

## Inaugurating the Academic Year 2011-2012

Natasha Lardera (October 06, 2011)



La Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi kicks off the new year with unique cultural projects, such as the multi-media presentation of Gian Antonio Stella's *The Horde*, an improved set of goals and the announcement of a new faculty member: Italian Gold Medalist Igor Cassina.

[La Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi](#) [2] is the only school in North America that provides a classical, bilingual education rooted in the Italian and European traditions. It was founded in 1977 by the [Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) [3] to meet the academic needs of Italians living in the New York City area. Then, thanks to an ever increasing interest from American families, La Scuola has grown into a unique bilingual educational institution, from the Preschool level through Liceo (high school), reflecting the best features of the Italian and American systems.

i-italy was at the inauguration of the new school year where representatives of the education world and cheerful students of all ages have sat through an interesting presentation of what's ahead.

Prof. Anna Fiore, headmistress, said that this year's goals are the same as every other year but she will never tire to repeat them. First and foremost it is necessary to always enhance and improve the quality of the education La Scuola provides and to continue being a strong and proud community.

"More needs to be accomplished: we need to better our technology system in both buildings, enrich and develop the bilingual and bicultural component of our educational offering in all 4 divisions. This has been possible through a project, for example, with the [University for Foreigners in Perugia](#) [4], where Liceo students study intensive Italian for four weeks and selected teachers study Italian language and culture and the didactics and methodology of bilingual education. Other goals are creating a scholarship fund for the Middle school and Liceo students, promoting the financial welfare of La Scuola and contributing academic and cultural projects for students and for La Scuola Families and Friends. An example of the fulfilling of the latter goal is a workshop in collaboration with [IACE](#) [5] and the [Consulate General of Italy](#) [6] about the Risorgimento for the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy.

The big announcement of the day was that Italian Olympic gold medalist [Igor Cassina](#) [7] has been appointed to La Scuola's faculty. He will teach physical education for grades 1-5 and athletics and volleyball for grades 6-12. Cassina began his career as a gymnast at age five and landed his first Italian title in 1994. He is the first Italian gymnast to win the Olympic gold medal in the men's horizontal bar (2004 Summer Olympics in Athens). In 2002, the International Gymnastics federation named the maneuver "Cassina" (giant Kovacs with 1/1 turn) after him. Cassina will walk with La Scuola's students during the Columbus Day Parade on October 10th.

The newly appointed Consul General in New York, Natalia Quintavalle confirmed the Scuola's fame is well known. The community is well aware of the high quality of the education offered at La Scuola and its name is admired all over the city. "I mostly encourage the presence of Cassina as it shows the school also gives great importance to physical education, something that is not done in Italy. It is very important for the overall development of our children."

Riccardo Viale, director of the [Italian Cultural Institute of New York](#) [8] said that "the humanistic teachings of the Scuola allow students to adapt to these ever-changing times. They are able to compete with the rest of the world and to change jobs in case theirs disappears with time." An example, people who are now working in the publishing field are looking at other options as the area is in continuous development and books are on their way to extinction. With the proper background, skills and education someone who loses his/her job can easily find something else in a different field.

Stephen Madsen Esq. , La Scuola's chairman, said that La Scuola is successful mainly because so many people care about its success and they collaborate as one with a common goal. "Congratulations to all the parents for choosing this place for the education of their children. This is a great choice but also an unusual choice." La Scuola is indeed committed to providing a thorough multicultural education to foster international understanding and openness in order to become citizens of the world. The challenging bilingual curriculum, deeply rooted in the European tradition, offers an intense academic program that encompasses both the Italian and the American cultures and is open to scientific and technological innovations.

Sheree Sebastiani, parent, teacher and president of the PA (Parent Association), was the last speaker of the day. She explained how the Scuola is the extension of one's family. Children spend so much time at school and it becomes a second home. The PA is involved in many initiatives, including successful fundraising events and the development of new projects.

One of the exciting projects of the new year was the presentation of the multi media show *The Horde*: stories, songs and images of Italian emigration by Gian Antonio Stella. The presentation featured the fascinating story of Italian emigration starting from the post-Unification era until the 1970s. These cultural events teach children important historical facts in a different way, which is extremely enjoyable for kids and adults alike.



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