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Italian American Leaders Establish Italian Language Foundation to Support High School Studies in Italian

New York, NY, July 3, 2008 – Matilda Cuomo, former first lady of the state of New York and chair of the Committee to Establish the Italian AP Program, Margaret Cuomo, M.D., a member of the committee, Louis Tallarini, president of the Columbus Citizens Foundation, and Salvatore Zizza, president of the National Italian American Foundation, today announced the incorporation of the Italian Language Foundation, Inc., a non-profit entity that will promote and help underwrite the AP Italian Language and Culture Program.

“The Italian-American community is galvanized in its determination that high school students have the opportunity to enroll in Advanced Placement courses in Italian,” said Mrs. Cuomo. “We are delighted that in 2008, just three years after the AP Italian exam was inaugurated, over 2,000 students took the exam. This number is striking considering the years of study required for a successful completion of the test. This is also an increase of 23% over the 2007 participation, clearly demonstrating that there is a growing demand for one of the great languages in world history.”

The AP Italian Language and Culture program is administered by The College Board, a non-profit organization that develops and oversees tests given to high school students, including the PSAT, SAT, and Advanced Placement, or AP, exams.

The College Board implemented AP Italian in 2005 following discussions held with the Committee to Establish the Italian AP Program and the receipt of subsidies totaling \$500,000 from the Republic of Italy, the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), the Order Sons of Italy (OSIA), and UNICO. In April 2008, The College Board announced that it would terminate the program in the face of related financial losses unless outside funders stepped forward.

“The AP Italian program is in its infancy, and its growth is robust,” said Mr. Tallarini. “Typically, it takes at least five years to build such programs to sustainable levels, and we look forward to working with The College Board, educators, and supporters of AP Italian to increase student participation and provide appropriate funding for the efficient continuation of a program that serves students across the country.”

“Supporters from the Republic of Italy and the United States are joining together in unison to fund raise for this vital effort,” said Mrs. Cuomo.

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