

Since October represents the month when the Italian cultural heritage is celebrated, I feel compelled to bring up a very important issue for those, like me, concerned about the uncertain future of the Italian language in this Country.

You may or may not already be familiar with the Italian Advanced Placement Program (APP) in Italian Language and Culture, a University level course of instruction that students can take while still in high school and which allows them to build college level credits recognized by almost all U.S. universities and by numerous foreign universities. This program is instrumental in helping students develop an appreciation for our great language and culture.

The program was initiated with the support of the Italian Government as well as high profile associations such as the NIAF, the Order Sons of Italy, and UNICO. After nearly ten years of efforts on the part of educators and the intervention of Mrs. Matilda and Margaret Cuomo, the Advanced Placement Program (APP) in Italian was finally implemented in 2006 by the College Board (the American Administration of the AP Programs, which already existed for foreign languages such as Spanish, French, German, Chinese). This was a momentous occasion, as Italian was the first new AP Language Program to be offered by the College Board in fifty years!

And yet today, this program - although still in its early development - is in jeopardy of being terminated. The issue is funding, given that the number of students enrolled (about 2,000) has been lower than expected and, in part, also because not the entire Italian American community has been as deeply involved in it as it should have. In April 2008, at the end of its third year, the College Board announced that it had sustained significant financial losses related to the APP and that it would be forced to discontinue it, unless donors and sponsors stepped forward in its support.

In order to mobilize the entire Italian American Community in defense and aid of the APP in Italian, the Cuomo family - its strongest advocate - has recently established the "Italian Language Foundation", dedicated to promoting and sustaining Italian language education in the United States and supporting the

College Board's APP in Italian. Its objective is to raise funds for Italian language education in the United States.

We look forward to the day when hundreds of thousands of students will participate in Italian language studies: in order to reach this important goal in the near future, we need your help TODAY to keep the program alive. The cost of sustaining the AP in Italian may involve millions of dollars until the time that it becomes self-sustaining through an enriched infrastructure, teachers training, and increased students participation. As recently underlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, more students reported that they would choose to study Italian than any other foreign language. In light of such promising future, we cannot allow AP Italian to be discontinued. Simply, it is too valuable a resource for the education of Italian and Italian American children and our society.

We need your immediate support to show the College Board that the Italian American community cares for the Italian language and culture as well as to guarantee that the program is funded in perpetuity. It is our hope that you will share in our efforts by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Italian Language Foundation, directly on-line through its website [www.italianlanguagefoundation.org](http://www.italianlanguagefoundation.org) . Your donation - even if very small - will help ensure that the study of Italian becomes an ever greater part of the American educational system.

It is my sincere hope that we can count on your generous support and I thank in advance all those willing to help fighting for such worthwhile cause.

Alessandro Motta  
Consul General of Italy in Chicago