Foundation.

In 2015, the foundation started the first “Flag Until 14” campaign to protect young children from brain traumas at too early an age, since science is showing the earlier you start a contact sport like football, the greater your chances for developing the disease. Patrick started playing at age 10. They also have free brochures and head bands for events wanting to promote the “Safe Sports = No Brainer” campaign. “Science is showing that CTE is 100% preventable. Once a child’s brain becomes inflamed and hit repeatedly, the damage starts. And you can’t take those hits back,” states Doug Zegel, one of the foundation’s board members. Veterans doing munitions and blasting exercises and domestic abuse victims are also at risk.

The human brain is not designed to smack around the inside of the skull. Particularly in young people, helmets do not protect the athlete from CTE.

Sadly Patrick suffered, undiagnosed and misunderstood for many years until taking his own life (a common CTE symptom). He left behind a son he adored, and a grieving family and community.

Visit www.StopCTE.org for more information. “Don’t give up. The website tries to help show that there is hope for those suffering with symptoms. Most of the symptoms are psychological, while the disease is physical. Unfortunately, practitioners often don’t look for past head traumas as the culprit. CTE can take 10 to 20 years to show symptoms so often the root cause is missed,” Karen

stated.

Amanda Walton, Patrick's sister and foundation board member, said "Not a minute goes by that I don't miss Patrick. We hope that our efforts will help enable parents to make informed choices and prevent the sure sadness that comes from watching a bright mind literally become unwired."

Karen Kinzle Zegel

Patrick Risha CTE Awareness Foundation

contact@stopcte.org

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Other](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/561666762>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.