



co.as.it.  
community  
services

# insieme

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01 | 2023

# OUR VISION

To be a leader in the provision of quality, accessible and affordable community care services for the general and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) communities.

# OUR VISION

To be the focal point in Queensland for the promotion and study of the Italian language and culture.



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insieme  
edition # one - january 2023

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# LETTER FROM THE CEO

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Happy New Year. We hope you enjoyed the festive season with family and friends and that you are as excited about 2023 as we are here at Co.As.It.

It was a busy end to 2022.

The year wrapped up with many festive celebrations held across the organisation's programs which you will read about in this edition.

Many of us are lucky enough to celebrate Christmas with family or friends, however, the importance of remembering those who are alone, frail and isolated is essential during these periods.

Our annual Christmas Hamper drive, full baskets which were delivered in December enabled us to achieve our goal of bringing a smile to the vulnerable members in our community and reminding them they are a part of our Co.As.It. family.

In December, we were very proud to stage the inaugural Art Exhibition at Amici House, showcasing the remarkable paintings created by our NDIS participants who attend the weekly art classes.

At the annual Christmas event, we congratulated many members of staff for their long term employment and commitment to the organisation and its vision, particularly in adapting to the continuing changes and challenges in our industry.

Without their passion and dedication, we would not be the dynamic team we are and we would not have such positive impacts on the people in our community.

Another busy year is expected in 2023, continuing to offer the diverse and engaging services and activities.

Our annual International Women's Day celebration is advertised in this edition in March and is a popular event attended by over 300 women.

Tickets are selling fast so be sure to get your tickets before this event sells out!!

*Dina Ranieri*

## KEITH

This has stabilised Keith's wellbeing and personality and he now enjoys having a coffee every morning with his friends who also live in his gated community.



Keith is an 86 year old gentleman who lives alone in a gated community but two years ago he began having terrible issues with his medications.

Keith has advanced memory issues and was not taking his meds on a regular basis, in fact, he would sometimes not take any of them for days on end!

His GP had him assessed and referred him to Co.As.It. for support.

Since then Keith's life has greatly improved. One of our nurses goes on a daily basis and administers his meds before 10am. This has stabilised Keith's wellbeing and personality and he now enjoys having a coffee every morning with his friends who also live in his gated community.

However, he never leaves until the Co.As.It. nurse has been! He has told our nurse Tina on numerous occasions *"how wonderful Co.As.It. is and how the nurse visits has changed my life. No more worries about have I taken my tablets.... did I take them this morning or do I take them tonight?"*

Keith's brother Lennie lives in Kilcoy and comes to stay with Keith a couple of times a year.

He has also thanked our nurses and all the people of Co.As.It. for the wonderful help we have provided to his brother, most importantly, he is most grateful that he does not have to worry about Keith's welfare as he is being so well looked after!

# CLINICAL SERVICES

## ALBERTO

His quality of life has improved dramatically, he is now able to go out, catch up with friends and have more freedom choosing how he spends his days.



When our clinical team met Alberto (80yr old) he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Alberto has urinary retention which requires a catheter, a device that should be changed every 4 to 6 weeks.

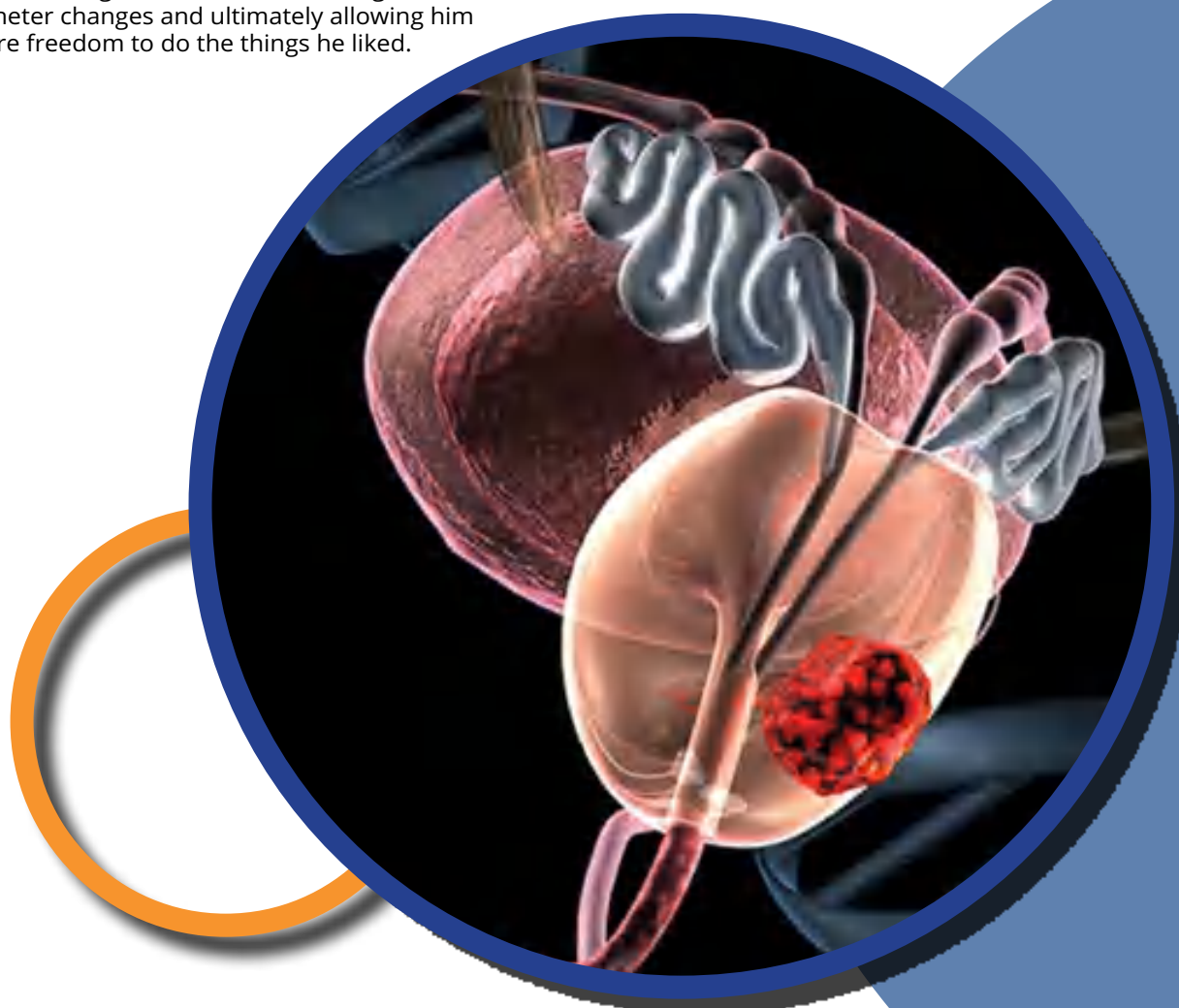
Unfortunately, Alberto used to get frequent urinary tract infections that had our clinical staff changing the catheters every two weeks. The infections would make him feel unwell so he was unable to go out nor do activities that he enjoyed previously. Furthermore, the process of changing the catheter was uncomfortable for him.

Our clinical team created a care plan that was aimed at minimising the infections, reducing the number of catheter changes and ultimately allowing him more freedom to do the things he liked.

Progress with the team attending to him twice a week has yielded happy results and with the frequency of his catheter changes now at 4 weeks, Alberto is 'he is a very happy happy'.

His quality of life has improved dramatically, he is now able to go out, catch up with friends and have more freedom choosing how he spends his days.

As the clinical team continues to work towards a 6 week catheter change, we hope that Alberto continues to improve and enjoy getting out and about more.





## SEW-PPORTING HAPPY'S LIFE GOALS



From the meet and great day, Happy and Blanca were a good match and they both started on a sewing journey together.

A year ago Happy was looking for support on learning how to use her sewing machine - one of her life long goals.

When the request came through to Co.As.It., the search started amongst our staff members to find someone with the required skills.

Having some basic sewing knowledge, our CCW Blanca raised her hand and accepted the challenge. She took it upon herself to buy 'Metric Pattern Cutting for Women's Wear' (a book called by Blanca "*my bible*").

Blanca took it upon herself to study up and learn more so that she could transfer those skills to Happy.

From the meet and great day, Happy and Blanca were a good match and they both started on a sewing journey together.

Fast forward to now, Blanca has taught Happy how to sew different decorative stitches, make button holes, and cut out pattern. Happy has successfully made two dresses for her doll, a skirt for herself and they have also ventured into doing crocheting and mandala painting.

Happy is so proud of her achievements with Blanca's support and she has expressed her happiness at learning something she always wanted to do.

She is looking forward to making bigger pieces of clothing with the extra skills she is learning on the way.

We cannot wait to see what master creations she makes in the new year.



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### SUPPORTING THE ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

In December, our community hub Amici House hosted its inaugural 'Art Exhibition' with paintings created by participants in the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme) and community art classes.

Ahead of the Christmas holidays, hundreds of guests turned out for the exhibition to celebrate the creative flair of the artists.

Art class teacher, Ali Gillet, couldn't hide her happiness after only two months of leading the classes. *"Art generates bravery and confidence in our students. It empowers them to make small decisions like what brush to use, how to correct colour, or how to see the colour or shape needed,"* Ali said.

Clinton an artist from the NDIS class, had his artwork exhibited at the event. For 2023, he says, *"The goal is to use a different painting style. I'm just having fun and learning. I want to try different approaches, like charcoal on animal paintings,"* he stated.

Karen, another artist from the NDIS class, revealed she uses the classes to relieve stress. *"I have anxiety, and I feel calm and relaxed among friends during the art classes,"* she said.

Co.As.It.'s CEO, Cav. Dina Ranieri, thanked Amici House staff and praised the importance of art classes held at the community centre.

*"An exhibition like this highlights the work we do in the community, and it highlights us bringing participants together to join in an activity."*



*"An exhibition like this highlights the work we do in the community, and it highlights us bringing participants together to join in an activity."*



### WHEN A DIALECT BREAKS THE BARRIER

His wife tells us that he is much happier and his moods are lighter and brighter now, thanks to Chiara and her dialect!



Raymond was born in Texas, Queensland in 1942 and his family tells us that his father migrated after WWII from a little town in north east Italy.

It wasn't until 10 years later that his mother was able to follow with his 10 year old sister who had never met her father.

Settling in Texas, work days were tough on the tobacco farm where Raymond later worked with his father, as did many other Italian migrants at the time. They all spoke dialect at home and at work with other compatriots.

Raymond went on to marry a lovely Australian girl and they started their own little family with the birth of their three children.

Diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2016, Raymond was referred at the beginning of 2022 to our counsellor Chiara for emotional and psychological support.

Initially he was very reluctant to engage with Chiara and often he appeared confused.

Eventually trust was established between the two and using a person-centred approach, reminiscing and narrative therapy, Chiara and his family saw his fun personality once again came to the fore.

What made a big difference was Chiara's ability to speak Raymond's dialect as her family were from the same region, a dialect he had not heard for many, many years.

Now Raymond greatly looks forward to Chiara's visits and his long term memory of his first language has resurfaced and his Italian is much more fluent at the end of each session.

His wife tells us that he is much happier and his moods are lighter and brighter now, thanks to Chiara and her dialect!





# MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM

## MARY

We take enormous pride at releasing happy ending stories. Let us then share the journey of one of our clients Mary\*.

Mary is an 80 year old lady who was referred to us by her HCP Coordinator who was concerned about Mary's ongoing verbal altercations with her only son.

She was being subjected to verbal abuse, belittling and was having frequent run-ins with her son where the episodes would deteriorate into emotional abuse and Mary was finding it very difficult to cope.

After an initial assessment, Mary was gently guided through a process of self-exploration (introspection), self-reflection, and personal growth which culminated in Mary's ability to establish healthy boundaries with her son.

The outcome?

Mary gained higher levels of resilience and lowered her levels of stress. Her rapport with her son has adjusted to a relationship where self-respect is reciprocated.

Currently, Mary has fortnightly phone counselling sessions which continue to support her growth in personal development, self-acceptance, and problem solving strategies.

*\*Name changed*



# COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM

## DENNIS



Dennis was a former weight lifting champion who represented Australia competing in numerous weight lifting events. In the course of his career he even met Arnold Schwarzenegger!

Dennis has Parkinson's disease now which affects his mobility and there are days where he struggles to leave the building.

When we first met Dennis in 2019 it was difficult for him to have new people in his environment because he was fiercely proud trying to manage on his own with support from friends when he really could not manage.

Since then, we've been able to help him access more services and a recent approval for a home care package will make a huge difference to his quality of life and independence.

We are happy to do the heavy lifting for you from now on, Dennis!

## CLIENTS' FEEDBACK

Dear Concetta

I just wanted to say a huge "thank you" for the help and assistance you and your staff have given me in looking after my mum Gloria for the last couple of years.

As you know, she will now go into Residential Aged Care as soon as possible. Your professionalism, kindness, compassion and empathy whenever we spoke, was a God send to me and always me feel the burden was somehow smaller. Messages were always passed on by staff and phone calls returned on the same day.

May I also make special mention of Mavrick, who helped look after the house. Mum always had good words to say about him and I know, she missed his visits when he was ill.

I will be forever grateful to you all.

Kind regards,

Sue Firth

# CIAO PROGRAM

## CONNESSIONI CULTURALI

Il programma CIAO ricopre un ruolo molto importante nella fornitura di attività linguisticamente e culturalmente adatte per i residenti di origine italiana delle case di riposo.

Il programma può aiutare gli anziani a gestire meglio il passaggio da casa loro alla casa di riposo, dove il cibo e le attività a loro disposizione potrebbero non essere in sintonia con il proprio bagaglio culturale.

Il programma, che non riceve finanziamenti specifici dal governo, può contare su due assistenti che gestiscono le attività di terapia diversionale linguisticamente e culturalmente adatte in otto case di riposo nel comprensorio di Brisbane, dove i gruppi si incontrano a cadenza regolare, settimanalmente, mensilmente, o ogni due mesi a seconda delle situazioni.

Il costo del programma viene mantenuto al minimo, ed è coperto dalle stesse case di riposo, che hanno capito l'importanza nel mantenere vivo il bagaglio culturale dei loro residenti di origine italiana.

Sono più di 70 gli anziani che prendono parte agli incontri del programma CIAO, della durata di circa due ore e che comprendono attività sensoriali, auditive e tattili che riportano alla mente dei partecipanti feste, occasioni e tradizioni relative a quel determinato mese.

A questi incontri non può mancare un buon caffè italiano e musica altrettanto italiana, che sovente porta i partecipanti a canticchiare le canzoni che riconoscono e che sono legate al loro passato.

**Il costo del programma viene mantenuto al minimo, ed è coperto dalle stesse case di riposo, che hanno capito l'importanza nel mantenere vivo il bagaglio culturale dei loro residenti di origine italiana.**





# COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

## ALFIO

He became a master chef of Italian cuisine and pastries and he enjoys sharing his delicious creations with family and friends.



When our community visitor volunteer Ranald was introduced to HCP client Alfio (92) he was hoping to learn about Alfio's country of birth especially the region of Sicily.

Ranald was planning to travel and holiday in Sicily later in the year for a few weeks, and finding out about local knowledge and customs is always a great idea to enhance the cultural experience. Alfio was happy to share by showing Ranald a large 3D map of Sicily.

Little did Ranald know that Alfio was also going to introduce him to the world of super handyman. Alfio shared with Ranald that there is not much that he has not tried to fix, make or engineer, from making his own leather shoes to engineering a mirror suspended from a cupboard draw over his bed so that he can lie down and apply his own eye drops without missing.

Alfio is a retired tiler and does not stop tinkering to pass the time. He has made his own full leather shoes by hand from watching his father who was a shoemaker when he was a boy. He even made a leather orthopaedic sandal to straighten his crooked big toe.

After Alfio's wife passed away, Alfio carried on his wife's love of cooking and tried his hand at gourmet Italian cuisine. He became a master chef of Italian cuisine and pastries and he enjoys sharing his delicious creations with family and friends.

Alfio has a wealth of knowledge to pass on and Ranald is keen to practice the Italian language, learning about Italian cooking, and at the same time connecting with the Italian culture.





# COMMUNITY VISITORS SCHEME

## A WONDERFUL MORNING TEA

On the Gold Coast in October, Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) volunteers participated in a morning tea followed by an educational session with Psychologist Carmelo Fazio.

Mental health topics and how they affect us and those around us were discussed. The conversation revolved around the explosion of anxiety and depression since Covid-19 broke out in 2020.

The specialist highlighted the necessity for Community Services workers to be educated on the expression "mental health" and how to effectively interact with those having a tough time.

*"Whoever is affected [by any mental issue] is entitled to be seen, heard, loved and respected. Always,"* said Carmelo.

Luisa Ruggiero, CVS Program Officer, considered the experience priceless and was confident that the conveyed information would make a difference for the volunteers.

*"He gave us many ideas and ways of defusing anger, paranoia and bad treatment when inflicted on us. We also learned to stay calm and just repeat our requests until they [clients] calmed down,"* she said.

He also outlined *"How not to be affected by this bad behaviour but how to make these people understand we are there to listen and help in any way we can without destroying our mental health."*

Everyone participated with their stories and shared how they were affected by their own fears and struggles.



# COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES

## THIS IS WHAT WE DO

The program aims at creating activities and gatherings for the members of our community.

### Technology Classes

Amici House  
every Thursday from 10am to 12pm

The class is designed to have around 10 participants. Currently, the class is at total capacity.

It aims to provide a basic yet sound knowledge of the different technologies, internet and apps. A 30 minute one-on-one session with a volunteer is provided as additional help for those in high need during the class.

The project highlights the importance of using the different technologies to contact their community, friends and relatives.

### Latin Dance Classes (one hour each)

Amici House  
every Wednesday from 9am to 12pm

Lutwyche  
every Thursday from 2 to 4pm

The activity is designed to have around 16 participants per class and is for all types of physical conditions.

Latin rhythms are taught gently for a multi-age group.

Participants need to be able to stand up independently without assistance.

### Art Classes

Amici House  
every Monday

These classes aim to create a safe space where the community can artistically feel free to express their emotions and let go of their imagination while using diverse artistic techniques. Classes are held weekly and delivered by a volunteer.

During each session, participants learn how to utilise various artistic technics like watercolours, coloured pencils, pointillism, drawing with pencils, mosaic with paper, and collage, to mention some.

In each class, the volunteer will propose a topic and the participants are free to use any material or technique to express that topic.

### Nourishing the Soul

Amici House  
every 1st Wednesday of the month from 10am to 12pm

Ladies attend 2.5 hours of a pampering session, which included an informative presentation. By providing a multi-aged and multicultural 'safe space', the participants are free to tap into their natural abilities to create bonds with other women.

Strategies and techniques are offered to increase self-reflection and boost self-esteem, facilitating awareness of negative 'self-talk' and familial/cultural expectations.





# COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT SERVICES

## A CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR OUR COMMUNITY

In spreading a little Christmas cheer within our community, this year Co.As.It. coordinators in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast delivered Christmas hampers to vulnerable clients who were delighted with the delicious gift baskets.

There were 100 hampers delivered this year with each basket made with love, mixing traditional Italian food like panettone with Australian well known Christmas fare of the best quality.

*"The hamper distribution continues our organisation's ethos of treating our clients like our extended family. Some clients don't get to celebrate with family or friends nor receive presents at this time. It is important for them to know someone is thinking about them,"* says Michele, Care Services Coordinator.

Wieslawa, a client whose primary support is her dog Koby, told us that she had never received such a thoughtful gift for Christmas.

She was so speechless she said *"In 88 years of life I've never received a gift so grand for Christmas! Thank you for your work in making the Christmas Hamper Drive happen!"*

*"What a beautiful way to celebrate the festive season with our clients and an even better end to the week before Christmas,"* said Paula one of the HCP Coordinators.





THE GREEK CLUB  
29 EDMONDSTONE STREET  
SOUTH BRISBANE

MARCH 11, 2023  
10AM - 3.30PM

Hosted by Kim Skubris

FASHION PARADE BY LAURA CHURCHILL  
BRISBANE FASHION MONTH

BRUNCH

RAFFLE PRIZES

PROSECCO  
SPONSORED BY ITALIQUORE



\$95 VIA EVENTBRITE  
07 3624 6100



International Women's Day



# QUEENSLAND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME

## PABLO



The QCSS Program can offer assistance to clients by linking them with local clubs, social networks and interest groups. These support services are provided under the Community Connections Support category.

So when the family of Pablo, one of our QCSS clients, was looking for community group activities for him to attend, the Co.As.It. Latin dance classes seemed to be a great option.

Pablo's family shared that he enjoyed dancing and, being Latin music (Pablo is from Venezuela), it seemed to be a great opportunity to link Pablo to the weekly classes on offer at Co.As.It.

Pablo has been attending the Latin dance classes with the assistance of a community care worker. Funded by QCSS, the worker assists in transporting Pablo

to these classes, encouraging his participation and understanding of instructions and learning of the dance steps.

It is always great to see Pablo's big smile when he is in the dance class. He happily joins in and seems to really enjoy the music and he can easily follow the dance steps with the support of his care worker. He is always keen to demonstrate his moves on the dance floor!

We are so proud of Pablo's achievements in the dance classes and so glad that he is able to access this activity with the assistance of the QCSS Community Connections services.

Pablo's story is a great example of how this program's services are curated to match individual client needs and enabling them to connect with activities and interests in their local communities.

## OUR COMMUNITY

### CELEBRATING COMMITMENT AND CULTURE

Co.As.It. recently held their annual Christmas event, celebrating their valued staff and thanking them for the outstanding work they undertake on a daily basis, despite managing on-going challenges and government policy changes.

At this year's event, over 150 staff members attended a fabulous evening of gastronomic delicacies accompanied to indie entertainers Vince Gelonese and Band. During the evening staff were also awarded numerous tributes in recognition of their long term commitment and valuable years of service - to our clients and local community.

CEO Cav. Dina Ranieri and Vice President Cav. Tony Palella presented staff with small gifts in appreciation of their loyalty and hard work.

"Management thanks all staff for their dedication this year in remaining to work in aged care against the many challenges we have been facing" said CEO Dina. She also went on to highlight that the long term employment of many staff was representative of the positive culture at Co.As.It.





**20 Years**

FERRANTI, Patricia  
ROSSI, Franca  
SIRIANNI, Rosetta

**15 Years**

CARRUTHERS, Adrianna  
MAURO, Marzia  
MORATAYA, Sandra  
POSE, Ilona  
WILLIAMSON, Megan

**10 Years**

CALABRO, Michelle  
DERMEDGOLOU, Rosella  
DESPOSITO, Claudina  
EDWARDS, Lucy  
KAITAU, Margaret  
LAROCCA, Giovanna  
LAROCCA, Rita  
LIVINGSTON, Felisa  
PAUL, Gai  
VOLPE, Kirsty

**5 Years**

CASTRO RAMIREZ, Josefa  
CERNIGLIA, Franca  
CHANG, Wei-Ning  
GONZALEZ, Florencia  
KAUR, Amandeep  
KAUR, Mandeep  
LING, Lorene  
MEAKIN, Shaun  
MORAN, Riva  
RAMSAY-CLOSE, Susan  
SOMMERS, Rodney  
TAYLOR, Julie  
WILLIAMS, Jorgina  
WYLIE, Sandra  
ZHANG, Aihua  
SILVIOLI, Alessandra  
RAWLINGS, Hannah  
ALEXANDRE, Karen  
RADOS, Anda  
RUZIC, Nina  
SABELJA, Jelena  
SARIC, Rosa  
SHINOHARA, Yasuo  
STAPLES, Mark

## DIANA - LA SUA STORIA



**Diana ha fatto domanda per essere riconosciuta come fisioterapista in Australia, un traguardo raggiunto nel 2020.**

Il percorso di Diana per diventare fisioterapista al Co.As.It. può essere descritto come una storia di dedizione e determinazione.

Dopo aver completato gli studi, avere ottenuto la laurea ed aver lavorato come fisioterapista in Colombia, suo paese natio, Diana ha deciso di lasciare la sua famiglia e gli amici e di emigrare in Australia per costruirsi una nuova vita, e nuove opportunità.

Con il suo inglese limitato e con i titoli di studio non ancora riconosciuti, Diana ha iniziato a lavorare dove poteva, facendo pulizie e lavorando nel settore della ristorazione, fino a trovare lavoro in una casa di riposo, dove ha potuto continuare a migliorare il suo inglese.

Sono ormai tre anni che Diana fa parte del nostro team di Allied Health, monitorando i programmi di fisioterapia e contribuendo, in generale, con le sue abilità linguistiche.

Diana ha fatto domanda per essere riconosciuta come fisioterapista in Australia, un traguardo raggiunto nel 2020.

Il riconoscimento ufficiale è arrivato nel maggio 2022, al termine di un periodo obbligatorio di prova monitorato Caleb ed Allison, i fisioterapisti qualificati del Co.As.It.

Siamo contenti che Diana abbia intrapreso questo viaggio professionale, e siamo tutti orgogliosi di avere contribuito in qualche modo a far sì che il suo sogno di una nuova vita in Australia si sia potuto realizzare.



# HOME CARE PACKAGES | BRISBANE

## SAM

Every fortnight, our support worker Nikki supports Sam (who is a rather skilled home cook), to create traditional Italian dishes.

Unable to cook on his own, Sam looks forward to having Nikki there to share his recipes and cook some of his favourite Sicilian pasta sauces and other well-loved dishes.

Of course Sam gets to learn a few tricks too. Previous support workers who were from Northern Italy have also given him some cooking tips on their cuisine and he often sneakily adds a piece of celery for extra flavouring.

Sam is a true gentleman and has opened up his home to Co.As.It. staff and his family has embraced the staff who enjoy cooking with Sam.

As Nikki says, *"From the first day we started cooking, it has been absolutely great, Sam is easy to get along with and passionate about what he is cooking."*



### CARING AND REALLY CARING

**"My parents love that it's not only Italians who attend (their first language), but a range of cultures that adds variety."**

Arriving in Australia in the late 1950s from the Italian city of Asti in Piedmont at age 22, Caterina developed three great loves - gardening, cooking and sewing which flourished while she also built a comfortable home for her family.

Four years ago, the diagnosis of Alzheimer's shook the family, yet her family rallied ensuring these same loves would remain her constants, catalysts for socialisation and connectedness, especially as there was concern Caterina would become isolated and lonely.

Caterina's primary carer is her daughter Carla. *"I wanted mum to remain socially connected, she and my father have been regular attendees at Co.As.It.'s social group activity centre, and this would need to continue. When they get off the afternoon bus, I hear lovely stories about staff members like Rose and Guido, their kindness, plus stories about their friends,"* said Carla. *"My parents love that it's not only Italians who attend (their first language), but a range of cultures that adds variety."*

It has been important for Caterina to maintain her attendance at the centre and each day she will ask if it is group day.

*"When I started caring and thinking about ways for mum to continue socialising, I reflected on her love for gardening, sewing and cooking. We started potting plants for neighbours and friends - mum and I pot anything we can get our hands on - herbs, vegetables, flowers, outdoor, indoor - you name it."*

*"We invite the neighbours and friends (some people started as strangers) around some afternoons, setting up chairs in the back garden to enjoy coffee or wine and let mum talk."*

*"Everyone who visits knows her story, and there is no pressure if she repeats things a few times. We pot so many plants that we now have a regular stall at the local neighbourhood centre's monthly community market and again mum has the opportunity to talk or simply sit in the sun. The community has rallied and we now receive donations of pots and fertiliser. It really is lovely".*

The family started their in-home care team around two years ago and feel truly blessed with the passionate and lovely ladies who spend time with Caterina - letting her set the agenda for the day.





## HOME CARE PACKAGES | BRISBANE

Care support workers Angela and Sherry (and previous carers) from Co.As.It. are calm, funny and spontaneous, running with each situation as it develops.

Dementia support Rita regularly connects or visits with loads of advice and support tools. *"One thing I learnt early on is to listen to experts and act on their advice", said Carla. "Rita introduced us to dawn clocks, music therapy and many links to worthwhile advice. But most importantly she introduced Ginger – Caterina's companion cat."*

*"So here we were putting support around mum to ensure she wouldn't be lonely or isolated, yet it was me, as her carer, who fell into those holes. I needed support just as mum did," said Carla.*

*"This was part of the catalyst for me to create 'The Loneliness Project' to talk about loneliness, which is experienced by one in three Australians, and to ensure there is no stigma around it. The antidote in many cases, is social connection."*

And it has been another of Caterina's loves – sewing that has aided The Loneliness Project develop its iconic flower brooch.

The extreme weather conditions of 2022 meant more time indoors so Carla needed to find an activity that would keep Caterina engaged. Caterina had been a most talented dressmaker, a career that included making wedding gowns.

Unfortunately, Caterina cannot sew any longer, but she can cut fabric. *"Mum cuts circles of fabric and I sew them into our six-petal flowers."* She talks about the colours and the fabrics – and she loves visiting fabric stores to look for remnant fabrics.

For Carla the flowers are iconic of what the Loneliness Project is about – connecting, engaging, talking and reaching-out. For her and her mum, the six petals represent social connections be these friends, family, carers, neighbours, colleagues.

The central toggle represents keeping people together, engaging, talking, encouraging while the pin at the back of the flower attached over the heart shows love and respect for one another.

Caring is not easy! And there are many Australians who are informal carers - over 2.5 million.

*"I think when I made the decision to be mum's carer it was almost a romantic idea that we would have quality time together. The reality is a carer gives up so much – career, finances, relationships and intellectualism in many cases."*

These losses are accompanied by the loss of the person



they are loving and caring for – slow deterioration and personality changes.

But having committed teams including medical, social and carer workers gives the primary carer personal time, respite and time for personal connection.

We thank Carla for sharing her story and for her inspiring activities that keep her mum engaged and happy.

## GEOFF

Geoff expressed that it felt like all his Christmases had come at once.

Geoff is in his early 90's but nowhere near leading a quiet and boring life.

After losing his wife and life-long companion of many years, Geoff was unable to keep up with the upkeep and maintenance of their family home.

Being fairly active and independent all his life, Geoff decided to buy his own unit in a small complex and with a little bit of assistance with his HCP he would be able to manage while still keeping his independence.

Some time had passed after moving in and getting settled in his new place, the coordinator called to see how things were going.

Although happy with his independence the coordinator could sense Geoff was a little down, and while chatting some other issues were identified.

It was discovered that Geoff was having trouble reaching his clothes line as his previous shoulder surgery had limited his overhead reach. The limited shelving in his kitchen was also an issue when it came to organise his items, and he was having trouble to understand his new phone and computer apps.

Furthermore, Geoff was concerned about a fall he had while out and what would happen if he could not be found until it was too late.

Once the coordinator was able to advise Geoff that all his concerns around the additional assistance could be accessed through his package, he could not believe his luck.

A digital technician was sent to assist Geoff with the phone and laptop issues, maintenance contractors were able to refit his clothes line and add extra shelving in his kitchen. A new personal alarm was also ordered with GPS tracking.

Geoff expressed that it felt like all his Christmases had come at once. Now every time the coordinator calls Geoff still reminds how grateful he is for the assistance.





# AGED CARE BRISBANE | SOCIAL ACTIVITY GROUPS

## NEW STARS REVEALED DURING ROCK'N'ROLL WEEK

Staff at the social group activity centres created a leg wobbling theme for clients recently that was inspired by the recent release of the new Elvis movie.

Each day of that week our staff welcomed clients to a Rock-n-Roll extravaganza at all of the centres that soon developed into energetic musical celebrations. Elvis truly lived – with a little help of a costume, transforming the unassuming community care worker Edmond into a hip-shaking 'Elvis'. Let's say his performances left many legs shaking and tapping to the music.

The clothes of the 1950's were wide skirts, bandanas, bobby socks and leather jackets and our staff certainly brought some great colour and style to the events. We were lucky that none of our clients were able to find tight leather pants or we might have had a few more Elvis impersonators parading around.

The clients are always advised ahead of time on the week's theme and some of them take to the notion enthusiastically by dressing the part. One of our fabulous clients, 95 year old Elva thought about her costume with real commitment.

On the day she attended she arrived with a red ribbon tied around her neck. On one end of the ribbon she had tied a bread roll and on the other end, a large rock - dug out of her garden! With all of the clients and staff in hysterics, her take on the 'rock n roll' theme was impeccable and highly applauded by all.

Milk bars and ice cream parlours were also very popular in the 50s. In keeping with the theme, delicious sundaes were served at morning tea after which all of the staff began singing and dancing and the affect this had on

clients was contagious – many joining in, rocking and rolling or toe tapping along with the music.

We were delighted to also welcome the local little tots from the nearby child care centre to the celebrations as they joined clients at Acacia Ridge in their bright yellow T-shirts!

Wonder if our coordinators can create an Avatar theme as this movie is due for release soon. too? Blue face paint anyone?



### RAG RUG MAKING AND BUTTON ART MEMORY SUPPORT GROUP



Irene and Caterina, two of our lovely clients who attend our memory support group at Casa Aurelia, have been very busy creating colourful rag rugs that can be made in a variety of sizes and come in handy for so many cute uses - pot plant mats, pet bedding, pot trivets, oven mitts, just to name a few.

This task involves stripping, measuring and sorting material that has kindly been donated over the years by other clients.

There is a great deal of thought that goes into the colours, patterns and thickness of the fabrics – they may be rags but they are designer rags!!!

Both Irene and Caterina come from a dressmaking background designing both men's and women's fashion including bridal wear. This activity is allowing the ladies to utilise skills they have not used for many years, fondly reminisce about the past.

There is a lot of discussion, laughter and sense of calm at the craft table which is a delight for all to see.

Another beautiful project was Button Art.

Our very creative group of talented ladies have created masterpieces simply using buttons. This project has helped harness their fine motor skills and given hours of pleasure to Caterina, Irene, Tatiana, and Elvira, our very own artists!





## MINI GIOCHI PER GLI ANZIANI A CASA AURELIA

Di recente i nostri clienti hanno ritrovato in loro uno spirito competitivo grazie ai mini giochi per gli anziani organizzati a Casa Aurelia dai coordinatori dei gruppi di sostegno della memoria.

Tre squadre si sono battute a pallacanestro, mini golf e a bowling, dimostrando sia abilità che desiderio di vincere.

Le medaglie in palio – oro, argento e bronzo – hanno rappresentato un forte incentivo per i partecipanti, che hanno dato il meglio di sé per poter portare a casa un riconoscimento per l'impegno da loro dimostrato.





## THE NEVER ENDING FUN AT THE GROUPS







## RUTH

Sixteen years ago, Ruth Allison began her journey as a volunteer at Casa Serena. After decades of teaching, it was time to step aside from the school and dive into a new world: community services.

Ruth stumbled upon Community Services due to her willingness to practice Italian and serve the local community.

*"I used to teach high school. When I retired, I didn't know what to do next. I was only sure that I wanted to speak in Italian and have contact with our community," she says.*

*"Days later, I saw Co.As.It.'s advertisement asking for volunteers able to speak Italian. It was love at first sight".*

On 14 December, for one last time, Ruth supported and spread love to each of her unforgettable clients (or friends, as she calls them). A farewell party was thrown for Ruth, where she received flowers, gifts and a panettone.

Friendship, as she emphatically says, is what will be kept from these moments of almost two decades at Casa Serena.

*"There are lots of pictures of birthdays, parties and Christmas. There are also those special moments of happiness and tears that I will always carry on me."*

Ruth recalls that her first interactions with clients at Casa Serena were strictly in Italian, as most of them

could not speak English. Among her initial tasks was assisting clients in contacting the local parish, teaching English and even helping a romantic client find a bride.

*"My experience as a volunteer was great. I recommend to anyone interested in serving the community talk to Co.As.It. My time at Casa Serena was amazing, and people have always been nice to me in a very welcoming way."*

Now, it is time for Ruth to look after herself and enjoy her retirement - and, for sure, become a periodic visitor to our "Community Centre of Friends".





# AGED CARE SOUTH COAST | SOCIAL ACTIVITY GROUPS

## HALLOWEEN INCLUDED, AND THEN SOME!

The social activity groups at the Gold Coast were heavily involved with spooks, ghosts and ghouls over October as they prepared some fun scenery for the Halloween event where they love getting dressed as witches, bats and pumpkins!

Lots of creative effort and laughter went into creating some very colourful props for the centre which everyone enjoyed.

Talking about creations, the clients immensely enjoyed working on Christmas tree decorations, which represented the sheer class, talent, and love for crafts of everyone involved.



## CHRISTMAS AT THE GROUPS

The Social Group on South Coast embraced the Christmas spirit with weekly activities ranging from crafting cards for loved ones to professional carols in December. Clients began the festive month with a special performance from the Dante Choir, boosting the expectation of what was to come.

*"We all sang Christmas carols in Italian and English, such as Jingle Bells, Mamma Mia, Feliz Navidad, among others. Clients sang, danced and played instruments such as maracas, rattles and tambourines,"* says Juny Spagnolo, Social Group Activities Coordinator for the South Coast.

The creative flair of the participants was also inspired in creating Christmas cards for their loved ones which turned out to be an emotional and rewarding experience where they could express themselves imaginatively through the activity.

Santa Claus finally arrived on the South Coast in the middle of December for what he must have thought was a warm visit.

Being on the Australian leg of his worldwide trip, he sported the essential Aussie footwear – thongs!

As usual, clients took pictures next to Santa Claus, followed by Christmas games like pinning Rudolf's nose and hanging rings on the reindeer's antlers.

To close the month with a bang, the groups had a special lunch organised by the new chef of the Italo - Australian Club.

Clients had pumpkin arancini, roast turkey, Christmas pudding as dessert and a lot of panettone!





# STAY ACTIVE PROGRAM

## A SUCCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Co.As.It's Stay Active has finished 2022 as a success for the community. Running now for more than three years, the program's single group of participants at the beginning of 2020 jumped to eight over three different venues over the past three years.

The 45 minute activities are developed and monitored by qualified physiotherapists Leonie Poole and Diana Barreto.

*"Elements of resistance, stretching, coordination, balance, cardiovascular fitness and mental challenges are included during each session. The goal is to make the groups an 'all round' fitness activity for seniors so as you can imagine, 45 minutes flies by very fast," explains Leonie.*

New activities are constantly included, and recently, 'brain gym' training components to ensure the healthy function of the brain have been added to the list.

*"Some simple dance moves, such as the well-known Macarena and Nutbush City Limits, have also been learnt and proven very popular. The classes are conducted 95% standing (only sitting for brief periods). However, everyone has a chair they can use for support or rest, as required," explains Leonie.*

*"One thing guaranteed is that Staying Active can be lots of fun, with old friends to catch up with and new ones to be made", finishes Leone.*

Last December, the participants enjoyed a festive break-up at their final session for 2022 with a group member bringing his piano accordion for entertainment.

Anyone interested in attending is invited to contact the office. Each session costs \$5 per person to help cover operational costs. Bookings are essential.

There is a screening process to ascertain whether participants are suitable to attend.

*"Safety considerations are paramount in group settings," says Leonie.*

New activities are constantly included, and recently, 'brain gym' training components to ensure the healthy function of the brain have been added to the list.





### WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? EVERYWHERE!



To enjoy the start of the warm season we took the groups on a number of outings recently.

One of which was the Seaway Kiosk at Southport for a nice fish and chips lunch. While there, we took advantage of the beautiful weather and went for a short stroll along the beach to enjoy the sea breeze and watch the beautiful boats cruising past.

A stroll at Benowa Botanical Gardens, followed by lunch at the Benowa Tavern had clients taking in the fresh air and enjoying the greenery, bridges, native ducks, birds and turtles that live in the gardens.

Going to Robina Town Centre for a shopping day for clients was followed by a delicious Italian lunch at the Double00 restaurant.







WE LOVE GOING AROUND!







# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## CANZONI A TEMA AND BOOK CLUB



The ILC short courses “*Canzoni a Tema*” have steadily increased in popularity. Held over three fortnightly Saturdays, the course teaches the Italian language through themed songs.

In term 3, the theme “*In alto mare*” introduced students to new vocabulary and idiomatic expressions centred on the topic “*il mare*” (the sea).

Songs about the sea from well-known artists like Tricarico, Cambogia, Jovanotti and Mango were introduced to the students. “*Mediterraneo*” performed by Mango and written in collaboration with Mogol, the biggest “*paroliere*” of all times, was without doubt “*un successo*”!

On the same Saturdays as ‘Canzoni a Tema’, the Book Club was also held. Students explored short stories written by various authors such as Primo Levi, Alberto Moravia, Matteo Bussola, Marco Presta, and Lorenzo Marone.

Participants were happy to discover new authors who are currently very popular in Italy.





# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## ITALIAN LANGUAGE WEEK AWARD

At the XXII Settimana della lingua Italian festival hosted by ILC last October, the Consul of Italy for Queensland and Northern Territory, Dott.ssa Luna Angelini Marinucci, announced the inaugural Italian Language Week Award, which was presented to two Year 12 students from Cairns State High School.

The award recognises excellence in Italian studies in Year 12 and was won by Poppy Cahill and Isabel Jackson.

The prize consisted of an all expenses paid 4-day, 3-night chaperoned trip to Melbourne to be immersed in an Italian cultural experience which the city offers in so many ways.

Accompanied by ILC's Francesca Cerniglia, the winners experienced an unforgettable Italian-themed trip between 4-7 January 2023.

In a video recorded on the last morning, the girls sent a message of thanks to the Consul: *"Siamo grate per questa esperienza e non la dimenticheremo mai. Grazie per questa opportunità di parlare l'italiano al di fuori della scuola e di 'vivere' la cultura italiana."*





# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## IMMERSION DAYS ARE BACK!



ILC's immersion days were halted due to the pandemic but have now resumed at the new premises in Lutwyche.

Students from Kelvin Grove State College and their teacher Laura Macina were the first to visit ILC in October on the occasion of the 'XXII Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo' celebrated worldwide.

ILC teachers took the students on a journey to discover the authentic language spoken by Italian youth. Through engaging language activities, games and songs, students learned new Italian words and explored authentic cultural aspects.

Students were surprised at how many English words are used by Italian teenagers, who sometimes combine English and Italian in a creative and fun way.



They also learnt how popular the rap music genre is in Italy and the highlight of the day was the dance session with teachers and students hitting the dance floor, celebrating the beauty of Italian music.

Immersion days are not only offered as excursions to ILC but are also offered within schools.

In October, ILC teachers Giovanna and Sonia facilitated an Italian workshop at Mango Hill State School. Inspired by Italian artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo's 'fruit faces', as well as contemporary artist Massimo Fenati's 'foodles' (a combination of 'food' and 'doodles'), students furthered their knowledge of Italian nouns and adjectives.

They also created their own artwork using the collage technique with stunning results.

During the two afternoon workshops students learned the basic steps of the famous southern Italian 'tarantella' dance as well as the art of flag waving.

Teacher Connie Lammertsma commented: *"Immersion days are a fantastic way for students to be exposed to the Italian language and culture and to engage with native speakers."*

More immersion days are planned for 2023!





# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## OFFICIAL VISIT TO ILC BY DEi

On Thursday 8 September, ILC hosted a morning tea and meeting with Jacinta Webb, Director of the Global Engagement Unit at DE International.

The occasion was to meet Dr Alberta Pettoello, Principal of the Convitto Nazionale 'P. Diacono', who was visiting Brisbane.

Dr Pettoello is Principal of the school in Udine, in Northern Italy, which hosts the winners of the annual StuditaliA prize organised by DEi.

The guests were very impressed with the short video viewed during the meeting showcasing the extensive activities carried out by Co.As.It.-ILC to promote and maintain the teaching and learning of Italian in Queensland Schools.



# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TOWNSVILLE



The Townsville Catholic Education Office hosted a 2-day Professional Development event for teachers of Italian on 29 and 30 August presented by ILC's Giovanna Amatruda and Rosella Dermedoglou.

Teachers in attendance were eager to learn new strategies and share ideas on how to make the Italian language and culture fun and relevant for their students.

The PD was very well received by teachers of Italian from all over Far North Queensland.



Some of the feedback included:

- "We have had a wonderful, meaningful learning experience"
- "Thank you for a very enjoyable and useful workshop"
- "The authenticity of language and culture is important for non-Italian teachers. Thanks!"
- "This PD has taught me valuable info to use with my students"
- "I could do a week of this!! Very informative and interesting"
- "You ladies are legends! Love your work"
- "Excellent presentation with valuable information"

Teachers of Italian may access support for the teaching and learning of Italian at any time by contacting Giovanna and Sonia at:  
[enquiries@italianlanguagecentre.org](mailto:enquiries@italianlanguagecentre.org)  
 (07) 3624 6172 or  
[www.italianlanguagecentre.org](http://www.italianlanguagecentre.org)



# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## ITALIAN WINE AND CHEESE NIGHT



Our latest Italian wine and cheese night at ILC was compered by Filippo D'Arrò, wine specialist and Managing Director at Italiquore. *"Wine is such an important part of the Italian culture, it is interwoven into our food and traditions"* said Filippo. You can tell that wine is a much loved passion for Filippo, who shared his knowledge on wines from 5 regions of Italy.

His wine selections blended tradition and cutting edge wine making techniques bringing the best of our viniculture to everyone who attended the event.

Hundreds of indigenous grape varieties grow in Italy but only a few of these types develop outside of the country. The complex influences that result in a wine's unique traits are represented in the concept

of 'terroir' (environmental factors that affect a crop's characteristics).

*"After all, wine is only fermented grapes - a product of farming in its pure and basic form. However there are numerous factors that go into growing just the right type of grapes from climate, rainfall, soil, elevation and land features and processing all combine to influence the grapes and lead to the wine's distinctive personality - its unique terroir"*, Mr D'Arrò explained.

That is why the same grapes grown in different regions result in vineyards exhibiting different results. In any case whatever 'terroir' they originated from, all of the attendees greatly appreciated the results!

# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## A VISIT TO NORTH QUEENSLAND

On 29 July 2022 the ILC team and the Italian Consul Dott.ssa Luna Angelini Marinucci were invited to judge 51 high school students in Years 7-12 participating in the MLTAQ Peninsula Italian Speaking Competition hosted by Cairns State High School.

At the end of the presentations, Dott.ssa Angelini Marinucci began the prize-giving ceremony with a heartfelt speech during which she commended the students for their dedication and encouraged them to continue on their Italian language learning journey.

Students placed first, second and third in each year level were excited to receive their ILC-sponsored gold, silver or bronze medals and certificates from the Consul.

It was also a special moment for teachers, who were proud to see the excellent results achieved by their students and to have these achievements awarded by the Italian Consul.

In the afternoon students and teachers were treated to a Sbandieratori (flag waving) workshop, presented by Sonia, the ILC Language Program Liaison Officer based on the Sunshine Coast.

On the following day the Consul attended the inaugural Cairns Italian Festival at Fogarty Park where she expressed her commitment to not only supporting the Italian community in Queensland but also Italian programs in schools.

She mingled with the numerous visitors attending the event and enjoyed viewing artwork by the artist Matteo Ferrario, who joined the ILC team as a volunteer for the event.

His artwork, featuring iconic Italian landscapes attracted very positive feedback and sparked curiosity among those who haven't yet had the opportunity to visit Italy.

At the art stall the ILC team was on hand to encourage young visitors to create their own interpretation of a famous masterpiece.

The children's colourful interpretations of Leonardo Da Vinci's Mona Lisa and the Vitruvian Man earned them well-deserved 'I was an Italian Artist for a Day' certificates to commend their efforts.





# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE TEAM AT ILC

ILC is delighted to welcome Francesca Cerniglia and Alessandra Scalco in the roles of Italian Language Resource Officers for schools in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast.

Francesca is not new to ILC, she has in fact been teaching and interpreting for ILC for several years.

Alessandra, on the other hand, is new to ILC. She graduated in 2013 at Università 'Roma Tre' in Rome and moved to Australia in 2015. She is currently completing her Master of Teaching.

ILC has always been involved in the promotion, teaching and learning of Italian language and culture in Queensland.

Thanks to Italian Government support, ILC now has the resources to provide better and wider support to teachers of Italian in State and non-State Schools.



The role of the Italian Language Resource Officers consists of:

- Supporting teachers of Italian in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast classrooms
- Linking the Italian classroom to the requirements of Australian National Curriculum (Languages/latest version 9.0)
- Creating/reviewing Italian teaching materials together with the Italian teachers
- Reviewing unit of work language targets and student assessment language outcomes
- Overseeing student oral speaking practice and where the extra help may be needed
- Assisting/supervising student teamwork or group work in the classroom
- Interaction with students learning Italian and specific classroom projects

Francesca supports teachers based in Brisbane, whereas Alessandra supports teachers based on the Sunshine Coast.

We wish them all the best in their new exciting roles promoting *"la bella lingua"*.

# ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING

## QUEENSLAND DEI CONFERENCE IN BRISBANE

The 2-day Department of Education International Conference was held on 18 and 19 July, with the theme *'Leading for Global Futures'*.

The conference highlighted the benefits of expanding a global mindset in shaping positive futures for students as well as showcasing the great work happening in Queensland schools providing unique opportunities for international students.

It was the perfect setting to invite the Fri.Sa.Li. World Group of Schools to the official signing of the 2022-2027 Memorandum of Understanding between the Fri.Sa.Li. World Group of Schools and the Queensland Department of Education International.

On Monday 18 July ILC's interpreter Francesca Cerniglia attended the MOU signing event and simultaneously interpreted the speeches of the VIPs representing the Queensland Department of Education International and the Fri.Sa.Li World Group of schools in Italy.

The feedback received from the Department was amazing: *'Francesca's interpreting lit up the room'*.

The objective of the signing was to promote internationalisation and the educational, social and linguistic development within the schools of the respective organisations.

*In the photo:*

*Rear row: Senator Gianni Marilotti, Chairman of the Senate Library and Historical Archives Commission (Senate of the Italian Republic); Senator Francesco Giacobbe, Senator of the Italian Republic, representing Italians in Asia-Africa-Oceania-Antarctica (Italy); Dottoressa Luna Angelini Marinucci, Italian Consul for Queensland and Northern Territory; Ms Jacinta Webb, Director, Global Engagement Unit, DE International; Dr Oldino Cernoia, Accounting Manager for the international exchanges of Fri.Sa.Li World Group of Schools (Italy); Mr Lorenzo Marilotti, Fri.Sa.Li World Group of Schools (Italy)*

*Front row: Dr Raffaele Franzese, Coordinator of Fri.Sa.Li. World Group of Schools (Italy); Mr Stephen Biggs, Executive Director, DE International.*







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community  
services

# Servizi comunitari per anziani e giovani bisognosi di sostegno.

**Avete bisogno di aiuto nei lavori domestici?  
Avete bisogno di aiuto per cucinare?  
Volete incontrare nuovi amici?  
Assistete qualcuno a domicilio e  
avete bisogno di aiuto?**

Il Co.As.It. Community Services fornisce assistenza alle persone anziane e ai giovani dal 1987 e il nostro personale esperto e qualificato è capace di prestare un servizio culturalmente e linguisticamente adeguato.

La maggioranza del nostro personale è bilingue e capace di assistervi nel vostro ambiente familiare in casa vostra.

I nostri gruppi sociali offrono un pasto casalingo e la possibilità di incontrarsi con gli amici e chiacchierare dei tempi andati.

Attività di arti manuali, canzoni e balli, tombola e gite fanno parte del nostro programma giornaliero.



Contattate il nostro centro al

## 3624 6100

per ulteriori informazioni



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