

# Passaic Valley UNICO

## Our January 2026 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="http://www.facebook.com/PassaicValleyUNICO">www.facebook.com/PassaicValleyUNICO</a>
Instagram Page	<a href="http://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***

***Good Morning All***

***2025 has come and gone, and we are all looking for a safe and healthy 2026.***

***I hope everyone and their families had a great and festive holiday season.***

***As we move forward coming into the New Year, I see our chapter coming together collectively. Working as a team has ALWAYS been our strong point. As you know, our chapter is one part of a large wheel which has always kept turning in a positive way.***

***We have our UNICO Money Raffle that we will be picking the winner at our first meeting of 2026. Last year's Superbowl Raffle was a huge success, and we will be running it again this year.***

***January's meeting will be held at Arturo's Restaurant. Little Falls on Wednesday January 14th - If you would like to partake for dinner, please be there by 6:15pm. The actual meeting will be at 8PM. Please email John Barbieri for your dinner attendance.***

***On behalf of the Executive Board, we want to take a moment to thank you all for your continued support and looking forward to working with all of you to help make another successful and fun filled year.***

***Respectfully Carmen Criscione- Chapter President***



## January Birthdays

01-15 Patricia Pelonero

## 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. Or please just bring your items to any chapter meeting

## Upcoming Events – Local and National

**January 14, 2026 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday ~ Monthly Chapter Meeting at Casa Arturo in Little Falls ... 6:30 dinner ... BYO**

**January 15, 2026 ~ Thursday ~ NJ District IV Meeting 7 pm ... At the Chandler in Belleville ~ hosted by the Belleville Chapter ... \$45.00 ... Our Chapter president needs to reply to District Gover with how many will attend**



Passaic Valley UNICO chapter members gathered at the UNICO National District IV annual Christmas Party, "A Special Party for Exceptional People", held at the Brownstone in Paterson. Each year District IV sponsors an evening of dinner, dancing, songs, and a visit with gifts from Santa for our special needs friends. This year District IV received support from the Foundabilities Foundation. District IV chapters include: Bloomfield, Cedar Grove, Montclair, North Haledon, Passaic-Clifton, Passaic Valley, Pequannock, Sparta, and Wayne. Standing to the right of Santa is UNICO National President Joseph Nasello from the Saddle Brook Chapter

### **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  
 I – Integrity  
 C – Charity  
 O – Opportunity**

**"Service Above Self"**



## 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

## Italian Lesson

- Bread ~ pane*
- Cheese ~ formaggio*
- Fruit ~ frutta*
- Vegetable ~ verdura*
- Meat ~ carne*
- Egg ~ uovo*
- Milk ~ latte*
- Rice ~ riso*
- Fish ~ pesce*
- Chicken ~ pollo*
- Salad ~ insalata*
- Butter ~ burro*
- ... (More on page 5)

## 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 2025-2026 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 2025-2026 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

### Our 2025-2026 Chapter Delegates

President Carmen Criscione ... 59 Members (President +3)

- Delegate: Sal Benvenuti
- Delegate: Patricia Pelonero
- Delegate: open
- Delegate: Joseph Agresti as PNP
- Delegate: Steven Pelonero as PNP

(Delegates represent our chapter and are urged to attend our district, regional, and national meetings, especially if a vote is called for)

### Our 2025-2026 Fundraising Committee Heads

Food Pantry .....	Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero
Golf Outing .....	Fred DeMarco
Holiday Cheer .....	Carmen Gaita, Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti
Overseas Armed Service Care Packages .....	Roni Corrado, Evelyn Tosi
Raffle ~ 50/50 .....	Claudine Stefanelli

### Non-Fundraising Committee Heads

Community Service Day (April) .....	Claudine Stefanelli
Good and Welfare .....	Joe Benvenuti
Heritage .....	Angelo Verrone
Italian Flag Raising .....	Steve Pelonero PNP
Membership .....	Christina Castillo, Roni Corrado
Newsletter .....	Steve Pelonero PNP
Publicity .....	Christina Castillo & Roni Corrado
Scholarship / Brian Piccolo .....	Michael Russo
Study Abroad College Grant Chair .....	Cav. Joseph Agresti PNP
Website .....	Steven Pelonero PNP
Website Member Section .....	John Barbieri

## *Merry Christmas Everyone*

### **Our Toys for Tots Committee**

*Thank you to everyone who donated the toys and to our chapter committee members who put this all together.*

*From the left: Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti, Fred DeMarco, Anthony Sabatino,  
Mike Carrubba, Mike Russo, Tom Breitweiser, Ken Kribs*



### **Christmas Cheer Committee**

*Pictured below are 3 of the 5 gift bags that will be on their way to needy families in the Passaic Valley community. Through the generosity of chapter members, 5 families will receive gift cards totaling \$500 to each family. Hats off to the chapter members for their continued support of this annual endeavor.*



# Italian Language Lesson

*Hello*

*Goodbye*

*Ciao*

*Arrivederci*

*How are you?*

*Fine, thank you*

*I'm fine*

*And you?*

*Come stai*

*Bene, grazie*

*Sto bene*

*E tu?*

*Good morning*

*Good afternoon*

*Good evening*

*Good night*

*Buongiorno*

*Buon pomeriggio*

*Buonasera*

*Buonanotte*

*My name is ...*

*Nice to meet you*

*Thank you*

*Thank you very much*

*You're welcome*

*Please*

*Mi chiamo ...*

*Piacere di conoscerti*

*Grazie*

*Grazie mille*

*Prego*

*Per favore*

*Sorry / Excuse me*

*I don't understand*

*Do you speak English*

*How much does it cost*

*Where is ...?*

*See you soon!*

*I'm hungry*

*I'm thirsty*

*Scusa*

*Non capisco*

*Parli inglese*

*Quanto costa*

*Dove si trova ...?*

*A presto!*

*Ho fame*

*Ho sete*

## *Italian Heritage Photo*

### *From the 2026 UNICO Heritage Calendar*

### *Celebrating the month of January*



#### *Castello Aragonese Ischia (The Aragonese Castle)*

*This photo was taken by a UNICO Point Pleasant Chapter Member*

*The castle was built on a small island at the northern end of the Gulf of Naples, Italy. The first castle was built in 474 BC. At the same time, two towers were built to watch for enemy fleets. Around the year of 1700, there were about 2000 families lived on the inlet with about 13 churches.*

# Where is your Family From?



## Committee & Comments

### Food Pantries ~ Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero

*Let's start the new year helping others. Please consider bringing some non-perishables to any one of our Volunteer Food Pantries or just contact our committee (Carmen and/or Patricia) ~~~ "Let's help others"*

Sponsors ~ Please try to support all of our supporters. They are all listed on the following pages.

### Website Member Section Update ~ John Barbieri

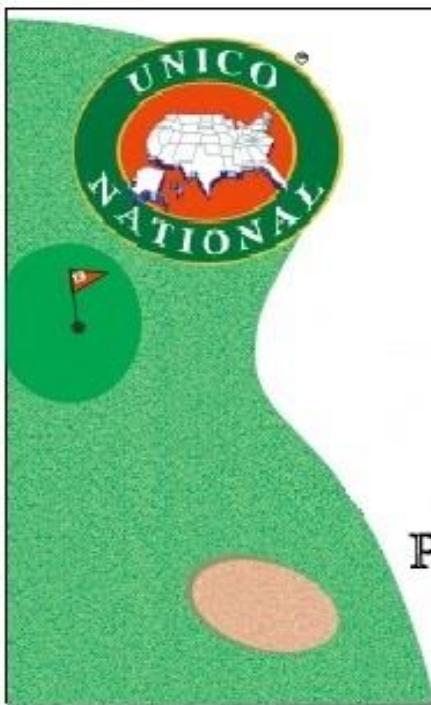
*The Member Section of the Chapter website is back up and running. Please go to the chapter website and click on the "Member Section" and sign in to see a lot more than what is on the website.*

### First VP Message ~ Joe Benvenuti

*I want to wish all our members and their families a very blessed Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year to all. It's been a very good start to this year, and we want to keep that going into the new year as well. I want to thank everyone for their generosity for the Christmas Cheer gifts. We raised just over the \$1000.00 from our members. Along with the club's donation we were able to give out 5 cheer gift bags with gift cards to Shop-Rite, Kohls and Target for needy families worth \$500.00 each. Thanks to Roni who did a great job putting the gift bags together for us. The 50/50 raffle is going strong and will be pulled at our meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup> at Casa Arturo. If anyone still has tickets to sell, please contact myself, Joe Benvenuti or Claudine so we can get them sold and please turn in any money you have, as soon as you can to either one of us so we know what the price will be for the 14<sup>th</sup>. Please make every effort to attend this January 14th meeting to kick off the 2026 year for our chapter.*

*Thank you and God bless ~~~ JoeB*





**Passaic Valley Chapter**

**Sponsor**

If you would like to be a  
PV UNICO Sponsor  
Please contact us  
@  
PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com

## 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.

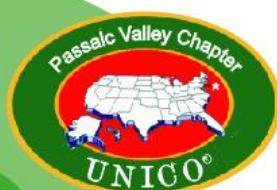
UNICO National has funded major research in Cooley's Anemia and Mental Health. Through its association with the Jimmy Valvano Foundation, it has funded over 10, \$50,000 grants to help find a cure for Cancer. These worthy areas continue to receive generous support from the chapters and its members for 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 2025/2026 Sponsors

(From July 1, 2026 ~ June 30, 2026)

**Thank you to “All” of our Sponsors**  
**Platinum Corporate Sponsor**

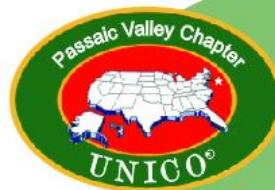


1244 McBride Ave.  
Woodland Park

**Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor**



[www.LegalLeafNJ.com](http://www.LegalLeafNJ.com)



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## Gold Level Sponsors



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UNICO**



Peter Graziano



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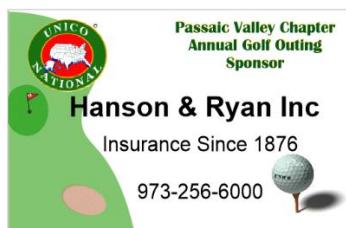
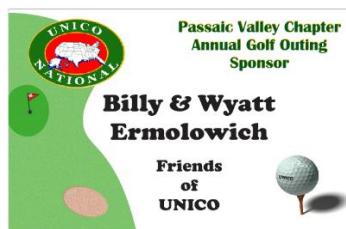
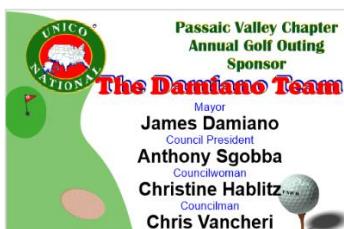
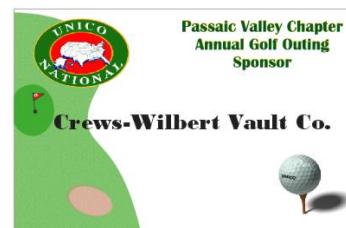
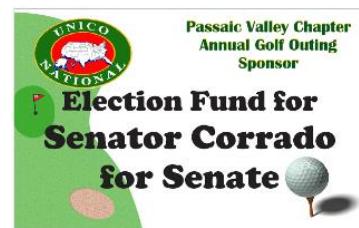
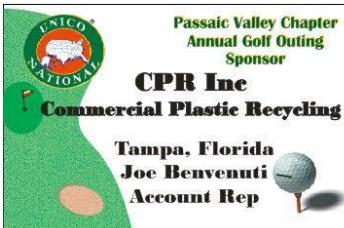
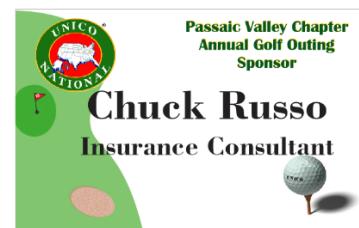
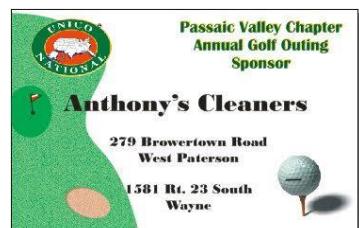
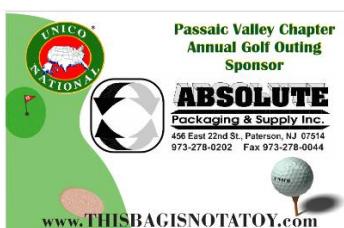


# Our 2025/2026 Sponsors

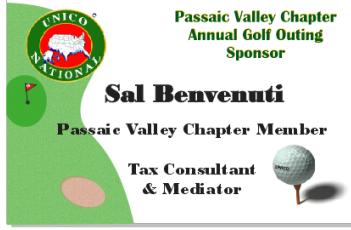
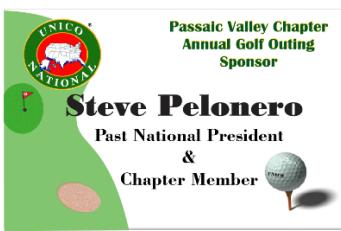
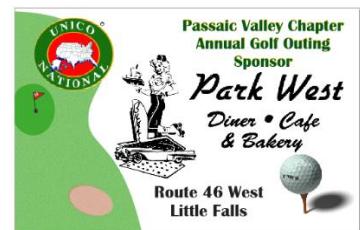
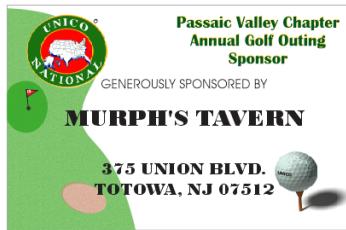
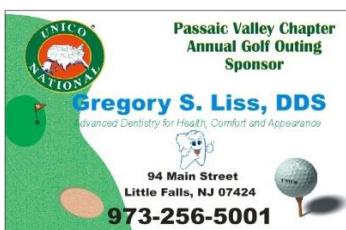
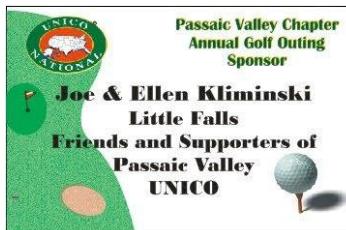
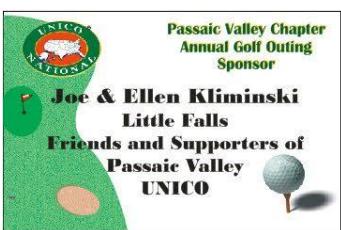
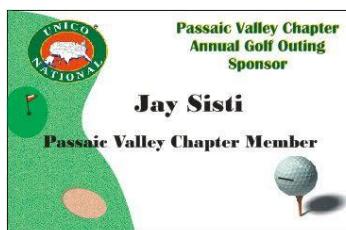
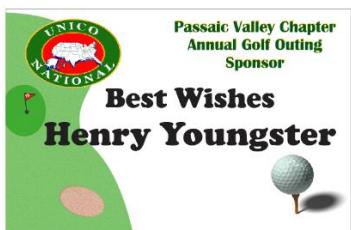
You too can be a proud sponsor of our Passaic Valley UNICO Chapter  
It is never too late.

You will be in every newsletter for our 2024-2025 year.

And, if received early enough, you will also have a sign on one of the 18 holes at our Annual Golf Outing



# Our 2025/2026 Sponsors



# Our 2025/2026 Sponsors

