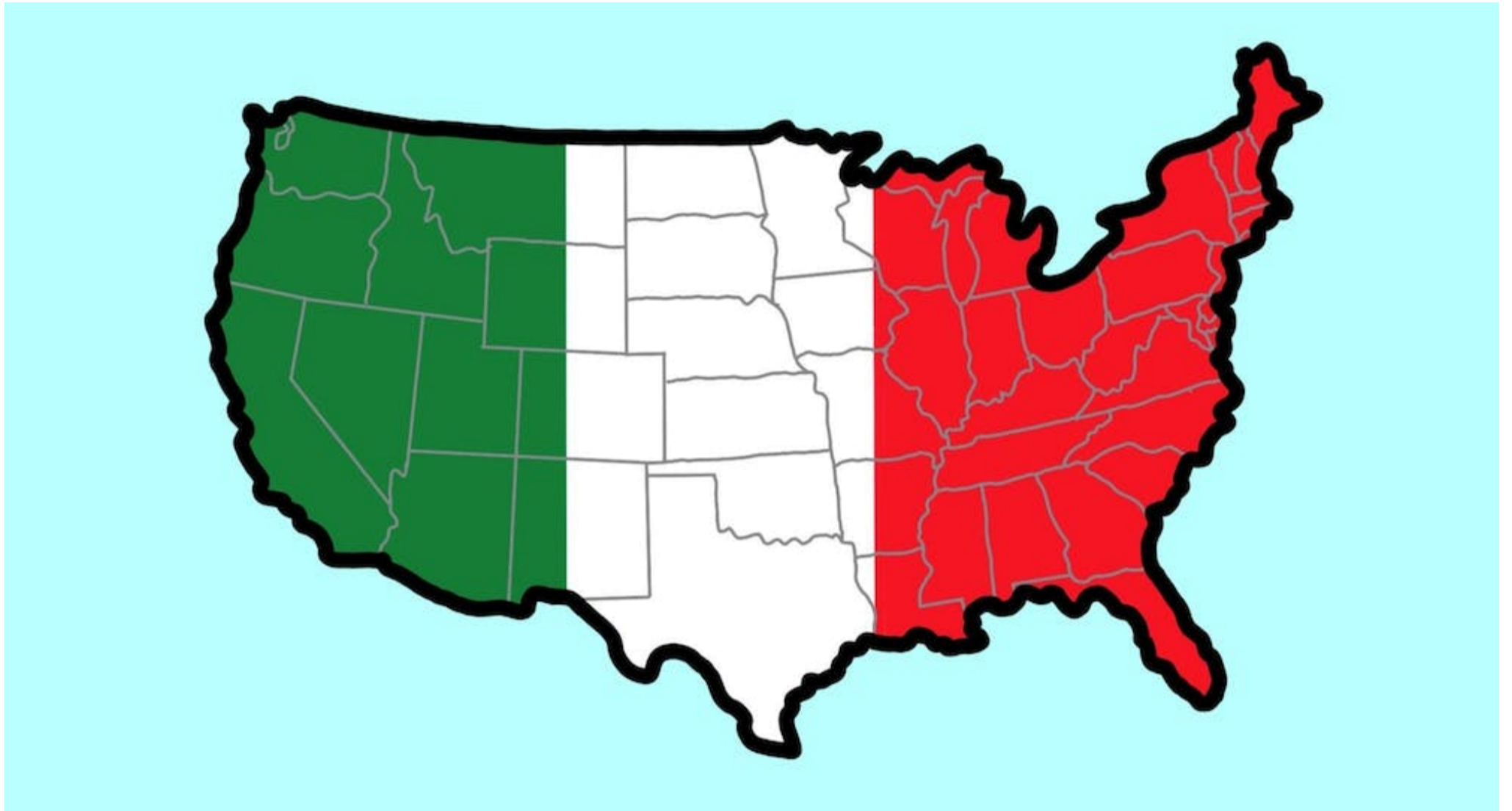


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# Celebrating Italian-American Heritage Month on-campus and beyond

[Kyle O'Connor](#)

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Photo by [Abbey Ross](#) | The State News

October marks a period of cultural recognition for Italian Americans across the country.

During Italian-American Heritage and Culture Month, Italians reminisce and reflect on the accomplishments and accolades of Italian Americans. Simultaneously, Italians use this month to focus on preserving and celebrating their culture.

This celebration of culture and lineage is evident within the student community at MSU, specifically the Italian Club.

“We try to incorporate the language into the meetings that we do to expose people to the language,” social relations and policy senior Emily Goschka said. “We also try to teach about the culture through fun and engaging meetings such as game night where we play Italian games or geography night when we teach people about the different regions of Italy and some facts about the regions.”

Goschka started her term as vice president of the Italian club at the beginning of this year.

“As someone whose family has been in the United States for a few generations now, Italian-American Heritage Month is a way to connect to my heritage,” Goschka said.

Recently, the Italian Club held an event to raise awareness for common global issues that also occur in Italy. The club helped host a discussion about environmental sustainability in Italy with the MSU Department of Romance and Classical Studies, as well as the Center for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies.

This event featured the Italian Consul, Allegra Baistrocchi, who runs the Italian Consulate in Detroit, an office that represents a foreign country for the purpose of issuing visas, renewing passports or processing citizenship applications for those traveling from Italy to Michigan.

[Carmen De Lorenzo](#), instructor and coordinator in the Italian Program at MSU, helps advise and lead the Italian club. De Lorenzo also serves as the Summer Education Abroad Director for [student ventures](#) to Ferrara, Italy.

“During this month, I organize and attend activities and events to showcase Italian-American culture,” De Lorenzo said. “It’s also an opportunity for Italian Americans and others to reflect on the impact of Italian immigrants and their descendants on American society, from art and science to cuisine and politics.”

Working at MSU for almost 20 years, De Lorenzo emphasizes the significance of hosting these events, as they are a reminder of cultural diversity and the enduring contributions of immigrant communities to the United States. She said these events provide a space and time to celebrate the shared heritage of Italian Americans and to appreciate the diversity of the American experience.

While away from the classroom, De Lorenzo speaks the Italian language with friends, family, and within her own household as a method of cultural preservation.

Not only is Italian-American Heritage Month celebrated on MSU’s campus, but also city-wide.

“The Italian American Club of Lansing celebrates Italian heritage month by hosting ‘Italian Dinner Night,’ or Una sera Italiana, an authentic pasta dinner,” president of the city cultural, [Tony De Luca](#), said.

De Luca is approaching his 20th year as president of the [Lansing IAC](#) and holds other positions within other committees that highlight Italian representation within the community.

“I am proud to serve on several organizations and committees that strives to maintain the beautiful Italian culture, traditions, and heritage: President of Italian American Club of Lansing, Commissioner on the Lansing Sister City Commission with an emphasis on Italy, and Counselor of COMITES of Detroit, a committee that represents Italian citizens in five Midwest states," De Luca said.

Though Italian-American Heritage Month is only one month out of the year, De Luca emphasizes his Italian pride to be year-round. He leads the Lansing IAC in hosting many events throughout the year such as authentic dinners, bowling events, picnics, celebration of certain patron saints' days, Valentine's Day event, bocce ball tournaments, and much more.

He said the club’s mission statement is to maintain and preserve the Italian culture, heritage, and traditions.

“I am proud of my Italian heritage," De Luca said. "As an immigrant to the United States, my family endured all the challenges and hurdles of coming to a new country without speaking the language, no transportation, and learning a new job occupation. To me, Italy is within me everyday."

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