



The Neapolitan Solidarity Crèche - “Il Presepio Della Solidarietà” Displayed at the Consulate General of Italy in New York through January 6, 2014

A gift of friendship and solidarity from the Naples, Italy Chamber of Commerce to The New York City Fire Department in honor of the victims of 911 and the brave Firefighters, Police and EMS workers that made the ultimate sacrifice!

On Display at Consulate General of Italy Headquarters, 690 Park Ave December 9, 2013 – January 6, 2014

Staten Island, NY, December 9, 2013... In December 2001, an 18th century style, handcrafted, 120-piece, 16 feet wide, 7 feet tall and 5 feet deep gift arrived from the Naples Chamber of Commerce to the NYC Fire Department. "Twelve years later, thanks to the efforts of Lou Barrella, Display Curator, and to thanks to the generosity of Casa Belvedere and The FDNY, we are proud to have this display at the Consul General of Italy in New York, announced Consul General of Italy Natalia Quintavalle at the unveiling ceremony on Sunday, December 8, 2013.

“The opportunity to exhibit this very generous gift from the Naples Chamber of Commerce to the NYC Fire Department as a tribute to the brave Firefighters, Police and EMS heroes is particularly meaningful to me” said Consul General of Italy, Natalia Quintavalle.

The crèche was donated to The New York City Fire Department on December 19, 2001. In accepting this special gift, then Chief of the New York City Fire Department Daniel Nigro said; “We are very honored to receive this symbol of friendship from our Italian brothers and sisters.” These same special guests, along with the current NYC Fire Commissioner, Salvatore Cassano, and Dan Nigro, former Fire Commissioner, were in attendance at the unveiling ceremony at Consulate General of Italy headquarters on Sunday, December 8, 2013.

Also present at the unveiling ceremony yesterday was Gina Biancardi, Founder/President of the Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere and Chairman of Casa Belvedere's Board of Trustees, Frank Aversa.

When Ms. Biancardi was asked about the significance of this display, she responded "Every Nativity Scene is thought to be the same, but the reality is that in Italy many nativities tell the story of Christ's birth in a different way. What really tugs at your heart about this Nativity's story are the figures of the three Kings who, instead of bringing gifts of gold, incense and myrrh, present Baby Jesus with three New York City firefighters' helmets, which prominently display the numbers 9, 11 and 01."

The Presepio was first displayed, post 9/11/01, St. Michael's Church in New York City. “I am particularly pleased that the officers of the FDNY have entrusted us at Casa Belvedere to be the custodians of this important and significant display;” said Frank Aversa. “In keeping with our custodial rights and responsibility, the Presepio has been exhibited at Casa Belvedere, St. John's University and now The Consulate General of Italy, 69th St and Park Ave. It's really very symbolic and a sight to see. I encourage the public to visit and experience this magical display firsthand.”

This handcrafted work of art was created by master artisans of the Campania Region of Italy and is consistent with techniques that date back to the seventeenth century. It occupies an area of approximately fifty-four square feet and it is comprised of 120 pieces including 83 figurines and 28 animals. The majestic set is the work of Master Giovanni Sinno, whereas the figures were modeled by master artisans Alfredo Molli, Ulderigo Pinfildi and Giovanni Sinno himself. The "art" of creating these individual pieces is passed down generation to generation and is very specific to the Neapolitan region of Italy. The diminutive figures of the crib are skillfully articulated with precise expressions on the faces made of terracotta, the detailed hands and feet made of wood, the strong bodies made of hemp and iron, and the 18th Century style, some quite elaborate, cloths made of silk and cotton.

“Il Presepio Della Solidarietà” will be on display at Consul General of Italy headquarters from December 9, 2013 – January 6, 2014. The exhibit is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council and also, through the generosity and support of The Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere. Display Curator: Lou Barella.

For exhibit hours, to schedule a group visit, email elisabetta.calello@esteri.it or call 212-439-8605.

Admission is free and open to the public.

Casa Belvedere, The Italian Cultural Foundation, is a unique 2.75 acre Arts and Cultural campus on Staten Island’s Grymes Hill boasting spectacular views of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and the New York City Harbor. It is a registered 501(c) (3) not for profit organization that seeks to preserve, promote, and celebrate the rich heritage of Italy by encouraging an appreciation of the Italian language, arts, cuisine, literature, history, fashion, and commerce through various educational programs, exhibits and events. For more information on Casa Belvedere visit www.casa-belvedere.org

Contact: Gina Biancardi

Tel: 718-273-7660

E-mail: media@casa-belvedere.org



Contact Information

Stephen Matthews

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646-503-4906