



ITALIAN  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

Preserving Our Culture. Serving Our Community.

SINCE 1916

# Il Messaggero

NEWS & UPDATES FROM ITALIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

*C*ari Amici,



For 105 years this organization has been helping Italians and Italian-Americans in the Bay Area to meet their economic and social needs. We were formed in 1916 to broaden the outreach of earlier economic, medical, and social initiatives of the previous century like those of the Italian Hospital and the Societa' di Mutua Beneficenza.

We are an independent charitable organization that does not depend upon governmental support and we would like your help to keep it that way.

Except for a small staff of three, none of our officers, directors and volunteers receive any income for our work and time commitments to the Organization. Our support comes from current donations and the

prudent management of past donations. In addition, as trustee of the Casa Fugazi we are obligated to manage and maintain the Building at 678 Green Steet in San Francisco.

Each year we ask for public donations to help us meet and expand our commitments. If you would like additional information about our programs and sources and use of funds, please feel free to contact through call or email our Executive Director, Pietro Bonanno at [pietrojbonanno@italiancs.com](mailto:pietrojbonanno@italiancs.com) or 415-362-6423 X11.

*Donald G. Parachini*

Donald G. Parachini  
President

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- *Community impact in numbers*
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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*B*uongiorno,



The last 2 years seem like a blur to everyone. Who would have thought we would live through such trying times? My message is one of hope. In reviewing the last 24 months I find myself smiling. Why, you might ask? Because, unlike most organizations and communities, we have come through these trials and tribulations stronger than ever. Covid in no way, shape or form stopped us from living out our mission. This is a compliment to not only my team but also to the broader Italian and Italian-American community. ICS is the infrastructure that allowed, enabled, and encouraged people to help one and other. The members of this community have demonstrated to me time and time again that together, we are strong. Together, we can stand-up to whatever situation and achieve great things. Whether it was a senior that was isolated, a younger individual that lost employment, or someone terminally ill, we met the challenge and alleviated the pain that

was presented to us. Together—"insieme"—we can elevate and re-live that sense of humanity which our ancestors embodied so well. Please read this newsletter with pride and know that you too are part of this community. Never have I seen volunteers so eager to help, clients so willing to try a new technology and a team ready to selflessly help a fellow community member. I salute Samsung and T-Mobile for teaming-up with ICS to provide simple tablets to our seniors. I will never forget the expressions of pure joy as seniors saw family and friends for the first time in years, in some instances, in decades. Another highlight for 2021 was reuniting Carlo Tarrone with his only living relatives in the Alps close to Turin, Italy. Alone and in poor company he suffered greatly during Covid. Our team pulled out all the stops and even accompanied him to Italy. These are just a few of the many initiatives spearheaded by ICS. Stay tuned for our 2021 Impact Report which will be released in January 2022. If you believe in the work our organization executes, please consider donating. In the next pages you will see the magnitude by which we have

increased our financial assistance program and senior activities budget. Each donation makes a difference.

I end this message with a tone of deep gratitude and bittersweetness. I conclude my third and last year as Executive Director at Italian Community Services. It is time I move to my next opportunity. This journey ends where it all began, back to the Board of Directors. I will continue to work towards making ICS the best organization of its kind in all the United States. Thank you donors, volunteers, and community members for making these three years unforgettable. My time at ICS reminded me of the beauty of humanity, compassion, and shared respect for our basic human needs. ICS—you have enriched me. Grazie.

*Pietro Jonathan Bonnano*

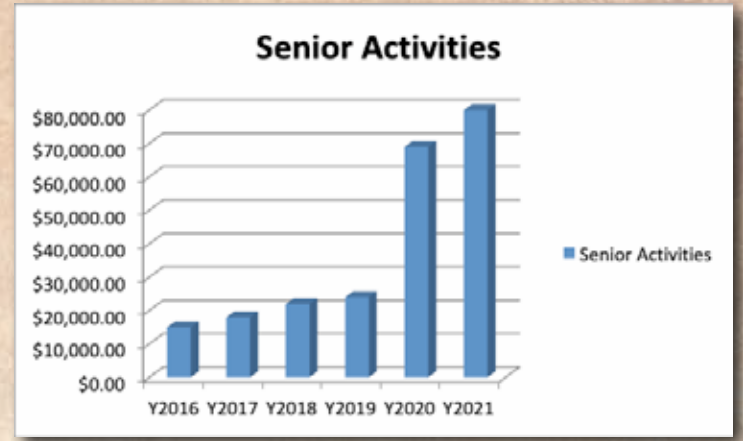
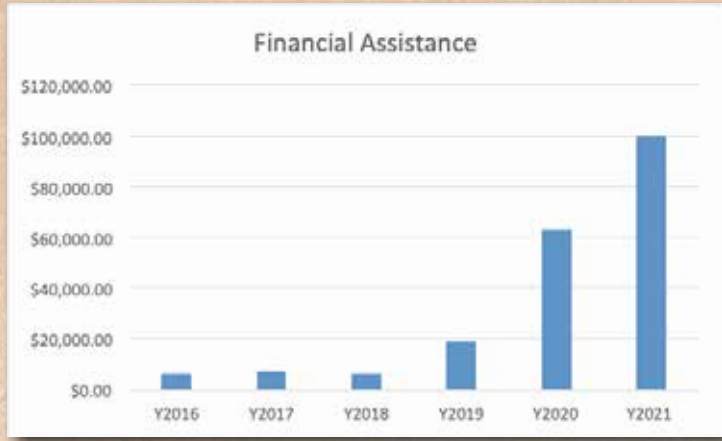
Pietro Jonathan Bonnano  
Executive Director

## Our Mission

Italian Community Services provides Bay Area Italian-American individuals and families with trusted resources to help them live healthy, independent and productive lives. We are committed to honoring and preserving the Italian language and culture, with an emphasis on the strength and support that come from family, community, education and goodwill.



# COMMUNITY IMPACT IN NUMBERS



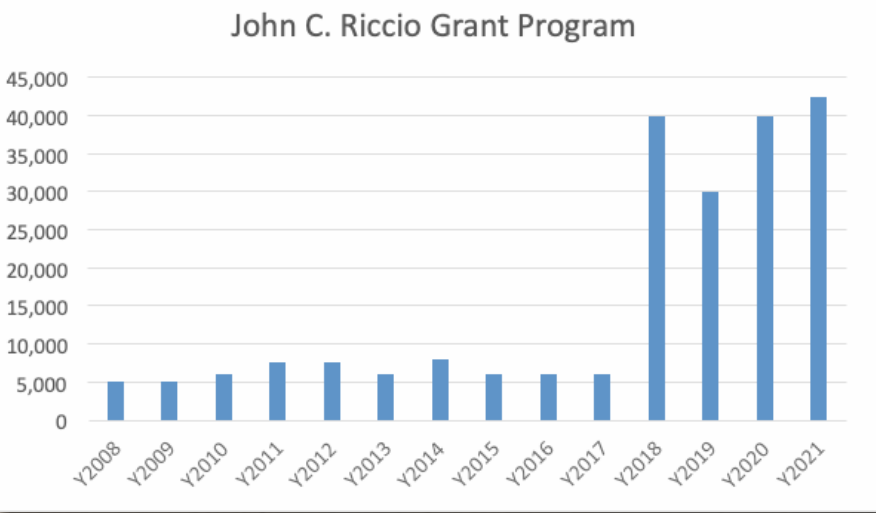
**Financial Assistance Program** – Italian Community Services has an extensive Financial Assistance program. In these times of need, we are happy to have helped over 63 households. If you or anyone is in need please contact us to learn if you qualify. Currently, we aid these households by paying a portion of the rent, utilities, groceries and essential transportation to and from doctor appointments. Covid exposed the most vulnerable in our community and we met the challenge head on. We are honored to have played a small role in alleviating the stress associated with financial hardship.

**Senior Activities**– Before covid hit our community, Italian Community Services held weekly meals, presentations and fieldtrips. To protect our most vulnerable we closed our doors and chose to bring our mission directly to everyone’s home. Our Senior Activities are organized with the goal of forging relationships, reducing isolation, cultural enrichment and educating. In 2020 we began the bi-weekly care package initiative bringing organic produce, essentials, Italian foods and treats as well as informational material to every household. Through this initiative we kept Italian food importers afloat, gave much needed business to over 80 organic farmers in Sonoma County and brought delicious foods to our community. By doing this we transformed food into social sustainability. The care package initiative wouldn’t have been a success without the help of our volunteers. Volunteers quickly stepped-up to the plate and made weekly calls to over 200 households. Soon, relationships were formed between our volunteers and our clients. These calls served as weekly check-ins to see if there was anything we could do in addition to bringing care packages, providing financial assistance and care coordination. For some, the calls were the only human interaction taking place during the pandemic.

**John C. Riccio Grant Program**- The John C. Riccio Grant supports the Italian language programs throughout Bay Area private and public schools. This program is named in honor of our Board Member John C. Riccio whom advocated for Italian language programs at all school levels. We invite schools to submit proposals through our website. Each year the committee meets to approve school requests and distribute funding. In the last 12 years we have provided over \$210,000 in funding to consolidate the Italian language programs in our local schools.



*St. Catherine of Siena in Burlingame*



*La Scuola International*



*Marin Catholic*

## EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY TO LIMIT ISOLATION



*Emilia seeing her family in Italy*

Italian Community Services implemented the use of specific technologies to help reduce isolation in our community. We learned quickly that isolation was affecting our seniors in different degrees and so we launched a few projects. For those that were not tech savvy we initiated a Friend-line. By calling this tollfree number our community members could talk anonymously to our team and volunteers. Soon after launching the Friend-line we provided Amazon Echo Dot devices to those that wanted them. For the most isolated we developed a senior friendly device with Samsung and T-mobile. Fides and Lia were childhood best friends in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia. Each decided to move to America and in their 20’s migrated to the US and made San Francisco their home. Separated by 3 city blocks, these best friends saw their families grow and visited each day. Once covid hit they initially spoke over the phone but soon that became mundane and their communication lessened. When we pitched the tablet program to our community, Lia and Fides were the first to sign-up. After numerous multi-language training sessions we were able to get Lia and Fides video chatting with each other. The tears of joy were impossible to hold back, even to our team that watched the first video call. To this day, these lifelong friends haven’t seen each in person as Covid fears continue to worry our seniors. However, due to these devices, video call each other twice a day to talk in their dialect, exchange recipes or simply see each other’s smile. Thank you.



*Fides and Lia video chatting*





# COMMUNITY NEWS

## CONSUL GENERAL LORENZO ORTONA DEPARTURE

In May, ICS generously provided a farewell reception for Lorenzo Ortona and Sheila Pierce-Ortona. As covid restrictions began to be lifted, we were successful in uniting the leaders of numerous Italian organizations to thank our Mr. and Mrs. Consul General for their friendship, and contributions to our community. It was a beautiful spring day which will remain in our memories.



Sheila Pierce Ortona and Romana Bracco



Vice-Consul Fabio Ballerini, and Pietro Bonanno

## ARRIVAL OF CONSUL GENERAL SERGIO STROZZI



In July, Sergio Strozzi became our new Consul General and has not stopped running since his arrival. We thank Consul General Sergio Strozzi for all the attention given to Italian Community Services and our initiatives. He is the first Consul General to ever volunteer for ICS. Grazie!

New Consul General Sergio Strozzi visits ICS



Board Members Don Parachini, Richard Cuneo and Paul Tonelli



Mr. and Mrs. Ortona

## ITALIAN HERITAGE PARADE

This year's Italian Heritage Parade was the first parade San Francisco saw since March of 2020. By all means this was a monumental success with over 65 floats participating. It was also the first time Italian Community Services participated. Our float was in collaboration with La Scuola International and the energy between our two groups was so palpable that we were awarded 2nd place.



ICS Team on Float



La Scuola International students decorating the float



La Scuola International and ICS team decorating the float

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT CLUB FUGAZI

Club Fugazi comes to life again. After the departure of Beach Blanket Babylon, ICS began an extensive search for a new theatre company. The 7 Fingers, originally from Quebec, Canada is an internationally acclaimed theatrical group that was looking to open a new permanent show in San Francisco. Today, the 7 Fingers have started "Club Fugazi Experiences" and



are now live at Club Fugazi. We couldn't be happier to have found a company that is not only committed to Club Fugazi but wants to honor the Italian roots of North Beach and supports its businesses. Thank you Club Fugazi Experiences for partnering with us and for bringing vital business to our Italian community in San Francisco!



## ICS RE-OPENING IN NOVEMBER

On November 17th Italian Community Services re-opened its doors and served a "Friends-Giving" which goes down in history. By bringing the community together, we are able to do great things. Pineria Barbara provided its critically acclaimed pinsa for the aperitivo, Lorenzo Scarpone generously donated succulent homemade porchetta while Emporio Rulli brought cases of its award winning Italian pastries. It was an elegant feast! The 7th and 8th grade students from La Scuola International served the meal and played music to serenade our seniors.





## Returning to Italy (Home)

In the last 3 years we have seen a clear pattern taking shape in our community. More and more seniors are making the decision to leave San Francisco and return to Italy. Often, this decision is not an easy one. After 40+ years of calling the Bay Area their “home” these individuals come to the conclusion that by moving back they can live a better life. This choice is shared by married couples, widowed and singles alike. This year alone, ICS has assisted 5 clients with this complicated project. The most

vivid example is that of Carlo Tarrone. Carlo moved from the alps in Piedmont to San Francisco in the 1950's. He worked hard at Gallo Salame



*SF Friends Bidding Carlo “Arrivederci”.*

Company and became a pillar of the North Beach community. Since 2015 his health started to decline and Covid accelerated the process. Alone, and depending on neighbors for essential assistance, Carlo turned to ICS for help. Over the span of 18 months, ICS communicated with Carlo's living brother and nieces in Piedmont. After much debating the decision was made for Carlo to return home. In September, ICS Executive Director Pietro Bonanno accompanied Carlo on the journey. After 3 months of living with his family, Carlo's health has rebounded and so has his overall quality of life. This is the first time ICS provided this service.



*KLM staff waves Carlo farewell as he arrives at the Amsterdam Airport.*



*Carlo reunited with family in Malpensa Milan airport. Sipping his first Italian coffee in ages.*



*Carlo with his nieces.*

## WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2022

**Covid-permitting, we hope to have 2022 be a year filled with initiatives. Many projects were designed in 2020 but because of the pandemic were tabled until further notice.**

➤ **SENIOR WOMEN SOCIAL GROUP-** For the last 9 years Leslie Pellegrini, husband Alex Pellegrini and their dog Luna have led social groups and they are ready to begin a group at ICS. The first session will be January 11th, 2022 at 1PM. Be prepared to learn new things, and reinvent your life after covid.

➤ **WORK LAB-** We will soon launch our very own Work Lab. Thanks to a generous donation we have purchased laptops and all necessary hardware/software for a successful program. The goal of this project is to train, teach soft skills and provide basic corporate culture knowledge.

➤ **PRONTOPIA-** ICS is partnering with Prontopia to launch a platform dedicated to matching seniors in need of errands/tasks with screened professionals whom work exclusively with seniors.

➤ **LIBRARY COMPLETION-** This two year project is soon to be completed. Look out in early March for the opening of our very own library of Italian and English rare books.

➤ **IMMIGRATION EXHIBIT-** The Small and Large Heritage Rooms will host a permanent exhibit on the Italian immigration story to California. Come learn about our ancestors, how they integrated into the US culture and applied their work ethic and Italian ingenuity to shape California for decades to come.

➤ **WELCOME TO THE BAY SERIES-** Launched in 2019 this series is dedicated to those that have recently moved to the Bay Area. Our quarterly info sessions provide essential tips for integrating and thriving in one of our country's most vibrant and complex societies.

➤ **AU PAIR GROUPS-** In March ICS will unite the over 70 Italian Au Pairs living with Bay Area families. These young adults often struggle to make a community of their own. We have a number of networking and social events dedicated to making their stay in the Bay Area a memorable one.

➤ **ITALIAN CLUBS AT HIGH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.** ICS is working closely with local High Schools and Colleges to support or create from scratch Italian Language and Culture clubs on campus.

➤ **JOINT EVENTS WITH BAIA-** ICS plans to co-host 3 community events with BAIA.

➤ **JOINT EVENTS WITH ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE.** In 2019 ICS and the Italian Cultural Institute started co-hosting musical and cultural events. Back by popular demand, both organizations plan to continue on this trajectory and give unforgettable opportunities of cultural growth for all community members.



# ABOUT THE TEAM



We are so thankful for the outpouring of support from the Italian American community along with our team of dedicated volunteers. We really could not have done it without them! With the holiday season, I am reminded of how many volunteers gave the gift of their time and just how much that means to us and our clients. Their resilience and eagerness to help has made such a difference in so many people's lives. We have a deep sense of gratitude for everything our volunteers have done to support Italian Community Services. Client - Volunteer Manager, Lana Toniutti



I am Starr Cutino Padovese. Despite moving all over the US as a child, I always knew I wanted to call San Francisco home when I got to make the choice. I fully moved to city 7 years ago and in that time this city has given me so many friends, memories, laughs and most importantly my loving Husband, who I got to marry during this crazy pandemic. We currently live in the Outer Sunset with our 110-pound Bernese Mountain dog, Cooper. The sense of togetherness that this tight knit community has is what draws so many people to it. That same sense of community is what I feel every day at the Italian Community Services getting to serve and partner with each and every one of you. Strategic Projects and Executive Assistant, Starr Cutino Padovese



Much of the mission of Italian community services is centered around community outreach. Helping members remain active, engaged and independent is at the core of what we do. For me, however it is even more. Every day this dynamic generation leads me with their wisdom and inspires me with their stories. They are what make my job so fulfilling! Client Services, Analisa Del Prete

# NEW COLLABORATIONS

Italian Community Services likes to bring people and organizations together in order to achieve great things. For this reason we partnered with Refettorio/Farming Hope to source and assemble the produce bags for our community. Refettorio is part of a broader movement which started in Modena, Italy that believes in using food to help individuals and communities thrive. In San Francisco, Refettorio's mission is culturally driven to strengthen the social ecosystem through the guiding principles; Value of Hospitality, Power of Beauty and Quality of Ideas. By supporting Refettorio, ICS is demonstrating its commitment to the broader community. Every \$ given to Refettorio goes towards their program activities which focus on empowering transitional employment for those more vulnerable and support economic opportunities for those who need it most through their social enterprise and food services to reduce food waste and nourish those food insecure across San Francisco county.

Soon after ICS and Refettorio began working together, the Italian Consulate of San Francisco showed great interest in providing support. Today, staff at the consulate, led by Consul General Sergio Strozzi and Vice-Consul Fabio Ballerini, are always preset to assist us in every initiative. Never before have consular staff and diplomats shown such interest in assisting ICS and supporting our activities.

To complete this puzzle the ARC San Francisco knocked on our doors to see if their clients could help and volunteer at ICS. The Arc is a lifelong learning and achievement center for 700 individuals with developmental disabilities in San Francisco. This organization is admired by many in the broader San Francisco Bay Area.



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PIETRO J. BONANNO



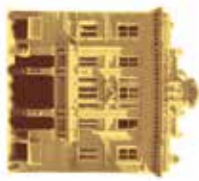


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## COMMUNITY IMPACT IN NUMBERS

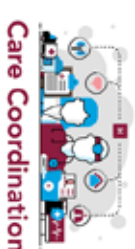
9,100 Wellness calls



1,240 Errands



210 Individuals receiving  
care coordination



8,000 Care packages



63 Families receiving  
financial assistance



56 Volunteers



## ANNUAL APPEAL DONATIONS

Grazie mille to everyone who donated.

A R Jeanson  
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