

Cresskill Public School Italian Night

It was only two years ago when Italian teacher Diana Zoino decided that she needed to help promote the Italian language and program in her district. Thanks to the collaboration with other great Italian teachers from other districts, she decided to host an Italian Night. The first year was a showcase of all the projects and special lessons for each level from sixth grade all the way to the Advanced Placement level. Parents and administrators were pleasantly surprised to see that all of the projects had a connection to real world situations and from job interview projects to the singing of "Nella Vecchia Fattoria" by the sixth grade. The night was a great success and well-received by the community.

In May of 2016, Zoino and fellow Italian teacher Erika Giacari-Cimorosi, hosted Cresskill's 2nd Annual Italian Night. Only this time, it was bigger and better. Both Zoino and Cimorosi are passionate about their native language and strive to preserve the Italian language and culture and spread that love to their students. With the generous support of Coccia Foundation and the local Cresskill UNICO National chapter, the night was an even greater success. As any traditional Italian feast, the cafeteria was draped in the Italian colors, decorated by the students, the aroma of the food filled the air, and the music played all evening long. As an added treat, Cresskill's rock band came on and played some traditional Italian favorites. Giacari-Cimorosi's sixth grade students had the guests clapping when they danced the "Tarantella," and Zoino's Italian AP students were the masters of ceremony, introducing guests and talking about the overall experience as Italian students. Before the night was through, both benevolent donors, Coccia Foundation and Cresskill chapter of UNICO National, were presented with plaques in honor of their generous support of the event.



Diana Zoino, Cresskill teacher of Italian, presenting a plaque to Elda Coccia and Joseph Coccia III

Signorina Zoino first met Coccia Foundation President Elisa Coccia at Montclair State University at the annual Italian teacher Symposium and was inspired by the work and dedication that Coccia Foundation had for the Italian programs. With the help and generosity of Coccia Foundation, Zoino continues in her mission to strengthen and double the size of the Italian program at Cresskill Public School.



Cresskill's sixth grade students displaying their passion and enthusiasm for Italian heritage and culture by dancing the "Tarantella"



Signorina Zoino with many of her Italian studies students

"Education is improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it." — Marian Wright Edelman