

December 2024

Year 22

Issue 227

# Passaic Valley UNICO

## Our December 2024 Monthly Newsletter



**Passaic Valley UNICO**  
**PO Box 341**  
**Little Falls, NJ 07424**

### **Serving**

*Little Falls  
Totowa  
Woodland Park*

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| Chapter Website  | <a href="http://www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org">www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org</a>                      |
| Chapter Website  | <a href="http://www.UNICOMembers.com">www.UNICOMembers.com</a>                                  |
| Facebook Page    | <a href="https://www.Facebook.com/PassaicValleyUNICO">www.Facebook.com/PassaicValleyUNICO</a>   |
| Instagram Page   | <a href="https://www.Instagram.com/PassaicValleyUNICO">www.Instagram.com/PassaicValleyUNICO</a> |
| District Website | <a href="http://www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com">www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com</a>                      |
| National Website | <a href="http://www.UNICO.org">www.UNICO.org</a>  |
| Chapter Email    | <a href="mailto:PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com">PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com</a>                  |

## **A Message from our Chapter President**

**Hey Gang: it's December - and the Christmas Holiday will be upon us VERY SOON- Not taking away from Thanksgiving but where is the time going?**

*I hope all of our members had a great Thanksgiving Day with the family. This is the time to reflect how fortunate we are to be together. Life is short and memories are made from past experiences – This is what we pass on to our future generation.*

*Our “Holiday Cheer” program is indeed another success, and it helps individuals that have not been as fortunate to help have some shining light for the holidays. Many towns and organizations have donated to “Toys for Tots” to help put smiles on the faces of the little individuals. People do want to make a difference.*

*Early in this month of December, many of our chapter members as well as members from other chapters will be supporting the “District Christmas Party” which has been going on for many years. Seeing the eyes light up of little children AND young adults really can bring tears to your own eyes. This is one event that we all hope will always continue for years to come.*

*The three town “Holiday Parade” was another huge success with over 250 entries of different fire companies, police departments, and everyday citizens wanted to help spread the holiday cheers. Toys for children were collected along the route and eventually distributed to children to help brighten up their holiday. What a GREAT time of year.*

*Going forward, our next scheduled monthly meeting will be held at: Evolutions Restaurant in ..... (Continued on the next page)*



## December Birthdays

5 Jean Chomko  
17 Michael Russo

## Photo Albums

All our chapter event pictures can be seen on our website ... Additional pictures from our "NJ IV District" and also a lot from our "UNICO National" events can also be seen on their websites.

[www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org](http://www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org)  
[www.UNICO.org](http://www.UNICO.org)  
[www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com](http://www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com)

## Food Pantry

Please do not forget about our UNICO Phil Arena and our many other Food Pantries ... Your non-perishable donation will help restock them.

Please contact our Food Pantry Chairs, Carmen Gaita, or Patricia Pelonero on how you can help.

## Upcoming Events – Local and National

December 3, 2024 ~ Tuesday ~ Our UNICO NJ District IV Christmas Dinner for our Special Need Friends ~ At the Brownstone ~ More information will follow.

December 7, 2024 ~ NJ District IV Bus Ride ~ Mulberry Street, Dinner and Tour of the New Italian American Museum

January 8, 2025 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday ~ Chapter Monthly Meeting ~ Evolution Restaurant in Woodland Park ~ 6:15 pm Dinner ~ 8:00 pm Meeting

June 23, 2025 ~ Monday ~ Our Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser ~ See page 7 of this newsletter for more information

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## Presidents Message ~ ..... (Continued from page 1)

Woodland Park, N.J., on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. If interested, .....

If interested, many members will be going earlier for dinner at 6:15pm. If you just wish to attend the chapter meeting, this will commence at 8:00pm sharp. Please email John Barbieri and let him know if you will be attending dinner, as it is very important that we get a head count.

On behalf of the Executive Board, we wish to offer nothing but happiness and special prayers to all of our members and families.

Have a safe holiday season - God Bless - Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

Respectfully- Carmen Criscione- Chapter President

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## Below are our UNICO's CORE VALUES

If you know of someone who has them and would like to help us make a difference, please invite them to a meeting and possibly have them join our chapter as a new member.

**U – Unity**

**N – Neighborliness**      **“Service Above Self”**

**I – Integrity**

**C – Charity**

**O – Opportunity**

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**UNICO Charities**

**Foundation Charities**

- ... Cancer Research
- ... Cooley’s Anemia
- ... Food Bank
- ... Italian Studies
- ... Mental Health
- ... Scholarship
- ... St. Jude’s Hospital

**National Charities**

- ... Anti Bias
- ... Armed Forces
- ... Columbus Day
- ... Heritage Calendar

**Five American Cities  
With Italian Names**

- Florence
- Mantua
- Sorrento
- Carrara
- Palermo

[\(Click here if you are reading this on your computer ~ It will give you lots of information with photos of each town\)](#)

**ComUNICO**

You can now read the Com-UNICO magazine on the internet  
Just click or go here >>>  
[www.unico.org/comUNICO](http://www.unico.org/comUNICO)

**Who’s Who**

**Our 2024-2025 Executive Board**

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| President .....               | Carmen Criscione |
| 1st Vice President .....      | Joe Benvenuti    |
| 2nd Vice President .....      | Chuck Russo      |
| Treasurer .....               | Bruce Ponchak    |
| Secretary .....               | Steve Pelonero   |
| Sgt. At-Arms .....            | John Morano      |
| Corresponding Secretary ..... | John Morano      |

**Our 2024-2025 Board of Directors**

|                |                        |             |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Steve Pelonero | Past Chapter President | 2010 & 2011 |
| John Barbieri  | Past Chapter President | 2014 & 2015 |
| Bruce Ponchak  | Past Chapter President | 2016 & 2017 |
| Carmen Gaita   | Past Chapter President | 2018 & 2019 |
| Eileen Wood    | Past Chapter President | 2020 & 2021 |
| Dominick Bucci | Past Chapter President | 2022 & 2023 |

**Our 2024-2025 Chapter Delegates**

President Carmen Criscione ... 59 Members (President +3)  
 Delegate: Sal Benvenuti  
 Delegate: Patricia Pelonero  
 Delegate: open  
 (Delegates represent our chapter and are urged to attend our district, regional, and national meetings, especially if a vote is called for)

**Our 2024-2025 Fundraising Committee Heads**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Cornhole Tournament .....                  | John Barbieri                              |
| Food Pantry .....                          | Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero         |
| Golf Outing .....                          | Joe Barone                                 |
| Holiday Cheer .....                        | Carmen Gaita, Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti |
| Overseas Armed Service Care Packages ..... | Roni Corrado                               |

**Non-Fundraising Committee Heads**

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Community Service Day (April).....               | Charles Russo                     |
| Good and Welfare .....                           | Joe Benvenuti                     |
| Heritage .....                                   | Angelo Verrone                    |
| Membership (plus member section of website ..... | John Barbieri                     |
| Newsletter .....                                 | Steve Pelonero PNP                |
| Nominating Chair .....                           | <b>Open - To be appointed</b>     |
| Publicity .....                                  | Christina Castillo & Roni Corrado |
| Scholarship / Brian Piccolo .....                | Charles Russo                     |
| Study Abroad College Grants .....                | Cav. Joseph Agresti PNP           |
| Website .....                                    | Steven Pelonero PNP               |



*Italian Heritage Photo*  
*From the 2024 UNICO Heritage Calendar ~ December*  
*The Church of Santa Maria in Assisi*



*This photo was taken by chapter member Steve Pelonero while on a trip to Italy in 2008 with his wife Patricia and also Bruce and Ann Ponchak and their daughter Jennifer. (all of the photos from this trip can be seen, if you have access to a computer. Just click here >>> [2008 in Italy](#)*

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## *A Chapter Members Family Heritage Serradifalco, Caltanissetta, Sicily*



### *Chapter member Steve Pelonero*

*The Pelonero family came here from Serradifalco and ended up in Pennsylvania, but permanently staying in Paterson, NJ, on Pine St.*

*Steve and his wife Patricia had the pleasure of visiting Sicily in 2019, with his brother Anthony and his wife Jo Ann, and also with Sal and Debbie Benvenuti.*

*If you are viewing this on your computer, and have access to the internet, please click on the links below to read and see all about Serradifalco*

*Serradifalco (the Mountain of the Falcon) was founded in 1640. More about Serradifalco can be read by clicking here >>> [Serradifalco](#)*

*The above photos from the left: the Mother Church St. Leo (hence brothers Michael Leo, Steven Leo and Anthony Leo); the Pelonero Volkswagen Dealer with all of us and the owner of the dealership; the road sign letting us know that we are almost there: the town map of Serradifalco; a street named via Pelonero; and the symbol of Sicily, the Trinacria ([click here to read about the Trinacria](#))*

*If you would like to see all of the photos that Steve took while they were there, you can click on this link >>> [Steve's Photos of Serradifalco](#)*

*We hope you enjoyed their visit to Serradifalco, Caltanissetta, Sicily*

# Where is your Heritage from ?





## Committee & Comments

### ***Community Service Day ~ Chuck Russo***

*Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 26 for our annual Food Drive at the Little Falls ShopRite. Details and sign-up sheets will be at the available starting at the February Chapter Meeting.  
~ Thank you, Chuck*

### ***Food Pantry ~ Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero***

*As always, donations for our local food pantries can always be brought to any chapter meeting (non-perishable items, money, or food gift cards) ~ Thank you always for your support.*

### ***Golf Outing ~ Joe Barone***

*Please see the flier and sponsor letter on pages 8 and 9 of this newsletter ~ Thank you everyone*

### ***Overseas Soldier Program ~ Roni Corrado***

*Major James Lacey (Evelyn Tosi's grandson) is in Texas and is in the "processing home" phase to end his deployment. He will be home in time for Christmas.*

### ***Publicity ~ Roni Corrado & Christina Castillo***

*Roni: The Italian Tribune published our article/pic of the Little Falls flag raising event celebrating our Italian Heritage in October.*

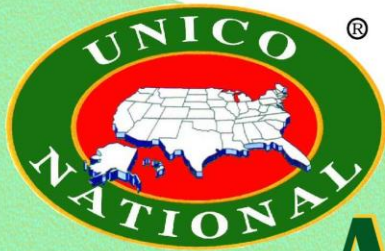
*Christina: The Passaic Valley Today paper published the Italian Flag raising in October !*

### ***Scholarship ~ Chuck Russo***

*Based on the success of our chapter Super Bowl Pool the last 2 years, we will be launching not one, but 2 pools this year. One pool will be \$25 a square as in the past. The committee has not yet made a final decision on the 2<sup>nd</sup> pool. We will inform the chapter prior to the January chapter meeting of the buy-in for both pools. Regardless of cost, the pools will be available at the January meeting since the Super Bowl is on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Please bring your checkbook or cash to that meeting for yourself, relatives, and friends who want to get in early. ~ Thank you, Chuck*

### ***VP Message ~ 1<sup>st</sup> VP Joe Benvenuti***

*I want to wish all our members and their families a very Happy Health Thanksgiving. Thank you all that have contributed to the food banks as well as the basket of cheer for the needy families for Christmas. We received enough donations to give out 5 cheer baskets again this year for \$500 each which I am sure will be very much appreciated by these families. Hope to see you all on December 3rd at the Brownstone for the Christmas party for the special needs participants. Again, thank you all for your generosity to our chapter.  
~ Joe B*



501c3  
organization

# Passaic Valley Chapter 40<sup>th</sup>

## Annual Golf Outing

Monday June 23, 2025

### Crystal Springs Golf Club

1 Wild Turkey Way, Hamburg, NJ 07419

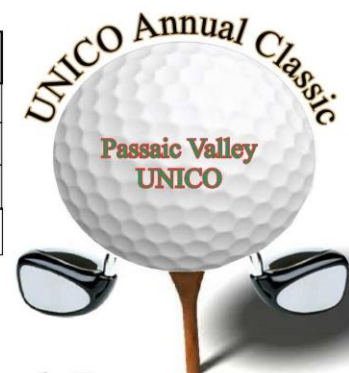
Modified Shotgun Start at 9:00am

- Highland Starter Breakfast at 8:00am
- On Course Beverages at Halfway House
- American Cookout Meal in the Big Sky Pavilion - 2:00pm to 6:00pm  
(includes beer, soda, coffee and tea)



| Contests, Prizes & Raffle's         |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Money Raffle                        | Closest to the Pin |
| Straightest Drive                   | Low Team Gross     |
| Win a CAR "Hole in One"             |                    |
| Win 3 Day Golf & Stay "Hole in One" |                    |

**PRIZES ON EVERY PAR 3**



### Online Registration

**\$175 per person - Check or Cash Payment**

**\$60 per person Dinner Only**

**\$179 per person - Credit Card Payment**

Pre-Registration is REQUIRED by June 18, 2025

Go to: [www.unicomembers.com/golf](http://www.unicomembers.com/golf)

**Golf Hole / Event Sponsorship - \$100 to \$500**

Ad displayed on the course, on our Website,  
and in our Monthly Newsletter for the Year!

**Contact: Joseph Barone**

**JCHRZBAR@gmail.com or 973-986-7042**

All proceeds will go to our local scholarship and charitable endeavors





# UNICO NATIONAL

The Largest Italian American Service Organization in the United States  
"Service Above Self"

*Unity - Neighborliness - Integrity - Charity - Opportunity*

Passaic Valley UNICO, 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing

June 23, 2025

Golf Hole Sponsor

On June 23, 2025, the Passaic Valley Chapter of UNICO National will hold its 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing. The golf outing is one of our major fund raisers for the chapter and goes to support the many local and National charities. Passaic Valley UNICO is a 501(c)3 approved organization.

On a local level, our Passaic Valley Chapter of UNICO has supported, in one way or another, the towns of Little Falls, Totowa, and Woodland Park. Some examples have been donations to the fire departments, libraries, and police stations. We have, and continue to supply, our "UNICO - Phil Arena Food Pantry" at Holy Angels Church in Little Falls. This pantry is there for all residents within the mentioned communities. Annually, we provide numerous High School Scholarships, Study Abroad Grants to students from Montclair State and Seton Hall Universities, donations to various high school projects and other charitable endeavors.

Every December with the help of local businesses like yours, we raise money and donate funds to local families in need of support as identified by the parishes in the aforementioned communities. Over the last several years we have donated on average, \$2,500.00 split equally per season to these people in need.

On a National level, we make donations through the UNICO National Foundation to The Jimmy V Foundation, St. Jude's Hospital for Children's Research, Coolies Anemia Foundation, Mental Health Research, and also to the UNICO National Scholarship Fund.

We are asking for your support by being a "Golf Hole Sponsor" at our annual Golf Outing. The cost is a minimum of \$100 which gets you a display sign on a hole with your name or business. In addition, as a hole sponsor, we will place your add on our website and in our monthly newsletter for one year. Our website currently has over 85,000 visits. Further information can be found at [www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor](http://www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor).

Please consider supporting our Golf Outing. Should you have any questions, please contact Joseph Barone, Chairman, Passaic Valley Golf Outing: (973) 986-7042. Checks should be made payable to Passaic Valley UNICO and sent to the address shown below, or payment can be made online at: [www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor](http://www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor).

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph Barone  
Golf Chairman



### *Our UNICO Charities*

#### *UNICO National*

*Armed Services ~ Columbus Day ~ Heritage & Photo Calendar*

#### *UNICO Foundation*

*21<sup>st</sup> century ~ Anti-Bias ~ Cancer Research & Prevention*

*Cooley's Anemia ~ Italian Studies ~ Mental Health*

*Scholarships ~ Torraco Food Bank/Shelter*

**About UNICO** ~ UNICO is the largest Italian American Service Organization in the United States  
Unity, Neighborliness, Integrity, Charity, Opportunity

UNICO was founded on October 10, 1922, in Waterbury, Connecticut. A group of 15 men, led by Dr. Anthony P. Vastola, came together to create what has become a very special and very proud organization. It was Dr. Vastola's dream to create an Italian American service organization to engage in charitable works, support higher education, and perform patriotic deeds. Our motto is "Service Above Self".

Each year, the UNICO Foundation and the UNICO National Chapters across the country donate approximately \$1 million to various charities. Scholarships continue to be the primary focus of UNICO, as roughly one-third of all monies raised goes to deserving students from all the chapter locations throughout the chain.

UNICO National has funded major research in Cooley's Anemia and Mental Health. Through its association with the Jimmy Valvano Foundation, it has funded over 10, \$50,000 grants to help find a cure for Cancer. These worthy areas continue to receive generous support from the chapters and its members for these worthy causes.

If you would like to attend one of our meetings to see if you might be interested in joining UNICO, please contact us through any member, or through our email. We would be honored to have you as a member of our Passaic Valley UNICO Chapter.



# Our 2024 Cornhole Sponsors

Passaic Valley UNICO



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# Our 2024 Golf Sponsors

(From July 1, 2024 ~ June 30, 2025)

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## Thank you to “All” of our Sponsors (62)

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~ Continued ~



~ Continued ~

# Our 2024 Golf Sponsors


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**Jay Sisti**  
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**Sal Benvenuti**  
Passaic Valley Chapter Member  
Tax Consultant  
& Mediator




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
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Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
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**Columbia Bank**  
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NMLS #1582575  
1127 Pompton Avenue  
Cedar Grove, NJ 07009  
Email: nstack@columbiabank.com  
Phone: (973) 857-6290  
Fax: (973) 857-6291



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Annual Golf Outing  
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**Totowa Tire Service**  
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Annual Golf Outing  
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**Election Fund for  
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
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141 River Road, #6  
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~ Continued ~

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# Our 2024 Golf Sponsors

Passaic Valley Chapter Annual Golf Outing Sponsor



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Passaic Valley Chapter Annual Golf Outing Sponsor



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jmartin@jamoopc.com

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**JOHN J. VETTER, JR., ESQ., LLC**  
Attorney at Law

John J. Vetter, Jr.  
Attorney at Law

3 University Plaza, Ste. 207  
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601  
Phone: 201-836-6300  
Fax: 201-836-6300  
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




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