

## **Ban Ki-Moon with the Young Global Citizens of the Future**

Letizia Airos (March 18, 2010)



March 12. This year's gala for La Scuola d'Italia "Guglielmo Marconi" was once again held at Cipriani 42. It was an important evening dedicated to investing in the future of our culture. Special guest: the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon

The [Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi](#) [2] organized a very special gala this year. We will remember the moments spent in the elegant dining room of [Cipriani 42nd Street](#) [3] for a long time. One of the most famous Italian restaurants in the city, it was first home to an important bank and now has become among the favorite venues for the most mundane events in New York.

More than at any other time, we witnessed a singular and thoughtful tribute to our culture and the Italian language. The youngsters attending the Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi testified to their work as successful students in the third millennium. Using moving words and pictures they presented their inter-disciplinary project entitled "The Ecology of Mind" and demonstrated how globalization today can become an opportunity to learn more.



“Future citizens of globalization are formed at the Scuola d’Italia, thanks to the in-depth academic and extra-curricular programs, and the activities that embrace both the European and American cultures.”

With these remarks, the guest of honor was warmly welcomed by all in attendance, who listened to his words in deep silence. He showed an outstanding intelligence and modesty as he interacted with the audience, all qualities that make of him a great international personality.

“You are the leaders of the future (...). All of these students carry an important message, and we have much to learn from them. Global problems need global solutions, but we can't achieve them without being global citizens. It's many years that this school educates and raises citizens of the world”

He also dwelt on the efforts made by the United Nations in a number of fields, including the promotion of peace and the climate changes. “I have been in Chile a few days ago and I am about to go to Haiti to support its government in facing the crisis. We need all of you to carry on our goals, I know that change is possible. I saw it in my own country. Do your share and work to support the efforts made by the Scuola to become an international center. We need your hope, institutions like your school, and people who encourage dialogue and promote the role of language as a fundamental tool to carry out our mission.”

Those who know the school and perhaps have had an opportunity to visit classrooms, meet students, and see them talking among themselves not only in different languages but about different cultures, also know that there could not have been (a more appropriate host. The Scuola d’Italia is the proof of how to effectively speak and teach Italian culture to students who are from different cultures. Teaching in each environment is relative, not absolute.

Ban Ki-Moon’s heartfelt speech moved the audience especially when he spoke about the importance of change. The boy who grew up in South Korea also seemed to be speaking to his peers.

Laura Savini, a familiar face from PBS, hosted the evening with superb elegance and a touch of irony. She, too, was very excited to introduce Ban Ki-Moon. Savini is involved in Italian-American community activities, and as a journalist she has worked on various Italian-American television productions. She has held the title of grand marshal at several local Columbus Day parades and president of the [National Organization of Italian American Women](#) [4] (NOIAW).

The gala dinner was sponsored by Italian Ambassador to Washington Giulio Terzi di Sant’Agata. Beside him were Consul General Francesco Talò, UN Ambassador Cesare Ragolini, San Marino Ambassador to the U.N. Daniele Bodini, the Honore Apostolic Nuncio to the U.N. Archbishop Celestino Migliore, and Rector of the [University for Foreigners of Perugia](#) [5] Stefania Giannini, the Guest of Honor.

Carissimi Amici Buona sera a tutti... Dear friends, good evening to everybody. Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata started his speech in Italian to underline how important the promotion of this language is to him. He talked about Italian pedagogues such as Antonio Rosmini and Maria Montessori, whose works and pedagogic methods have deeply influenced school programs throughout the world, especially in the United States.

Education is not a preparation to life, but it is life itself. He took inspiration from this quote to make a number of considerations on the importance of schools like Scuola Marconi, an example of excellency in the field of multicultural teaching. Besides providing the students with a diploma that is valid in Italy, Europe, and the United States, it also promotes cultural initiatives such as Encounters



aimed to spread the values of tolerance and respect among different cultures.

As the floor passed to Consul General Francesco Talò, he proudly highlighted how the school organizes a wide range of initiatives that guarantee a bi-cultural and bilingual education of the students. " This school is an actual community that involves professors, students, and parents. It is part of an Italian System created to support our culture in a city that embraces the entire world within its borders. Thanks, and let's go on with our efforts towards the promotion of the Italian language and culture - *continuamo con lo studio della lingua e della cultura italiana* - Consul Talò concluded in Italian.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees Stephen Madsen remarked that since 1977 the Scuola d'Italia has offered a unique curriculum that embodies the finest attributes of the traditions and cultures of both Italy and the U.S. He thanked the Alexander Bodini Foundation and other institutions for supporting the school, and acknowledged Professor Stefania Giannini, Chancellor of the University of Perugia. His heartfelt thanks were also extended to Headmistress Anna Fiore who, along with Deputy Headmistress Pia Pedicini, has actively continued the tradition of educational excellence.

During the evening a special award was also presented to entrepreneur, patron and benefactor Ambassador Daniele Bodini, the Honore of the event and a member of the Board of Trustees.

In her brief but emotional speech, Anna Fiore thanked everyone and emphasized the importance of the school's curriculum based on bilingual education. She then announced that the school has initiated a joint program with the University of Perugia that will include exchange programs for teachers and students to develop research projects on bilingualism. After a little over a year in office, it is clear that her dedicated work has broadened the school's horizons through diverse activities and partnerships with various institutions within the Italian cultural community.

Chancellor Stefania Giannini, finally took the microphone and underlined the importance of the partnership between the University for Foreign Students of Perugia and the Scuola d'Italia, as a way to support the spreading of the Italian language in a multicultural world. "In the most ancient Italian university, in Perugia, we make students coming from all over the world feel at home".

Among the many guests in attendance, the following dignitaries were also present: recently appointed Director of the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [6] Riccardo Viale, Deputy Consul General Laura Aghilarre, Alfio Russo Director of the Education Office of the Consulate, Vice President of the [CGIE](#) [7] Silvana Mangione, Directors of [ENIT](#) [8] and the [Italian Trade Commission](#) [9] Riccardo Strano and Aniello Musella, Chairman of the [Columbus Citizens Foundation](#) [10] Frank Fusaro, and [Supreme Court Justice of New York](#) [11] Hon. Dominic R. Massaro, Director of [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [12] Stefano Albertini, President of [CINN Worldwide Stephen Acunto](#) [13], Mico Delianova Licastro [USA Representative CONI USA](#) [14] and President of [IACE](#) [15] Berardo Paradiso.

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