On December 10th we held the annual Christmas party for the children and their families. For those of you who did not make it, I could tell that it was an immediate sold out and a huge success. Yet, before I start to write about the children’s workshop and choir, the music performance, the gift giving with Santa and the Befana aided by the Elves, I wish to share my thoughts about why every year, we are so eager to gather in the cozy and greatly decorated space of the Chevy Chase Village. I will start with a quote from the Little Prince: “We all need rituals.” “What is a ritual?” said the little prince. “Something that is frequently neglected,” said the fox. “It is what makes every day different from the other days, one hour different from the other hours.”

To all expats and to all the families connected to Italy by ties of friendship, love and passion, this holiday party is the most special. It is our home away from home. Some of us, growing up, were accustomed to the trepidation of a day that started weeks earlier in the kitchen, where the memories of the homely, wonderful fragrances would renew again and again. It carried on with the doorbells ringing every few minutes, followed by a chilly gust of winds and the cheerful voices of the grandparents, aunt, uncle and cousins. It was the excitement of the hustle bustle of colorful packages finding their way under the Christmas tree to be opened later and looked at intently until the Midnight. And then there were the games, the bingo, the prizes to win, the children scurrying around, the adults drinking and chatting. It was the night where no one got scolded and everyone tried hard to be the best version of themselves. For that night, there would not be pulling on pigtails, nor cheating at the cards and no tantrums.

And so, our Christmas party started exactly like that: with the door opening, the children dressed in their best coming through with a gust of wind, impatient to sing the songs and tell the story they rehearsed in class with their loving and caring teachers. A big shoutout to maestro Diego leading the musical performance, maestra Caterina and the violin performers, maestra Samantha and Irene for preparing the compelling story of the panettone and to maestra Fiorenza who entertained the children with the Christmas workshop. Among the notes of the violins, of our piano performance, the voices of the children and of Santa parading with the Elves and the Befana, we all found our Christmas at home once more. This home which is the community we created all together made us all proud, from the smallest child excited to be on stage for the first time, to their parents exchanging well wishes with a glass of prosecco and a slice of panettone and to our Elves and Santa, our high school kids because, after all, no one is ever too old to rejoice in the magic of Christmas.
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Single: Mark Stratman, Theresa Mazzaro, Dennis Boccippio, Mark Zito
Couple/Family: Brett Wernick and family, Josie Geiger and family
Tyler Matuelle and family

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Dear Members,

I am always looking forward to the New Year because there is so much planning and so many exciting events in the 2024 calendar!

After the holidays there are always a few quiet days to pause and look behind to see how far we have come, and we are proud of our past accomplishments. The Italian Cultural Society continues to grow under the expert leadership of our executive director, Francesca Casazza, both in classes and memberships. Although expanding is a great endeavor, it also presents some challenges and one of those is finding people to join our faculty and staff.

Many of you have approached me asking how you can volunteer at ICS. I am delighted that this is happening because traditionally, this would entail applying as a potential Board member. However, this at times requires more commitment that one can offer.

Therefore, in answer to our members who wish to be more involved with our organization, we now have a volunteer group called “Friends of the Board,” where anyone who has time, skills, and input to give us, can do so. All you need to do is to send an email to me or to the school with your contact information and your set of skills or preferences for volunteering. You can, of course, always offer your candidacy to become part of the Board, and we are welcoming new candidacies in 2024 to fill the vacancies of our retiring Board Members whom we wish to thank from the heart for their years of service.

If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can proceed with your candidacy. Elections are coming up soon in April, so please do not delay!

We are opening 2024 with a wonderful concert of Viola and violin by Maestro Diego Rodriguez, as a fundraising event for the Maria Wilmeth Scholarship award supporting high school students attending public or private schools where Italian is part of the curriculum. We are relying on your generosity to be able to offer those scholarships at the 2024 Gala awards ceremony, so that we can continue to inspire high school students to excel in learning Italian. The concert will take place on Sunday, Jan 28th at the ICS Headquarters at 4:30 pm and I am looking forward to welcoming many of you there.

Calling all basketball fans for January 25th, Italian Heritage night with the Wizards. You can find more info and how to get tickets on our website.

I wish 2024 will be a year of peace, as so many parts of the world are in upheaval. I feel we are very lucky to live in a country where war is studied on books and not lived on an everyday basis. Yet I feel our mission to bring knowledge of the Italian language, culture, history, and art is becoming ever more compelling. We can learn from the past only if we know the past.

Annelise Brody Morani
Chair of the ICS Board of Directors

KIDS AND TEENS WORKSHOPS

Venerdì 5 gennaio sera un bel gruppo di bambini dai 4 ai 10 anni si sono divertiti a scoprire la storia della Befana, come è vestita, quando arriva, cosa porta, chi sono i Re Magi, quando arrivano, cosa portano, con cosa arrivano. Hanno fatto un viaggio virtuale in Italia per ammirare la Befana che arriva in gondola a Venezia, che fa la zip line in Basilicata, che lancia caramele di zucchero dalla gru dei pompieri a Napoli, che si cala dalla torre a Bologna, che arriva con gli sci d'acqua a Savona, che consegna i dolcetti in bicicletta a Ferrara. Hanno mangiato la pizza, imparando ad ordinarla all'italiana: “peperoni? no i peperoni sono verdura; al formaggio?, no, si chiama Margherita; al salame? sì, se pensavate di volere i peperoni americani. Si sono meravigliati assaggiando il carbone della Befana e le monete di Euro di cioccolato. Balli, giochi e lavoretti dalle 6.30 fino alle 9.30 di sera, si, tutto in italiano all'ICS!

Vi aspetto per il prossimo laboratorio con cena, coriandoli, mascherine e stelle filanti e perché no, anche in costume per il Carnevale, venerdì 2 febbraio 2024: https://italianculturalsociety.org/course/kids-workshop/

By Fiorenza Castelli, Workshop and Summer Camp Coordinator

The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C.
Dear ICS Friends,

Among 2023 accomplishments are new courses, new students and new well-prepared teachers. Many new members joined from all over the US; we partnered with other institutions, like Sons and Daughters of Italy, NIAF, AFI Silver Theatre, the JxJ Washington Jewish Film and Music Festivals, Georgetown University, American University, the Italian Cultural Institute and with the Italian Embassy for an enthralling Easter Egg Hunt in Villa Firenze; we co-sponsored a magical classical concert led by Alvise Casellati at the Lincoln Memorial, we organized an elegant Gala celebrating the Architecture and Sustainability and Stefano Boeri’s career; we offered in-person events and continued our webinars, which are available in our Past Events webpage and on YouTube; we organized our second guided tour to Italy with Bethesda Travel and our instructor and Chair of the ICS Board Annelise Brody Morani. In 2024, Bethesda Travel will bring us to Torino and the wine surrounding area for the first 10 days of September, while the previous week, we will be hosted in an exclusive villa in Tuscany, where, among exploring the surrounding attractions - including vineyards for high-end wine tastings - participants will have the opportunity to learn the basics of the Italian language, or improve their language skills, while enjoying the beauty of the villa, with one of us, likely myself! Stay tuned, we will announce details by next week. I am very excited about this new opportunity of spreading Italian culture and offering Americans unique opportunities to learn and enjoy the best of it.

The new year is bringing a plethora of classes online and in person, after-school Italian language courses and curricular courses in a number of DC, MD, VA private and public schools - as our first mission as Ente Gestore, working for the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs. We will offer piano and violin classes and concerts, starting with Diego Rodriguez’s concert, on January 28th, organized with a fundraising purpose to replenish the Maria Wilmeth Scholarship Award. A captivating repertoire that spans the rich musical heritage from “O Sole mio” by Eduardo di Capua, a timeless Neapolitan classic, to the lively notes of “La Donna è Mobile” by Giuseppe Verdi, through the American folk “Shenandoah”. Please see details in the next pages.

Next Aperitivo Italian Style to converse in Italian with one or more teachers/staff ICS will be a festive Carnival celebration and participants are welcome to wear a face mask, a costume, or just be themselves. The previous Friday night, Feb. 2nd, is the kids’ turn, instead, with Maestra Fiorenza’s workshop.

Our Upcoming Events Webpage mentions our plans until June. If you missed our Festa di Natale, you can watch an excerpt on our YouTube Channel, as well as if you want to watch our past events and videos. See our kids in the Christmas Chorus: we are offering coro classes for kids 4-13 also Saturday at 3:40-4:40pm, or Sunday 5:00-6:00pm, in order to accommodate more families, in addition to Monday’s group.

Winter schedule is online and you are still in time to join. Do not miss the next Latin Beginners 1, starting Friday, nor Tutti all’opera! Nor Parliamo di arte, or Italy Today, if you want to read the news with us. These courses, Cooking classes and more are on our schedule.

Thank you for being part of our community and for your trust in our organization. Your support and appreciation for our courses and events is very valuable for us and we look forward to seeing your involvement grow more and more this year.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, our staff and our teachers, I wish you all the best for a new year filled with health, love and happiness.

Francesca Casazza
CEO & Executive Director
CONCERTO DI INIZIO ANNO
Fundraising for our Maria Wilmeth Scholarship Award
SUNDAY, JAN. 28th at 4:30 p.m. (ET)
At the ICS Headquarters
4833 Rugby Ave., Suite 201, Bethesda, MD

CONCERTO DI VIOLA E VIOLINO by MAESTRO DIEGO RODRIGUEZ

After the concert, join us for Chocolate, Panettone & Prosecco to make a toast to the New Year!
Every participant will receive a Ferrero chocolate box.

Ticket price $45
All proceeds will contribute to the Maria Wilmeth Award Fund, supporting high school students attending public or private schools where Italian is part of the curriculum. As we have depleted our funds, we rely on your generosity to help us continue inspiring high school students to learn Italian.

2023 ICS Gala Maria Wilmeth Awardees

Info and RSVP: www.italianculturalsociety.org/events
1. **“FUNICULÌ, FUNICULÀ”** (LUIGI DENZA) -

2. **“O SOLE MIO”** (EDUARDO DI CAPUA) -

3. **“LA DONNA È MOBILE”** DA ‘RIGOLETTO’ (GIUSEPPE VERDI) -

4. **“TORNA A SURRIENTO”** (ERNESTO DE CURTIS) -

5. **“MEDITATION”** DA ‘THAÏS’ (JULES MASSENET) -

6. **“O MIO BABBINO CARO”** DA ‘GIANNI SCHICCHI’ (GIACOMO PUCCINI) -

7. **“SHENANDOAH”** (FOLK AMERICANO) -

8. **“PARLA PIÙ PIANO”** DA ‘IL PADRINO’ (NINO ROTA) -

9. **“INTERMEZZO”** DA ‘CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA’ (PIETRO MASCAGNI) -

10. **“LIBERTANGO”** (ASTOR PIAZZOLLA) -

**CONCERTO DI INIZIO ANNO – VIOLIN AND VIOLA CONCERT BY MAESTRO DIEGO RODRIGUEZ**

**FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR THE MARIA WILMETH SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS FUND**

From 1-4pm, before the concert, we will host a book fair and sales of De Ruta ceramics. An entire afternoon dedicated to fundraising, to replenish the Maria Wilmeth Award, which needs funds: we are committed to continue to award students of Italian in High Schools where Italian language is part of the curriculum. Please support this fund, enjoy a fine concert and take advantage of a great selection of Italian books, that we are selling to make space in our full library!

Purchase your ticket [here](#).
Come ogni festa italiana anche il Carnevale ha le sue tradizioni culinarie.

Tra i dolci più famosi da consumare in questo periodo ci sono le “Chiacchiere”. Questo è un dolce dai tanti nomi, infatti a seconda delle diverse regioni di Italia, viene dato un nome diverso: le potete chiamare Bugie, Cenci, Frappe, Galani o Cròstoli. La ricetta, invece, è molto simile dovunque con ingredienti semplice e impasto base:

- Farina (500 grammi)
- Zucchero (80 g)
- Burro (50 g)
- Tre uova

C’è poi chi mette del vino bianco o del liquore come Limoncello e Marsala.

La sua forma varia dal semplice rettagolo alle divertenti mascherine, il tutto viene fritto e ricoperto da abbondante zucchero a velo.


La città di Napoli, invece, racconta un’affascinata storia riguardo a questo dolce. Si dice, infatti, che la regina Margherita di Savoia amasse molto chiacchierare, e un giorno mentre era con i suoi ospiti le venne fame e chiese al cuoco di corte, Raffaele Esposito, di preparare un dolce capace di rallegrare sia lei che i suoi ospiti. Il risultato è stato sorprendente, capace di deliziaro tutti i suoi ospiti di corte. Dal quel giorno venne dato a questo dolce il nome “Chiacchiere”, perché ottimo da mangiare durante una chiacchierata. La sua principale caratteristica è che si compone di tanti pezzi, e per questo ottimo da condividere con tante persone.

Ogni anno la nostra Italian Cultural Society non perde l’occasione di celebrare insieme il Carnevale, per chiacchierare e ricordare le tradizioni italiane. Anche durante il Covid, la nostra Maestra di coro di allora aveva organizzato un fantastico lavoro online con i bambini “Il Pulcinella di Stravinski”, lo Chef Roberto Donna ci aveva mostrato la sua ricetta delle “Bugie” e Laura Loddo aveva presentato il Carnevale di Venezia. L’intera ora di festa è ancora su YouTube!

Quest’anno, gli eventi in programma sono due per adulti e bambini: workshop per bambini “Il Carnevale e le Mascherine” con la Maestra Fiorenza in programma venerdì 2 Febbraio, e per adulti, “Aperitivo di Carnevale”, evento previsto per il 9 Febbraio.

A questo punto non ci resta che augurare un buon Carnevale a tutti!
Like every Italian holiday, Carnival also has its culinary traditions. Among the most famous desserts eaten during this period are the "Chiacchiere." This is a sweet with many names, in fact, depending on the different regions of Italy they are given a different name, you can call them: Bugie, Cenci, Frappe, Galani or Cròstoli. The recipe, on the other hand, is very similar everywhere with simple ingredients and basic dough:

- Flour (500 g)
- Sugar (80 g)
- Butter (50 g)
- Three eggs
- White wine or liquors such as Limoncello and Marsala.

There are different shapes from simple rectangles to fun little carnival masks, all are fried and covered with plenty of powdered sugar. The history of this Carnival dessert dates back to ancient Roman time. In fact, the Romans celebrated the “Saturanali,” which represents a festival very similar to the Italian Carnival of today. During this festive period, the Romans ate "frictilia," which were sweets fried in pork fat. These were distributed in the streets to the celebrating crowd. The city of Naples, instead, tells a fascinating story about this dessert. It is said that Queen Margherita of Savoy loved to chat a lot, and one day while she was with her guests she got hungry and asked the court cook, Raffaele Esposito, to prepare a dessert capable of cheering up both her and her guests. The result was astonishing, capable of delighting all her court guests. From that day this dessert was called "Chiacchiere" because it’s excellent to eat during a chat. Its main characteristic is that it is made of many pieces, and for this reason great to share with many people.

Every year our Italian Cultural Society does not miss the opportunity to celebrate Carnival together, to chat and remember Italian traditions. Even during Covid, our Maestra of chorus, Felicia Toscano, organized a fantastic online show with the kids: “Il Pulcinella di Stravinskij,” Chef Roberto Donna revealed his recipe for “Bugie” and Laura Loddo presented “Il Carnevale di Venezia.” You can watch the whole party [on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

This year, the scheduled events are two for adults and children: workshop for children "Il Carnevale e le Mascherine" with Mastra Fiorenza scheduled for Friday, February 2nd and for adults "Aperitivo di Carnevale" event scheduled for Friday, February 9th. At this point, all that remains is to wish everyone "Buon Carnevale!!"

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**ABOUT POCHE PAROLE**

Poche Parole is published each month from September through May. Deadline for ad and article submissions is the 22nd of the month preceding publication of the issue. Please send submissions to [ICS.Eventi@italianculturalsociety.org](mailto:ICS.Eventi@italianculturalsociety.org). Advertisers appearing in Poche Parole have paid a fee. Publication of any advertisement in Poche Parole does not reflect ICS endorsement or guarantee of the advertiser’s services, products or statements. Material contained in articles is the sole responsibility of the author and does not indicate ICS endorsement.

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Rates per month, per 3 months: Business card - 1/8 page: $100; 1/4 page: $150; 1/2 page: $200; Full page: $300

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**ABOUT ICS**

The Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C. (ICS) is your home for cultural and social events in the Washington metropolitan area, and for courses to learn or improve your Italian. Our community is growing and involving the entire US.

**OUR MISSION**

The Italian Cultural Society promotes the appreciation and knowledge of the Italian language and culture by creating opportunities through language programs, cultural events, and partnerships.

**OUR HISTORY**

Founded in 1953 by Professor Salvatore J. Castiglione, Chairman of the Italian Department of Georgetown University, the Society launched its Italian Language Program in 1974, with contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

VISIT US ONLINE AT [ITALIANCULTURALSOCIETY.ORG](http://ITALIANCULTURALSOCIETY.ORG)
APERITIVO ALL’ICS
Upcoming: Friday, February 9th, from 6:30 to 8:00pm

Join us to try traditional Italian ‘chiacchiere’ (Carnival fritters)! Indulge in Aperol Spritz and delicious appetizers while chatting with our native Italian instructors/staff.

Passaparola con amici e conoscenti che vogliono conversare in Italiano. Non preoccuparti se sei “beginner level,” unisciti a noi per un autentico aperitivo italiano del venerdì sera! Feel free to wear a Carnival mask, or costume.

Aperol Spritz is kindly offered by CAMPARI, prosciutto and salame are courtesy of NEGRONI, generous sponsors of ICS events.

Please RSVP by Thursday, Feb. 8th at 5pm. Must be 21 to attend. Purchase your ticket [here](https://italianculturalsociety.org-events/).

Check out the highlights below from December’s Aperitivo!
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