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## **Dedicated Students of Italian Language and Culture Receive the First Ever Dante Awards for Excellence**

New York, NY, December 13, 2012 – Margaret I. Cuomo, M.D., President of the Italian Language Foundation, today announced the distribution of the first Dante Awards for Excellence to students for exemplary achievement in The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program for Italian Language and Culture (AP Italian).

The awards were sent to 58 students in 14 states throughout the United States. The amounts of the award were \$200.00 for students who scored a five and \$100.00 for those who scored a four in the AP Italian exam, which was administered in May 2012. Students also needed to register with the Italian Language Foundation (ILF) and submit verified scores.

Funding for the awards is provided by the ILF and a grant from philanthropist Leandro P. Rizzuto, the Founder and President of Conair.

Dante Awards for the 2013 AP Italian exam will be provided based on scores of four or five and will be distributed on a first-come basis. Registration to qualify for the awards is free and should be completed by March 15, 2013. Students may register at the ILF website, [www.italianlanguagefoundation.org](http://www.italianlanguagefoundation.org).

“The Foundation’s Dante Award for Excellence, which was established in 2011, recognizes significant achievement by students of Italian Language and Culture,” said Dr. Cuomo, who co-founded the ILF with Chairman Louis Tallarini in 2008. “It is an incentive for students to apply themselves to the study of a great language and culture at a time of globalization and increased cultural and commercial exchange between two great countries and during a period when governmental support of world language studies is under attack.”

The awards are a landmark for Advanced Placement Italian studies in recognizing and fostering participation in the field. The AP Italian program had been suspended in 2009 and reinstated in the fall of 2011 following a nation-wide initiative to reestablish the program. The reinstatement effort was led by the ILF in concert with the Republic of Italy, the Columbus Citizens Foundation, the National Italian American Foundation, Order Sons of Italy, and private donors.

In addition to providing funding for the Dante Awards, the ILF is organizing workshops for teachers of high school Italian to enhance their competence in teaching AP Italian and also to pursue certification to train other teachers in Italian language and studies. The workshops are administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and underwritten by the Generoso Pope Foundation.

Both the Dante Award for Excellence and the ACTFL workshops are open only to students and teachers who are members of the ILF. Student membership is free, and teachers may join at a cost of \$25.00. More information is available at [www.ItalianLanguageFoundation.org](http://www.ItalianLanguageFoundation.org).

The Italian Language Foundation is dedicated to promoting and sustaining Italian language education in the United States and supporting the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) program in Italian Language and Culture. The Foundation is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation qualified by the Internal Revenue Service to receive tax deductible contributions.

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