

For Immediate Release

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NIAF JOINS ITALIAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION AT CASA BELVEDERE TO PROMOTE CULTURAL PROGRAMS ACROSS U.S.

(WASHINGTON, D.C.—March 20, 2012) The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) and the Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere in Staten Island, N.Y., have joined forces to bring Casa Belvedere’s successful Italian arts and cultural programming to NIAF’s membership nationally.

“This alliance is a great way for NIAF to begin working jointly with local organizations to encourage the Italian American community at large to share new ideas, best practices, and success stories,” said **John M. Viola**, NIAF’s newly-appointed COO. “Casa Belvedere has done an amazing job creating innovative Italian arts and cultural programming that its constituents in the New York metropolitan area can enjoy and appreciate. The thought of duplicating and replicating these cutting-edge programs, classes and events in other regions throughout the United States where NIAF has a strong presence is really exciting.”

Gina Biancardi, president and founder of The Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere, is also excited by this joint venture. "I hope that many of our friends and patrons will join us on April 12, 2012, at NIAF’s East Coast Gala as we celebrate and commemorate the beginnings of an excellent opportunity to put Casa Belvedere’s arts and cultural programs to work for many other Italian Americans across the country. Unifying our community via arts and culture, the very fabric of what we're made of, is a positive and powerful step. We owe this unified effort to the hard work and sacrifices of our parents and grandparents. It’s in honor of those who came before us that we must ensure that those who come after us truly understand and appreciate our rich and vibrant heritage and culture.”

The Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere is dedicated to promoting, preserving, celebrating and highlighting Italian arts and culture via Italian language classes for all age levels, Italian culture classes, a culinary arts program, photo and art exhibits, film, musical performances, lectures and presentations. Situated on three acres of prime hill-top property overlooking the Verrazano Bridge and New York Harbor, the Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere also promotes commercial and student exchanges as well as international tourism. To learn more about the ICF at Casa Belvedere visit, www.casa-belvedere.org.

NIAF will hold its annual East Coast Gala on April 12, 2012, at Cipriani 42nd Street in New York City. The NIAF gala begins with a cocktail reception at 6:30 p.m., followed by an awards program, live auction and dinner. During the gala, before 500 guests, the Foundation will honor captains of industry in broadcasting and media, business, finance, education and entertainment. Proceeds from **NIAF's East Coast Gala** will benefit the Foundation's philanthropic and educational programs. Tickets begin at \$400. Attire: Business. For more information or sponsorship opportunities, visit: www.niaf.org/eastcoastgala or contact Jerry Jones at 202/939-3102 or jerry@niaf.org.

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the heritage of Italian Americans. www.niaf.org.