

Run Leo! Avanti Tutta. At the New York Marathon to Conquer Cancer

Mico Delianova Licastro (November 03, 2016)



An Italian athlete is coming to New York, not to stop a war, but to continue one that he began 4 years ago in 2012 against cancer, an incurable lung tumor that metastasized. Leonardo Cenci goes by the name “Leo,” which, in Italian, means lion. He is the type of person who loves life and is not easily intimidated by the challenges that we as humans sometimes encounter, especially ones that can shorten our lives. Leo also conceived the “Oncology Games,” and created “Avanti Tutta”, an organization that, through its programs, promotes a healthy lifestyle and gives dignity to individuals afflicted by cancer.

ARTICOLO IN ITALIANO >>>

Once upon a time there was a marathon. A race so important that it had the power to stop wars



when the Olympians were about to compete.

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Four years ago doctors told him, “Leo, we are sorry, but the disease is too advanced to treat.” They gave him only a few months to live.

Leo did not want to hear about succumbing to the disease. Thanks to his volcanic character, his deep love for life, and the treatments he received from Dr. Chiara Bennati’s team - that will come with him to New York - Leo is still here with us with, and he has a renewed energy. Leo also conceived the “Oncology Games,” and created “Avanti Tutta,” an organization that, through its programs, promotes a healthy lifestyle and gives dignity to individuals afflicted by cancer.

Mauro Casciari, a reporter for the Rai program “Mi manda RaiTre” and friend of Leo, will accompany him in his adventure across the ocean.

Leo’s adventure is on the lips of all of racing enthusiasts everywhere, not only in his hometown of Perugia. While he was participating in a race in Rome, he met Giovanni Malagò, the president of CONI (Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano). Malagò was touched by his story and his enthusiasm, so he invited Leo to participate in a press conference in CONI’s room of honor in Rome where he would announce his participation in the Big Apple’s marathon and inform the public of his activities. “He has an incredible story,” Malagò stated, “Therefore, I believe that the project linked to the Oncology Games represents not only a finish line, but also a starting point to launch a very important message regarding the extraordinary benefits that can be derived from sports. Leo is one of us. Bebe Vio reminds me of this. I never once saw them without a smile on their faces. In 2012 Leo wanted to run the marathon, but Hurricane Sandy stopped him. This time he Hurricane Leo will be the one to win.”

His athletic preparation is rigorous, but Leo also thinks about the therapies that are working extremely well to stop the cancer’s progression. “Even a delay of four years is allowing me to fulfill my dream of participating in this marathon, the marathon that Fred Lebow created. He was also affected by cancer, but he decided to run the marathon. I challenged myself to complete the course in 5 and a half hours and beat Fred’s record. But my first concern is battling cancer and sending a message a message of courage and hope to whomever finds himself or herself in my situation.”

In New York, before Sunday’s marathon, Leo will participate in the Consulate General of Italy’s reception for Italian marathon runners, offered by Consular General in New York, Francesco Genuardi. In order to warm up his muscles, Leo will participate in a run around Central Park with Gianni Poli, an athlete that won this same marathon 30 years ago.

The weather looks good because of the Indian Summer. Leo will not be alone during the race. The warmth of the New Yorkers is well-known, and they will applaud and encourage him to finish the race. Leo will run with the number #64502, and he will give it to Malagò upon his return to Italy. It’s going to be a great day for a battle that Leo wants to win.

And he will.

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