

DAVINCI SOCIETY OF WAGNER COLLEGE

Honoring Italian roots, helping students succeed

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When 21-year-old Charles Poveromo was applying to college, he knew tuition costs wouldn't be cheap.

But when he toured Wagner College on Grymes Hill as a Tottenville High School student, he learned of the DaVinci Scholarship — given to an Italian-American student each year by the DaVinci Society of Wagner College.

"I probably wouldn't be at Wagner if it wasn't for the scholarship," he said.

"It was such a weight off my shoulder. I was seriously concerned about being able to go to school. I'm grateful for what they've done for me."

The society was established in 2000 to promote greater understanding of Italy and the contributions of Italian-Americans to the country's culture.

Each year since 2004, the society has held a scholarship fundraising dinner that honors prominent Italian-Americans whose work improves the quality of life on Staten Island and the surrounding region.

Three partners support the scholarship each year: the Columbus Citizens Foundation, the DaVinci Society and Wagner College.

Each partner contributes \$5,000 each year; the annual scholarship is valued at \$15,000.

Since the scholarship's inception, the society has awarded a total of \$600,000 in scholarships; \$200,000 from each partner.

"Wagner's DaVinci Society strengthens the link between Staten Island's first college, and its students, with the Island's Italian community," said Lee Manchester, director of media relations at Wagner College.

"We are deeply grateful for the support of its members."

The Columbus Citizens Foundation — a non-profit organization committed to fostering an appreciation of Italian-American heritage and achievement — chooses one student each year for the DaVinci Scholarship.

ITALIAN ROOTS

Poveromo said his family came from different areas of Italy, including Sicily and Naples.

Growing up, he said his dad was the stereotypical Italian-American from Brooklyn, while his mom's family followed the "off-the-beat Italian" traditions.

"I had a good mix of that; the culture with Sunday dinner and the traditions you'd expect being raised Roman Catholic," Poveromo said.

"The music is really the biggest thing that influenced me, and listening to the old Italian-American singers."



Charles Poveromo performing at Lorenzo's Cabaret at the Hilton Garden Inn in Bloomfield in November. Photos courtesy of Charles Poveromo



Poveromo was inducted as the youngest member of the Friars Club last September.



Poveromo is acknowledged by Tony Bennett during a concert at the Westbury Theatre.



Poveromo with Chazz Palminteri at 2017 Columbus Day Parade.

He said he's been singing as long as he can remember, to famous Italian-American singers like Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Tony Bennett.

Most people associate Poveromo with singing classic songs by his stage name "Charlie Romo" — performing at various venues in Manhattan and on Staten Island.

The student has also worked an intern at

the Italian American Museum in Manhattan, a small museum with exhibits documenting Italian-American history and heritage.

"It's been a positive thing for me and I'm proud of it," Poveromo said. "It's a big part of who I am and my personality, from the food to the music."

AFTER GRADUATION

The senior is expected to graduate in May with a dual major in music and childhood education.

After graduation, he plans to follow his path in music and travel around the world, both nationally and internationally.

He said he hopes to pursue a record deal and become a recording artist.