



CONNECT

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Celebration of Heritage & Contributions

By: **Cedalia Ellis**

October marks Global Diversity Awareness Month. It's a month to celebrate and pay tribute to the diverse minds and beliefs worldwide that have influenced and made contributions to our culture and the world. Diversity is a large part of what makes life interesting. When it is present, there is an opportunity to learn. As individuals, we can have a narrow and biased view of the world, and diversity interrupts that and exposes our blind spots. So, as we continue to move forward and grow in cultural humility, take some time to broaden your view of the world by learning about cultures, populations, or religions that are different from your own

**DIVERSITY EQUITY &
ENGAGEMENT
NEWSLETTER**

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ITALIAN HERITAGE

Essential Values

1. Concept of Family is at the core of the Italian American experience. Their concept of family defines their roles: father supports; mother provides care and stability; and children are taught respect.
2. Strong Work Ethic: Italian Americans take pride in working hard and appreciating the fruits of their labor.
3. Catholic Faith, rooted in a 1000-year history, which honors the Virgin Mary in meaningful tradition and celebration.
4. Sense of Pride in who they are – pride in family's history and accomplishments; pride in values and faith; pride and gratitude in what they have been given.

Some Commonly Described Characteristics

1. Use hands a lot when talking
2. Talk loudly
3. Passionate
4. Big Families
5. Great Food

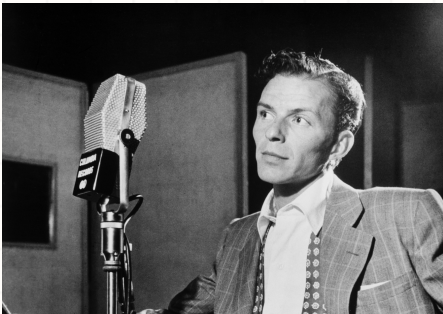


CONTRIBUTIONS OF ITALIANS WITH IN UNITED STATES



SPORTS

Sports like soccer, car racing, and even skiing are all popular activities in Italy. Soccer's popularity has grown worldwide, and today, there are millions of fans in America, largely due to the influence of Italian immigrants.



ENTERTAINERS

Along with a world-class meal, you could expect to see a great act, as well. Performing in restaurants is not uncommon and is how some of the most iconic entertainers like Frank Sinatra, Mel Torme, and Dean Martin got their start.



FOOD

Italians introduced their iconic foods to this new world. Pizza, pasta, marinara sauce, and meatballs are just a few of the delicious food contributions from Italian-Americans.

Spotlight on: Lynn Falcony



By: Terry Gish

In honor of Italian American Heritage Month, I decided to talk to Southwestern's own Lynn Falcony. Lynn began her career at Southwestern as a Recovery Assistant in 2019. She has since transferred to DCS Mulberry as a Skills Development Specialist.

Both of Lynn's paternal grandparents are Italian-American. Her grandmother, Elsie Cardon Falcony, was a first-generation American. Elsie's parents immigrated from Italy to New York before traveling westward and settling in Youngstown, Ohio. At the time, Youngstown was not exactly a melting pot. Immigrants were welcomed into the city and then welcome to live and worship in cultural segregation. The Brier Hill neighborhood in Youngstown was known as Little Italy.

Two generations and 500 miles past Brier Hill, Lynn still celebrates her Italian heritage. One thing that has carried over is an appreciation for Italian cuisine. Lynn enjoys making cavatelli pasta, breaded eggplant, and other dishes not available at the local Olive Garden. Lynn's extended family gathers together each Christmas Eve to celebrate the Feast of the Seven Fishes, an Italian tradition of preparing a banquet of seafood in honor of the holiday.

Lynn's greatest inheritance of Italian heritage, though, has been her family. Lynn says that some people stereotype Italian-American families as being like the ones they see on *The Sopranos* or *Everyone Loves Raymond*. However, the reality is more beautiful and less dramatic. According to Lynn, "Italian-American families that I know are very tight knit, gather regularly with one another, and love a whole lot."

When asked about the Italian-American community in Evansville, Lynn said, "It's grown a little bit. There's an Italian-American group that meets once a month and has dinner at people's homes. The Italians have found each other!" Still, Lynn says that she misses the observances of Italian culture that Evansville lacks.

Lynn said that being Italian-American has not been an issue in her employment with Southwestern. However, she does look forward to the DEE leading Southwestern's efforts to recognize and celebrate "the various cultures found within our community."

Thanks to Lynn for sharing her time, story, and heritage with us.

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH: OCTOBER 2021

Theme for NDEAM 2021: 'America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion'

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is held annually in October to commemorate the contributions of people with disabilities to America's workplaces and economy. This year's theme, "Recovery: Powered by Inclusion" magnifies the importance of inclusion in the work place. It also ensures that all people with disabilities have access to employment while communities across the United States recover from COVID 19.



Ways to Celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month

- **Training**- Dedicate time during NDEAM to train new and seasoned leaders on a variety of disability-related practices.
- **Attend a local NDEAM celebration** – Many organizations throughout the country commemorate NDEAM by hosting local events.
- **Participate in Disability Mentoring Day** – Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) is a nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities through hands-on career exploration and ongoing mentoring relationships.



National Disability Employment Month

by: Terry Gish

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. To celebrate, I wanted to take a look back at an amazing program that Southwestern had to help clients with severe and persistent mental illness earn a paycheck. Most of you have probably never heard of Jobs Club, but it's a proud part of our company's history.

Jobs Club was a program started in CSS in the 1980s as a way to offer employment to clients who were unable to obtain or maintain a job in the community. Jobs Club contracted with various companies to provide a particular service (e.g. labeling and mailing envelopes). The work then was done by a group of clients under the supervision of Southwestern staff members.

I spoke with Steve Pitt, who oversaw the program. Steve remembers it well. "From a psychosocial standpoint," he said, "it was the most therapeutic thing we ever came up with." It gave clients the opportunity to experience employment in a patient, understanding environment. In fact, Steve said there were "no questions asked" if a client had to step out of the program for a period of time to focus on their mental health.

Steve said the tasks performed by Jobs Club participants included:

- Labeling retirement newsletters for Whirlpool
- Mailing materials for Wesselman Nature Preserve
- Cleaning various offices, including the Private Industry Council office
- Distributing recycling bins
- Passing out flyers for Merry Maids
- Cutting rubber moldings to a specific length
- Performing yard work

However, there was really no limit to what the Jobs Club folks could or would do. For instance, they had the unenviable task of cleaning the Mesker Park Amphitheater after a raucous crowd watched the Rocky Horror Picture Show the night before. They also once buried a dog in a pet cemetery, per the request of the late pet's owner.

Clients who worked in Jobs Club were paid minimum wage, and most only worked a few hours each week. However, the sense of pride and self-worth that it instilled in them was immeasurable. "You held your head a little higher," Steve said of clients whose hard work literally paid off.

Jobs Club was a not-for-profit venture, but the money that was left after client payroll was put to good use. Leftover funds were collected and put toward taking participant trips to St. Louis and Cincinnati.

Jobs Club sometimes became a springboard toward more traditional employment. Steve said that Jobs Club could lead to a Vocational Rehabilitation referral. Indeed, it was increased work with Vocational Rehabilitation and the shift toward Supported Employment that eventually brought Jobs Club to a quiet end.

Still, Southwestern should look back with pride on the work that was done through Jobs Club. It was an innovative idea for its time, and it gave clients opportunities, rewards, and some lasting memories.



Southwestern Behavioral Healthcare

D.E.E. COMMITTEE

Let's Talk: MICROAGGRESSIONS

2021 CULTURAL HUMILITY SERIES: MICROAGGRESSIONS PANEL

To register, send an email to dee@southwestern.org with your name and agency's name. Panel link will be provided upon registration.

CEUs will be offered

14 OCTOBER 2021
12 PM - 1:30 PM

Virtual Panel Discussion via Zoom

The Indiana Behavioral Health and Human Services Licensing Board has approved this organization to provide Category I Continuing Education for LSW, LCSW, LMFT, and LMHC.



Katy Adams
President and CEO



Dr. Veronica Huggins
USI Professor of Social Work



Dr. Donna Culley
Director, Child and Family Services



Phillip Smith
Mobile Crisis Team Responder

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