

National Italian American Foundation

Italian Language and Culture Teacher of the Year Award

Information for the Year 2009

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) was founded in 1975 as a non-profit, non-partisan organization in Washington, DC. The NIAF is the major advocate in Washington, DC for nearly 25 million Italian Americans, the nation's fifth largest ethnic group. Its mission is to preserve and protect Italian American heritage and culture. One of the NIAF's top priorities is the promotion of the Italian language. In this effort, which began in 2003, the NIAF honors a teacher for excellence in Italian language and culture classroom education. (See the NIAF website at www.niaf.org.)

A selection committee will select the NIAF Italian Teacher of the Year. The NIAF Italian Teacher of the Year award recipient will be announced in September of 2009 and recognized at the NIAF Annual Convention in October 2009. The recipient will receive a scholarship for tuition, travel expenses, and a living stipend to enroll in a continuing education course for teachers of the Italian language to foreigners at the University of Perugia. In addition, the recipient will mentor a student seeking to become an Italian language teacher (see Award section for details).

Purpose

The purpose of the award is to annually recognize an outstanding educator in Italian language and culture. The recipient will have shown dedication and contribution in the field of teaching Italian. The award of a continuing education stipend aims to provide the instruments (content, methodological and bibliographical) to teachers so they can continue their professional development.

Eligibility

- All nominees must be employed by an accredited American school during the 2008-2009 school year to be eligible for nomination.
- Nominations for elementary and secondary teachers will be considered.
- Nominees must have a minimum of three (3) years teaching experience.
- Nominees can be teachers at public, private and/or parochial schools.

Candidates should be skillful, dedicated teachers who plan to actively continue classroom teaching. Most importantly, a candidate should demonstrate an ability to inspire a love of learning the Italian language and culture in students of any background.

Application Process

Teachers must be nominated by their school principal.

The application consists of two parts: 1) a cover sheet to be filled out by the school principal (nominator) and 2) the application to be filled out by the nominated teacher. The application should be typed or word-processed, and essay questions should be double-spaced. When additional pages are added, the question number and essay topic should appear at the top of each page. Limit answers to the number of pages requested in each section (type size no smaller than 10 point).

Please provide all information requested in the application form.

Material should be either single-stapled or submitted with a clip/clasp, with no binding.

The completed applications and any support materials submitted can not be returned to the applicant or nominator. We suggest the applicant keep a copy of all submitted material.

All applications must be submitted by mail in their entirety, including all attachments and letters of support. Partial or incomplete applications will not be evaluated.

Once the application has been submitted, no changes or additions will be permitted.

**Applications must be post-marked by Friday, June 26, 2009.
No exceptions to the deadline will be granted.**

Applications should be mailed to:
NIAF Italian Teacher of the Year
1860 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Application post-mark deadline:	Friday, June 26, 2009
Notification date:	Wednesday September 2, 2009
Acceptance date:	Friday September 11, 2009
Award ceremony (Washington, DC)	October 2009 (NIAF Gala weekend; date TBD)
Study in Italy*:	July 2010 (estimated)

*2009 recipient may defer study in Italy for one year. Award expires summer 2011.

Selection Process

An Award Committee, made of a panel familiar with Italian language, Italian culture, foreign language education and the NIAF, will meet in July 2009 to discuss the nominees and applications.

The Award Committee will evaluate applicants on a number of criteria including:

- *Creativity and innovation* in teaching Italian language and Italian culture;
- *Interdisciplinary approach*: the degree to which the connection is made between Italian language and culture and other subjects/disciplines;
- *Student impact*: evidence of a teacher's impact on inspiring students, student attitudes and on overall learning;
- *Dedication* to the advancement of teaching Italian language culture, and *community impact*: evidence of a teacher's impact on the community (related to Italian language and/or Italian culture);
- *Professional development*: Desire to stay informed about current educational theories, foreign language education, and Italian language and culture; and
- *Letters of support* (3).

All nominees will be notified by Wednesday, September 2, 2009 of the selection of the Award Committee.

Award

NIAF Convention

- NIAF Teacher of the Year will be presented during the NIAF Convention in Washington DC. Winner will be provided with roundtrip transportation to/from Washington, DC, 2-3 nights hotel accommodations, two tickets to NIAF Awards Gala and a stipend to cover other related travel expenses.

Corso di Aggiornamento per Insegnanti d'Italiano all'Estero

- NIAF Teacher of the Year will be allotted a continuing education stipend to participate in the University of Perugia's "Corso di Aggiornamento per Insegnanti d'Italiano all'Estero". Expenses include transportation between the US and Perugia; tuition and course fees; accommodations for a single room in shared apartment; and daily stipend for food at the University cafeteria.

Mentoring

- NIAF Teacher of the Year will be responsible for mentoring a local college student in the field of Italian language and education. The NIAF Teacher of the Year *could* allow the student to visit and observe him/her in the classroom, help grade papers or teach

a class. When the Award Committee chooses the Teacher of the Year, NIAF will search for the student the recipient will mentor. NIAF will locate someone within the area of the recipient. In case a student is not located, other obligations will be agreed upon for the mentoring portion of the award.

For more information, visit www.niaf.org/programs/teacheroftheyear or email gspillane@niaf.org or mmazzo@niaf.org

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