

March 2026  
Year 23  
Issue 242

# Passaic Valley UNICO

## Our March 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***

***Happy March***

***I believe that as of this writing, the Olympics have come and gone - Possibly.***

***Either way it was GREAT to see the USA compete. Which means that our upcoming golf outing in June will be a competition for many individuals.***

***The golf committee is in high gear and working extremely hard to make this one of the best outings ever. Please reach out to your friends and businesses for scholarships and foursomes. Let's hit the ball long and totally enjoy the day.***

***Kudos to the committee.***

***It's truly great to see that we are getting more members every month and that they are getting involved in our programs. Grazie for your help.***

***The Scholarship Committee has been meeting and have their job cut out to recognize and confirm their chosen applicants. Not an easy task, but every year they do a phenomenal job.***

***On behave of the Executive Board, we wish to thank you for your on-going and continued support. This is what makes our chapter great. Enjoy life.***

***Respectfully***

***Carmen Criscione - Chapter President***



## March Birthdays

03-07 Joe Barone  
03-23 Alexa DeLuccia  
03-27 Bill Ermolowich

## 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

March 8, 2026 ~ Sunday ~ Daylight Saving Time (clocks ahead 1 hour)

March 11, 2026 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday ~ Monthly Chapter Meeting ~ AN email will go out with the place and time ~ Please check also on our chapter website for more information

March 17, 2026 ~ Tuesday ~ St. Patricks' Day

March 19, 2026 ~ Thursday ~ NJ District IV Meeting ~ Portabello's in Oakland ~ \$45 per person ~ Must RSVP to Chapter President

April 18, 2026 ~ Saturday ~ Community Service Day ~ Food Pantry Collection at ShopRite Little Falls

April 24, 2026 ~ Friday ~ NJ District IV Pasta Dinner for our Special Need Friends ~ Wayne PAL ~ \$25 per person ~ BYO

~~~~~

## Welcome to our two new members

Sworn in at the February meeting by Chapter President Carmen Criscione (left) Carl Ricca (Center) from Totowa, and Gerard Capizzi (right) from Little Falls



## 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**

- |        |         |
|--------|---------|
| Black  | Nero    |
| Blue   | Blu     |
| Brown  | Marrone |
| Gray   | Grigio  |
| Green  | Verde   |
| Orange | Arancio |
| Pink   | Rosa    |
| Purple | Viola   |
| Red    | Rosso   |
| White  | Bianco  |
| Yellow | Giallo  |

... (More on page 4)

**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 ... 49 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

# *Italian Language Lesson*

|                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <i>FAST</i>           | <i>Veloce</i>      |
| <i>SLOW</i>           | <i>Lento</i>       |
| <i>SMALL</i>          | <i>Piccolo</i>     |
| <i>BIG</i>            | <i>Grande</i>      |
| <i>SIMPLE</i>         | <i>Semplice</i>    |
| <i>COMPLICATED</i>    | <i>Complicato</i>  |
| <i>RICH</i>           | <i>Ricco</i>       |
| <i>POOR</i>           | <i>Povero</i>      |
| <i>OPEN</i>           | <i>Aperto</i>      |
| <i>CLOSED</i>         | <i>Chiuso</i>      |
| <i>FULL</i>           | <i>Pieno</i>       |
| <i>EMPTY</i>          | <i>Vuoto</i>       |
| <i>I'M SORRY</i>      | <i>Mi dispiace</i> |
| <i>EXCUSE ME</i>      | <i>Mi scusi</i>    |
| <i>THANK YOU</i>      | <i>Grazie</i>      |
| <i>YOU'RE WELCOME</i> | <i>Prego</i>       |
| <i>I LIKE IT</i>      | <i>Mi piace</i>    |

*Italian Heritage Photo*  
*From the 2026 UNICO Heritage Calendar*  
*Celebrating the month of March*



***Ruins in the city of Paestum Salerno Campagna Italy***

*(Photo was taken by a Binghamton NY Chapter Member)*

*Paestum was a major ancient Greek city on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea.*

*The ruins are famous for their three ancient Greek temples in the Doric order dating from about 550 to 450 BC and are currently in an excellent state of preservation.*

*The city walls and amphitheatre are largely intact, and the bottom of the walls of many other structures remain, as well as paved roads.*

*The site is open to the public, and there is a modern national museum within the area.*

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# Where is your Family From?



## Committee & Comments

### Food Pantries ~ Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero

*Let's continue helping others. Please consider bringing one or more non-perishables to any chapter meeting, or to one of our Volunteer Food Pantries or even just contact our committee (Carmen and/or Patricia) ~~~ "Let's always help others ~ Especially during this Lenten Season."*

### Membership ~ Christina Castillo

*We now have 49 total members: 45 regular paying dues members and 4 Student/Scholarship recipients. We are happy to welcome Carl and Gerard to our chapter.*

### Pasta Dinner ~ PNP Joe Agresti

*If anyone plans on going to the District Pasta Dinner for our Special Needs Family, and if you would like to volunteer to help serve for a short while, please let me know at the March meeting. Thank you for your service*

### Publicity ~ Christina Castillo

*The chapter thanks the Passaic Valley Today Paper for running our events and ad articles n their paper.*

### 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 and sign up to help on one of our many committees.*

## **SAVE THE DATES**

~~ SUNDAY ~ JUNE 14, 2026 ~~

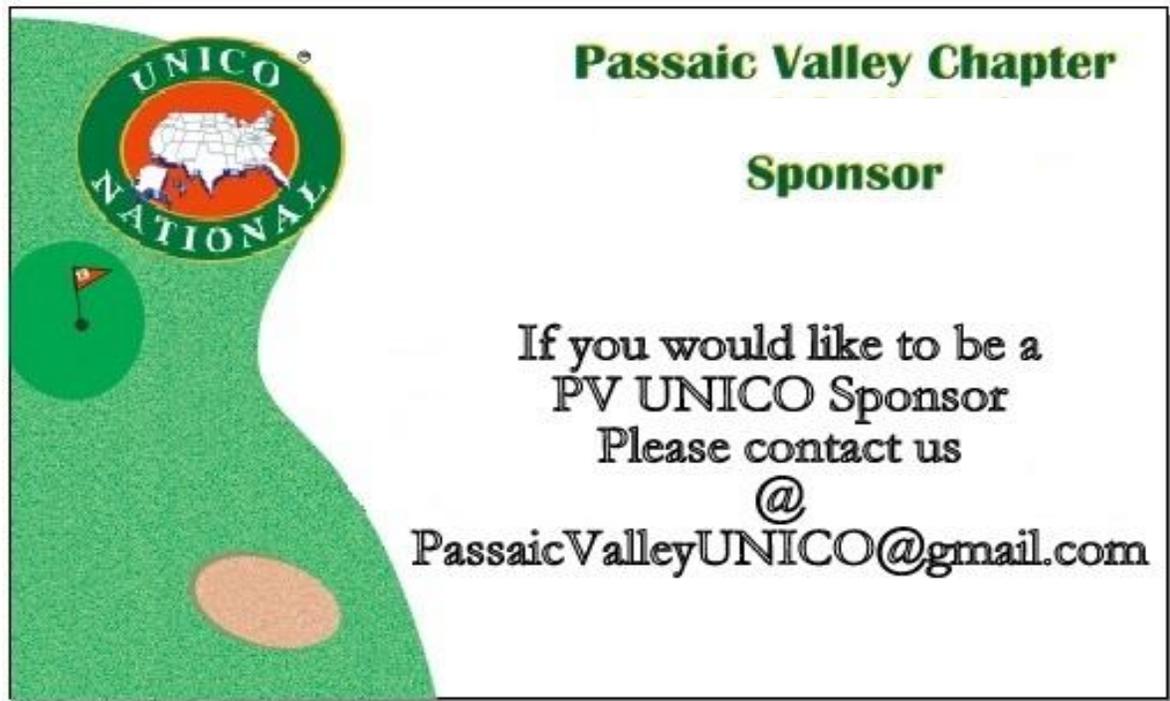
OUR ANNUAL

SCHOLARSHIP AND BRIAN PICCOLO AWARDS DINNER

~~ MONDAY ~ JUNE 22, 2026 ~~

THINK GOLF WEATHER

OUR ANNUAL GOLF OUTING SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER



### **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 ~ Torracco 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.

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

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