



Interested in how the Italian language is taught in U.S. schools?

Then plan to attend NIAF's conference, "From Dante to Benigni: Italian Language and Culture in American Schools" on Saturday, October 18, 2008 during NIAF's Convention Weekend. For more information, visit www.niaf.org.

NIAF Members, Affiliates Support AP Italian

Additional information about the Italian Language Foundation and efforts to maintain AP Italian classes in high schools will soon be available at www.italianlanguagefoundation.org.

By Monica Soladay

In 2005, the College Board began offering Advanced Placement Italian Language and Culture, also known as "AP Italian," to high school students across the United States. But just three years later, the board announced in April that it would cancel the program after the 2008-2009 school year, citing lack of interest, unless outside sources of funding become available.

To save the program, several NIAF members and affiliates recently launched a nonprofit to promote and underwrite AP Italian. On July 3, the group – which includes former NIAF board member and former first lady of New York Matilda Cuomo; Margaret Cuomo, M.D., a member of the original Committee to Establish the Italian AP Program; Louis Tallarini, president of the Columbus Citizens Foundation; and NIAF President Salvatore J. Zizza – announced the incorporation of this nonprofit, the Italian Language Foundation, Inc.

"The Italian-American community is galvanized in its determination that high school students have the opportunity to enroll in Advanced Placement courses in Italian," said Mrs. Cuomo. "We are delighted that in 2008, just three years after the AP Italian exam was inaugurated, over 2,000 students took the exam. This number is striking

considering the years of study required for a successful completion of the test."

Cuomo noted that the number showed an increase of 23 percent over participation in AP Italian during 2007, "clearly demonstrating that there is a growing demand for one of the great languages in world history."

Cuomo's observations are supported by a recent study of more than 5 million U.S. high school students released by The National Research Center for College and University Admissions. The center's 2007 Post-Secondary Planning Survey notes that if given the option, more students would choose to study Italian than any other foreign language. In fact, more than 50 percent of students surveyed would choose to study Italian.

The College Board's launch of AP Italian in 2005 followed discussions held with the Committee to Establish the Italian AP Program and the receipt of subsidies totaling \$500,000 from the Republic of Italy, the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), the Order Sons of Italy (OSIA), and UNICO. The AP Italian Language and Culture program is based on developing students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills within a cultural frame of reference reflective of the richness of Italian language and culture.▲