



Scuola d'Italia Plays a Major Role in NYC

Letizia Airos Soria (March 18, 2009)

Gala to benefit La Scuola d'Italia "Guglielmo Marconi." Guests came together to promote education during this moment of crisis for an exceptional school here in New York.

It has employed dozens of workers and has seen thousands of persons, transactions, checks, investments, and notes through times of economic crisis and recovery. We are talking about the majestic hall at Cipriani which for decades has been the headquarters of a bank that hosted the gala for ["the La Scuola d'Italia "Guglielmo Marconi" \[1\]](#) this past Friday.

This time the investment that was celebrated, strangely enough under the vaulted ceiling of a former bank, was the best of an organization that can look back on its achievements and congratulate itself: the education of the next generation. As [Consul General Francesco Maria Talò \[2\]](#) said from the podium during the course of the evening, "education, especially during times of uncertainty, represents the best investment."

Here at [Cipriani on 42nd Street \[3\]](#), conceived by Louis Aires who in 1921 was inspired by the Italian renaissance, students, teachers, parents, and guests gathered to celebrate their school in the best possible way.

The La Scuola d'Italia "Guglielmo Marconi" is the only school in North America that offers its entire academic curriculum in both English and Italian and an international education that constantly refers back to both Italian and American cultures.

The evening's program was rich and varied. Several hundred invited guests participated in a fundraising auction, dined on an exquisite Italian menu, attended a performance by students, and listened to remarks by illustrious guests.

Conductor Petrika Melo began the evening by leading students in singing the national anthems. Students also presented a well-researched program on the international annual theme of astronomy.

"The Italian School has already realized several goals and is now entering a new phase. The next goal is the acquisition of a new academic building," said the school's new principal Anna Fiore in her presentation. Since her arrival, she has been known for her desire to involve the school directly in activities within the Italian and Italian-American communities. According to the Consul General, the school has played a major role in the city. "The new principal has understood how important it is to work together. This is a collaboration of intentions and interests that look to the future. The children have become true journalists thanks to one of the school's academic programs. For example, they have interviewed the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini, and they have actively participated in Holocaust Remembrance Day by reading the names on Park Avenue outside the Consulate and interviewing witnesses. In this way, the school has played a major role in the life of the city."

The Consul General continued: “We all feel the effects of the crisis on the global economy. I believe that precisely under these circumstances it is necessary to consider the future while building a solid foundation for the next generation. We have a great future ahead of us. It is the children of the Italian school who are proof that great projects can be accomplished with great effort.

The school’s generous donors have shown that they are making an investment in the future. Bubbles have burst and many certainties have shown themselves to be unfounded, but culture remains solid especially Italian culture and traditions. When culture is connected to the values and ideals of this great country that welcomes us, we have a mutually beneficial synthesis. These children with two cultures and two languages are truly the masters of their own destinies and they have a great future ahead of them.

Stephen Madsen, chairman of the school’s board of trustees, also referred to the moment of economic crisis: “It is a small school of excellence with great ambitions that positively looks to the future despite the difficulties of today.”

The gala and the evening’s events were seamlessly coordinated by Piera Palazzolo Falzone. Vice Principal Pia Pedicini was recognized for having completed 30 years of uninterrupted service to the school. “Over the course of three decades of total dedication to the school, Pia Pedicini has guided our institution with courage, vision, and competence. She has always been a role model and a source of inspiration,” said the principal.

The evening was accompanied by music from the Ligurian artist [Frank Balducci](#) [4].

Frank Fusaro, director of the [Columbus Citizens Foundation](#) [5], an Ethyle Wolfe historian, and member of the school’s board of trustees was also recognized for his 90th birthday. After watching a short film with several interviews and montages, he was given a certificate on behalf of “Rai 1” presented by Monica Maggioni.

Among the many guests and speakers, the following dignitaries were also in attendance: Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Archbishop Celestino Migliore, [Director of the Italian Cultural Institute Renato Miracco](#), [6] Directors of [ENIT](#) [7] and [Italian Trade Commission](#) [8] Riccardo Strano and Aniello Musella, President of the [Italy-America Chamber of Commerce](#) [9] Alberto Comini, Lawrence Auriana, Chairman of the [Columbus Citizens Foundation](#) [5] as well as Supreme Court Justice of New York Hon. Dominic R. Massaro and Vincenzo Marra President of the [Ilica Foundation](#). [10]

(Translated by Giulia Prestia)

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Links

- [1] <http://www.lascuoladitalia.org/>
- [2] http://www.consnewyork.esteri.it/Consolato_NewYork
- [3] <http://www.cipriani.com/cipriani/new/locations/new-york/events/42nd-street.php>
- [4] <http://www.myspace.com/andreabalducciexperience>
- [5] <http://www.columbuscitizensfd.org/>
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