

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*“A Home Where the Culture and Traditions of Italy can be Experienced and Enjoyed”*

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**Casa Belvedere, The Italian Cultural Foundation Approved for a \$150,000 Matching Grant From Richmond County Savings Foundation**

*Deadline nearing for gifts to be matched to help restore and convert the historic Stirn Mansion to an Italian Cultural Center*

**Staten Island, N.Y., Tuesday, December 15, 2009** – Casa Belvedere, The Italian Cultural Foundation was recently informed that Richmond County Savings Foundation has accepted its application for a \$150,000 Matching Signature Grant. An official press announcement will be held at 79 Howard Avenue on Monday, December 14 at 11:30 a.m. Key Foundation directors and staff members as well as other Casa Belvedere supporters will be in attendance.

“We are extremely delighted to have been approved for this important grant” said Gina Biancardi-Rammairone, the organization’s founder. “Casa Belvedere is housed in a century old, historically significant, mansion that is in need of restoration, renovation and modern-day utility upgrades. Additionally, in order to make it suitable as a public community center, many fire and safety standards, as well as handicap accessibility standards, need to be met. This Richmond County Savings Foundation Matching Grant in support of project **Accessibilità** will go a long way to help Casa Belvedere comply with New York City Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act.”

Casa Belvedere, The Italian Cultural Foundation, is a New York City based 501(c) (3) that seeks to preserve and promote an appreciation of Italian language, arts, literature, history, fashion, cuisine, and commerce while also celebrating the Italian heritage and the contributions of Italians and Italian-Americans to the fabric of the United States.

Through innovative programs, exhibits, and events, Casa Belvedere seeks to highlight the many positive contributions of Italians and Italian-American, foster a deeper understanding of heritage and culture and ensure that the Italian language, traditions, holidays, feasts and family values stay alive.

Thanks to the generosity of Staten Island residents Gina Biancardi-Rammairone and Luciano Rammairone, Casa Belvedere is headquartered in a beautiful landmark Italianate mansion that sits on nearly three acres atop Grymes Hill and boasts spectacular views of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge and the New York City Harbor.

RCSF is committed to supporting projects that enhance the quality of life in the communities served by the Foundation. In this regard, RCSF focuses on supporting charitable organizations whose programs and services advance educational opportunity and enrich cultural development. Organizations are invited to submit Signature Project requests by invitation only.

All are encouraged to help Casa Belvedere open its doors to the public by Fall of 2011. With the matching support of the Staten Island Community, Casa Belvedere can begin its “Accessibilita” project and be well on its way to meeting public facility standards. Online donations are accepted at [www.casa-belvedere.org](http://www.casa-belvedere.org). Visitors can also subscribe to the mailing list to receive updates and to learn about upcoming events and programs.

The December 31, 2009 deadline is nearing for individuals to double the size and impact of their gift. For more information please call 718-273-7660 or e-mail [info@casa-belvedere.org](mailto:info@casa-belvedere.org).