



2022 Italian American ***Volunteer of the Year*** Nominees



Mary Buzzelli-White



Mary Buzzelli-White is the Co-President of the Altar and Rosary Society and she supports many of the Italian Organizations in the Community. Mary ran a "Glow in the Dark" Bocce Tournament as the Co-President of Altar and Rosary to raise money for young students to go to Catholic Schools. Mary has volunteered her time to ensure that Mt. Carmel maintains its status as a historical site, along with maintaining the gardens and is a huge supporter of the Mt. Carmel Bazaar. One of Mary's most notable contributions is to St. Elizabeth of Hungary. She works with all the Italian organizations to collect coats for the needy and homeless along with serving in a lunch line every Tuesday. She exemplifies what it means to be a dedicated volunteer and the fruits of her volunteer efforts have only strengthened the community she is serving.

Sal Siraguse



Sal Siraguse has been in the Denver area for over 40 years working in both the restaurant business and the dairy business. Sal has held leadership positions within the Restaurant Association, and led the Drink Red Wear Red event to benefit those in the industry who are in need. Sal has been a member of the Italians of America for 12+ years and is currently the Guard. As part of the IOA, Sal has been involved in numerous charitable events including the Annual Rodder's Ball and the Red Lion Run Car Show, which benefits Food For Thought. Sal volunteers regularly at Food For Thought preparing food bags for school children who need food for the weekends. Sal has volunteered many years for Mt. Carmel Men's Club, the Pizza Fritta Booth at both the Bazaar at Mt. Carmel and also the Feast of St. Rocco at the Potenza Lodge. As a member of Fiori 'd'Italia Club, Sal is the co-founder of the Annual Busnardo Memorial Bocce Tournament, which benefits Caruso Family Charities. Currently, Sal is President of the Sons & Daughters of Italy directing the lodge in a positive manner as an administrator, all while spending countless hours as the "head chef" for lodge events as well as rental events. As a member of so many organizations, Sal extends himself to volunteer in many capacities. It is not very often that Sal will say no to offering his help with whatever needs to be done.



Gloria Volpi



Gloria Volpi gives many hours a week volunteering for the Italians of America Organization. She started volunteering at age fourteen along with her parents for Mount Saint Vincent and has never stopped. For many years she has worked as a volunteer side by side with Sister Michael who takes on foster children. Gloria often helps take care of the kids along with cooking and cleaning. Gloria has been a hairdresser for 59 years and many times goes to the clients home when they are shut-ins. She also takes in donations to distribute to families in need and will deliver to their homes.

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2022

IABA Business of the Year Nominees



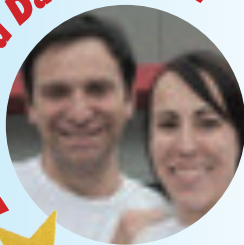
Heidi Naples



Heidi's Brooklyn Deli

Entrepreneurship has been ingrained in Heidi's life since the age of 5 when she watched her mom open a fabric shop. During college Heidi also worked in the restaurant industry. After graduating, she and her soon to be husband Steve, moved back to Bay Ridge, Brooklyn where they enjoyed the culture, people and of course the food. When they moved to Denver they chose the North Side because it reminded them of Bay Ridge. The only thing missing was good deli food. The merchant district at 32nd and Lowell was barely occupied, so in 1994, 'Heidi's Bagels and Ice Cream' was born. The restaurant was expanded to become Heidi's Brooklyn Deli in 1997. By 2004, Heidi and Steve had expanded to opening 5 Heidi's Brooklyn Deli locations and the idea for franchising took hold. Now, eighteen years later, Heidi's Brooklyn Deli has 13 stores spread across six states with two new stores in development for the Denver Metro area and a second location in Las Vegas. Still an entrepreneur, Heidi now works alongside her two daughters and looks forward to all that is to come for Naples Franchising Systems, Inc and the Heidi's Brooklyn Deli brand.

Larissa and Daniel Croll



FASTSIGNS

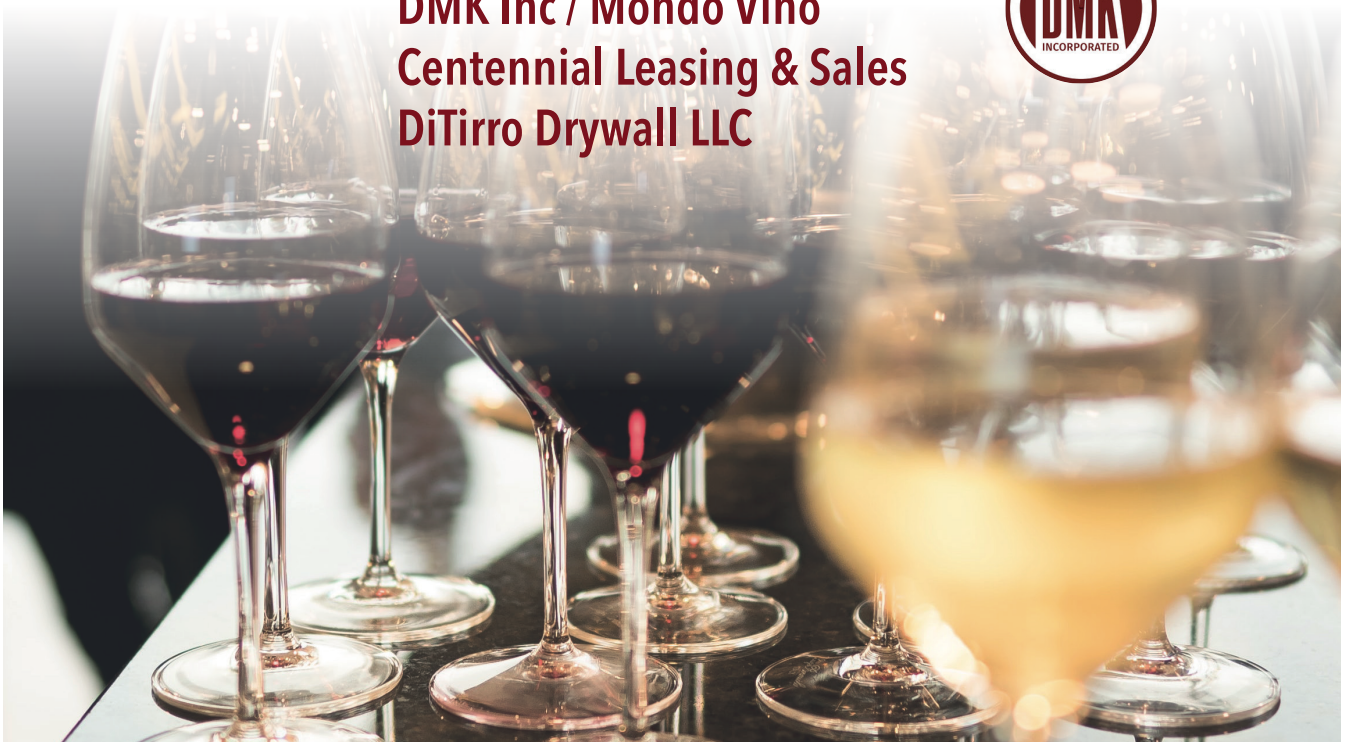
FASTSIGNS of Englewood was first opened in 1996, with Matt and Barb Metcalf taking over ownership in August 1997. Through their leadership, the Metcalfs grew the business from a small banner and vinyl decal shop to a trusted community resource for all things signs, graphics, and installation that consistently ranks in the top tiers of the FASTSIGNS franchise organization. In April of 2013, Matt's daughter, Larissa, and her husband, Daniel, joined the FASTSIGNS Englewood team. After learning the business from the ground up, Daniel and Larissa took over ownership in January of 2020. FASTSIGNS Englewood provides a wide range of sign and visual graphics; banners and decals, vehicle wraps, lobby signs, and channel letters. They enjoy the challenge of finding custom solutions for their customers. Larissa and Matt's Italian roots come through Matt's mother's family. Matt's grandmother, Clarina "Clara" Bianco, and his grandfather, Gaetano "Guy" Rocco, both immigrated to the United States with their families when they were children in the early 1900s.



Monster Tree Service

Mike and Renee Barnes own and operate Monster Tree Service of Southwest Denver. Mike retired from his 37 year corporate career focused on a business plan with an employee/client centric culture as the cornerstone. As of February 2023, Monster Tree Service of Southwest Denver has over Four Hundred 5-Star Reviews on Google, which is an anomaly in the industry. Mike and his employees believe it is the culture that drives this success. Renee always helped with the business, answering phones and performing various office functions, but it wasn't until 2022 that she retired from the Jeffco School system and became a full-time employee working alongside Mike. Monster Tree Service of Southwest Denver specializes in everything "trees and shrubs." The business has experienced 50%+ growth year over year since its 2019 inception. Mike was the first Denver area franchise, but three more franchises have been established since, including North Denver, Southeast Denver and Greater Boulder. Mike and Renee joined IABA shortly after establishing their business and value the connections they have made through IABA.

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2022

Italian American of the Year Nominees



Jerry Caruso



Jerry Caruso and his wife, Karen, started Caruso Family Charities in 2006 after a trip to Children's Hospital Colorado more than 20 years ago inspired them to help terminally ill children. After meeting with doctors and nurses, they learned of an immense financial need for underprivileged families who have a sick child. This was all Jerry and Karen needed to hear, and from here, Caruso Family Charities was started! Jerry is also the founder of Caruso Kitchens in Lakewood, CO, which he began in 1983. Jerry's oldest son, Jared, now owns Caruso Kitchens which allows Jerry more time to focus on Caruso Family Charities. Jerry's daughter Andrea plays a major role in helping CFC move forward to help as many families as possible. CFC has donated more than 3 million dollars to more than 1200 families since 2006. Jerry's service attitude was instilled in him at an early age from his parents who were always helping anyone who came to their door as well as being very active in the Italian community and Mt. Carmel Church. Jerry is also very active in his community and is a dedicated father and grandfather. Just like his parents, his greatest joy continues to come from helping families in need.

J. L. Gerardi



Dr. J. L. Gerardi, a native of Colorado, was born and raised in Trinidad. Dr. Jess Gerardi received his A. B. degree from the University of Northern Colorado, His M. A. degree from U C L A, and his Doctor of Philosophy in music education from the University of Colorado. Dr. Gerardi served as band and orchestra director for the Englewood Public Schools from 1963 to 1988. His famous "Pirate" marching band appeared nationwide, including two trips to the Portland Rose Festival where they won the sweepstakes trophy both times, and two unprecedented trips to march in the famed Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. He taught for two years in Durango and was the assistant principal at Flood Middle School from 1990 to 1993. Dr. Gerardi also served as the Director of Entertainment for the Denver Broncos Football Club and Director of the Denver Broncos Band from 1968 to 1998. He served as a member of the CBA Board, and assisted with the state marching band contests for 22 years. He directed and played trombone in many professional bands in the Denver area. Dr. Gerardi has received numerous honors and awards in his career including the coveted "Citation of Excellence" award from the National Band Association.



John Giardino



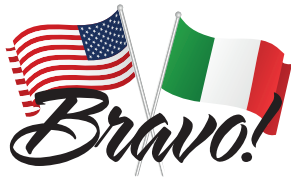
Dr. John Giardino has served the Italian American community of Denver for the last thirty years. He became a member of the Dante Alighieri Society of Denver in 1992 and joined the Board of Directors in 2006 as Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, where he oversaw the judging and awarding of scholarships to university students wishing to study in Italy. John successfully increased the number of scholarships awarded and the money available through many fund-raising efforts. He became President of the Dante Alighieri Society of Denver in 2019 and is currently serving in that position. As President, he actively serves on all committees of the Society. Under his leadership, the Society has sponsored many activities to promote Italian Heritage Month during October 2019-2022. He has established a working relationship with the Italian Consulate of Chicago, the Italian Cultural Institute of Chicago, and the Denver office of the Honorary Vice-Consul of Italy. He is an active member of the Italian American Business Association and has promoted cooperation between the DAS and the IABA. John and all of his family members have made the promotion of Italian Culture in Colorado the centerpiece in their lives.

Lisa Lokken



Lisa Lokken has been a member of Potenza Lodge since she turned eighteen, and has held many board positions and committee positions over the years. She is currently the Ladies Auxiliary President. She has helped plan many of the events over the last 20 years, and has chaired a booth at the annual St. Rocco's Feast for longer than she can remember. Lisa is a third generation member at Potenza and she follows in the footsteps of both her grandparents, Jerry and Carol Perito, who were presidents before her. Lisa was born in Denver, to an Italian mother and an English father. She has always called Westminster, Colorado home, and still lives there with her family. She has been married to her husband, Mike Lokken, for twenty-five years, and together they have 2 children. Her happy place is in the kitchen cooking for those around her, and sharing love through her nonnie's old Italian recipes. However, if you ask her for the recipe you will of course be met with the question of "What recipe?" Through her love of cooking she also found a passion selling Pampered Chef and helping others see cooking as less of a chore.

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2022

Italian American of the Year Nominees

(CONTINUED)



patrick Lubrano



Patrick Lubrano is a father first, volunteer next, and all around wonderful human who truly puts himself after others consistently. Originally from back east, Patrick has lived around the country. He and his family reside in Thornton but he travels the city a lot as he tends to drive everywhere for everyone! As a family man, Patrick is ensuring that his eldest son in Arizona has what he needs to raise a family, while also making sure his young twins receive a top notch education. Patrick is a member of the Knights of Columbus and is associated with his church. Over the past 3 years, Patrick has led several donation drives for blankets for the homeless. He collects the donations and delivers the blankets to various locations in and around Denver. When delivering to individuals he will have a conversation with that person showing he cares. Patrick has been written up in several papers for his work, and Patrick can be found volunteering for just about everything from car show parking coordinator to cooking for his children's fundraisers. As the Building Committee Chair at the Sons & Daughters of Italy, he is leveraging his knowledge and past experience of facilities management to help guide improvements to the lodge. Patrick is currently facing some health challenges but these do not let him stop the wonderful work he is doing throughout the community!



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**Special Thanks to Sal Siraguse, Rita DeFrango,
Lisa Lokken and all the volunteers for preparing
the dinner and bartending!**

2022 Italian American ***Educator of the Year*** Nominees

Robert Giusto



Robert Giusto has worked in the educational arena for most of his career. Robert has recently retired from Lakewood High School, and should be commended for his accomplishments both inside the classroom and with the after school programs he promoted and supported. Robert instilled the desire for advancement in his students. He shared his knowledge with students and parents alike, creating an extended Lakewood High School family. Robert's accomplishments include leadership as the Dean for Lakewood High School, his promotion of advanced and specialty courses, the creation and implementation of the Italian language courses and club, as well as promoting sports and theater. Robert supported his students through all facets of academia and provided them valuable life skills. Robert also promoted scholarships in organizations and continues to run the scholarship program sponsored by the Sons & Daughters of Italy, Denver Lodge.

Tami LoSasso



Tami LoSasso has been an example to many in her time at Lakewood High School. She not only instructs in the classroom but is the Director for the spring musicals. Tami oversees more than 5,000 theater students at the yearly Colorado Thespian Conference. Always there for her students, Tami earned the title of "best teacher and best role model" from many of her students who looked forward to her theater class and considered the class more of a family. Tami was there for her students helping them along the way not just with education but with life skills and to many was like a second mom. Tami has impacted many students through her teaching, many who attribute their success in school and after graduation to her guidance. Tami goes above and beyond for her students and always puts them first. She cares greatly about them and enjoys seeing them succeed in life.

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2022 Italian American ***Educator of the Year*** Nominees

(CONTINUED)



Cynthia Vannucci



Dr. Cynthia Vannucci has over 20 + years of hotel, restaurant, and convention management experience along with 20+ years as a university educator holding four hospitality industry certifications. It is her dedication for outstanding service that acts as a gesture of her passion in business, research, and teaching. Cynthia studied hospitality management and received her BS at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in Hotel Administration. She received a Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University and sought out Metropolitan State University of Denver to teach. While at MSU, Dr. Vannucci received many awards for her leadership, research, teaching and community service. Her research on salient behaviors of career development, issues of integrity and its subsequent effect on positive customer service encounters led to her appointment as the department internship coordinator. After retiring three years ago, she became Certified as a Career Coach, Certified Job Coach for the Intellectually Developmentally Disabled and is Certified to Teach English as a Second Language (TESL). She taught ESL this past fall in Montefiascone, Italy where they own a home. Dr. Vannucci and her husband Peter Henkel, a European Chef, and retired culinary professor, have three children and live in Parker, CO. In fall 2023, Dr. Vannucci and Chef Henkel will be teaching and sailing with Semester at Sea.



2022 Italian American ***Sports Personality of the Year*** Nominees

Richie Cozzolino



Richie Cozzolino is a second-generation Italian American who joined the CBS News Colorado Sports team in June 2022. He has worked his way across Colorado since 2018, previously reporting and anchoring sports in Grand Junction and Colorado Springs before arriving in the Mile High City. Richie's ancestry can be traced back to the Calabria region of southern Italy, where his cousins still reside in a small town named Spezzano Piccolo. His grandparents Riccardo Cozzolino (Richie's namesake) and Antonietta immigrated via Ellis Island in the 1940's. Richie hails from St. Clair Shores, Michigan. He attended Michigan State University and graduated with a journalism degree in 2015. His passion for sports and desire to tell the community's stories landed him at CBS Denver as Sports Reporter, Producer, and Anchor. He has traveled across the country covering the Denver Broncos, as well as following playoff runs from the Nuggets and Rockies. He was a member of CBS Denver's live coverage of the Avalanche's Stanley Cup Championship and parade in 2022. His reporting earned him a Colorado Broadcasters Association award in 2019.

Chad Povich



Chad (Molinaro) Povich found his love of baseball at age five. His baseball career blossomed in high school and upon graduation in 2004, he received a full ride baseball scholarship. While in college, Chad received many awards including Pitcher of the Year 2005, 1st Team All American Pitcher in 2005, 2006 and 1st Team All Conference Pitcher 2005, 2006, 2007. In 2005, Chad was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates, 32nd Round and in 2007 he was drafted by the Boston Red Sox, 42nd Round. In only 45 days from being drafted, Chad was one of the fastest players to reach AA level in Portland, Maine. Chad's career in professional baseball spanned from 2007-2015 and even through injury, he continued playing for teams such as the Boston Red Sox, Sioux City Explorers, Amarillo Sox, Laredo Lemurs and the Bridgeport Bluefish. In 2015, Chad found a new path that allowed him to be close to home and his Italian roots. Chad currently serves as the Director of RoughRiders Baseball in Superior, CO. His love of the game continues as he coaches the next generation of players and manages 50+ rosters a year. Chad and his wife Jenny have two boys Macklin and Ryder.



2022 People's Choice ***Nominations for "Best of"***

BEST PIZZA

Amici's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant
Arvada Villa Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant
Cafe Jordano
Carl's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant
Parisi Pizzeria & Trattoria
Pietra's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant
Randi's Pizza & Italian Restaurant
Romano's Italian Restaurant

BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Abrusci's Fire & Vine
Amici's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant
Cafe Jordano
Carl's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant
Gaetano's Italian
Jimmy's Jersey Street Cafe
Parisi Pizzeria & Trattoria
Pietra's Pizzeria & Italian Restaurant

BEST ITALIAN ENTERTAINER / ARTIST

Four Amici's
Russ Canino
Rick Chinisci
Kim Mikkelsen

BEST ITALIAN DELI / MARKET

Carmine Lonardo's Italian Deli
Enrico's Italian Market & Deli
Paisano Sausage Company
Spinelli's Market
Vinnola's Italian Market & Deli
Valente's Deli, Bakery & Italian Market

BEST ITALIAN BAKERY

Gargaro's Italian Bakery
Grammy's Italian Goodies
Vinnola's Italian Bakery

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