



UNICO

NATIONAL

*PASSAIC VALLEY CHAPTER
P.O. BOX 341
LITTLE FALLS, NJ 07424*

*PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com
www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org*

*Monthly Minutes
May 13th, 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday*

-
- Date** May 13th , 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday
- Place** Holy Cross Church , Woodland Park, NJ
- Prayer** 7:02pm John Morano
- Flag Salute** 7:02 pm John Morano
- Dinner** 7:00 pm
- Meeting** 8:00 pm

Members & Guests in Attendance

Members (49) at meeting 25

Guests at meeting 2

Percent % at meeting 53 %

Executive Board

| <u>Attendance at meetings</u> | | <u>9/'25</u> | <u>10/'25</u> | <u>11/'25</u> | <u>12/'25</u> | <u>1/'26</u> | <u>2/'26</u> | <u>3/'26</u> | <u>4/'26</u> | <u>5/'26</u> | <u>6/'26</u> |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| President: | Criscione | 1 | x | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| 1 st VP: | J. Benvenuti | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 nd VP | Chuck Russo | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | 1 | |



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|--------------|----------|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| Secretary: | Pelonero | 1 | x | x | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | X |
| Treasurer: | Ponchak | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | 1 |
| Sgt.At-Arms: | Morano | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Delegates at Meetings

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|-----|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Sal Benvenuti | 1 | 1 | NMT | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2. Pat Pelonero | 1 | x | x | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | X |

Board of Directors at meetings (6 past Chapter Presidents)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| Carmen Gaita | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | x | x | x | x | X |
| Bruce Ponchak | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | 1 |
| John Barbieri | x | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Steve Pelonero | 1 | x | x | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | X |

Past Chapter Presidents in attendance at meetings

| | <u>9/'25</u> | <u>10/'25</u> | <u>11/'25</u> | <u>12/'25</u> | <u>1/'26</u> | <u>2/'26</u> | <u>3/'26</u> | <u>4/'26</u> | <u>5/'26</u> | <u>6/'26</u> |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Joe Agresti PNP | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | x | x | |
| John Barbieri | x | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Sal Benvenuti | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | x | |
| Carmen Criscione | 1 | x | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Carmen Gaita | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | x | x | x | x | x | |
| John Morano | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| Steve Pelonero | 1 | x | x | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | x | |
| Bruce Ponchak | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 | 1 | |



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| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|-----|
| Chuck Russo | 1 | 1 | 1 | NM | 1 | 1 | x | 1 1 |
| Angelo Verrone | 1 | x | 1 | NM | x | 1 | x | 1 1 |

Opening Remarks

- **President Carmen Criscione**

Carmen welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed our two guests to the meeting: Dwayne Good from Cedar Grove and Bob Barraco from Little Falls as potential new members. Carmen mentioned we have one more meeting left in June and then we break for 2 months then recon vein in September. Then he welcomed Joe Benvenuti 1st vice president for his opening remarks.

- **1st VP Joe Benvenuti**

Joe welcomed everyone said the year is almost done have one more meeting in June as well as the Scholarship dinner and then a break for the summer. He mentioned the scholarship dinner will be on Sunday June 14th at the barnyard. It is a nice night to honor the hard-working seniors with their scholarships. Please try to attend it will be a great night. The last meeting will be a pizza and muscles meeting at Holy Cross Church on June 24th and it will be free to all the members its on the club.

- **2nd VP Chuck Russo**

Chuck welcomed everyone. He mentioned all the hard work, time, and dedication that the scholarship committee has done with picking the venue and working hard to pick the recipients. He said please all come join us at the dinner it's a nice night to celebrate the Chapter and honor all the students. If you have money tonight for the dinner, please give to a member of the scholarship dinner and if you don't have the money tonight please try to get it in soon as its 1 month away.

Secretary Minutes

Secretary: Steve Pelonero PNP

Steve was absent so Carmen spoke and said that Steve had emailed all the minutes out to the members as well as the newsletter was sent as well. Carmen thanked Steve for al his hard work with the minutes and the newsletter and asked for a motion to accept.

Motions to accept were from:

John Barbieri and Joe Benvenuti

All were in favor



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Treasurer Report

Treasurer: Bruce Ponchak

Bruce noted that he emailed the treasure report to everyone. He also said if he doesn't have your email or it's an old email, please let him know so that he can get your correct email you will receive the treasure reports.

End of month balance was \$22,732.00 with a CD balance of \$11,000 and the CD will mature in July.

Motions to accept were from:

John Barberi and Angelo Verrone

All were in favor

Bills and Communications: John Morano

John reported that we got a receipt from National for donating \$200 to the UNICO national heritage calendar.

John also reported that we got a Thank You card from Pastor Emily Youngberg for the donation we made to her church during Christmas time, and she was very appreciative for what we have done for them.

Chapter Budget

- N/A

Chapter Elections: Nominating chair to be appointed by Chapter President

- In Steve's absence Christina Cast one vote for the office of 2026-2027 to be as follows: For president, Joe Benvenuti; for 1st VP Fred DeMarco, the 2nd VP position is open; Sgt-At-John Barbieri, for Treasurer Bruce Ponchak, and for Secretary, Steve Pelonero PNP



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Fundraising Committees

• Community Service Day: Claudine Stefanelli

Claudine was absent so Chuck Russo spoke on her behalf. Claudine wanted to thank everyone for helping out that day. She could not have done it without the support from the members. It was a beautiful day. 3 car loads of food were delivered to Holy Angels Church in Little Falls, 3 loads of food were delivered to The United Methodist church in Little Falls NJ, 3 loads of food packed to the roof of the car was picked up by St. George Antiochian orthodox church in Little Falls NJ, 3 loads of food was picked up by the Veterans home in Paterson NJ, and 3 loads were delivered to the 1st Reform church in Little Falls NJ. She also wanted to thank anyone who made copies of the shopping list to hand out to the customers that day it was greatly appreciated. She said everyone who handed out shopping lists, loaded up carts, collected the food or took food to the food pantries she was so grateful for all of you. \$610 was collected that day and that money was converted into Shoprite gift cards and those gift cards were split up evenly and was given to all the churches listed from before. Chuck mentioned how next year they will look into getting another church with a food pantry to help out since no more St. Agnes and St. James did not want the food, we collected they refused it. If you know of any other churches who needs food, please let Chuck or Claudine know. It was a great day and very successful.

• Fifty-Fifty: Claudine Stefanelli

Claudine was absent so Carmen mentioned how she had done it in the past and it was very successful so Claudine will be doing it again in the fall

• Food Pantry: Carmen Gaita, Patricia Pelonero

Both were absent so Carmen mentioned how we support many local food pantries in the Passaic Valley Area.



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• **Golf Outing: Fred DeMarco**

Fred reported that there were 10 teams signed up and he got some more teams tonight so total now is 14 teams signed up. John Barberi mentioned that there are 28 sponsors so far paid. Last year we had 65 sponsors so please it is very important that everyone visit as local business or a place that you eat at frequently to ask if they want to be a hole sponsor. It is \$100 to be a hole sponsor. John mentioned this is how we make our money from the Sponsors. Fred mentioned we need to guarantee 72 golfers so please ask everyone you know if they are interested in golfing to join us. The goal Fred and his committee has set is to make is \$10,000 on Sponsors so again let's hit this goal. Last year we made \$7,500 so we can do more this year. Fred said if you were a hole monitor last year you will be staying the same for thus year and to please see Fred if you would like to help that day at the golf outing.

• **Holiday Cheer: Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti, Carmen Gaita**

No report however for the new potential members Joe Benvenuti reported that we help 5 needy families for Christmas time by gifting them with \$500 each in gift cards to Kohls, Shoprite, and target to help them with their Christmas needs. The money comes from a budgeted line item and from donations from the members.

• **Overseas Soldier Program: Evelyn Tosi / Roni Corrado**

Roni reported that this program is for current overseas soldiers. It was started in 2008 and is a program that our chapter has been doing for close to 20 years. It's for military people who are in warzone and may need food. Once the club knows of a soldier who is in need, they soldier gets us a list of things they need, and the club donates the food or snacks and then the box is delivered to the warzone. There are currently no soldiers that we know of who are in a war zone. If anyone knows of someone in the war and who may need our assistance, please let Roni know and we will get an address where we can send a box of goods to that soldier's group. Evelyn Tosi mentioned her grandson Major Josh Lacey was flown into Germany and he was extended for 5 months. And she has one in El Paso Texas supporting Ice and the rest are all home safe and sound.



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- **Scholarship: Mike Russo**
 - Mike mentioned that this year 14 scholarships will be given out to deserving seniors in the amount of \$1,000 each. In addition, there will be two Brian Piccolo Athletic Awards given out. This year to cut back on costs there will be no gifts given for the Brian Piccolo awardees just the recognition of receiving the award and being honored that night. There also will be no Study abroad awards given out this year. The Scholarship dinner is on June 14th at the Barnyard for a cost of \$60. There will be a cocktail hour for members only. Mike mentioned we did submit a candidate for the district scholarship and that student is Dante Benvenuti. Mike said we are hoping our candidate wins the district as we have had winners from our chapter in the past. Mike said it's a great night so please all members come it's a great night for the chapter as well.
- **Study Abroad: Cav. Joe Agresti PNP**

No report

Non-Fundraising Committees

- **Flag Raising: Steve Pelonero PNP**

No report Carmen mentioned how Steve always does the Flag raising with the Town of Little Falls and its always a great turnout and the club will be participating in it again this year.
- **Good & Welfare: Joe Benvenuti** No report
- **Italian Heritage: Angelo Verrone**

No report however Angelo mentioned he will be kicking something off in September



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- **Membership: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**

Christina reported that our chapter has 49 members with an average age of 67. The meeting in March had 51% attendance. Christina also noted that two members are celebrating their birthdays this month of April: Philip Polizotto and Michael Carbonelli . There are flyers on the tables to get in potential new members by inviting them to come to our June 24th pizza and dessert meeting. If you know anyone who is interested in joining our chapter of UNICO please bring them to the June meeting. A copy of the flyer is already on the Passaic Valley UNICO Facebook page Thank you Steve Pelonero for doing that. Also starting June 1st flyers will be posted in Quick Check, Bella Notte, Shoprite, Stop and Shop etc. to get the word out. Also, color copies were made and given to Mike Russo to put out on the tables at the Scholarship dinner to try and get some of the parents of the award winners to possibly come to the pizza meeting that night. Please take a flyer and spread the word.

- **Newsletter & Website: Steve Pelonero PNP**

No report Steve Absent

- **Public Relations: Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado**

Christina mentioned how it was a good moth of publicity the article with Pastor Emily from 1st Reform church receiving her check for the \$1,000 grant the Roni had helped pastor Emily receive was published in both the PV today and the Italian Tribune paper. Also Holy Angels church bulletin published an write up with me and Mike V who runs the food pantry as well as a write up thanking Claudine and our chapter for the food we donated. Christina and Roni thanked the Italian Tribune and also the Passaic Valley Today newspapers for always running out articles.

District and National Events

- **District News**

Carmen mentioned in June the winner of the district scholarship will be the host chapter for that meeting.



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- **National News** ○ Chapter President Carmen reported, the national convention will be held in July in Orlando Florida. The 2027 convention will be held in Nashville Tennessee.

Old Business

Carmen reported that the sports banners for Softball and baseball in both Totowa and Little Falls are up on the fields so if you go to any softball or baseball games in those towns, please check out our banner. Carmen said how it was mentioned by Tommy Breitwiser to get a float together for the town wide Christmas parade which is the largest in NJ and it will be great to have our chapters name out there. There is still plenty of time to work on this and if you would like to help Tommy please reach out and let him know.

New Business

- None

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made at 8:29 pm,
by Joyce O Hara and Joe Benvenuti
All were in favor.

Respectfully Taken by

Christina Castillo: Chapter member

Meeting Attendance

The year's meeting attendance on the following two pages >>



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| | | | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Total |
|----|-------------|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| | | | 24 | 20 | 0 | n/a | 28 | 26 | 20 | 23 | 13 | 0 | |
| | Total | Members | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Agresti | Joseph | 1 | | . | . | 1 | 1 | | | . | | 3 |
| 2 | Barbieri | John | | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 3 | Barone | Joseph | | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 4 | Benvenuti | Joseph | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 5 | Benvenuti | Salvatore | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | . | | 6 |
| 6 | Bifalco | Mark | | | . | . | . | . | . | . | . | | 0 |
| 7 | Breitwieser | Thomas | | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | . | | 4 |
| 8 | Capalbo | Frank | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | . | | 5 |
| 9 | Capizzi | Gerard | . | . | . | . | . | 1 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| 10 | Carbonelli | Michael | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 5 |
| 11 | Carrubba | Michael | | | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| 12 | Castillo | Christina | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 7 |
| 13 | Cervino | Peter | 1 | | . | . | | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| 14 | Cestone | James | | | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 4 |
| 15 | Cestone | Julianna | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 16 | Chomko | Jean | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 17 | Corrado | Roni | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 7 |
| 18 | Criscione | Carmen | 1 | | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 19 | DeLuccia | Alexa | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 20 | DeLuccia | Alexander | | | . | . | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| 21 | DeMarco | Fred | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 7 |
| 22 | Dransfield | Daniel | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 23 | Dransfield | Grace | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |



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|----|------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| 24 | Eoepchino | Kyle | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 25 | Ermolowich | William | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 26 | Gaeta | Gerardo | 1 | | . | . | | | 1 | | | | 2 |
| 27 | Gaita | Jessica | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 28 | Gaita Jr | Carmen | 1 | 1 | . | . | | | | | | | 2 |
| 29 | Klosik | Emilia | 1 | | . | . | | | | | 1 | | 2 |
| 30 | Kribs | Ken | | 1 | . | . | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| 31 | Longo | Pete | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 32 | Lynch | Peter | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 33 | Morano | John | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 7 |
| 34 | OHara | Joyce | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 7 |
| 35 | Pelonero | Patricia | 1 | | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | . | | 5 |
| 36 | Pelonero | Steven | 1 | | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | . | | 4 |
| 37 | Polizzotto | Philip | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 38 | Ponchak | Bruce | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 6 |

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May 13th, 2026 ~ 2nd Wednesday

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| 39 | Ragusso | Michaela | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 40 | Ricca | Carl | . | . | . | . | . | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| 41 | Russo | Chuck | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 42 | Russo | Jillian | | | . | . | | | | | | | 0 |
| 43 | Russo | Michael | | 1 | . | . | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| 44 | Sabatino | Anthony | x | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 6 |
| 45 | Sisti | Gisella | 1 | 1 | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 7 |



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|----|------------|----------|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| 46 | Stefanelli | Claudine | 1 | | . | . | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | . | | 5 |
| 47 | Tosi | Evelyn | 1 | | . | . | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | 4 |
| 48 | Verrone | Angelo | 1 | | . | . | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 4 |
| 49 | Youngster | Henry | | | . | . | | | | | 1 | | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| Total | Members | 24 | 20 | . | . | 28 | 26 | 20 | 23 | | | 25 |
| Total | Guests | 3 | 0 | . | . | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | | | 2 |
| Total at | Meeting | 24 | 0 | . | . | 30 | 26 | 20 | 26 | | | 27 |
| Meeting | Location | CA | Biga | . | . | CA | HC | Biga | CA | | | HC |
| Percent | at meeting | 49% | 41% | 0% | n/a | 61% | 53% | 41% | 53% | 0% | | 0% |

| Guests | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------|----------|---|---|----------|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| Angela | Sabetta | 1 | 0 | . | . | . | . | . | | | | |
| Terry | DelGuidice | 1 | 0 | . | . | . | . | . | | | | |
| Anthony | Sabatino | 1 | 0 | . | . | . | . | . | | | | |
| Gerard | Capizzi | . | . | . | . | 1 | . | . | | | | |
| Carl | Ricca | . | . | . | . | 1 | . | . | | | | |