UNICO National

THE LARGEST ITALIAN AMERICAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

UNICO National Office
Fairfield Commons
271 US Hwy 46 West
Suite F-103
Fairfield, New Jersey 07004

In New Jersey: 973·808·0035
Out of state: 800·877·1492
Fax: 973·808·0043

E-mail: uniconational@unico.org
Visit us at www.unico.org
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>About UNICO</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scholarships</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs/Charities</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Award Programs</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Programs and Information</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised 2012, UNICO National
Q. **What is UNICO National?**
A. UNICO National is a nationwide service organization. Its members are exclusively US citizens of Italian heritage or married to those of Italian heritage. Members must be of good character and reputation. Local Chapters across the country are united in a national chain. They work on local and national projects, to uplift the prestige of the Italian American community. UNICO is non-political and non-sectarian.

Q. **What does UNICO do?**
A. UNICO grants scholarships, promotes Italian study chairs, observes Columbus Day with appropriate activities, supports programs aiding underprivileged and handicapped children, community and civic activities, mental health, cancer and Cooley’s anemia research. It also promotes good fellowship among members.

Q. **What does UNICO mean?**
A. The name, translated from the Italian language, means “unique” or “only one of its kind.” Additionally, the letters represent:

- **U** - Unity
- **N** - Neighborliness
- **I** - Integrity
- **C** - Charity
- **O** - Opportunity
Q. **Why was UNICO founded?**
A. UNICO was founded to give strength and force in opposing discrimination against Italian Americans. Dr. Anthony P. Vastola, founder of UNICO, established the mission to serve the community, counteracting discrimination. The motto: “Service Above Self.” has been the guiding principle of UNICO National.

Q. **When was UNICO established?**
A. UNICO was organized in Waterbury, Connecticut in 1922 when a group of Italian Americans led by Dr. Anthony P. Vastola began providing service to the community. The idea then spread to several other cities in the East where additional Chapters were chartered. The first UNICO convention was held in New York City in 1930. The National Italian Civic League, a similar organization, was established in Omaha, Nebraska in 1931 and spread to about 15 cities in the West. Both groups continued their fine work during the ensuing years. In 1946 efforts began to affect a merger, ultimately creating one national organization. On July 4, 1947, at a convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, UNICO National was born.

Q. **How many members are required to form a Chapter?**
A. Fifteen members are needed to start a chapter. UNICO is not necessarily concerned about large numbers, but rather the quality of its members—people who will devote time, energy and resources to its activities. UNICO wants individuals who will sincerely practice UNICO's motto: “Service Above Self.”
Q. Are donations to UNICO tax exempt?
A. Donations to UNICO's charitable arm, the UNICO Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) corporation, are tax deductible. Donations to UNICO National, or its Chapters, are not tax deductible.

Q. How does UNICO National function?
A. UNICO has duly elected officers who serve without compensation. It is their responsibility to administer the affairs of UNICO National. Officers are elected at the annual convention by the chapter delegates in attendance. The officers are accountable to the chapters which comprise UNICO National. Each Chapter is represented by its president and delegates. All actions of the officers must conform to the UNICO National Constitution and By-laws.

Q. How does a chapter function?
A. Each chapter is governed by local officers and a Board of Directors. All actions must be approved by majority vote of the general membership in accordance with its Chapter Constitution and the UNICO National Constitution. All such actions are under the chapter’s exclusive control, so long as they conform to the UNICO National Constitution.

Q. Will a UNICO chapter compete with other groups of Italian heritage in our community?
A. No, there is no reason for such competition. UNICO wants to work together with these groups and, by good example in UNICO’s accomplishments, join in increasing the prestige of Italian Americans in the community. There is no conflict of interest.
Q. Would membership in UNICO National affect our Americanism or relations with other ethnic groups in the community?
A. Absolutely not! UNICO members are Americans first. As we work to improve our image through charitable acts, scholarships and civic accomplishment, we are helping to make better citizens and, thereby, a better America. UNICO is tolerant and will cooperate with any community group that works towards the improvement and welfare of that community.

Q. What does a Chapter gain by being a part of UNICO National?
A. By joining this great UNICO movement, Chapters and their members become part of a national effort to promote Italian American heritage. By its increased membership and by national cooperative achievement, UNICO is stronger in combating discrimination. Members become a part of a national group in which they can make many lasting friendships with UNICANs in various parts of the country. UNICO National also provides: (1) ComUNICO newspaper, a publication reporting UNICO activities and featuring articles of interest to the entire membership; (2) participation in the National Scholarship Program; (3) various Chapter forms and standard items; and (4) assistance from the National Office.

Q. Does UNICO National have any control over Chapter funds?
A. No, so long as the Chapter carries out the provisions of the Constitution in meeting its financial obligations to UNICO National, sends representation to National meetings and fulfills its responsibilities as a Chapter.
Q. What does UNICO National expect from a Chapter?
A. UNICO National expects all its chapters to abide by the Constitution, meet regularly, serve their communities, and bear responsibility to UNICO National by meeting financial obligations, attending National and regional meetings and supporting the National organization and its programs.

Q. What can we expect to accomplish by establishing a UNICO chapter in our community?
A. Members develop a better understanding of and respect for each other and for Italian Americans as a whole. They will develop a desire to do things for others, giving time and support in the pursuit of that most rewarding virtue—charity. Members will develop a better citizenship by community activity, reinforcing the recognition of the innumerable contributions made by Italian Americans to the American way of life.

Q. What has UNICO accomplished?
A. UNICO has done so many things on a National and chapter level that it would be impossible to list them all. Generally, it has awarded thousands of dollars for college scholarships and established Italian study chairs in colleges and universities throughout the country. UNICO has provided grants for cancer research, raised millions of dollars for local charities, recognized many individuals throughout the Nation for outstanding achievements, sponsored a mental health program, a Cooley's anemia program, formed partnership with the ‘V’ Foundation for Cancer Research and encouraged and participated in the annual observance of Columbus Day. UNICO National has come to the defense of our Italian name in many instances through its strong Anti-Bias Program. It has assisted in improving immigration laws. It has provided financial support for disaster relief efforts including nationwide campaigns that raised millions of dollars for reconstruction in areas devastated by natural disasters such as Italy and Haiti.
Dr. Anthony P. Vastola envisioned an Italian American civic organization that would benefit society while celebrating our illustrious heritage. Of priority was a commitment to promoting higher education. Today, UNICO continues Dr. Vastola’s vision by awarding scholarships to deserving students.

The UNICO National Foundation offers four undergraduate scholarships valued at $6,000 each paid out at $1,500 per year, over four years. To qualify for consideration, a candidate must be a United States citizen of Italian heritage and a graduating senior at a public or private secondary school.

UNICO National offers two postgraduate scholarships. The Sgt. John Basilone Scholarship requires that the applicant be a senior in college, or a graduate beginning postgraduate studies. This scholarship is valued at $1,500 per year for a maximum of four years. The Dr. Benjamin Cottone Memorial Scholarship requires that a candidate be a college senior or graduate who is beginning graduate studies in the field of medicine or is currently enrolled in an accredited medical school in the United States. The Cottone Scholarship pays $5,000 on award. A candidate for either program must be a United States citizen of Italian heritage. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria outlined on the application in order to apply.

The Bernard and Carolyn Torraco Memorial Nursing Scholarship Program provides two grants valued at $2,500 each, paid on award. A candidate must hold U.S. citizenship. This program is open to nursing students of all ethnicities who meet the eligibility criteria outlined on the application.

Applications are to be acquired from and submitted through a participating, local UNICO chapter.
Bernard Torraco, the son of Italian immigrants, was born in the “horseshoe section” of Jersey City, NJ. Carolyn Lattanzio, whose parents came from Abruzzi, lived in the Bronx, NY.

Upon graduation from New York University, Bernard opened his accounting office in October of 1929; this was just two weeks before the Stock Market crash. Carolyn, an accomplished bookkeeper, helped during the busy tax season. A hard working and generous couple, the Torracos were known to accept chickens or other goods from clients in return for services. The Torraco Co. grew to be one of the one of the largest accounting firms in Hudson County.

Active in many organizations, Bernard Torraco was especially committed to UNICO National. Joining the Hoboken Chapter in 1946, he later served as their president. After holding various elected positions on the National level, Torraco was installed as National President in 1959.

In 2010, Ralph Torraco, son of Bernard and Carolyn, proposed a UNICO National Nursing Scholarship in memory of his parents. Ralph had explored ways to assist deserving students preparing to work in helping professions. After careful consideration, he decided to endow a nursing scholarship program under the UNICO banner. By aiding aspiring nurses, Ralph felt we would provide for a positive and significant benefit to society. He also felt this would be an appropriate way to acknowledge the dedication of the nurses that cared for his parents in their later years.

UNICO National is pleased to honor the memory of Bernard and Carolyn Torraco as we offer these valuable scholarships.
President Franklin D. Roosevelt called Don S. Gentile “Captain Courageous” in recognition of his exceptional service. “A One Man Air Force,” was General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s description when presenting him with the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1942. His battle successes, surpassing all others at the time, earned him the title “Ace of Aces.”

Dominic Salvatore Gentile, born in Piqua, Ohio, on December 6, 1920, was the son of Italian immigrants. From an early age, he was fascinated with flying. As a teenager he had his own Aerosport biplane, which he piloted with amazing skill.

Following high school graduation Don, as he was known, enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force. After training in California and Canada for less than two months, he earned his “wings.” The young pilot was sent to England where he flew with the Eagle Squadron. When America declared war, he transferred to the US Eighth Air Force.

A man of extraordinary courage and skill, Gentile was awarded many decorations in addition to the Distinguished Flying Cross, including: the Silver Star, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Air Medal, the Presidential Unit Citation, the World War II Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the British Distinguished Flying Cross, the British Star, the Eagle Squadron Crest and the Italian War Cross.

After the war, Don Gentile continued in the Air Force. He served as a test pilot at Wright Field, a training officer in Fighter Gunnery and as officer at the Air Tactical School. Tragically, he was killed in a crash while piloting a T33 jet trainer near Andrews Air Force Base.

Major Don Gentile’s heroic service and outstanding bravery are an inspiration and source of pride to Italian Americans. UNICO National honors his memory with this prestigious scholarship awarded in his name.
William C. Davini has been described as a man of outstanding integrity and remarkable independence of thought. A native of Minnesota, he was a well-regarded educator and coach. As Assistant Superintendent of Schools in St. Paul, he demonstrated deep concern for and commitment to the welfare of our youth.

A member of the National Italian American Civic League, Davini was a driving force in designing the merger with UNICO. He was the founder and Charter President of the St. Paul Chapter. When elected National President of UNICO in 1947, he served with distinction.

Highly respected as one of the greatest civic minds in UNICO history, Davini participated in many significant projects. He was dedicated to serving others. Davini is credited with establishing an important connection between the Italians of Minnesota and those of like heritage nationwide.

Davini is recognized as the father of the UNICO National Scholarship Program, and his legacy continues to this day. His impact on UNICO National will long be appreciated and remembered. In honor of his profound contributions, UNICO National established the William C. Davini Memorial Scholarship in 1960.
Alphonse A. Miele was inducted into the Newark, New Jersey Chapter of UNICO National in 1942. He held every elected position and served admirably on the local, district and national levels.

Possessing exceptional mediation skills and a serious commitment to expansion, Miele worked diligently to unify the chapters of the East, Mid-West and West.

He was elected National President in 1955 and his valuable experience and his unshakable faith in UNICO ensured outstanding leadership. After completing his term, he volunteered to work in the National Office as Secretary/Business Administrator, a position which he held for thirteen years.

In recognition of his selfless and dedicated service to UNICO National, Miele was presented the prestigious Dr. Anthony P. Vastola Award in 1961; it is the highest honor UNICO confers.

The Alphonse A. Miele Memorial Scholarship was established in 1970 to honor the valued contributions of a distinguished leader who was always willing to serve.
Exceeding 50 years of service to UNICO National, Theodore Mazza’s contributions are of great historical significance. He is acknowledged as authoring the merger of the National Italian American Civic League and the UNICO Clubs organized in the East by Dr. Anthony P. Vastola to form UNICO National in 1946.

Mazza, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, played a major role in the development and growth of UNICO National. He served the organization in numerous capacities including: Executive Secretary, Treasurer, Scholarship Director, Executive Vice President and in 1951 as National President. In 1957 he was elected UNICO Foundation Treasurer. He later served as President of UNICO Foundation.

As National Historian, Mazza wrote the first complete history of UNICO. He prepared many of the important documents, guidelines and brochures which serve as a basis for current procedures. He initiated the National Directory, the Vastola and Rizzuto Awards and the Past Presidents Advisory Council.

In 1957 Theodore Mazza was named the first recipient of the Dr. Anthony P. Vastola Award, UNICO National’s highest honor, in recognition of his devoted service to UNICO and his home community.

In tribute to Theodore Mazza for exemplary service and his distinguished role in forming UNICO National, a scholarship in his memory was established in 1971.

THEODORE MAZZA
MEMORIAL
SCHOLARSHIP
Established 1971
Sgt. John Basilone, an exemplary patriot, was awarded the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross in recognition of his uncommon valor; he is the only person in American history to receive both commendations.

The son of Italian immigrants, John Basilone was born in Buffalo, NY and raised in Raritan, New Jersey. At the age of 18 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to the Philippines. There he was nicknamed “Manilla John.” He completed his enlistment in 1937.

In 1940, just prior to US entry into World War II, Basilone joined the Marine Corps. On Guadalcanal in 1942, his heroic activities contributed to the defeat of an entire Japanese Regiment. While defending the strategically important Henderson Airfield, Basilone and his men were greatly outnumbered. Under almost continuous attack for three days, they fought successfully to repel the enemy. During this battle, Sgt. Basilone repaired machine guns, crossed hostile lines for ammunition and held his position until replacements arrived. For his courage and heroism on Guadalcanal, Basline was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor; he was the first enlisted Marine in WWII to receive this honor.

Upon his return home, he toured 10 states on a successful War Bond Drive. After the tour, he volunteered for reassignment to the Pacific Theater. While Medal of Honor awardees are not usually permitted to return to combat, his request was honored.

Landing on Iwo Jima with the first assault wave Basilone, under intense fire, destroyed a blockhouse and its Japanese defenders. He guided a trapped Marine safely though a minefield. Less than two hours into the assault, Basilone was killed by an enemy mortar shell. He was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for valor on Iwo Jima.

Owing to his extraordinary bravery and outstanding gallantry, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone left an incredible legacy. UNICO National is committed to preserving and promoting his memory by awarding the Sgt. John Basilone Postgraduate Scholarship.
Dr. Benjamin J. Cottone was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1905. A graduate of Dunmore High School, he continued his education at Temple University, Muhlenberg College, St. Thomas College, now the University of Scranton and was graduated from Hahneman Medical College, Philadelphia. Following graduation Dr. Cottone served an internship at Hahneman Hospital, now Community Medical Center. He began general practice in 1932 and continued his family medical practice while studying for a specialty at the Manhattan Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital, New York City. Later he trained in ophthalmology at Hahneman Medical College and he attended the University of Vienna, Austria for additional studies. He decided to limit his field to ophthalmology.

Dr. Cottone helped form the Scranton Chapter of UNICO in 1955. He was instrumental in establishing the chapter scholarship program. He assisted with fundraising for various projects and promoted cooperation with other organizations to benefit the community.

An active civic volunteer, Dr. Cottone served on the Board of Directors for the Association of the Blind, the Scranton Lions Club, the Boys and Girls Club, the Scranton Elks, the Mental Health Association and UNICO National.

Dr. Cottone was installed as UNICO National President in 1971. During his tenure much was accomplished. Especially important was providing assistance to flood victims in Pennsylvania’s Luzerne Valley.

Upon his passing, a substantial endowment was provided to the UNICO Foundation which allowed for the establishment of the Dr. Benjamin Cottone Medical Scholarship. This act of generosity indicates the high esteem in which Dr. Cottone held UNICO National.
The Anti-Bias Committee (ABC) of UNICO National serves an essential purpose by educating the public, thereby creating awareness of negative stereotyping and discrimination against Italians and Italian Americans. This committee achieves its goals in a number of ways:

The Mille Grazie Award, A Thousand Thanks, is presented to those who exemplify the positive image of the Italian and Italian American culture, stand up for their Italian American heritage, and speak out against defamation and stereotyping.

The committee provides support programs and seminars expounding the positive aspects of the Italian and Italian American culture, arts and literature at schools, corporations, and communities throughout the country.

Films, such as, “Anti-Italianism: Discrimination and Defamation in the History of Italian Americans” are brought to the public’s awareness.

UNICO’s ABC program brought to light the outstanding efforts of the Italian people during World War II to save Jews that had fled to Italy to avoid persecution. The organization worked with the defamation arm of B’nai B’rith on “A Debt to Honor,” which details these heroic efforts.

Seminars to educate students of this forgotten part of Italian history have been held. Additionally, this chapter of Italian history has been added to the curriculum of the state of New Jersey schools.
Cooley’s anemia is an inherited disease of the blood which, while found in other populations, is peculiar to people of Mediterranean ancestry. It is non contagious but passed from parent to child by inheritance of a gene defect.

There are two main forms of Cooley’s anemia—the disease and the trait.

1. Persons born with the disease have defective red blood cells which are unable to carry enough oxygen to the body’s vital organs. This results in severe anemia and ultimately death.
2. Persons born with the trait can be healthy and lead normal lives. If, however, two people with the trait marry, their children may inherit a defective gene from each and develop the severe form of Cooley’s anemia.

UNICO National and its chapters have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in an effort to find a cure. Affected children, who used to live only to five years of age, now live well into adulthood. But, a cure has not been found. Funds are still needed for research, treatment, transfusions, and medical costs that burden family resources while they await a cure.
UNICO has been active in the establishment of chairs in Italian Studies at various colleges and universities.

In 1984 UNICO National was approached by the University of Connecticut to participate in the first permanently endowed Chair on Modern Italian History. Named after a prominent history professor, the Emiliana Pasca Noether Chair was officially launched in June 1986.

A plaque was placed in the College of Arts & Science building listing all UNICO Chapters that had contributed. Doctorates have been conferred and over 250 students have received instruction on Modern Italian History at the University of Connecticut.

New Jersey’s Seton Hall University came next, in 1994. It was through the generosity of Joseph and Geraldine LaMotta that the Chair received its largest single contribution. Thereafter, this campaign was identified as the Joseph & Geraldine LaMotta Chair for Italian Studies.

In California, a scholarship campaign resulted in the establishment of the George L. Graziadio Chair in Italian Studies at the University of California, Long Beach. The lead position was taken by UNICO and $100,000 of the $500,000 needed for the Chair was raised through UNICO’s efforts.

UNICO members then moved on to establish the Alphonse M. D’Amato Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies at the New York University, Stonybrook.

Next came Montclair State University in New Jersey. This Chair was established in 2008 through the generous naming gift from the Inserra Family Foundation in honor of their parents. The Chair is now known as the Theresa and Lawrence F. Inserra, Sr. Italian and Italian American Studies Chair.

Additionally, the Queensboro, New York Chapter of UNICO National worked diligently to establish the Queensboro UNICO Italian and Italian American Studies Chair at Hofstra University.
MENTAL HEALTH
UNICO’s Commitment
And Objectives

Approximately 20 challenges have been identified under the mental health umbrella including: Alzheimer’s disease, developmental disabilities, depression, bipolar, autism, eating, emotional and cognitive disorders. At times mental health issues are inaccurately identified, neglected and misunderstood.

Mental illness is widespread, affecting all ethnic groups, income and education levels, professions and ages. Mark Twain, Michelangelo, Van Gogh, Handel, Tolstoy, Hemingway and Churchill all faced mental health challenges. Countless family, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, and strangers who enrich our lives also face such challenges.

Considered American’s greatest humorist, Mark Twain periodically endured bouts of depression. Michelangelo, leader of the Italian Renaissance and one of the world’s most famous architects, artists and sculptors is thought to have had a bipolar disorder. He along with Handel, a world-renowned composer, had periods of high productivity only to be thwarted by episodes of deep depression. Abraham Lincoln also coped with depression.

UNICO’s commitment is to underwrite meaningful projects in the areas of research, diagnosis, treatment, education, and training related to mental health issues. The UNICO Foundation, through funding by UNICO chapters, districts, personal contributions, and corporate sponsors continues to donate thousands of dollars to diversified mental health programs.

UNICO’s objective is to affect a noticeable difference in the lives of challenged individuals and their families.
In January of 1993, Jim Valvano met with ESPN executives who offered their support in creating a foundation that would fund cancer research. Always the coach, Jim then began to develop a plan that would lead his team to victory. On March 4, 1993, Jim Valvano received the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage at ESPN’s first American Sports Award Show. During his acceptance speech, the weakened Jim Valvano proved that the strength of his dream would endure as he announced that, with the help of ESPN, he was starting the ‘V’ Foundation for Cancer Research. He proclaimed that the motto would be “Don’t Give Up...Don’t Ever Give Up!” With an all-volunteer Board of Directors that has grown to 23 members, and the support of ESPN, the ‘V’ Foundation embarked on its mission to raise money for cancer research. Jim Valvano died on April 28, 1993 but he had already set his dream in motion.

The ‘V’ Foundation’s mission to find a cure for cancer is predicated on generating the requisite funds to support research, the ability to identify quality researchers and to increase public awareness.

In 1999, UNICO National formed a charitable partnership with the ‘V’ Foundation for Cancer Research and together have raised funds to combat this dreaded disease. UNICO chapters raise funds through charitable events and walk-a-thons. A number of grants have been presented for varying types of cancer research such as Hodgkin's Disease, Breast Cancer, Prostate Cancer and more. Hospitals that received support are: Yale University School of Medicine, University of Chicago Cancer Research Center, University of Connecticut Health Center and Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Johnson Medical School, Columbia University Comprehensive Cancer Center, Cancer Institute of New Jersey for Pediatric Cancer Research, and UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center.

With cancer touching so many lives, cancer research continues to be one of UNICO’s major charitable endeavors.
Dr. Anthony Paul Vastola was born in 1889 in San Valentino, Italy. At the age of six, his family emigrated to New Haven, Connecticut. He was graduated from Yale University and Fordham Medical School as a physician and surgeon.

When his request to join a local organization was turned down because of his ethnic background, he conceived the idea of a civic group with members of Italian heritage. In October 1922, a group of fifteen men met in the library of Dr. Vastola’s home to organize just such a group patterned after other civic organizations. It was a fulfillment of his dream to unite men of Italian heritage in an organization to perform charitable, patriotic and educational deeds.

This was the birth of UNICO; its name taken from the Italian language to indicate that the group was unique. Dr. Vastola possessed the imaginative genius to conceive of a new and significant service organization and the courage and ability to make it successful.

Today, Italian Americans continue Dr. Vastola’s vision and work to promote the ideals upon which UNICO was founded. Great men leave in their work a permanency; Dr. Anthony P. Vastola has left behind his legacy—UNICO National.

The Vastola Award is granted to a member of UNICO on the following basis: He or she must have been a member of UNICO National for at least ten years and must have performed exceptional service on behalf of UNICO on the national level. The candidate should be a person who has performed this service above and beyond the call of duty, has shown initiative and originality and performed such service without monetary reimbursement. Such a person must have demonstrated the belief in and practice of the ideals of UNICO National.
Born October 21, 1877, Antonio R. Rizzuto came to the United States at the age of 12, became an American citizen on March 4, 1898, and from 1909 until his death in 1934 resided in Omaha, Nebraska.

In his lifetime, he pursued the quest to assist and encourage his countrymen to become contributing members of their respective communities. He donated not only his time but also his financial resources in furthering these goals.

He traveled extensively throughout the Midwest promoting the ideals and principles associated with UNICO National.

The Rizzuto Award perpetuates the memory of a man who earned the means to be able to assist others and who had a passionate love for his fellowman. His counsel and guidance were a stepping stone to those he helped to achieve success. This memorial award will be a constant reminder of his inspirational devotion to others.

The Rizzuto Award is granted to a non-Unican on the following basis:

The person must be a non-Unican, who has either made a definite contribution in services, or otherwise, to UNICO; or, may have contributed to the general betterment of mankind through the sciences, music, drama, etc.; or may have contributed in someway to the welfare and advancement of Italians in our country or abroad; and has shown service to all Americans regardless of race, creed or religion.

Basically, those persons to be honored will have upheld, believed in and practiced the fundamentals and principles embodied in our UNICO Creed.

The Rizzuto Award is the highest award presented by UNICO National to a non-member.
Joseph P. Cianci, Esq., a native of New Britain, Connecticut, was born on March 12, 1932. Cianci was educated in the public school system of New Britain, received an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Bryant College in Providence, Rhode Island, and ultimately, in 1957, received his Doctor of Juris Prudence degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law. He later served in the United States Army Infantry and received an honorable discharge.

In 1961, Cianci was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly as the State Representative from New Britain. He was the youngest member of the Democratic Party to serve in that capacity and later served on the State Judiciary Committee. He was the first Italian Catholic to be elected President of the New Britain area Conference of Churches.

Cianci was to become the president of UNICO National when on April 16, 1982, tragedy struck. Cianci suffered a cerebral vascular incident that left him in a coma. At a UNICO National Executive Committee Meeting in May 1982, Joseph P. Cianci, Esq. was unanimously appointed President-Elect Emeritus 1982-1983. After a lengthy illness, Mr. Cianci passed away in 1986.

The Humanitarian Award named in his honor is presented to an individual exemplifying those qualities of exceptional dedication and service to mankind without remuneration or recompense.

The recipient must have demonstrated by word and deed a definite concern for and commitment to serve his fellowman. That unselfish dedication must have touched all people without regard to race, color, creed or national origin.
Philip Mazzei, an Italian physician, was a close friend of Thomas Jefferson. Credited as the creator of the doctrine “All men are created equal,” Mazzei worked to promote American independence.

Established in 1976 through the untiring efforts of General Vincent Chiodo, these awards are given annually to any person regardless of sex, color, creed, race or national origin that fits the criteria.

**Grand Patriot Award**
Presented in recognition of one’s fostering freedom and good will to mankind.

**William Paca Award**
Presented in recognition of a person’s research in the area of historical facts and contributions by the many unsung heroes whose lives were expended in making our country the beacon of freedom in the world today. The William Paca award is named for the Italian Revolutionary War patriot whose signature is on the Declaration of Independence. Paca was the first Governor of Maryland.

**Civis Illustris Award**
Presented in recognition of a person’s achievement in the arts and sciences that will benefit humanity, working in the interest of their fellowman in civil, social, commercial and industrial development of their community.
“The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor”

Vince Lombardi's accomplishments, in ten years with the Green Bay Packers, offer an unforgettable lesson in coordinating struggle, talent, belief, challenge and determination; it is one of the greatest football stories ever. He led the Packers from a downtrodden state to the championship playoffs in 1961, 1962, 1965, 1966 and 1967. After retiring for a year in 1968, he accepted a similar challenge. He took on the leadership of the Washington Redskins, which resulted in a winning season that first year.

If the contest between life and cancer could have been decided on a football field, Vince Lombardi would have been the winner. He would have been able to affect his “second miracle” - rejuvenating the Washington Redskins. The sixties “Man of the Decade” may have also earned that esteemed title for the seventies.

As fate would have it, Vince Lombardi, one of the most respected and successful football coaches, lost the game to cancer on September 3, 1970. He was honored posthumously the following year with enshrinement in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The lifestyle of Vince Lombardi off the field was equally honorable. He was respected as a most outstanding businessman and citizen. He loaned not only his name, but also his time and talent to numerous charities. His life was a fine example of “Service Above Self.” Even as the seriousness of his final illness became certain, he was served as Honorary Vice Chairman of the Honor America Day on July 4, 1970. He said, at the time, in typical Lombardi fashion, “I think it’s the right thing to do.”
Dr. D.M. Nigro a Kansas City, MO native was a genial medical practitioner with an easy way of making friends and putting people at ease. It was this talent that made him known to people in all stages of society. He numbered among his friends his Missouri neighbor, President Harry S. Truman. Knute Rockne was one of the famous personages who were close to Dr. Nigro. Knute Rockne is considered one of football's greatest coaches. Their friendship went back to when they were classmates. After Rockne's unfortunate accident, Dr. Nigro organized the Knute Rockne Memorial Association which met annually to honor the coach.

Nigro initiated the National Athletics Awards program that he personally financed for close to twenty years. In 1935, he and Italian American Civic League President Fred A. Ossanna implemented the idea of awarding a large trophy to the National Football Champions; the first award was presented to the University of Minnesota in December 1935.

Dr. Nigro loved sports with a passion. He made it a personal commitment to recognize young people whose athletic skills were outstanding. His dedication in promoting athletic programs continues today as UNICO National recognizes the talents of Italian American amateur athletes.

This award celebrates the memory of UNICO National President Dr. D.M. Nigro—a true sportsman.
UNICO Chapters around the country are proud to perpetuate the name of Brian Piccolo. His courage, in the face of serious illness, has been a continuing inspiration for millions of people.

Born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Piccolo began his football career at the age of eight. Football later took him to the gridiron of South Catholic High in Fort Lauderdale, to great accomplishments at Wake Forest and into four active seasons with the Chicago Bears.

This young, likeable athlete was destined to excel but his career was cut short by five types of cancer. After several operations, constant radiation treatments and much pain, Brian Piccolo died on June 16, 1970 at the age of 26, leaving his wife and three young daughters.

The measure of the man is perhaps best understood in this paraphrase of one of his quotes, “The first thing a guy’s got to have is determination because a man’s career is such a long road. There were so many ups and downs along my road. You’ve got to believe in yourself, not to show anybody else, but just to prove it to yourself.”

His personal battle has been an inspiration to countless persons determined to achieve their own goals.

This award is presented on the chapter and district levels annually during the month of April to high school athletes demonstrating those attributes associated with the life of Brian Piccolo. The recipients must be of Italian heritage, have shown outstanding improvement in athletics, are graduating from a secondary school and reside within an area of a sponsoring chapter or district.
UNICO National established the Marconi Science Award at the August 1994 Board of Directors Meeting. The intent was to honor the centennial (1895-1995) of the first long distance wireless transmission and to recognize the great scientific contributions made by Guglielmo Marconi.

Guglielmo Marconi was the genius who began the communications revolution. His discovery of long wave, short wave and microwave transmission ushered in the modern era. Radio and television are just two of the offspring of his brilliant contributions. UNICO is honored to commemorate his legacy, which is an inspiration to those who seek to discover new truths and enrich our lives.

After many planning meetings and involved efforts, a very deserving recipient was chosen from the numerous applications received. On April 30, 1995, Dr. Alfonso Di Mino of Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey was presented with what would become the first UNICO National Marconi Science Award and Medal. Dr. Di Mino, an accomplished scientist and inventor, who came to the U.S. from Italy in 1950, was a fitting first recipient for the award because of his diverse expertise in a number of scientific disciplines. He had many inventions and patents in various fields such as physics, chemistry, mechanics, and appropriately, radio electronics used in medical and industrial applications.

Like Dr. DiMino, those who have been selected for this award represent a wide spectrum of research and invention in the physical sciences. As did Marconi, they have braved new trails; our lives are better for it. UNICO continues to be dedicated to finding Marconi designees who meet its very high standards for research and development of new technologies.
Columbus Day and Italian Heritage and Culture Month are filled with parades, wreath-laying and flag raising ceremonies, dinners and other activities. Nationwide, UNICO chapters participate in the observance of Columbus Day and Italian Heritage and Culture Month throughout their local communities to promote the positive contributions that Italians and Italian Americans have made.

Proclamations by governors, mayors and city councils take place during the month of October. UNICO is at the forefront of these celebrations. Chapters encourage their local communities to erect overhead street banners in order to raise awareness that “October is Italian Heritage and Culture Month.” This theme is incorporated nationally into related events.

The New York City Columbus Day Parade has been our national flagship parade since 1986 and is the world’s largest celebration of Italian American culture. The parade is a televised global event with millions of viewers and nearly one million spectators.

There are several states that issue proclamations for Columbus Day and recognize October as Italian American Heritage and Culture Month. However, there are approximately 17 states that do not recognize Columbus Day or Columbus’ discovery of America.
**UNICO’s Charitable Contributions**

**Scholarship**
UNICO’s first charity. UNICO has awarded scholarships of over 3 million dollars to worthy students.

**Mental Health**
Supports community access programs, job placement and community outreach through hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants.

**Cooley’s Anemia**
Supports Cooley’s anemia research through hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants.

**Italian Studies**
Took the lead in establishing Italian and Italian American study chairs in universities throughout the country.

**‘V’ Foundation for Cancer Research**
Partnered with this foundation, named for the inspirational basketball coach James Valvano, providing several $50,000 research grants.

**AP Program**
Partnered with other Italian American organizations through the American College Board to establish an Advance Placement Program in Italian language.

**Italian Language**
Sponsored Italian language immersion camp scholarships.

**September 11, 2001**
Provided donations to Windows of Hope, Twin Towers Orphans Fund, Craig Lilore Memorial Trust, and New York Columbia Association.

**National Disasters**
First to get water to victims of Hurricane Katrina with the assistance of the National Guard. Provided support to hurricane victims in Florida, flood victims in Pennsylvania, earthquake victims in San Jose, California. Built day care centers after the earthquake in southern Italy and provided support to earthquake victims in the Abruzzo Region of Italy and Haiti. Raised funds for restoration after Hurricane Sandy.
UNICO NATIONAL
Mission Statement

To promote and enhance the image of Italian Americans;

For members to be of service to the community;

To promote Italian heritage and culture;

To promote, support and assist charitable, scientific, cultural, educational and literary projects;

To promote members’ interest in public welfare;

And to cooperate with others in civic, social, and cultural development.
If you would like additional information on any of our programs or if you are interested in membership information contact us at:

UNICO National Office
Fairfield Commons
271 US Hwy 46 West
Suite F-103
Fairfield, New Jersey 07004

In New Jersey 973·808·0035
Out of state 800·877·1492
Fax: 973·808·0043

E-mail: uniconational@unico.org
Visit us at www.unico.org

“Service Above Self”