

Giuseppina Zenga Scholarship (Becker Family)



Monica Fisher Piccininno

Recently graduated from Northampton HS, Monica will be attending The University of Rhode Island. While undecided in her major she is leaning toward Marine Biology.

Monica's grandfather Giuseppe Piccininno descends from the Puglia Bari region of Italy, in the little town of Torito. Her grandmother, Consuelo Gutierrez descends from Bogota Columbia. Named after her aunt, Monica lives with her mom Annamaria in the Florence section of Northampton.

Northampton HS teacher, Jamison Isler, describes Monica as gregarious, outgoing young woman who approached life with spirit and verve. She is adventurous, curious, and smart. While focusing on classwork Monica also is a member of the track team and the band. She was on the leadership council of the schools National Honor Society chapter.

They (my grandparents and Mom) taught me to be respectful, polite, generous and to be considerate of others. "I hope my grandfather never forgets the songs he taught me. Above all, I hope you know the impact it had on not only my childhood, but my life as well."

Such thoughtful and impactful words to your grandfather, Monica. The traditions and guidance of your family will guide you well.

George & Rose Tazzini Memorial Scholarship



Angelina Riggio

Angelina will be attending Our Lady of The Elms College after just graduating from East Longmeadow HS. She will be pursuing a degree in Nursing. Currently living in East Longmeadow, her parents are Lila & Dominic Riggio. The family descends from Reggio, Calabria.

Angelina was a cheerleader throughout high school. Her commitment and passion for that led her to coach youth cheerleading at the middle and elementary school in her community. Additionally, she volunteered at local elderly homes throughout her community.

A chance encounter, with a parent & her toddlers, at a local coffee shop resulted in saving a choking toddler. While the mother froze, Angelina calmly took action. That situation led the mother and Angelina to team up to do volunteer teaching for other youngsters, how to prevent and aid in choking, CPR and babysitting safety classes at the local library.

"One of my fondest memories of my Nono and Nona is making homemade pasta with them in their kitchen. The process was a true labor of love, starting with the mixing of the dough by hand, which was always my favorite part. I remember the smell of the flour, the feel of the dough in my hands, and the sound of their voices as they spoke Italian to each other. Those moments in the kitchen with my grandparents taught me the value of hard work and the importance of family traditions, and they will always hold a very special place in my heart." **Angelina, you appear to be on your way to helping a lot of grateful people!**

George & Rose Tazzini Memorial Scholarship



Anna Russo

Anna currently attends Springfield College. She is studying to become a Physician Assistant. She was raised in Agawam by her parents Fortunata & Bruno Russo. Her brother, Antonio, was also selected for a scholarship this evening. Her family roots are from Barciigliano.

Anna served as a PediPal volunteer at Baystate Health spending time with patients at the Children's hospital inpatient and PICU. She also performed volunteer outreach at the Children's Hospital as the CAB commuter chair coordinating events like Halloween Bags for kids, Christmas Toy Drive, Valentines Day cards & treats for the staff and cards for the pediatric patients and provide over 300 Easter eggs with candy for staff and patients. She also works at her family's bakery.

Mr Morales, Asst Dir. Of Student Activities states that Anna is a true ambassador of Springfield College. She leads by example and her passion and dedication with get her far.

On her grandmother: "she told me all of the superstitions, and traditions that she had to make sure I carried on as the first-born granddaughter. SO maybe, it wasn't the cookies that were so important. Rather, it was the time spent together that meant too much. Whenever I miss my grandmother, I can still feel her through thinking of these stories and living out her favorite Italian traditions". **Anna, those stories are actually "fortune cookies"!**

Italian Cultural Center Language Scholarship



Serena Caira

Serena just graduated from Lexington HS and will be attending Northeastern University studying Electrical/Computer Engineering and Italian Studies. Serena lives with her parents Luca & Veronica, and two sisters, in Lexington, MA. Her sister Alessia is also receiving a scholarship this evening. The family are descendants from Atina, Frosinone, a small town in central Italy inland between Rome and Naples.

Serena was very active during her high school years. Head of Fundraising & Student Outreach - Student Gov't Association, Helping Homeless Club President, National Honor Society, Best Buddies, Peer Mentors, Sacred heart Church & Brigid's Church Involvement, Squad Leader-Lexington Police Explorers, Youth Commission Leader... makes for an exhausting schedule.

Paula Zanirato Doorfmann, Serenas' Italian teacher describes her as a confident, charismatic, and engaging student. She went on to say that Serena is a self-motivated young woman, incredibly talented and driven in a positive way.

"Each of my favorite cultural traditions gave me a unique perspective on what it means to step back from things like work and technology that the U.S. seems to always be hyper-fixated on, and just enjoy the moment and the beautiful people around you." **Serena, it is a delicate dance, and it seems you are figuring out the steps just fine!**

Giuseppe Polimeni Italian Heritage Scholarship



Evelyn Humphries

A student at Assumption University, Evelyn is pursuing a degree in Nursing. Her parents are Owen & Gina Humphries and reside in Longmeadow. Her heritage comes from the Rossi, Mercolino, Dialessi families tracing back to Palermo, Sicily, Naples, Campania, and Calabria.

Evelyn seems to fill every minute of free time with volunteering and community service. Mercy ER dept, Rachel's table Teen board member, Ronald McDonald Teen Board member, St Mary's Parish, Project Red Coord & Girls Action network of Girls Inc. of the Valley. Not to mention what she is involved at Assumption; Treasurer & Senator of Student Gov't Assoc, Resident Asst, Orientation Leader.

As Jodi Falk, of Rachel's Table, puts it; Evelyn's leadership has inspired hundreds of young people in our region. She connects with the most important mission in life-service with compassion and dignity. She has an unbounded positive attitude, detailed and focused work ethic, commitment, and sense of purpose.

"Despite the fact that none of my grandparents attended college, my grandparents instilled a love of learning in me. They also fostered a sense of pride in my Italian heritage and showed me how to be kind and care for others. I truly believe that nursing is my vocation, and that being a nurse will allow me to bring my love of family, education, tradition, and faith together to serve others." **Evelyn, those are the ingredients to success on every level!**

Robert & Lena DeCarlo Memorial Scholarship

Presented by George O. Tazzini on behalf of DeCarlo Family



Maximus Sepulveda

On a full football scholarship, Max is attending Franklin & Pierce University. He is majoring in Criminal Justice. Max's descendants (Siciliano) hail from Genoa, Naples, Reggio & Calabria areas of Italy.

Born to Maria Siciliano & William Sepulveda Max grew up in Wilbraham. Max took to football as a youngster and excelled at all aspects of the sport. Working together as a team helped Max become more outgoing and more engaged in the classroom as well. He has performed service within the community like picking up litter in local parks, mowing and cleaning seniors citizens lawns and coaching younger players as they learn football.

Most important to Max is how family members would rally around each other in times of need. "My Italian heritage has taught me how to live a life full of love, laughter, honor, faith and family." **Max, very good lessons to maintain your Italian roots firmly planted!**

Anthony J. & Sylvia Forastiere Memorial Scholarship

Julia Puppolo



Julia currently attends The College of Holy Cross. Not making it easy on herself, Julia is majoring in International Studies and Political Science while carrying a minor in French.

Julia is one of two daughters of Angelo & Isabel Puppolo and grew up in Springfield. Her ancestors originated in the San Cosmo Albanese village in the province of Cosenza Calabria.

While interning for then Sen. Warren, Mr Handford (Dir of DHHS) remarked: Julia has shown strength of character and remarkable grit. This is certainly reflected in her long list of community service involvement activities. Julia co-founded (and is co-president) of Project KIN, a Springfield based program for inner city youth to empower them, organizing community events and raising funds for scholarships. She also served as asst. coach for Springfield basketball CYO 7th-8th grade girls, as peer educator/multicultural peer educator at Holy Cross, Worcester refugee Assistance Project, resident assistant, and Orientation leader at Holy Cross.

"In an Italian family, food is more than just sustenance- it is a way of life. It is a way to connect with our past, to honor our traditions, and to celebrate the joy of being together as a family." So well put Julia.

Albert (Bob) Bonavita Memorial Scholarship

Antonio Giovanni Russo



Currently attending Western New England University pursuing a degree in Pharmacy and a Masters in Business Administration. He is the son to Fortunata & Bruno Russo and living in Agawam. His sister was also selected for a scholarship this evening. Antonio's family roots trace back to Bracigliano, Italy.

Antonio belongs to Sacred Heart Church (Agawam) where he volunteers regularly. In between his studies at WNEU, Antonio serves as Treasurer of his class, a guest speaker to incoming college freshman and also tutors pharmacy students.

Beth Welch, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Programs at WNEU stated; (in her recommendation letter) that Antonio is intensely committed to his education and the pharmacy profession, his strong work ethic, service to community, demonstrated initiative and his promise of success. Certainly a well rounded young man !

In his own words: "Italian culture is surrounded by love, laughter, food and most important, Family. My Italian ancestry taught me the meaning of family, love, work and sacrifices."

Antonio, as you surround yourself with new friends in this new age, always surround that with the strength of family and heritage.

Joseph S. & Anna Bonavita Memorial Scholarship

Antonio Izzo



Recently graduated from Longmeadow HS, Antonio will be attending Merrimack College majoring in Business Administration and playing Lacrosse.

Son to Luigi & Giovanna Izzo, Antonio was raised & lives in Longmeadow. Antonio's Italian roots go back Bracigliano. His father immigrated to America at 19yrs old. His teachers and counselors remarks included that Antonio was an eager and engaged student that was liked by his peers.

Antonio was able to balance his class work, lacrosse, football all while working at his family's restaurant. If that wasn't enough to fit into a routine, he managed to volunteer 20 hrs. a week at Heritage Hall Nursing Home.

From the printing of the Italian flag on his first lacrosse stick, convincing his team they are a family, and family comes first to teaching them to never eat pasta with butter, Antonio has certainly furthered the lessons of his Italian heritage.

"My dad always reminded me that education is a gift. I watched my mom work her hardest to be in 3 places at once. Their sacrifice to give me the opportunity to even consider attending college is something I will never forget." **We are sure you won't Antonio ! Sacrifices made; foundations laid.**

Jim & Darlene Fiore Nursing Scholarship

Gianna Liquori



Gianna is currently attending The College of Our Lady of the Elms. She is pursuing a Nursing degree making the Deans list on a regular basis. Gianna is a member of Elms College Soccer & Lacrosse team as well.

Gianna lives in East Longmeadow with her mother Flora & father Luigi Liquori and sister Stefania. Her father's side of the family is from Bracigliano, Salerno and her mother's side from Quindici and Mosciano.

While attending high school Gina served as a Volunteer Ambassador at Baystate Health. She has worked (since high school) and continues to work at CVS Pharmacy as a front store associate. Gianna also seems to find time to volunteer as a youth coach for the East Longmeadow Recreation Dept. She recently joined the Student Nurse Association Program (SNAP) at Baystate Health. Gianna has logged clinical experience at a variety of locations, VA Mental health Clinic-Leeds, Baystate Medical Center-Pediatrics to name a few. CVS supervisor Manzi stated that Gianna always went above & beyond, a team player who works well with others, possesses a positive & friendly demeanor

Gianna says her favorite time of year are the holidays. Making tortellini with her grandmother is her fondest memory. Her grandmother always told her to keep the family recipes in your head. **Gianna, from one Italian to another, write them down-just don't share.**

Joan Porto Memorial Scholarship (Dan Cohen)

Alessia Caira



Alessia is currently attending The College of Holy Cross. She is studying Accounting & Italian. Alessia lives with her parents Luca & Veronica, and two sisters, in Lexington, MA. Her sister Serena is also receiving a scholarship this evening. The family descends from Atina, Frosinone, a small town in central Italy inland between Rome and Naples.

Alessia spent some of her "free time" as a Lector and Eucharistic Minister. She is President of her Class of 2024, a member of the Dance Ensemble, Campus Ministry, accounting tutor, College Admin Board Against Alcohol all while managing her studies !! In high school she placed 1st in 15-16 girls Race Walking at the 2017 USATF-NE Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships.

Joyce Pinney, Dir. Of Faith Formation of the Lexington Catholic Community shared that Alessia has emerged as a leader for the young people of our community, and how her confidence has grown. She added, Alessia's leadership style is one of influence-strong enthusiasm that leads others towards the events, experiences, and values she espouses.

"In my mind, Italy was freedom. It was relaxation and happiness. This is what being Italian means to me. While I love the classic traditions such as the Befana and delicious foods, my Italian culture grounds me and reminds me that the important things in life are the simple things." **Alessia, though it is indeed about the "simple things", we are sure YOU will do great things!**

George & Rose Tazzini Memorial Scholarship

Carlina Romano



Just graduated from Westborough HS, Carlina will be attending University of Rhode Island majoring in Marine Affairs with a minor in Oceanography. She lives with her mother Diane Romano in Westborough, MA. The Italian descendance is Agnone, Molise, which is inland central Italy.

Carlina was a member of The National Honor Society since the 10th grade while playing on the school Soccer team. She served her community through the following programs: Teen Mental Health Initiative, The Key Club and The Environmental Club.

Carlina's High School Principal Callaghan, noted her tenacious work ethic with the highest standard of professionalism. A great role model, that displays leadership abilities, is smart personable, mature and thoughtful are other words he used to describe Carlina.

For Nonna: "These traditions will stay with me for the rest of my life. My Nonna taught me that family means everything, especially to Italians, and she couldn't have been more correct. In this day and age, family is the glue that keeps us together and connects us to our past. Without our traditions, feasts, good food, family and love, Italians wouldn't be Italian. And I couldn't be me. I will pass these values and beliefs to my children and grandchildren, as my Nonna did for me" **Carlina, Thank you for bringing Nonna's spirit back to the ICC!**