

Club Newsletters



ITALIAN AMERICAN
CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Honoring the past, enriching the future



3659 Green Road, Suite 124
Beachwood OH 44122
1-800-592-5373
www.iacfcleveland.org

August 2009

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IACF Trustee Gio DiLalla with members of Club Molisani

IACF Members and Co-Sponsors Meet Students at Brunch

66 people enjoyed a meal of lasagna, sausages and salad, not to mention cannoli and pizzelle, at IACF's first-ever membership brunch on June 28, hosted at Villa Serena in Mayfield Heights. But the real high point was after the food, when we heard from the students themselves. Two of our senior winners read us their essays, and we also heard a few samples of thank-you letters from previous years.



The brunch was conceived as a way both to recognize the students and to share with our members and others the heart-warming results of the essay award program. Invitations went out to all of the student essayists, to IACF members, and to the officers of co-sponsoring clubs, as well as the teachers and judges and a variety of other contacts. The result was a wonderful mixture of people from different perspectives and backgrounds, all of them people who value the Italian heritage and want to keep it alive for younger generations. We were especially glad to meet ten of the students and their families, and to share the experience with representatives from the Southwest Italian-American Club, Club Molisani, and the Sante Catholic Union.



After the cannoli and pizzelle, IACF President Lisa Amato Reid welcomed everyone and explained briefly the essay award program. Each of the IACF trustees then read a sample thank-you letters receive from previous award recipients. Especially important were phrases such as *"please continue to do this so that others can have the same experience of learning about their heritage"* and *"I am looking forward to next year when I can read another book and participate in the program"*.



We then had the pleasure of listening to, First Place Senior from Mayfield High School, read her essay, extracts of which appeared in the July issue of La Gazzetta. For those who missed it, Josette described how a book had led her to learn more about the challenges faced by her beloved grandmother. As a grand finale, **Gino Andreano**, First Place Senior from Benedictine High School, gave us a very personal and moving story about his grandfather, from whom he learned "to always cherish life and to never ever give up without a fight", ending with the greatest tribute one could hear: "I believe that my grandfather was the perfect example of Italian Americans: a hardworking, loving, God-fearing people who put their families and loved ones before themselves. Not only am I very proud to say that I am an Italian American, but I am especially proud to say that I am the grandson of Gino Andreano."



We're convinced that it was these essays that led four people to become new members on the spot. Several others took home membership forms, and we look forward to adding them to our fellowship.