

## Italian Heritage Month Begins!

Joelle Grosso (October 04, 2016)



On Friday, September 30th the Italian-American community gathered at the Italian Consulate in New York City to celebrate the start of Italian Heritage month.

The heavy downpour on Friday evening did not stop the commencement of Italian Heritage month in New York City. [Joseph Sciame](#) [2] of the [Italian Heritage & Culture Committee of New York](#) [3] was joined by the Consul General of Italy [Francesco Genuardi](#) [4], [Matilda Cuomo](#) [5], and Robert Pignatello of Hunter College to talk about the joys of being part of the Italian-American community.

Speaking of the Mother Italy Statue located in Poses Park on [Hunter College](#) [6] campus, Consul Genuardi said that he “can not imagine a better symbol of how strong the ties and the bonds between Italy and the United States are.” However unfortunately due to the rain, the event was relocated to the Italian Consulate on Park Avenue. Pignatello put it best when he said that “instead of a visit to Mother Italy, we had a visit by Mother Nature, but that’s okay because it did not dampen



our spirits.” In fact, the crowd was more enthusiastic than ever to kick off October and celebrate it’s profound significance for Italian-Americans everywhere.

Sciame, the President of IHCC-NY as well as the [Vice President for Community Relations at St. John’s University](#) [2], praised Dr. Angelo Gimondo, who unfortunately could not be present at the event, for being the founder of this esteemed committee. Gimondo is the person responsible for creating a week that celebrated Italian heritage 40 years ago which has now been extended into a month. When asked about what he’s most proud of after all these years, Sciame says it’s the ability to expand the promotion of Italian heritage and culture from just one week into an entire month. He adds that “it’s the collaboration and respect of the Italian-American community when we work together that creates synergy and with synergy you have energy and it makes things connect.” It is thanks to this special relationship that makes the month of October what it is today. Of course the highlight of the month is the [Columbus Day Parade](#) [7] on October 10th and Sciame noted that the parade is not only a big deal in the city as it has recently been spreading out to states like Illinois and Texas. He is also proud of the fact that IHCC-NY will be hosting events in every borough this year, so no matter where you live you will have the opportunity to celebrate everything Italian!

Perhaps the most memorable part of the night was when Matilda Cuomo came up to speak at the podium. Being the wife of [Mario Cuomo](#) [5], a politician who served as the governor of New York for three terms, as well as the mother of [Andrew Cuomo](#) [8], who is following tradition as the current governor of New York, Matilda is no stranger to politics. She has gotten involved in community service herself with the creation of the program [Mentoring USA](#) [9]. It is a non-profit organization that was developed with the goal of cutting down the drop-out rates of students in New York. As a woman who has dedicated her whole life to helping children and families, Matilda believes that serving the community should be a priority for all. With her effortless charm, she immediately got the audience laughing by announcing that “Italians are the best, I’m sorry! They have something, I don’t know what it is. You feel something when you are with an Italian.” Everyone was obviously in agreement and the pride of being Italian or of Italian descent could be felt in the room. With the help of the Italian-American community, Matilda believes it is only by working together that we can make sure that the next generation goes to school and becomes educated.

The ceremony was then followed by a beautiful reception and it is safe to say, everyone enjoyed the evening in good company. There are many exciting events in store for the next few weeks so if you are interested in Italian culture, please check out [IHCC-NY](#) [10]’s full schedule for October.

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- [5] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario\\_Cuomo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Cuomo)
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- [8] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew\\_Cuomo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Cuomo)
- [9] <http://www.mentoringusa.org/>
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