

Ottawa Italian Women's Filò

Celebrating inspirational Italian-Canadian women in Ottawa since 2003

In rural villages of Italy during the long winter months, families and friends used to gather in the warmest place in the house or barn to weave, sew, knit, repair and make tools, and to have a good time. Storytelling and singing formed a large part of the evening. In some parts of Italy, women got together alone for evenings where they had a meal with special delicacies, told jokes, and sang. The tradition of the Filò, and the name, evolved from this concept of the thread that the women used to mend their clothes, as well as the thread of their conversations.

Today, the Ottawa Italian Women's Filò brings together women of Italian origin in order to celebrate their accomplishments, recognize community service, educate others in the Italian culture, and acknowledge each other as outstanding role models in a spirit of friendship, light heartedness and camaraderie. The thread of the Filò tradition ties younger generations to the trailblazing women who came before them.

On March 5, 2020, we celebrated our 18th Annual Filò Gala. We were fortunate to be able to celebrate together, prior to the current restrictions on large gatherings due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, we were thrilled to present the 50th Ottawa Italian Women's Filò Award to Enza Baiamonte. We also presented a special award, the *Premio Vita*, to Bonnie Favilla. Both recipients exemplify the spirit behind the Filò. They are both outstanding role models and leaders in our community, and have worked hard to celebrate and promote Italian culture.

In an effort to create a greater awareness on women's heart health, we invited three wonderful women to speak about this issue of rising concern: Nadia Lappa, of our own community; Dr. Michele Turek from the University of Ottawa Heart Institute and the Ottawa Hospital; and Lisa Comber from the Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre.

Once again, we had a silent auction at the Gala, as well as a raffle prize. Through the auction and raffle we were able to raise funds for two important organizations: Villa Marconi and the Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre. We are pleased to announce that we were able to donate \$1,000.00 to Villa Marconi, and \$3,200.00 to the Canadian Women's Heart Health Centre. Further, our donation to the Heart Health Centre was doubled by corporate sponsors as part of Heart Month! Therefore, as a result of the Filò, \$6,400.00 was donated to the Heart Health Centre.

We are thankful to our guests and community partners who continue to make our event a success, year after year. Without the support of the community, the Filò would not be able to continue this tradition of honouring women and giving back to the community. We look forward to another Filò celebration in March 2021, and we look forward to being able to gather together again once we are able to do so. In the meantime, the Filò Committee wishes you and your family good health, and may you find joy and gratitude in these trying times.