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Boxing Champ Mikey Garcia to Appear at Mercado Park

Boxing champion Mikey Garcia will appear Saturday, May 17, at Mercado Park in Perris to sign autographs during a City-sponsored skill session that continues the successful and popular Live Well Perris healthy-eating active-living initiative.

The skills clinic begins at 10 a.m. at the park at 10th and D Streets. Participants will take part in a series of boxing-related training techniques like jump-roping, medicine-ball tossing and working out with heavy bags.

Prizes will be given away to residents who take part in the skills competition, including t-shirts, boxing gloves and recreational equipment. Bicycles will also be given away. The day's activities feature several sparring matches.

The camp is geared toward children and teen-agers but is open to everyone. Admission is free. The camp kicks off a series of sports clinics promoting activities like hiking, baseball, soccer, swimming and skateboarding. It's all part of the City's ongoing "Live Well Perris" program to encourage residents to take an active role in improvement their quality of life.

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Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers at a fund-raiser in 2013 for the P-Town Combat Sports Academy. Rogers is hosting a boxing-skills clinic May 17 at Mercado Park.

Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers, a longtime boxing fan and enthusiast, is hosting the May 17 boxing clinic. She went to Madison Square Garden and Atlantic City to watch fights while living on the East Coast and became friends with pugilistic legends Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson. One of Rogers' prized possessions is a photo of her sitting on Louis' lap when she was a little girl.

Rogers said the sports clinics aim to get residents, especially youngsters, off the couch by encouraging physical activities that can reduce an assortment of medical problems and lead to longer, healthier lives.

"It's time to knock out diabetes, high-blood pressure, cholesterol and heart disease!" she said. "Boxing is a sport that is open to boys and girls and requires a lot of aerobic exercising and training that gets the heart muscles pumping," she said. "The skills clinic will introduce kids to boxing skills, provide a wonderful way to get exercise and have fun and introduce them to a great sport."

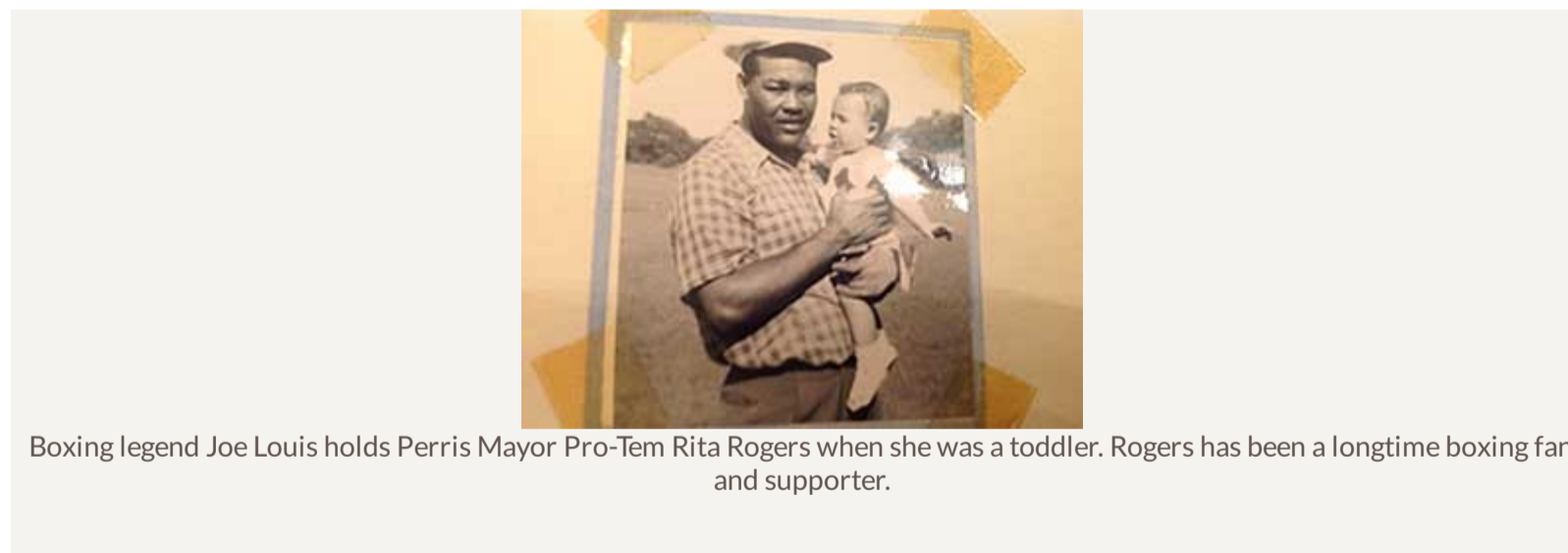


Perris Mayor Pro-Tem holds a championship belt during a 2013 fund-raiser at the P-Town Combat Sports Academy: "Boxing is a sport that is open to boys and girls and requires a lot of aerobic exercise."

The City is partnering with the P-Town Combat Sports Academy on the boxing clinic. P-Town operates a gym on Indian Avenue that trains and provides mentoring and tutoring to about 150 boys and girls ages 5 and above, including several professional boxers.

The City and P-Town have a long association and have collaborated on various sports and fund-raising programs over the years. P-Town trainer and co-owner Angel Ochoa said the City's support is crucial for the gym to survive. "We could not do what we do without assistance from the City of Perris, for which we are most grateful," Ochoa said.

"We want to give something back to the Perris community. We are committed to helping kids stay off the streets. When they're in here, we keep them busy. They go home tired."



Boxing legend Joe Louis holds Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Rita Rogers when she was a toddler. Rogers has been a longtime boxing fan and supporter.

Mikey Garcia, 26, is among the pros who train at P-Town. Garcia is 34-0 as a fighter and recently defended his WBO super featherweight division title in Madison Square Garden. He is trained by his father, Eduardo, and brother, Robert, also a super featherweight (130-pound maximum weight) champion. In an interview with sportsillustrated.cnn.com, Mikey Garcia said that as a youngster, he wanted to be a police officer or lawyer.

But after taking up the sport as a teen-ager, Garcia advanced quickly through the amateur ranks, winning the 2004 National Junior Golden Gloves Championships and the 2005 National Police Athletic League Championships.



Perris Mayor Pro-Tem being held by boxing legend Sugar Ray Robinson (right) when she was a toddler.

He turned pro in 2006.

"I never dreamed of being a fighter," Garcia told the magazine in January. "Right now, I wouldn't change it. I'm glad I chose this career. It's what I do best, so why change it? I haven't told my brother yet, but I plan on maybe retiring in four or five years. At 30, I plan on doing something else. For now, I will just do what I do best."



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