



ITALIAN
COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Preserving Our Culture. Serving Our Community.

SINCE 1916

Messaggero

NEWS & UPDATES FROM ITALIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Supporters,



As we approach the end of another remarkable year at Italian Community Services, I am honored to reflect on the incredible impact we've made together in the Italian and Italian-American communities of the San Francisco Bay Area. As President of the Board, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support we've received from our dedicated team, volunteers, and the broader community.

It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of our beloved Chairman, Donald Parachini. A true pillar of our community, Don's legacy will forever inspire us to continue the impactful work he championed.

One of the cornerstones of our mission is to provide essential social services to seniors, and this year has been no exception. Our commitment to enhancing the lives of our elder community members has resulted in meaningful programs that address their unique needs. From wellness checks and social activities to assistance with daily tasks, we've worked tirelessly to ensure that our seniors not only receive the care they deserve but also enjoy a sense of connection and belonging.

None of this would be possible without the generous support of individuals like you. Your commitment to our cause has allowed us to expand our reach and touch the lives of even more seniors in need. Together, we are creating a stronger, more connected community where everyone, regardless of age, feels valued and supported.

On November 5th we completed our first fundraising event after a 3yr Covid hiatus. Through the leadership of board members Romana Bracco, Julia Dondero and David Giannini and the unwavering support of ICS staff we were able to host a successful fundraiser in our building, Casa Fugazi, with the cooperation of our tenant, Club Fugazi Experiences, and their show Dear San Francisco. Through ticket sales and auction, both live and silent, we were able to raise \$27K to support our community activities.

As we look toward the future, we recognize that there is still much work to be done. The challenges facing our seniors and our community persist, and your continued support is crucial in helping us meet these needs head-on. We humbly ask for your support through donations. Your contributions will directly fund our programs, ensuring that we can continue making a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

To make a tax-deductible donation, please visit our website at www.italiancs.org/donate or contact our office at 415.362-6423 for more information on how you can contribute.

Thank you for being an integral part of the ICS family.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year! Grazie mille,

Stephen Leveroni
President

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ciao a tutti,



On November 5th we celebrated 107 years of "preserving our culture and serving our community." I wanted to share the remarks I prepared for that evening as I believe it captures the essence of our work:

When the Fugazi Family built and donated Casa Fugazi to the community they envisioned it being used for a night just like this one. Art, entertainment, community. Una bella serata insieme. What a beautiful night together!

When the founders of Italian Community Services started our organization 107 years ago, in 1916, they were the titans of their day in our community. You know their names...A.P Giannini, Ghirardelli, Lastreto, Bacigalupi. All VERY VERY successful, all VERY VERY hard working, all UNITED in giving back to their community. Specifically when they created our organization they acknowledged that not everyone within our community was thriving and that they had a responsibility to help. Help in those early days involved supporting seniors and widows who were in financial need, helping recent immigrants find work and housing, providing English lessons to help their community get established.

107 years later we are still committed to serving our Bay Area elders, and we've evolved to stay current with the needs of our community. When we took over as trustees of Casa Fugazi in 1961 we also added this space to our mission which gave us even more opportunities to serve our community. Today we serve a free luncheon every Wednesday at noon on the 3rd floor in our Large Heritage Room. It's a place for our seniors and community to gather and feel "at home." Please consider joining us when you have time. We also offer other activities and outings for our seniors in addition to helping connect them to city and other nonprofit resources. In addition to our senior work we help connect our community to trusted caregivers for their families, we provide language grants to Bay Area Schools, we provide holiday care packages to our community several times a year, we also provide space in our 3rd floor meeting rooms for many Italian focused organizations to meet like Le Donne d'Italia, Leonardo da Vinci Society, CIBA, Italian Heritage Parade, COMITES. But instead of me sharing more about ICS and our work, let me have our community share, in their words, a bit more about us. Watch the video: www.youtube.com/@italiancommunityservices. I want to share a bit more about two of the community members you

saw in the video. You saw Giuliana Figone at the end of the video talk about learning how to speak Italian at Sts Peter and Paul School. Those classes are the ones ICS supports via our Riccio grant program and those grant monies are critical... but it's also about inspiring the next generation of Giannini's and Fugazi's. But how? Well with the help of a cadre of volunteers (which frankly there is no way we could do our work at ICS without our volunteers) we had Guiliana and 50 of her classmates join us for a morning at Casa Fugazi. One of the activities our volunteers led was to draw their self-portraits...inspired by the hundreds of black and white photos of prominent Italians we have hanging proudly on our walls upstairs. The idea is that our youth can envision their OWN contributions to our community. Whether they become artists, or bankers, or architects, or chocolate makers, how will they uniquely and individually give back to their community. This is a beautiful legacy I want to continue to build on so come see Guiliana's self-portrait and the 49 others that we have hung on our walls so that she, and her family and our community can continue to be part of this ongoing legacy of hard work, success and philanthropy within our community.

Lastly I want to share one specific story with you. You saw Pasquale Molinaro in our video. He had sunglasses on his head and a big toothy grin and said he feels like Italian Community Services is family to him. He has been a regular at ICS for many years attending our luncheons and other senior activities. I met him when I began as ED of ICS about 1.5 years ago. One day at a Wed lunch I asked him about his family. He shared he's originally from Napoli but started out in New York. I asked him when he saw his family last and he said "40 anni fa." I said 4 years ago? No, 40 years ago. Pasquale had been homeless for 4 decades living on the streets across our country, and although he currently has stable housing at a SRO in the Tenderloin, he had been estranged from his family for 40+ years. I asked if he wanted to re-connect and he said yes but had no idea how to find them. Now whether you believe in God, the Universe or Providence but I have a friend who started a nonprofit here in San Francisco called Miracle Messages (who I've volunteered with) and they focus on reuniting homeless people with their loved ones by leveraging a team of professional and volunteer investigators and in less than 3 days they found Pasquale's family both in New York and in Naples. His family thought he was dead as they had looked for him for years with no luck. They were ecstatic to re-connect with him. When Pasquale was ready, we

downloaded WhatsApp onto his gov't issued phone and together called his family in Napoli who had all gathered to be reunited with him. As you can imagine it was an emotional and powerful experience for everyone and still gives me chills every time I tell this story. To see Pasquale guessing which sister was which by pointing to the screen (because as you can imagine people look different after 40 years) or to see them all laugh together as Napoletano (the regional dialect) was no longer as easy for Pasquale to understand since he doesn't use it very often in the States.

When I asked Pasquale how he felt a few weeks after reconnecting with his family he said Vyria "I was dead, and now I am alive." Since then, we continue to support Pasquale in different ways like connecting him to the UOP School of Dentistry low cost dental program or working with our dear friends at the Consulate to help secure his Italian passport, so that when the timing is right he can go back to Napoli. He's still trying to secure his US citizenship so if anyone has any immigration attorneys, please let us know. His story is unique and is ongoing and is not always smooth but it's a beautiful example of what ICS does. We create a trusted space for our community that allows us to support in very caring and individualized ways.

We've been blessed to be founded and originally supported by the Giannini's, Ghirardelli's, Bacigalupi's, Belgrano's and other beautiful Italian and Italian American families. And we have a new wave of individuals and families who have given generously to support our work: like the Castagnetto's, Sanguinetti's, Moretti's, Morzenti's, Bracco's, Sangiacomo's, Colavita's and many others but one thing is clear, it's a shared responsibility. Yes, some families have always been able to give more than others, either financially or with their time or connections, but it's part of the DNA of this community to help the community and to give back to the community and we thank you for supporting us tonight and in the days, weeks, months and years to come." I extend the same invitation to our newsletter readers and thank you in advance for your ongoing support of our work. Come visit us at Casa Fugazi and have a very Merry Christmas and New Year. Ci vediamo nel 2024!

Vyria Paselk Haverhals
Executive Director

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Celebrating Community Heroes: Volunteers in the Spotlight!

In the heart of our Italian community lies a network of dedicated individuals, embodying the essence of 'famiglia' through their selfless acts of service. We thank our volunteers who bring warmth and generosity to our lives and share some of their words on why they volunteer at Italian Community Services:

These treasured quotes offer a glimpse into the spirit that our volunteers bring to our community. Join us in thanking these exceptional individuals who remind us that "Insieme siamo più forti" (Together we are stronger). Their dedication illustrates that the essence of volunteering is not just an action; it's a way of embracing community and spreading joy.

Il volontariato è l'arte di donarsi, senza aspettarsi niente in cambio (Volunteering is the art of giving oneself, without expecting anything in return).

Please consider volunteering with us as another way to give back to our community! www.italiancs.org/volunteer



I volunteer because I see that people can't wait to get to Wednesday. They come here because they feel a part of the community, they exchange their opinions, they can say what they did during the week...They are a part of my family.

Maria De Venezia, Wednesday Luncheon Lead Volunteer



I heard about ICS and was so thrilled to come and volunteer for such a beautiful organization that does many outreach programs for Italians. I've seen so much joy in all the elders that do come [to the events] and I really enjoy it too.

Terri Baldocchi, Wednesday Luncheon and Outreach Programs Volunteer



I find it nice to come here as a volunteer and speak with some of the [community members]. Some of them do not speak English very well, so its nice for both me and them to converse in our native Italian language about life.

Vince Garambone, Wednesday Luncheon and Friendline Visitor Volunteer

GRAZIE MILLE VOLUNTEERS

a special thank you to volunteers with the most recorded hours in 2023

100+ hours

Ana Mayorga

Mary Molinari

Terri Baldocchi

75+ hours

Josephine Lucchesi

Maria De Venezia

50+ hours

Terry Trapani

Vince Garambone

Joyce Gugliemi

ICS SENIOR COMMUNITY

As we embrace the holiday seasons, Casa Fugazi continues to be a vibrant tapestry of laughter, camaraderie, and shared experiences. Our senior activities and luncheons have become the heartbeat of our beloved community, offering a diverse range of opportunities for connection, learning, and celebration.

We hosted a variety of events this year for our beloved crowd of seniors. Besides our usual Wednesday Luncheons and Thursday Activities, including bingo, bocce at Joe DiMaggio playground, card games and movies, we introduced Technology classes, Emotional Support Dog visit, a field trip to the Italian Cemetery, SFMOMA, the SF Opera Merola Program Concert, a Giant Game + an unforgettable day on the ICS Float during the Italian Heritage Parade!

Thanks to steadfast support from a dedicated group of volunteers, we've had close to 1900 in-person interactions with our community including a total of 800+ meals provided at Casa Fugazi (up till Nov 15th).

We are looking forward to a new year of gathering at Casa Fugazi where Italian and Italian American seniors find a community that celebrates their rich heritage, fosters lifelong friendships, and embraces the simple pleasures of life. Casa Fugazi stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of Italian seniors, proving that the journey of aging could be as beautiful and enriching as a Tuscan sunset.

Luncheon attendees quotes when asked "What does Italian Community Services mean to you?" and link to video:
www.youtube.com/@italiancommunityservices

Sheila: "I love it here! Everybody has been so good to me and for me. But I don't tell 'people' how old I am!"

Romano: "A place that helps me with many things and where I have found friendships."

Elba: "Mi sento come a casa con le abitudini italiane " (I feel like being home with all the Italian rituals).

Rose: "A place to go and get out of the house and spend time with other people and find peace of mind."

Georgette: "I like it very much here; I have all my friends here. We have a good time and there is always good food here. Everybody is so nice."

Agata: "It's a family and a community and I like the togetherness. It reminds me of my family."

Pasquale: "The staff is very kind. They help you and give you advice. Its' like a family for me."



JOHN C. RICCIO GRANT PROGRAM

This fall we were happy to announce that Italian Community Services was able to support 8 Bay Area schools and institutions as part of our John C. Riccio grant program this year. The John C. Riccio Grant not only promotes language proficiency but also fosters a deeper connection to Italian heritage, enhancing cultural diversity and enriching the fabric of our community. The 8 organizations included: Burlingame High School, ItaLingua Institute, La Scuola International School, Lowell High School, Marin Catholic High School, Museo Italo Americano, St. Catherine of Siena School, and Saints Peter and Paul School. Italian Community Services is very happy to offer this financial support, and look forward to ongoing engagement with these schools. To find out more about this program: www.italiancs.org/riccio-grant



Saints Peter and Paul School grantees visit ICS at Casa Fugazi.

HOLIDAY CARE PACKAGES

In a heartwarming display of community spirit, Italian Community Services and Workday recently joined forces again to continue the Holiday Care Package Program for the second year in a row, led by the passionate commitment of Denise Accurso, a dedicated volunteer and Workday employee.

The ICS Care Package Program began as a response to prevent senior isolation brought on by the pandemic in 2020. As stay-at-home orders began to lift, Denise reached out to ICS requesting that the Care Package program continue for the holiday season. Her enthusiasm sparked a collaborative effort with Workday in 2022, gathering over 30 employees to support ICS in assembling and delivering 300+ care packages across the Bay Area for Thanksgiving 2022, Christmas 2022, and Easter 2023.

The impact went beyond volunteering; Workday's acknowledgement of their employees' efforts resulted in a generous grant to ICS, supplementing the Holiday Care Package Program and allowing it to continue in 2023.

Italian Community Services recently wrapped up the Thanksgiving 2023 Care Package Program in collaboration with Workday, assembling over 80 care packages to deliver across the Bay Area with the help of many ICS volunteers.

The collaboration between ICS, Workday, and Denise is a testament to the power of partnership and individual commitment. Their collective initiative not only touched lives of many within our community during the holidays but also set a shining example of how collaboration and goodwill can create meaningful change in communities.

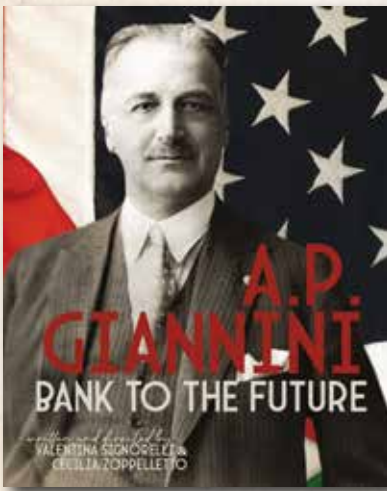


Denise Accurso and Madison Barton

A.P. Giannini Free Movie Night at Casa Fugazi

In celebration of Italian Heritage and Culture Month on October 16th, we proudly featured a documentary honoring A.P. Giannini. Born to Italian immigrants, Giannini founded Bank of America and played a pivotal role as one of the initial founders of Italian Community Services. The documentary, titled "A.P. Giannini - Bank To The Future," was presented in our beautiful theatre, Club Fugazi, in collaboration with Italian Community Services, Club Fugazi Experiences, and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura of San Francisco.

Directors Valentina Signorelli and Cecilia Zoppelletto graced us with their presence, sharing valuable insights into the film's creation. We were delighted to open our doors to the community for this enriching event, offered at no cost. The turnout was exceptional, with a full house eagerly gathering to delve into the life of A.P. Giannini, a true titan of our community.



107th Anniversary Celebration Highlights

On the night of November 5th, together with our community, we celebrated 107 years of "Preserving our Culture and Serving our Community" and it was a fabulous night together! Thank you to everyone who made it out to Casa Fugazi for a night filled with so much joy and laughter. In particular, a special thanks to Club Fugazi Experience and their show Dear Francisco for sharing their incredible talents with us that night. We

also wanted to thank Supervisor Aaron Peskin for presenting us with a certificate of honor "in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco." We aim to continue this service for the next generation of Italian and Italian Americans so thank you for your support! If you'd like to check out some photos, please visit our website: www.italiancs.org/107-anniversary.

ICS Wish List

Another way to support ICS is to help fund items that we need on a regular basis, like our weekly luncheon supplies and/or donate items that we'd like to have to do our work. Check out this Amazon registry for ideas of what we want/need and contact us if you can help fund or donate these items:



Check out New Website

Earlier this year we unveiled a brand new website where you can discover the latest on our programs and initiatives as well as learning how you can contribute to our work and make a meaningful impact. Find us at: www.italiancs.org and be sure to also follow us on social media for real-time updates on our work within our community.

This year we were humbled to receive two significant financial gifts from the Armand Castagnetto and Alfred Sanguinetti trusts. They joined a long list of philanthropists like the Giannini's, Ghirardelli's, Saturno's, Marini's and others who have believed in and funded our work over the years. To join them in their generosity, consider supporting us financially: www.italiancs.org/donate



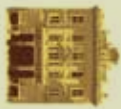
Angelica Sanguinetti Michela delivering ICS a 50K check in honor of her late father Alfred Sanguinetti.

2023 Board of Directors

- | | |
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Vyria Paselk Haverhals
Executive Director



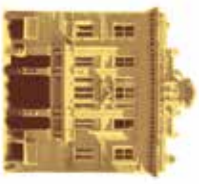


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501 (c) (3) Organization
TAX EIN 94-1196199

OUR STAFF



Vyria Paselk Haverhals, Laura Capuzzi, Madison Barton

Madison Barton: Community Relationship Manager

Maddy focuses on Volunteer Coordination, Database Management, Special Events and Community Member Correspondence

"I'm part of ICS because of the amazing relationships in my community. I'm thankful for all the wonderful amici, nonnos, and nonnas who care about me as much as I care about them."

Laura Capuzzi: Client Advocate Manager

Laura focuses on Senior Care Coordination, Community Luncheon and Activities and Advancing Access to Bay Area Health and Wellbeing Resources

"Serving the Italian community, it's more than a job, it's a daily opportunity to make a meaningful difference in someone's life. Advocating for their well-being, connecting them to essential resources, and being a supportive presence in their lives brings a profound sense of fulfillment and keeps me connected to my Italian heritage."

2023 Donors up till 11/21/23 (includes in kind donors)

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