

Lara Roseto '17

Corona d'Alloro Prize in Italian Studies

Growing up, I had a lot of exposure to Italian culture—especially Italian cuisine—as my family on my father's side is Italian. During visits to my grandmother's house, I always looked forward to being surrounded by my boisterous Italian family. When all of us got together, there would be tables lined with an array of Italian dishes, olive assortments, and freshly baked Italian bread from one of the bakeries down the street from her house in Queens, NY.

My appreciation of the culture and food that I experienced growing up fueled my interest in learning the Italian language. My high school didn't offer Italian, so my first exposure to the language, aside from hearing some Italian on visits to my grandmother's, was in college. The more I learned, the more my passion for the language grew. I have always been proud to be an Italian-American and so learning to speak Italian helped me to feel more connected with my Italian family and heritage. Italian is such a beautiful language and it has a unique musicality to it.

In my Italian class with Professor Leisawitz, I was exposed to Italian music and cinema and soon became interested in Italian films, especially those starring Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni. From there, my passions extended to performing Italian music, including an Italian aria "Se tu m'ami." I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to pursue learning Italian in college, as it gave me the opportunity to become more connected with Italian culture and to immerse myself in a beautiful language full of passion and grace.