



Our Community, Our Language: What Italian Americans Can Do

Giulio Terzi (November 06, 2011)



Italy's Ambassador to Washington Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, writes about the initiatives to promote Italian language and culture in the U.S. and the opportunities they open to the Italian-American community (Editorial note: ten days after this article was published, Ambassador Terzi was made Italy's Minister of Foreign Affairs)

This year has turned October into the Italian Heritage Month in the United States. In Washington, the House and the Senate have submitted a resolution to this effect in response to an initiative put forward by the Italian-American community with the support of the Embassy. President Obama, in asking "what would America be without the contributions of Italy and Italian Americans," said he was



proud to celebrate Italian American Heritage Month as well as the 150th anniversary of Italy's unification.

They are affirmations of an extraordinary friendship. They come from the highest of authorities and match the unprecedented public participation throughout the United States in the events of recent weeks. I still have vivid memory of the tens of thousands of people along 5th Avenue in New York on Columbus Day. I received reports of similar manifestations of pride and satisfaction from our Consuls that organized over 130 events for [Italy@150](#) [2].

I am calling on this very Italian pride when I ask the Italian-American community in the United States to once again support the Italian government's efforts to disseminate the teaching of our language in American schools one year after we signed the agreement which, thanks to your contribution, reinstated Italian in the Advanced Placement program.

We set the scene by making 2011 an all Italian year in the United States marked by very significant moments such as President Obama's proclamation for "Italy's birthday" on March 17 and President Napolitano's visit to New York. We have new tools to bring Italian closer to young Americans also through social networks: the website www.usspeaksitalian.org [3], a forum for discussion created by the Osservatorio sulla Lingua Italiana for students, families, and teachers has been active for several months now; we launched a portal, [Italy4Kids](#) [4], so that children and young people can learn more about Italy, its language, and its culture.

Now we need you: get together, talk, discuss the opportunities that learning Italian offers; tell your school's principals, teachers, and parents to learn more about Advanced Placement Program (AP) Italian and its advantages, using the information and the contacts in the brochure that has been prepared for the introduction of courses in September.

Let's speak Italian and let's talk about it.

(* Ambassador of Italy to Washington. Minister of Foreign Affairs since Nov 16, 2011.

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