

From: [AMANDA BROOKER](#)

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Subject: Mille Grazie! Preble Italian Program Assisted by WislItalia Group

\$5,000 check to aid funding of new program

Who would have guessed “Ciao” would be ringing through the hallways of Preble High School this school year? Pilot site of the Green Bay Area Public School District’s Italian program, four classes of students have chosen to study the language instead of, or in addition to, the traditional Spanish, French, and German offered at high schools. The program was initiated because of the numerous ties Green Bay’s paper industry has to Italian businesses, and the fact that employees with Italian language skills have been in demand locally.

A \$5,000 check will be presented to the district at 10:00 AM on Saturday, October 18, at the state-wide meeting of WislItalia at the Brown County Aging Resource Center, 300 South Adams Street. WislItalia’s support was critical in starting the new program. Plans are in place to expand to Italian 2 for the 2009-2010 school year. The district is also piloting Mandarin Chinese at Southwest High School – with students currently filling two classes.

“This donation has given us the ability to offer a unique program that is a benefit to both students and local employers,” said Louise Blankenheim, executive director of curriculum and instruction. “Students were surveyed two years ago, and Italian and Chinese were the top two languages they wanted to pursue. We also spoke with employers and they wished to move in this direction as well.”

WislItalia was formed in 1996 to promote the teaching of the Italian language and culture throughout the state. Because of their efforts, classes are now being offered in colleges, tech schools, high schools, and elementary schools throughout Wisconsin.

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