

Italian-American CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA

Newsletter

SEPT/OCT 2026



A Message from Board Chair

Jeff Lamberti

For more than 25 years, members of this organization have worked toward a dream: creating a home worthy of Iowa's Italian American community and the history entrusted to us.

This October, we finally get to come home.

I have heard that sentiment from members of our Heritage Council, and I can't think of a better way to describe what October 24-26 will mean.

There are people in this organization who have carried this dream for decades. They preserved family histories and artifacts, created programs, hosted events, volunteered countless hours and kept our Italian traditions alive. They did all of it with the belief that someday we could create something more.

That "someday" is now just weeks away.

Even through a summer of construction and preparation, the Center has remained active. We have gathered for events, shared traditions, welcomed people into our community and gotten a glimpse of just how much more will be possible when the new Center is fully open.

There is still plenty to accomplish before October 24, and these final weeks will undoubtedly be busy. I also hope we take some time to recognize the significance of this moment.

The new Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa belongs to everyone who helped preserve this organization, everyone who believed in its future and everyone who will walk through its doors and discover something about Italian American culture and history for the first time.

When we gather October 24-26, we will certainly be celebrating a grand opening, but for many of us, I think it will feel like something more.

I look forward to celebrating with you.

Warm regards,

Jeff Lamberti, Board Chair

Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa

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Neumann Brothers' Construction Update



Working towards those final stages in the upcoming months in preparation for the grand opening events at the end of October. Here are some recent photos of our recent progress.

neumann

Carpet and Ceiling Tiles Installed on 2nd Floor Banquet



Skylight Installed at Museum



Courtyard Pavers being installed



Mansion Ramp Carpet Installed



Wood Flooring Installed/Stained in Education



East Parking Lot Pour Back



Kitchen Equipment On-site and Awaiting Start-up



Administration Lighting Fixture Awaiting Glass



Emblem of the Italian Republic

Paolo Bartesaghi

Ancora un po' di storia italiana prima dell'apertura del nostro nuovo Centro Culturale Italo Americano il prossimo fine Ottobre

A little more Italian history before the opening of our new Italian American Cultural Center this coming end of October.

The Emblem of the Italian Republic

The Emblem of the Italian Republic is the identifying symbol of the Italian State and one of the symbols of the Italian homeland. Officially adopted on May 5, 1948, its design tells a story about Italy and the values of its people.

At the center is the Stella d'Italia, the white five-pointed Star of Italy, a symbol with roots dating back to Greco-Roman mythology. The star rests upon a cogwheel, representing work and progress. Surrounding them are an olive branch, symbolizing peace, and an oak branch, representing the strength of the Italian people. The branches are tied together by a red ribbon bearing the words *Repubblica Italiana*.

L'EMBLEMA
DELLA
REPUBBLICA
ITALIANA



**Ulivo -
Olive Branch**
Symbolizing
Peace



**Stella -
Star**
Symbolizing
Unity



**Ruota -
Cogwheel**
Symbolizing
Work



**Quercia -
Oak Branch**
Symbolizing
Strength of the people

The story of the emblem began shortly after Italy became a republic. In October 1946, the government established a commission to create a new national symbol to replace the coat of arms of the former Kingdom of Italy. A national competition was opened to all Italian citizens, with one important requirement: the Star of Italy had to be included. The response was remarkable. 341 candidates submitted 637 sketches.

Artist Paolo Paschetto was selected to develop the design. His first version, however, was not exactly greeted with universal enthusiasm. One Roman newspaper even disparagingly compared it to a bathtub.

So, Italy tried again.

A second competition was held, attracting 96 participants and another 197 designs. Once again, Paolo Paschetto was chosen as the winner—this time unanimously.

His design was refined into the emblem we recognize today: the white star outlined in red, centered over the cogwheel and surrounded by the olive and oak branches. It was approved by the Constituent Assembly on January 31, 1948, and officially adopted on May 5 of that year.

One interesting distinction: although it is sometimes referred to as Italy's coat of arms, technically it is not. A traditional coat of arms requires a shield, and Italy's design has none. It is therefore properly called the national emblem.

As we prepare to open the doors of our new Center, it seems especially appropriate to remember the meaning contained within this symbol: peace, unity, work, progress and the strength of the Italian people.

I hope you found this little piece of Italian history interesting. Thank you for supporting the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa as we continue to share and celebrate Italian culture and history throughout our community.

Paolo Bartesaghi, President

Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa

In Our Library

Day Campers this year shared several books about Italy or by Italian authors. These are our newest additions to the library.

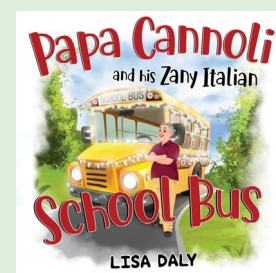
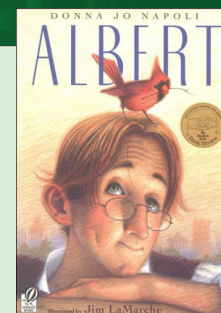
One of the books is *Albert* by Jo Napoli. This book talks about Albert who always had an excuse not to go outside, and how a family of birds showed him the good things he would find when he finally did.

Another is the cardboard picture book *Good Night Italy* by Adam Gamble and Harvey Stevenson. This book contains drawings of many of the historic spots in various parts of Italy. It also has a page that lists several favorite foods.

The last book is a favorite. It is called *Papa Canoli and his Zany Italian School Bus*. This story, by Lisa Buttiglieri Daly, tells about the school bus driver for Huckleberry Hill School who has been nicknamed Papa Canoli. His bus is the one all of the children hope to take to school.

"Papa", shares love for his Italian heritage by the activities he teaches on the way to school. Students learn about making meatballs, the sculptor/painter Michealangelo, and playing bocce as well as other interesting facts. In addition, each lesson comes with a fun fact and a math problem to solve. Did you know that George Washington had a bocce court at Mount Vernon?

These three books are a nice addition to the children's section of our library. Once the library is open, come check them out.



Bella Italia Day Camp Favorite Recipes

TITLE *Crockpot Pizza Dip*

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large skillet, cook and crumble beef and sausage over medium heat until no longer pink. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the mixture to a 3-quart slow cooker. Stir in all the other ingredients except the garlic bread.
2. Cook covered on low for 2-3 hours or until heated through. Serve with garlic bread.

TITLE *Italian No Bake Cake*

DIRECTIONS

1. Place vanilla wafers in a single layer at the bottom of a 9x13 dish and set aside.
2. Whisk together the sweetened and condensed milk and the lemon juice. Stir in the crushed pineapple.
3. Pour mixture evenly over the wafers and spread carefully to completely cover them. Top with remaining wafers.
4. Drop dollops of whipped topping over the cake and spread evenly. Sprinkle with coconut. Decorate with cherries.
5. Place cake in refrigerator overnight or at least 3 hours before serving. Store in refrigerator.

INGREDIENTS

- ☐ 12oz Vanilla wafers divided
- ☐ 14oz Sweetened and condensed milk
- ☐ Juice of one lemon
- ☐ 20oz crushed pineapple drained
- ☐ 8oz whipped topping, thawed
- ☐ 1 cup pineapple
- ☐ 24 maraschino cherries drained and patted dry

INGREDIENTS

- ☐ 1/2 lb ground beef
- ☐ 1/2 lb Italian sausage
- ☐ 28oz crushed tomatoes
- ☐ 1/2 cup diced green pepper
- ☐ 1/4 cup grated parmesan
- ☐ 2 tbsp tomato paste
- ☐ 1 clove minced garlic
- ☐ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ☐ 3/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
- ☐ 1/4 tsp. pepper
- ☐ Hot Garlic Bread

Event Recap

Bocce Golf Wrap-Up

The first bocce golf event, benefitting the Food Bank of Iowa, was a success. More than 150 pounds of food as well as a monetary donation were given to the Food Bank.

The Heritage Advisory Council of the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa wishes to thank all of the volunteers who helped, as well as those who participated and made contributions.

Thank you to our sponsors; Barattas Restaurant, Biaggis, Graziano Brothers Grocery, RDG Planning and Design, Tumeas Restuarant, and the Riordan Family.

Congratulations to the winners of our drawings; Walter, Vicky Facto, Greg Steff, Peter McDermott, Patricia Determan, Greg Bently, and the Special Olympic Bocce Ball Champions.

A Winning Celebration

The Special Olympics Bocce Ball Champions put their prize to good use, enjoying a celebratory meal at Tumea & Sons with the gift card they won at the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa's inaugural Bocce Golf event. Congratulations to the champions—and thank you for helping make the event such a memorable success!

2026 Bella Italia Children's Day Camp

This year's Bell Italia children's day camp was held from July 27 - 31. The theme of the camp this year was Italian Influences.

Campers studied Italians and Italian Americans who made significant differences in today's world. They shared information about architects/inventors, artists, food and chefs, authors, and sports. They made a collage for each topic and displayed them in the room for easy reference.

Campers learned some Italian words relating to each topic as well as those for the days of the week, colors, and numbers. They also learned songs in Italian sung to melodies they already knew. One of their favorites again this year was Fra Martino.

Daily crafts included scrap material creations, puff paint, marbled paper, small books and decorating wooden cars for a racing game. Their favorite game was vedo qualcosa (I spy) using the Italian color names. They also played a matching game using the names of fruits and vegetables in English and Italian.

Recipes they tried included crockpot pizza dip, Italian No Bake Cake, Crockpot Zuppa Toscana, coconut balls, and No Bake Lemon Pie. Campers had a hard time choosing their favorite recipe. Two of their favorite recipes can be found in another area of the Newsletter.

Campers went home with booklets containing the information they learned, their songs and recipes, as well as color-by-number pages to help practice their colors.

Thanks go to Scornovaccos Pizza and Pasta for the use of the party room for camp. Additional thanks go to Markie White who volunteered her help with camp and Tony Lemmo who visited and talked to the campers about why he decided to become a chef and the people who influenced him.

We're looking forward to another fun and educational day camp next year.



Upcoming Events

Fall is shaping up to be an exciting season for the Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa, with opportunities to gather, celebrate and—at long last—open the doors to our new Center.

Sapori d'Autunno

September 30, 2026 | 5:00pm-7:00pm

"As a member of Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa's Heritage Advisory Board, I organize seasonal Italian food events to celebrate the Country's rich culinary culture and the local venues that champion it in Iowa. Italian cuisine is deeply tied to the seasons, a tradition shared by Michelin-starred kitchens and nonna's tables alike. These gatherings help us appreciate fresh flavors, connect as a community, and celebrate the best each season offers."

—Andrea Barruta, Heritage Advisory Board - Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa

Join us for an evening celebrating the flavors of fall at Lucca, 420 E. Locust Street in Des Moines, on Wednesday, September 30, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Sapori d'Autunno continues our seasonal tradition of bringing people together around Italian food, culture and community.

A Weekend to Celebrate Our New Center

After years of planning, hard work and tremendous community support, October brings the moment we have all been waiting for.

Saturday, October 24 | Thank You Celebration

6:30-9:00 p.m. | Program at 7:00 p.m.

A special evening dedicated to the donors, supporters, volunteers and friends who helped bring the new Italian American Cultural Center of Iowa to life.

Sunday, October 25 | Community & Family Open House

11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. | Dancers at 1:30 p.m.

The doors open to the community! Bring family and friends to explore the new Center and enjoy an afternoon featuring food trucks, outdoor games, dancing and more.

Monday | Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

4:00 p.m.

We'll officially mark the opening of the new Center with a ribbon cutting ceremony and celebrate the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the IACC.

We look forward to welcoming you to the new home of the Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa and finally sharing the space our community has worked so hard to create.



We Reflect And Remember

Connie Bills

Aldo Forneris

Wes Drahozal

Mary Kay LaBonia

To remember a friend or loved one with a memorial, send a check with your tax-deductible donation to:

Italian-American Cultural Center of Iowa - Memorials
PO Box 4994
Des Moines, Iowa 50305

Please include your name and address as well as the name and address of the person you would like to have informed of your gift.



With Gratitude for the Grand Opening Wine Donation



Enrico Marcato
Winemaker



CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING
TO EU REG. N. 2021/2115



MINISTERO DELL'AGRICOLTURA
DELLA SOVRANITÀ ALIMENTARE
E DELLE FORESTE



Our Community In Action

The Cultural Center is not just a place—it is a home for the organizations and traditions that already bring this community together.

Italian American Women of Iowa (IAWI)

September/October Newsletter



Monthly Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month, and we would love to see you there. Our next meeting is on **September 22, 2026, from 6:30-7:30pm!**

Membership Dues:

If you would like to join IAWI, membership rates are \$25 for members under 65, \$15 for seniors ages 65-74, and free membership for those 75 and better.

If you have any questions or would like a membership form, please contact us, we would love to welcome you to the IAWI family!

- Lucrezia Moore at (515) 710-1247 or visit our website: ItalianAmericanWomenofIowa.com

Cheer and Sympathy:

If you would like a card sent to one of our members, contact Gracy Kirkman at (515) 321-7178.

The past few months have been filled with fun, fellowship, and giving back to our community!

• Bocce Ball Tournament – June

In June, we hosted a Bocce Ball Tournament to raise funds for our Scholarship Fund. It was a wonderful day of friendly competition, laughter, and Italian-American camaraderie, all while supporting the education of deserving students in our community. Thank you to everyone who participated, donated, and helped make the tournament a success! This year's Scholarship went to Eva Astor - check out our post on Facebook to congratulate her!

• Back to School Night – Columbus Park Neighborhood - August

We were proud to participate in the Columbus Park Neighborhood Back to School Night by donating 100 backpacks filled with school supplies to local children. It was a joy to join the community in sending our neighborhood kiddos off to school prepared and excited for the year ahead. We are honored to support our neighbors and invest in the future of our community.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our events and helped make these past few months so memorable.

Upcoming:

• IAWI will be making an appearance in **October** to host our annual **Trunk or Treat**- stay tuned for more information via our Facebook page @IAWI IA

Follow us for information on what's happening for IAWI!

- Facebook - lawi IA
- Instagram - [italianamericanwomenofiowa](https://www.instagram.com/italianamericanwomenofiowa)



Our Community In Action

The Cultural Center is not just a place—it is a home for the organizations and traditions that already bring this community together.

The Men And Women Of The Vittoria Lodge

Sept. 20th	Lodge meeting at 2:00, followed by polenta dinner-bring a topping.
Oct. 18th	Lodge cleanup at 8:00, lunch at noon, meeting at 2:00
Nov. 7th	Auxiliary HOLIDAY CRAFT SALE & PASTA LUNCH , 9:00-3:00
Nov. 15th	Lodge meeting at 2:00
Dec. 11th	PRESIDENT'S HOLIDAY PARTY at 6:00
Dec. 19th	Lodge meeting at 2:00
???	CAVATELLI DINNER (date to be determined due to Easter)

****Please be sure to note the above dates and upcoming activities on your calendar.****

This summer has hopefully brought you cherished memories, wonderful travels, a chance to relax and, of course, family gatherings. It's comforting to look back on those moments with gratitude and to eagerly look forward to the remainder of the year.

We hope to see all lodge members at our upcoming events and meetings.

Roger Fiori
President, Vittoria Lodge

Deb Fleishman
President, Vittoria Lodge Auxiliary



With Gratitude to Our Grant Sponsors



With Gratitude to Our 2025 Gala Sponsors



Supporters:

Linda & Jeff Lamberti
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Carla Wood

Be Part Of Our Family Tree



Ryan
COPPOLA

Frank Anthony
DEFAZIO
My Dad.

Help our legacy
grow—join our
Family Tree.



Antonio Cosentino
DEFAZIO
fu Francesco

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CULTURAL CENTER OF IOWA
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DES MOINES IA 50305



STATEMENT OF GIFT INTENT

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STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ PHONE _____

YES! I/WE WISH TO SUPPORT THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER WITH A PLEDGE:

IN THE AMOUNT OF: _____ OVER: ☐ 1 ☐ 3 ☐ 5 YEARS

PLEASE ACCEPT OUR INITIAL PAYMENT OF: _____

WITH A REMAINING PLEDGE BALANCE OF: _____

PLEASE DESIGNATE MY DONATION AS SUPPORT FOR: _____

NAME TO APPEAR ON DONOR NAMEPLATE: _____

FULFILLMENT OPTIONS:

☐ ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK IN THE AMOUNT OF: _____

☐ PLEASE CHARGE MY/OUR CARD LISTED
BELOW IN THE AMOUNT OF: _____

CARD NUMBER: _____ EXP: _____ CCV: _____

☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS ☐ DISCOVER ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA

☐ I WOULD LIKE TO SET UP A RECURRING PAYMENT FROM MY BANK (AN ITALIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER REPRESENTATIVE WILL CONTACT YOU REGARDING YOUR ACCOUNT INFORMATION)

☐ I/WE WISH TO GIFT STOCK/SECURITIES: NO. OF SHARES: _____

NAME TICKER: _____

(STOCK TRANSFER INSTRUCTIONS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST FOR YOU OR YOUR BROKER)

☐ I/WE RECOMMEND A GRANT FROM MY/OUR
DONOR ADVISED FUND. FUND NAME: _____

☐ \$ _____ OF THIS PLEDGE WILL BE PAID BY A MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM AT

DONOR(S) SIGNATURE(S): _____ DATE: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE ITALIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER!