

**ATTENTION: ASSIGNMENT AND NEWS EDITORS**

**NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**Italian Community Honours Distinguished Italian Canadians**

**National Congress of Italian Canadians – Toronto District in celebration of its 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ordine al Merito Gala presents 2015 Ordine al Merito and the Youth Achievement Award.**

**Toronto, ON (April 30, 2015)**

The National Congress of Italian Canadians-Toronto District, (NCIC-TD) in celebration of its 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordine al Merito will honour the distinguished recipients at a reception and dinner to be held at The Royalton Hospitality and Event Centre in Woodbridge on **Friday, May 29, 2015**. The recipients will be presented with the organization's distinguished service awards, the *Ordine al Merito Award* and the *Youth Achievement Award*, for their accomplishments and contributions to the community.

"The Congress is very pleased to honour Dr. Gina Valle and Mr. Louie Santaguida, Ordine al Merito recipients and Matthew Leone Efthimiades, Youth Achievement Award for their contributions to the Italian Canadian community and our Canadian society at large," said Silvana Tibollo, President, National Congress of Italian Canadians Toronto District.

Dr. Gina Valle is a proud Canadian of Italian heritage. Gina is a woman that has strong roots in the community and a dedicated role model for our youth and community. Gina is a woman of incredible energy and dedication to the causes she supports and the results she has achieved. She is a team leader, she advocates for women's rights and multiculturalism and has inspired many youth, both male and female as well as community members to participate and give both of their time and money.

Over the years in addition to her role as daughter, wife and mother, Gina has worked tirelessly trying to understand how the human spirit engages when confronted with differences in race, religion, status and abilities. She continues her work in diversity through her organization Diversity Matters.

Amongst her most notable accomplishments Gina is the editor of the book "Our Grandmothers Ourselves". She is also the curator of the Legacies exhibit which focuses on women from 24 cultures.

Dr. Valle's dedication is known to many but she remains modest and always ready to support those in need regardless of their ethnicity. We are honoured to present this award to Dr. Gina Valle; we will provide our youth with another strong mentor and leader for them to emulate.

Mr. Louie Santaguida is a developer, visionary and community leader. In addition to his daily work as a developer, he has and continues to pursue revolutionary ideas for redeveloping brownfields in the area of sustainability. Mr. Santaguida in his recent development projects employs "green technology" to minimize the impact of carbon footprints on the environment.

Mr. Santaguida also dedicates his time and resources toward enhancing the lives of those less fortunate. Since 2003 Mr. Santaguida has dedicated his time to bettering our community through the support of homeless youth at Covenant House.

As an achiever Louie has put himself through one of the most remarkable tests of survival, by participating and completing the "4 Deserts Challenge", only to be rewarded by donations that he later turned over to the Hospital for Sick Children.

We are honoured to present this award to Louie Santaguida as he embodies the spirit of The Ordine al Merito Award.

Since 1998, the N.C.I.C. – Toronto District has also presented the YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, honouring Canadian Italian youth between the ages of 18-30, who have contributed to the betterment of our society. This year we are delighted to present Mr. Matthew Leone Efthimiades with the 2015 Youth Achievement Award.

Matthew is a proud Canadian of Italian and Greek heritage. He is an active participant in the Italian community of Oshawa and a dedicated role model for the youth.

Matthew is a first year Engineering student enrolled at UOIT in the Mechanical Engineering and Management Program. He was the recipient of the prestigious Founders Scholarship, Cardinal Carter Scholarship and an Ontario Honours Scholarship

Matthew has been a retreat leader, organized Anti-Bullying initiatives; community food drives Environmental conferences and is a coach for youth soccer. Matthew is a role model and mentor to his peers. He is a young man who dedicates himself to the values of his heritage- hard work, perseverance, caring about others and contributes to his community.

"The annual presentation of the Ordine al Merito and the Youth Achievement Awards is an opportunity for our community to unite in recognition of the achievements of our fellow Canadians of Italian heritage. In celebrating the 27<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordine al Merito, the Toronto District is proud to honour these three outstanding Canadians of Italian heritage and to celebrate our community," said Silvana Tibollo, President of the NCIC-TD".

A reception and dinner will be held on **Friday, May 29, 2015 at The Royalton Hospitality and Event Centre** in Woodbridge to celebrate the accomplishments of these distinguished Canadians of Italian heritage.

For information, tickets and sponsorship/advertisement, please contact Cathy Tinaburri:  
Tel. 416-531-9964, or Email: [info@canadese.org](mailto:info@canadese.org).

### **About the NCIC-Toronto District**

Founded in 1974, the National Congress of Italian Canadians consists of a national executive headquartered in Ottawa; seven affiliated regions, each representing a geographical division in Canada; and affiliated districts within each region, the number of which varies with the concentration of Italian Canadians.

The mission of the Toronto District (which predates the National Congress of Italian Canadians as a non-profit umbrella organization, originally known as the Federation of Italian Canadian Clubs and Associations) is to represent, promote and act as an advocate for Italian Canadians in the GTA; and to foster the evolution of a better Canada through mutual understanding, goodwill and cooperation between all Canadians.