Casa Italia

Home of the Italian Cultural Center

1621 N. 39th Avenue, Stone Park, IL 60165

September 2026

Dear Friends and Supporters of Casa Italia,

Look how far we have come together!

- Expanded Programming
- Monthly Cenettas
- A new Community Center
- New exhibits on the way

Together, these milestones show the energy, generosity, and renewed momentum that are shaping Casa Italia's future.

Just look at all we have accomplished together in the last 18 months. Casa Italia is not only alive and well, it is growing stronger every day. We have preserved the programming our community has loved for years, expanded our offerings, and welcomed new energy across our campus. Most importantly, this progress happened because of you—our friends, supporters, volunteers, and organizations who continue to believe in Casa Italia.

Casa Italia is proud to be a welcoming home for Italian organizations of every kind. Our new Community Center offers accessible second-floor office space, supported by our fully operational elevator, for organizations seeking an affordable and convenient place to gather, work, and grow. Office rental includes helpful services such as mail service and access to a conference room that can be reserved for organizational meetings.

2026 has already been an incredible year for Casa Italia. Our children's summer camp was a wonderful success, thanks to Lyn Scolaro and her staff, who created an Italian immersion experience like never before. Campers explored traditions, culture, language, and cooking skills, and they enjoyed field trips to government agencies and a bocce facility. We are especially grateful to Elizabeth Battaglia and Elio Bartolotta for helping make the culinary portion of camp such a memorable experience.

Dancing Under the Stars was a tremendous success. About 300 guests enjoyed a beautiful evening of food, music, fellowship, and dancing. We are grateful to the committee, led by Bill Lowendick, for their hard work in making the event so special. Of course, none of this would be possible without Nancy and Darrell, whose dedication and love for Casa Italia continue to be at the heart of everything we do.

In 2026, we began hosting monthly dinners that we affectionately call Cenettas—gatherings of friends enjoying a delicious meal and warm fellowship. With our newly expanded kitchen and banquet facilities that can accommodate more than 300 people, our Community Center is the perfect place to bring people together. Each dinner begins with a social hour and entertainment, followed by dinner and a spotlight on an Italian organization, giving them an opportunity to share their mission. These evenings have been a great success and have welcomed many first-time visitors to Casa Italia.

Our bocce league continues to bring people together on Monday nights at the Elmwood Park recreational facility. This initiative began during my first term as Chairman of Casa Italia more than 10 years ago, inspired by Tony Fornelli, one of our founders, who dearly wanted to see it become a reality. Today, the league continues to grow, and everyone has a wonderful time. Best of all, many friendships have been formed on the bocce courts.

The annual Festa Della Famiglia was a tremendous success. The event, hosted by the Società San Francesco di Paola in cooperation with the Calabresi in America Organization, ran for four days, and even a little rain could not keep nearly 1,000 people from attending the mass. Thanks to the shelter of the Pavilion and the many tents set up across the grounds, guests were able to enjoy the celebration together. We are fortunate to have such wonderful organizations supporting our efforts to keep our traditions and culture alive.

There are even more exciting things ahead in 2026. Our annual dinner gala will honor Vito Moreci and his family. Vito, the owner of Roberto's Ristorante in Elmhurst and York Tavern in Oak Brook, has an inspiring story of immigrating from Sicily and building a life rooted in hard work, family, and hospitality. The gala will be held on Saturday, October 17, at Carlisle Banquets in Lombard. Once again, we will also raffle two trips to Italy in 2027 in partnership with the Calabresi in America organization, along with a brand-new Vespa.

So not to overwhelm this correspondence with all we do, I would be remiss if I didn't mention; Italian languages classes for both adults and children; our Casa Italia Sabato cultural events held at our Cultural Center's Florentine room; our 50th Anniversary Vocal Scholarship completion and dinner and last, but not least our Christmas Village. Please refer to our website for details on all this exciting programing.

I will close with an Italian proverb that beautifully captures this moment for Casa Italia: "A goccia, a goccia si scava la pietra," which means, "Drop by drop, the stone is carved." To me, this reflects the care, patience, and steady commitment guiding the redevelopment of Casa Italia. Step by step, and with the support of our community, we are building something stronger, brighter, and full of promise for the future.

I look forward to sharing more exciting news with you in the near future.

Grazie per la vostra continua fiducia, il vostro sostegno e a vostra fiducia di Casa Italia.

Peter Volpe
Chairman of the Board – Casa Italia