

MARIA LOMBARDO

COMPETITIVE GRANT FUNDED PROGRAMS



In order to assist Italian-American organizations in obtaining Federal funding for their programs, the "Grantsmanship Workshop" was created soon after the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) opened its doors. The workshop featured speakers and panels that discussed eligibility requirements for Federal grants, and how-tos on preparing successful proposals. Joseph T. Ventura, then executive director, said that while many organizations had excellent ideas about helping their communities and promoting their heritage, they often lacked knowledge about the source of Federal funds for the execution of their programs. Learning of NIAF's grant writing needs from Dr. Alfred Rotondaro then Executive Director, Dr. Maria Lombardo volunteered to write proposals at no cost to NIAF.

Her empathy for immigrants stems from her journey from Italy to America on the Christopher Columbus ship and her experiences as a non-English speaker navigating English programs from elementary to the university level. With a doctorate in Bilingual Education and Reading financed by the Federal government Dr. Lombardo learned the art of proposal writing and fundraising. In 1982, based on research and teaching experience, Dr. Lombardo wrote a proposal for a Parent Training Program in New York City and Boston. When the program was funded it financed Lombardo's position as Education Director for NIAF. This gave Dr. Lombardo the opportunity to do major pioneering work for the Italian American community. Her background as the daughter of a slave labor camp survivor later led her to develop and gain

National Endowment of the Humanities funding for a series of 'Holocaust in Southern Europe' programs.

NIAF Received Grants

Over the years, Dr. Lombardo conceptualized ideas for programs, wrote proposals, acquired funding, conducted said programs and coordinated outside evaluators to examine the programs' strengths and weaknesses. Often these programs became models for other Italian American organizations to emulate. Dr. Lombardo submitted numerous grants on behalf of NIAF to the Federal Government, private organizations, the Italian Government, universities and individual donors. Some of the grants are listed below.

Italian American Parent Training Institutes of Parents and Teachers

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education
- The National Italian American Foundation
- School Districts

The program targeted parents from Southern Italy who were not familiar with the American school system. The project examined the impact of training upon: a) parents' active participation in schools and political structure of the bilingual programs; b) the behaviors of parents as to the activities that they conduct with their children and c) the reading achievement of bilingual, elementary age children.

Dr. Lombardo conducted extensive training programs for Italian immigrant parents with bilingual children enrolled in American schools. She also provided on site technical assistance for the Italian American organizations seeking to expand bilingual education programs. She noted psychology findings that fifty percent of a child's intelligence is developed by age four. In the case of Italian Americans, although parents were interested in educational advancement for their children, many were unaware of at-home reading and math activities that would improve their academic achievement. Since Italy operates under a centralized education system, parents were not aware of the American educational system, which is based on community participation. The outcomes of this program were: the development of Parent Advisory Committees, voicing opinions to school officials, parent voting at School Board elections, and training parents to see increases in the reading levels of their children.

Two publications that resulted from the program: "Italian American Parent Training Institutes," Office of Bilingual Education, 1987, and "Reading Skills and Activities for the Italian American Parent Training Institutes of New York City and Boston Public Schools," ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1984.

Burlington, Mass. School District

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education

Dr. Lombardo was asked to write a proposal and received a grant for the Burlington Public Schools for, model Italian Project FLAG (Foreign Language Assistance Grant) to address all five of the Secretary's Competitive Priorities to: 1) train regular education classroom teachers through an intensive summer foreign language program in Italy; 2) link non-native English speakers (Italian Advisors) in the community with the schools to promote two way language learning; 3) promote the sequential study of Italian language and culture to increase students' Language scores, Reading and Math scores; increase Italian instructional time to 45 minutes per day, five days per week and after school; and extend students' Italian language learning to grades four and five thus serving the total of 1,480 students; and to coordinate a sequential curriculum with the middle and high schools based on the National Standards in Foreign Language (ACTFL, 1996); 4) make effective use of technology by using a cable station network system; and 5) promote content based instruction and disseminate videos, Parent and Teacher Handbooks to duplicate Project FLAG at any of the 50 CASIT member elementary schools in the Boston area and to elementary schools offering Italian nationally.

Through a combination of CASIT (Centro Attivita Scholastiche Italiane) Italian government funds, that have increased starting with \$20,000 and more recently \$50,000 per year and its own funds, Burlington has sustained an Italian language program for elementary grade children.

Peng You Project at Cambridge Public Schools

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education

Working with Dr. Mary Cazabon, the Peng You Project was funded as a Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant. The purpose of the program was to conduct Mandarin classes for students up to the high school level. To assist other school districts that may wish to duplicate the program, a Mandarin Curriculum based on thematic units was developed incorporating Health content. Students were pre and post tested individually using the SSALD Exam. Teachers received training and worked with their Boston Public School counterparts. Parents attended the Chinese New Year Celebration and the Peng You Fair. A highlight of the program was having student interns of the Project work in the community to utilize their Mandarin skills. Both student and teacher exchanges were started with China. As a result, Dr. Lombardo was invited to participate in a US Delegation to China.

Spotlight Program at University of Massachusetts, Boston

Funded by:

- US Department of Education

For five years Dr. Lombardo was the Project Coordinator training mainstream teachers of Boston, Cambridge and the Framingham Public Schools in ESL Instruction. She supervised student teachers placed in ESL and Sheltered English Instruction classrooms in the Boston area. She revamped the ESL License and Certification Program that Master's level students needed once their coursework was successfully completed. To obtain state licenses in ESL, students were required to complete a Practicum Experience. By creating online and face to face courses, the ESL Licensure and the Field Experience courses students were guided to ensure the state provided them licenses. As a result of the revamped program more than 90% of the graduating students also received their state licenses increasing workforce value.

Union Ridge School District Consortium Foreign Language Proposal

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education
- Italian Consulate
- Chicago Area Schools

In a unified effort, the Italian consulate of Chicago through Anna Fiore; the Union Ridge School District 86 through Dr. Raymond Kuper; and Dr. Lombardo prepared a foreign language proposal that rendered successful results from the U.S. Department of Education. The Foreign Language Assistance Grant titled "Language and Learning for the Future: Global Education for the Global World" constituted a total matching fund of \$4.3 million for continuing and establishing the Italian language in Chicago area schools for three years. The U.S. Department of Education, the Italian consulate and the Union Ridge School District 86 made the matching funds available.

As a result of this grant, nine suburban schools from six school districts in the Chicago area, the Italian government and community groups established, developed and implemented an innovative model of foreign language "FLES program content enriched." This program provided Italian language instruction to 2,274 students from Kindergarten through eighth grade as part of the regular school day. Through this grant the schools developed a sequential integrated curriculum by delivering Italian language instruction three times a week, from 40 to 60 minutes each session, including immersion units in art, music and social studies.

Preserving, Promoting The Italian Language & Culture in the U.S.

Funded by:

- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Italian Ministry of Public Education
- Georgetown University

Dr. Lombardo wrote a proposal to the Italian Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct an international conference in Washington, D.C., to present models for maintaining and promoting the Italian language and culture in the United States and abroad.

Her proposal was based on the research and implementation of a grant she had funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1982. Competing with various Italian American organizations and universities nationally, the NIAF, together with the Italian Cultural Institute of Washington, D.C., was awarded funding from the Italian Ministry of Education and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct a major international conference to discuss the status of Italian language study in the U.S., and to develop strategies for establishing, maintaining and reinstating Italian language and culture programs throughout the country.

The intent of the conference "Preserving and Promoting the Italian Language and Culture in Washington D.C." was to bring educators together from Italy, Canada and the U.S. to discuss the most effective strategies for initiating Italian programs and maintaining such programs where they already existed. A critical focus was to help teachers learn about exemplary programs. Another goal was to discuss how to educate the general public about the positive aspects of the Italian and Italian American history and culture, thus eradicating negative stereotypes (ie. mafia). The Advisory Committee, which set the agenda for the language conference, was comprised of U.S. Senators and Members of Congress, including: Senators Patrick Leahy and Richard Santorum; Congresswomen Rosa DeLauro, Susan Molinari, Constance Morella, Nancy Pelosi and Marge Roukema; and Congressmen John Baldacci, Sonny Bono, Mike Doyle, Thomas Foglietta, Dan Frisa, John LaFalce, Rick Lazio, Frank LoBiondo, Donald Manzullo, Bill Martini, Frank Mascara, John Mica, George Miller, Joe Moakley, Frank Pallone, James Oberstar, James Traficant and Robert Torricelli.

This stimulating international conference established the NIAF as a leader and pioneer in providing a forum for the promotion of Italian culture and, in particular, the Italian language, the study of which is threatened with extinction in the U.S.

Women's Educational Equity Act Program

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education
- Community Educational Center (CEC)

"Preparing Ethnic Minority Women for American Society" was a request prepared by Dr. Lombardo with the Community Educational Center (CEC) for a grant. This Model program was prepared and made available as a Teaching Manual, or a step-by-step procedure including language, cultural, job preparation and techniques tailored for Italian women. The NIAF and the

Community Educational Center disseminated the Teaching Manual to Asian Centers and Italian American organizations. Lombardo researched literature, interviewed experts working with various Italian women, conducted surveys with the target population and prepared curriculum.

Program details were published in the U.S. Department of Education journal serving as a model for Italian women with children in school. The intent of the program was to have mothers learn how to assist their children in American's educational system.

Serving as the Project Director, Dr. Lombardo prepared curriculum, materials, lists and surveys in Italian. The results were implemented in Boston. A Teaching Manual was prepared and distributed to 12 National Italian American Foundation sites nationally that were monitored by the applicant's Regional Vice Presidents.

"Terzo Convegno Di Pedagogia e Didattica"

Funded by:

- Italian Embassy
- Italian Ministry of Education
- American Association of Teachers

Constantly assessing the needs of the Italian American community and considering contemporary issues, the NIAF Education Department worked to create interesting and informative conferences for the Italian American community in the United States.

Under the direction of Chairman Frank D. Stella, the NIAF began special interest sessions with leaders of the Italian American community. Italian American college presidents were invited to Washington, D.C. to discuss specific programs that the NIAF together with universities could conduct nationwide to meet America's Goals 2000. The National Italian American Foundation hosted more than 200 teachers and professors of Italian at the Italian Embassy. The group, representative of the American Association of Teachers of Italian, attended a conference sponsored by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages at the Washington Convention Center. The Italian language course focused on art history, language and culture while the other tours focused on the comparison of the Italian and American legal systems. The cities included in the tours were Rome, Camerino, Orvieto, Gubbio, Urbino, San Marino, Assisi, Perugia, Florence, Spoleto, Arezzo and Siena, Honored guests at the event included Italian Ambassador Boris Biancheri; Professor Albert Mancini, President of the AATI.

The NIAF has supported the efforts of the AATI by collaborating on conferences and hosting officials from the Italian Ministry of Education. It is in part through receptions such as this one held at the Italian Embassy that appreciation can be expressed to dedicated and committed educators of the Italian language.

Family English Literacy

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education

The proposal titled, "Project Achieve"—Developing the English as a Second Language Skills of LEP Adults and Out-of-School Youth To Impact The Education Achievement of LEP children was a request for a Family English Literacy Program by Dr. Lombardo for a three year grant. Once Federal funds were terminated the applicant would absorb all costs for continuing the program and increasing the number of participants. During the first year 100 Italians would be served at the Community Educational Center (CEC). During the second and third year the group would increase by 50%. The project proposed to assist students, parents and teachers to assist out-of-school youth in improving English language proficiency, academic achievement and to assist parents in English as a Second Language; parenting; job skills; and help improve their attitude toward Bilingual Education Programs. Senator Edward Kennedy and his wife were honored by the parent participants in East Boston.

The Model that Lombardo used for NIAF was to conceptualize a program, raise funds and then conduct the program and create a model that could be replicated nationally. Programs like Blue Ribbon, Student Exchange, Parent Involvement and Women Training are some examples.

Our Lady of Mercy Recipient of The Blue Ribbon School National Program

Funded by:

- U.S. Department of Education

As a result of writing a successful proposal and designing a Multicultural Mentoring Program (NIAF's Adopt a School Program), Dr. Lombardo had Our Lady of Mercy School in Potomac, Maryland selected as a Blue Ribbon School. Its exemplary program was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Created by the Secretary of Education, the purpose of the Blue Ribbon Schools Program is to honor America's outstanding public and private schools. Each school is evaluated on outcome measures and conditions of effective schooling, such as leadership, teaching environment, curriculum and instruction, student environment, parent and community support, and organizational vitality.

In order to show the school's ethnic diversity, she conducted a Needs Assessment. Once it was completed she noted that there were many students of Italian background. She expressed this need to the Italian Embassy and the Italian Cultural Society, who responded by providing an Italian teacher to the school. The instructor cultivated the multi ethnic background of the students

and invited Mentoring U.S.A. to conduct a Multicultural Mentoring Program with the assistance of the Harvard Multicultural Mentoring Program.

Multicultural Mentoring Program

Funded by:

- Harvard University
- Our Lady of Mercy

The design of this program was to involve community ethnic organizations representing the background of students. Mentors from the community organizations would work with the students on academic issues and also incorporate cultural information into lessons. Students benefited from role models representing the culture of their ancestors. Use of the native language was encouraged depending on student knowledge and understanding. Harvard University was interested in diversifying the mentoring program to meet student needs. Ethnic organizations working with the NIAF were encouraged to partake in this model program. Dr. Lombardo goal was to develop this model across the U.S. with the NIAF regions to promote the teaching of Italian and to raise the standards of American education. Each region's NIAF Vice President would work closely with its headquarters in Washington, D.C. to raise funds. Basically, the majority of funds would come from the school districts, State Government, Italian Ministry of Education and the U.S. Department of Education.

Exchange Programs With Italy

One of the goals of NIAF was to maintain economic and cultural bonds with Italy. Whether it be doctors from Italy speaking at medical conferences in the U.S. or students from the U.S. invited to exchange residences with counterparts in Italy.

An enriching Italy-U.S. exchange program took place when the U.S. State Department United States Information Agency (USIA) funded Dr. Lombardo's proposal for 30 high school students to take part in a bilateral exchange program. Further funding came from Intercultura and Italy/Italy Magazine.

In conjunction with the University of Camerino in Italy, together with Dr. Francesco Nicotra, publisher of Italy/Italy Magazine arranged for Italian American lawyers to travel to Italy to study the Italian legal system.

Student Exchange Program

Funded by:

- U.S. State Department United States Information Agency
- Region of Lazio, Italy

- The Italian Government
- Italy/Italy Magazine
- Inter-Cultura Foundation

With a successful proposal submitted by Dr. Lombardo to the USIA, the NIAF also received funds from Inter-Cultura and Italy/Italy Magazine to initiate, and strengthen its institutional capabilities to establish and promote a long term academic homestay exchange for 30 secondary school students (or recent graduates) of a one semester duration between the United States and Italy. Closely related to the NIAF in this program was the establishment of protocol with the Italian Embassy in the U.S.A through its cultural affairs section that worked closely with NIAF.

The intention of the program was to offer students the opportunity to become immersed in the language and culture of Italy and the U.S. Prior to his arrival in America, an Italian student participant, Licio Torelli, had no English language proficiency. He made remarkable progress as the year went by, and eventually made the honor roll at his American high school. Ezio Anzi, another Italian exchange student, integrated himself completely into the American culture. Socially, he was considered the most popular boy in his class. He even managed to pass the written English test and to obtain an American driver's license. As a result there was a waiting list of students and host families interested in future student exchange programs with Italy.

Camerino Legal Exchange Summer Program

Funded by:

- University of Camerino
- National Italian American Foundation
- Italy/Italy Magazine
- Italy/Italy Cultural Exchange Foundation

Lawyers were afforded the opportunity to compare the American and Italian legal systems and to partake in an Italian language course focusing on art history, language and culture. The cities included in the tours that accompanied the program were Rome, Camerino, Orvieto, Gubbio, Urbino, San Marino, Assisi, Perugia, Florence, Spoleto, Arrezzo and Siena.

Law Internship Program Between Italy and the U.S.

Funded by:

- National Italian American Bar Association
- Movimento Studentesco Italiano

Lawyers were exchanged between Italy and the United States and placed in prestigious law firms. The program focused on the Italian Language and International Law and were conducted at Camerino University and the University for Foreigners in Perugia. The NIAF, together with Dr. Francesco Nicotra, publisher of Italy/Italy Magazine, arranged for Italian American lawyers to travel to Italy to study the Italian legal system.

Law Intern Program

Funded by:

- Italian American Bar Association
- The National Italian American Foundation

Another program is the Law Intern Program, co-sponsored by the NIAF and the National Italian American Bar Association. The program helped young Italian lawyers to familiarize themselves with the American perspective in international law, to make professional contacts, and to learn more about American culture generally. After a one week orientation in Washington, D.C., the interns were placed with host families for four weeks in cities including Philadelphia, New York and Washington, D.C. The program was later expanded to include internships in Italy for Italian American lawyers.

Medical and Legal Exchanges

Similarly, the University for Foreigners in Perugia, Italy, collaborated in organizing an "Italian Heritage Program," which allowed American doctors and lawyers to participate in special study and travel programs in Italy. The Morgagni Medical Society helped to organize medical tours in Italy allowing for hospital visits and conferences to discuss medical issues.

Art Exhibits

Dr. Lombardo had a strong belief that NIAF should maintain strong ties with Italy and allow the public that could not travel to Italy to experience Italy's rich history.

Daily Life of the Etruscans Exhibit

Funded by:

- Osuna Gallery from Perugia Italy
- Ministero Per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali
- L' Università Italiana per Stranieri
- NIAF

Dr. Lombardo raised funds for an Etruscan Exhibit to be brought to the Osuna Gallery in Washington, D.C. for the first time. The exhibition included artifacts from Etruscan tombs of Perugia, Italy. This exhibit launched the "International Year of the Etruscans" in the United States.

L'Occhio Se Salta il Muro Exhibit

Funded by:

- Italian government
- Region of Emilia Romagna
- Capital Children's Museum

This exhibit brought from Italy displayed children's work as they were taught via the Maria Montessori approach for primary and elementary ages. It encouraged children to explore their environment as a basis of learning and expressing their ideas creatively and freely. Teachers acted as guides in the self initiated instruction by children.

The Nerone Exhibit

Funded by:

- Reggio Emilia, Italy
- Capital Children's Museum of Washington DC

Nerone's artistic works were displayed and children had the opportunity to work with the artist to make their own paintings to be displayed at the Capital Children's Museum. A reception funded by Guest Services followed the exhibit brought from Italy by Dr. Lombardo.

"Columbus Legacy: Hopes, Dreams, and Reality" Exhibits

Funded by:

- Montgomery County Schools
- Capital Children's Museum
- Russian Delegation of Teachers and Students
- Italian Ministry of Education

In 1992, two exhibitions organized by Dr. Lombardo were held at the Capital Children's Museum in Washington, D.C., both entitled "The Christopher Columbus Legacy: Hopes, Dreams and Reality." The Columbus education program began with a small scale pilot program at Luxmanor Elementary School in Rockville, Maryland. A resource specialist with previous experience in Columbus instruction seminars conducted a workshop for the Luxmanor teachers. The topic of Columbus became a relevant component of the Luxmanor students' lessons in math, science, and social studies. Luxmanor's art teacher worked with the students to develop projects that would further explore Columbus themes and create an exhibit. The Luxmanor children's artwork formed the first of the "Columbus Legacy" exhibitions.

Congresswoman Constance Morella, honorary chairperson of the exhibition, officially opened the show with a private presentation and reception. The guests included trustees of the

Museum, representatives of the National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association, and prominent members of the Italian American, Hispanic American and Native American communities, as well as the young artists and their parents. During the opening of the show, NIAF Vice Chairman Arthur J. Gajarsa presented Luxmanor's principal with a check for \$500 to be used for the purchase of books on Christopher Columbus.

Later in the year, the NIAF encouraged teachers to utilize the 1992 Columbus Quincentennial for educational purposes by inviting educators throughout the country to submit their most successful lesson plans focused on the study of Columbus and related topics. A panel of judges determined the most innovative entries, and compiled them in a Resource Guide. These outstanding teaching program ideas were shown at the Capital Children's Museum. In a second exhibition, the artwork was not only created by American students from various parts of the country, but also by Italian children in Alba, Italy and by a group of Russian children who were visiting Luxmanor Elementary School. Together with their new American friends, they too produced artwork that was shown at the "Columbus Legacy" exhibition.

Conferences

Conferences and seminars are a major component of educational outreach. They are generally conducted as part of specific Education Program activities. Conferences are conducted to educate the public about issues that affect Italian Americans. Topics ranged from medical issues to important historical periods. To ensure the success of conferences, grants were obtained from other organizations to cosponsor events.

Along with the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation of Turin, Italy the first international conference was conducted on "The Role of the American of Italian Heritage," which explored educational opportunities for Italian Americans, and how to realize them in the future. Major conferences followed. The first was a historical conference honoring Giuseppe Garibaldi, with former Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti as the featured speaker. The second conference was "Preparing for 1992," chaired by Benjamin Palumbo. A substantial number of non-Italian Americans were in attendance.

In conjunction with the Cooley's Anemia Foundation, a conference was held in Washington, D.C. on Thalassemia, which is a form of anemia. It was once thought to affect only those of Mediterranean ancestry but has since been found in more than 30 countries. Experts on the disease from Italy and the U.S. including Dr. Antonio Cao of Rome and Dr. Carlo Valenti of Sardegna, participated in the event. Ensuing conferences focused on Health Care Reform in the U.S., Alzheimer's patients and families, to the 'right to die' initiative. These were funded by the NIH, the White House and other organizations. Dr. Lombardo worked with the National Institutes of Health, the Italian American Bar Association, Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals and the White House to organize the events.

Over the years many significant conferences were conducted together with the National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW), under the leadership of Dr. Aileen Riotto Sirey. The conferences aimed to define the role of Italian American women and present their achievements in the areas of sciences, business, academia, politics, medicine and law.

Medical Conference: "Thalassemia: A Responsibility of All Medical Disciplines"

Funded by:

- National Italian American Medical Council
- Cooley's Anemia Foundation
- Fairfax Hospital

The NIAF Medical Council, in conjunction with the Cooley's Anemia Foundation, co-sponsored a conference in Washington, D.C. on Thalassemia. The disease is a form of anemia which was once thought to affect only those of Mediterranean ancestry, but has since been found across the world. Experts on the disease from Italy and the U.S., including Dr. Antonio Cao of Rome and Dr. Carlo Valenti of Sardegna, participated in the conference.

Medical/Legal Council

Funded by:

- National Italian American Foundation

A salient program in NIAF was conducted by the Medical/Legal Council on an annual basis during the NIAF Gala weekend. Dr. Lombardo coordinated with Georgetown University and other schools for doctors and lawyers to receive CME and CLE credits for participating in such events. Dr. Maria Lombardo sought and was able to obtain outside funding to conduct the conferences on a yearly basis. The topics selected benefitted the Italian American community with information regarding caretakers, wills and resources for the elderly.

Medical Conference: "The Right to Die"

Funded by:

- NIAF Medical Council
- The National Capital Area
- The National Italian American Bar Association

This seminar explored how decisions affecting life's end impact upon the medical and legal professions. The seminar discussed living wills, durable powers of attorney, the Patient Self

Determination Act of 1991, and the Model Death with Dignity Act. The program examined these issues by positing case histories, which the panelists discussed from a moral, ethical, and legal standpoint. There was an examination of the Italian American family's role in the decision making process of a family member's death. Speakers included: Tom Beauchamp, Senior Research Scholar, Kennedy Institute of Ethics, Dr. Edmund Pellegrino, Ethic's Director at Georgetown University Center for Advanced Studies, Dr. Elliott Perlin, Professor of Medicine at Howard University Hospital, Dr. Richard Doerflinger, Associate Director for Policy Development for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Dr. Greg Bloche, a physician/lawyer and a professor at Georgetown University Law Center. Paul Anthony served as the Moderator.

Medical Conference: "Life's Journey: Will Your Mind Go The Distance"

Funded by:

- Sigma-Tau Pharmaceuticals Inc.
- Sigma-Tau Foundation
- National Italian American Bar Association
- National Medical/ Dental Council

The symposium focused on medical and legal issues in the long term health care of Alzheimer's Disease, where studies of Alzheimer's patients were presented and discussed. Cultural differences regarding the Italian family as caretakers were also examined. Ira Magaziner of the White House was the keynote speaker at the conference.

Medical Conference: Health Care Reform

Funded by:

- White House Conference on Aging
- Sigma Tau Pharmaceuticals Inc.
- Sigma Tau Foundation
- The National Italian American Bar Association
- NIAF Medical/Dental Council

A comparison of the Italian and United States Health Care Systems was conducted with a focus on the aging population. The "U.S. Health Care Reform" conference was sanctioned as a Mini White House Conference on Aging. The NIAF conference was funded and co-sponsored by the Sigma Tau Pharmaceuticals Foundation, with collaboration from the White House and the National Institutes of Health. Giancarlo Schettino, former Director of Public Relations for Sigma Tau, said in his introduction to the 1994 conference that health care reform is "undoubtedly the most urgent social problem facing the U.S."

The conference was open to the public and discussed not only U.S. health care reform but also those of other countries. Dr. Antonia Novello, former U.S. Surgeon General, said health care reform should be a priority if we are to move forward as a nation.

During the second half of the conference, White House Senior Policy Advisor Walter Zelman addressed the White House's position on healthcare reform. After responding to numerous audience questions, he stated: "We may not have won the battle, but we'll win the war."

Calabrian Regional Conference: "La Calabria Nel Mondo"

Funded by:

- The Region of Calabria

In April 2000, representatives from countries all over the world discussed how to promote and maintain the Calabrese culture within their respective countries. Dr. Lombardo represented NIAF in the colloquium held in Crotona.

Dr. Lombardo introduced the John Mott Scholarship Endowment Fund that provided scholarships for students of Calabria, Italy. She coordinated efforts with the Mott Foundation Board to help develop an adult learning center in Serra D'Aiello. The first student identified as a scholarship recipient was Giuseppe DeBiase of Serra D'Aiello, Calabria. A computer major at the University of Cosenza, DeBiase came to the NIAF luncheon to receive his \$10,000 Mott Scholarship presented by Lou Pierro, President of the Mott Foundation.

NIAF Scholarship Program

Scholarships were always the focus of NIAF concerned with the education of young people who will become tomorrow's leaders. The organization offered a variety of scholarship assistance in business, law, medicine, education, and music through the private contributions of NIAF supporters, Italian American organizations, private firms and the annual income generated by the Scholarship Fund. With Dr. Maria Lombardo's work, the program grew from \$250 scholarships to \$10,000 scholarships and an endowment of \$1.9 million. She established scholarships for two contracts of \$3.6 million from the Mott Foundation and from the De Francis Scholarship Endowment. Annually, scholarship monies were raised by Dr. Lombardo directly or indirectly as she helped others to raise scholarship funds through Galas and Regional events. Dr. Lombardo initiated the idea of matching scholarship funds with other organizations.

The scholarship program was successful because it allowed donors (individuals, organizations, companies) to custom tailor their program to students of certain regions, geographic areas, who were academically worthy but financially underserved. Eventually a community service component was added to the requirements. The Scholarship Review Committee was responsible for the selection of scholarship winners on an annual basis. Some of

the Scholarship winners were presented to the community at NIAF's Education Luncheon held in conjunction with its Gala Dinner and at regional local events with Regional Vice Presidents.

One of numerous examples of commitment are the first scholarship sponsors, the DeFlavia family of Pennsylvania who believed that "no one should be denied an education because of lack of funds." They bequeathed one third of their estate to the NIAF to provide scholarships for needy Italian American students. Mr. DeFlavia felt strongly about the importance of scholarships because a senatorial scholarship had enabled him to attend Temple University during his economic hardship. For 13 years, the Marinelli Family Fellowship was kept alive by the late John and M. Concetta Marinelli's daughters, Angela and Anne and continued with late Michael and Antonio Marinelli, cousins of Angela and Anne. Many other donors continued their commitments over the years.

Scholarship Recipients

Recipients have been students from high schools, colleges, universities, and graduate schools across the United States. The Italian American students attributed their academic achievements to their ethnicity and to strong familial support. In most instances, the students are able to show that their grandparents were the first generation of their families to arrive in this country. The prime reason given for their immigration is the economic difficulties they faced in southern Italy: coming to America meant an economic opportunity for them. Ethnic pride surfaced in many of the applicants who wished not only to learn the Italian language, but also to travel to Italy and discover their heritage. In their applications, students often included a family tree. Another common thread that tied the recipients together is their appreciation for the opportunities offered to them through NIAF scholarships. A student who received the Sigma Tau Neurology Scholarship expressed his thanks by writing, "I have always been aware of the importance of education in the Italian American community. I would often hear my grandfather talk about his own younger brother who had moved in [with him] to complete medical school. I certainly appreciate your dedication and commitment to the Italian-Americans, and to the art and science of medicine." Criteria for selection included academic merit and financial need. Winners were selected by the NIAF's Scholarship Review Committee.

One of the highlights of the Scholarship Program was assisting Eva Franchi to establish her Sergio Franchi Music Foundation in honor of her late husband and tenor to recognize students in voice performance. Franchi tirelessly raised funds for scholarships by holding an outdoor concert and presenting scholarships on the Franchi Estate in Connecticut for 25 years.

As a result of a NIAF fundraising dinner, the Pavarotti Scholarship was initiated in honor of Luciano Pavarotti. Dr. Lombardo worked with Pavarotti in selecting scholarship winners.

NIAF Grant Program

Over the years, Lombardo conducted a multitude of educational programs funded by grants that were models for the community. To assist individuals, organizations and educational

institutions to conduct similar programs, Dr. Lombardo urged NIAF to establish a grant program through its Education Committee. Applicants were encouraged to obtain matching funds from outside the NIAF. The Goals of the NIAF Grant Program were to:

- Preserve the Italian American heritage
- Promote the Italian language and Italian culture in America
- Inform the public through various media outlets about Italian American heritage, accomplishments of Italian Americans, issues of concern to Americans of Italian descent and the ties between the United States and Italy
- Develop new information on social, cultural, economic and ethnic characteristics of Italian Americans
- Foster inter-connections among the Italian American community

The NIAF Education Committee made their selections annually.

Among the Projects Funded by NIAF:

"A Debt to Honor" - A 29-minute documentary in color produced by Documentaries International Film and Video. Narrated by Alan Aida, the film presents Italian rescuers of Jewish victims and Holocaust survivors telling their stories.

"Bella Vista: A View of World War II from Montana" - A 30-minute documentary that tells the story of 1,000 Italian civilians held at Fort Missoula during World War II. It is co-produced by independent filmmakers Kathy Witkowsky and Lori Hudak, under the auspices of KSPS Public Television in Spokane, Washington.

"Ciao Italia" - A popular cooking program, broadcast nationally on Public Television and hosted by Mary Ann Esposito, who promotes the cuisine and culture of Italy and her Italian American heritage.

"Editoria Italiana in USA" - a documentary film on the history of Italian newspapers in the United States (bilingual presentation).

"Perfidia" - a feature film that deals with the little-known story of the internment of Italian American citizens, along with Italian POW's, on American soil during World War II.

"Italian Sculpture: Masterpieces from the National Museum of Palazzo Venezia in Rome" - an exhibition of Italian Renaissance and Baroque sculpture at the Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, Georgia.

"Bocce" - a documentary film that is the precursor of a feature-length documentary on bocce in America.

Lingua Nostra Project - a national approach to initiating Italian language instruction in U.S. schools by mobilizing parents to take action in their own communities.

The Italian American Photo Archive - a general repository of photographs encompassing the global experience of Italian immigrants.

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum - an old New York tenement building that presents a variety of immigrant experiences.

The Perugino Project - a programming project at the Grand Rapids Art Museum on Renaissance and Italian culture.

Mentoring U.S.A. - a program involving college students' work with children of elementary school age who risk becoming dropouts.

The Cooley's Anemia Foundation - research on thalassemia, a blood disorder affecting Italian Americans.

Conducted Surveys

NIAF published the first inaugural issue of "The Scholarship Gazette." The first article published inside was the "Where are They Now?" survey that Dr. Lombardo conducted of past scholarship winners.

In conjunction with the conference 'Preserving and Promoting the Italian Language in the United States,' Dr. Lombardo asked 2,000 students how the Italian language was maintained at home and school, and asked their ideas on promoting Italian culture in the future.

Students indicated that besides NIAF scholarships, they wanted mentoring; exchange programs with Italy; Italian language programs; medical, legal, political and business internship placements; and networking programs that NIAF should conduct to help them.

Workshops' on How to Introduce Italian Language and Culture in the Public Schools by Grant Writing

Dr. Lombardo organized workshops on promoting the Italian language and culture by obtaining grants. The identified needs of specific populations were the impetus behind the questions and issues raised in the institute on proposal writing. The main questions were how those populations and their needs could be better defined, how an appropriate and feasible educational program could be conceptualized and how that program could be translated into a fundable proposal consistent with Federal guidelines.

Specific questions included how to conduct a needs assessment, how to distinguish between supplanting and supplementing, how to obtain support services for programs and how to elicit School Board support for a bilingual program proposal.

To answer these questions, the presenters structured a two-part Institute. The first part dealt simultaneously with the processes of conceptualizing a program and writing a fundable proposal. The second part dealt with ideas and suggestions, mostly in the form of checklists,

intended to give assistance in initiating the proposal writing process and in evaluating both the process and its final product, i.e., the proposal. The workshops helped put those organizations in contact with potential funding sources. Amongst these workshops some took place in Boston, New York, Washington, New Jersey and Chicago.

Lombardo's work came full circle first obtaining funding to establish programs at NIAF and then assisting Italian Americans to replicate and attain funding to establish these aforementioned programs in their community. Assistance in establishing Italian community programs could be derived from publications by Lombardo: "Scholarship Opportunities for Italian American Students," "Resource Guide to Studying in Italy Moving Forward in Education," "Making a Difference in Education," "Preserving and Promoting the Italian Language and Culture in North America;" "The Status of the Italian Language and Culture Past and Present."

Recognition for Her Work by the Community

Dr. Lombardo assisted school districts to obtain Federal funding for their early education, Computer Assisted Instruction and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Amongst the recipients were the Boston Public Schools, Lawrence Public Schools, Cedar Rapids Community School District, Columbus/West Liberty School Districts, Belcourt School District, Bismarck School District, Fort Yates Public Schools, Ojibwa Indian School District, St. John Public School District, Turtle Mountain Community School District, White Shield School District, Oak Park School District, Akron School District and Pierre Indian Learning Center.

For her work with the Italian language and culture, Dr. Lombardo was recognized and amongst her awards a full Federal Fellowship for doctoral work at Boston University; nominated Chair of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation by President Obama; selected as Consultore for the Region of Calabria; chosen as Member of US Delegation to China for her work with Chinese; received Outstanding Educator Award, I Migliori Educator Award and amongst her other recognitions were the Raoul Wallenberg Award and the Marisa Bellisario International Award for her work on Italy and the Holocaust,