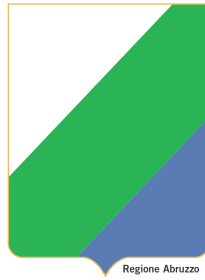


**Abruzzo Earthquake Fund of NEO**



**Abruzzo Forte & Gentile**

November 16, 2009

To: Northeast Ohio Italian American Clubs  
From: Abruzzo Earthquake Fund of NEO  
RE: Status of our Project

This past spring more than 20 Northeast Ohio Italian American Organizations banded together for a common cause – to provide financial aide to the victims of the devastating earthquake that hit the Abruzzo region of Italy in April.

Early meetings of the committee helped establish direction and strategy for the newly-formed, non-profit organization – the Abruzzo Earthquake Fund of Northeast Ohio. It was determined at that time that we would work together to raise funds, identify appropriate contribution targets for our donation and communicate with the Italian American community in Northeast Ohio to keep you informed of our progress. We decided that sub-committees should be formed to address four operating areas – merchandise sales, event planning, publicity and disbursement of funds.

We recognized, immediately, that the most profound question facing us was not how to raise the funds – but where to make our investments to best help those in need. We fully realized that, as rebuilding began, the needs were dynamic – ever changing. We chose, therefore, to concentrate our early efforts on the generation of revenue in the early phases of our work – and address disbursement of funds as our financial contributions reached a more impactful level.

To demonstrate commitment and provide ‘seed’ money to launch our campaign, each Italian American club was urged to contribute \$100 to the Fund. We used this money to buy Abruzzo Earthquake merchandise for resale. Groups of volunteers attended area Italian American festivals and sold t-shirts, wristbands and magnets. Many of the Clubs also sold merchandise at their individual events and functions, too. More than \$3,000 was raised from those efforts, alone.

On July 11 the Home Family Club hosted a dinner dance on the west side of Cleveland that raised more than \$11,000 for the cause. On September 13 the Wickliffe Italian American Club hosted another fundraising event on the east side which resulted in another \$20,000 being raised that day. Both efforts demonstrated the interest in and ability of local Italian American clubs to work together and support one another in a worthwhile cause.

Additional personal contributions including \$1,000 raised by the Solon High School Italian Club brings our donation total to \$36,921 to date. (It should be noted that 100% of all funds generated will go towards the assistance of the victims of the earthquake. There are no administrative costs drawing upon those funds.)

Future plans for fundraising include a wine tasting event that will be held in late February. Details on that function have yet to be finalized.

As for the distribution of funds...at the November 9<sup>th</sup>. 2009 meeting, a number of proposed investments were put forth by members. The Disbursement Sub-committee is committed to investigate these possibilities, identify and report back their recommendations to the general committee at the next meeting (scheduled for January 11<sup>th</sup>. 2010). At that time, if the Abruzzo Earthquake Fund of NEO committee feels that the recommendations are valid, a vote will be taken and steps will be taken to:

- a) distribute all of the funds
- b) distribute part of the funds
- c) distribute the funds in phases

POSSIBLE AREAS OF DISTRIBUTION include:

1. Portable defibrillators used in emergency situations to jump start the heart. Donations would go to *protezioni civile* (emergency workers) approximate cost, \$1400 each
2. Emergency facility for multiple towns
3. A proposed rehabilitation center that would service the needs of 5-6 communities.
4. Student training for rehabilitation centers, assisted living, etc.
5. Sponsoring or investing in trade/vocational schools for rebuilding skills (carpentry, masons, etc.)
6. Rebuilding of an autism center
7. Student help with funds for school books
8. Scholarships and exchange student programs
9. Rebuilding of student dormitories.
10. Rebuilding of schools
11. Rebuilding of churches
12. Helping businesses to remain viable

For any other viable plans to be considered by the Disbursement Sub-committee, please send to [davidecotugno@baranellolodge.com](mailto:davidecotugno@baranellolodge.com) no later than January 1, 2010.

Any ideas **must** have specifics such as: Italian contact information and location of need, purpose of funds, etc.

The Abruzzo Earthquake Fund of Northeast Ohio is committed to investing a full year's time in this venture (through April 2010), evaluating our progress and the changing needs in Abruzzo at that time to determine if and how we will proceed from that point.

Anyone interested in attending our meetings or taking an active role in our efforts should contact Chairman Dennis Castiglione at [dcastiglione@migi.com](mailto:dcastiglione@migi.com) or 440/781-2763.