

## Summer camp, Italian style

This entry was posted on Monday, July 16th, 2007 at 3:40 pm by Alice Gomstyn. **The Hall Monitor (The Journal News)**

*What's better than spending your summer eating ice cream and running through sprinklers? How about doing it all in Italian? We sent intern Sarah Johnston to check out the scene at a Yonkers camp which lets kids do exactly that. Here's her report...*

"It's important that [campers] have outdoor summer fun because otherwise it becomes too academic," says Italian teacher Gengo Di Domenico, the founder of Camp La Piazza di Carolina, an Italian language immersion camp in Yonkers.

Di Domenico has been running two summer programs "*i prescolari*" for ages 3-5 and "*i giovanotti*" ages 6-13 for three years now out of the warm confines of her own home. Equipped with a classroom, an outdoor patio, and a backyard, Gengo Di Domenico immerses the preschoolers in Italian through games, dance, music and arts and crafts projects.

Every day has a theme: one day last week it was "gelato day", the Italian word for ice-cream. The children spent the morning learning the words for the different ice-cream flavors. They then made their own ice-cream cones out of construction paper. Next the ice-cream truck came. And then, after digesting, it was time for some outdoor sprinkler fun.

"They're perfect at this age because they soak it all up," says staff counselor Cristina Beccarelli, 21, of the children in the "prescolari" summer camp. "Ava, who just turned 3, is always repeating, even if you don't ask her."

The older children, who learn separately from the toddlers, participate in more of a theatrical program, creating an original production in Italian and performing it for family and friends at the end of camp.

One of Di Domenico's satisfied customers is Sandra Sherman. Sherman moved to Yonkers from Italy five years ago. After having her daughter Ella, 4, Sherman began looking for an Italian school in Westchester. Nobody, however, knew of any "not even the Italian Consulate in New York."

So when she saw a sign for La Piazza di Carolina, she was in shock.

"I couldn't believe my eyes," Sherman said. "Nobody ever told me that Carolina had a school!"

"She's happy," Sherman said of Ella, after dropping her off for her third day of camp. "She keeps telling me she wants to go again."

Both 4-week programs run from July 2-27, with "*i prescolari*" in the morning from 9-11:30 a.m. and "*i giovanotti*" from 12:30-3 p.m.

For more information, visit [www.lapiazzadicarolina.com](http://www.lapiazzadicarolina.com).

*Photo by Ricky Flores/The Journal News.+*

