



THE ITALIAN CONNECTION: Ralph Nudo (center) presents an official Italian proclamation to Carmel Middle School administration and staff including Bill Manfredonia and Felicia DiLeo. (Photo by Eric Gross)

## Italians appreciative of Putnam hospitality

By Eric Gross  
Staff Reporter

PATTERSON—A group of Italian musicians were appreciative of the hospitality they received while visiting Putnam this month.

The ensemble performed in both the Carmel and Mahopac School Districts to spread the culture of their native land to American school children.

The quartet, Tira Dirittu, mentioned the American hospitality to officials of the Italian government upon their return. Last week an official proclamation was received in America that thanked the two communities for recognizing their her-

itage.

"Our community thanks you for creating a profound connection that unites us all," wrote Mayor Vito Barbagallo.

Carmel Middle School Principal William Manfredonia called the connection between his school and the Italian community tremendous. "This was very kind of them. The real hero is Ralph Nudo, a man who moved to Putnam County a decade ago and last year formed the non-profit Calabrian-Heritage Italian American organization that was able to bring the concerts to both the Carmel and Mahopac school systems."

Nudo explained the mission statement of his group was to

promote culture: "Our children are our future. Without them, Italian culture won't survive!"

Nudo, whose daughter attends the George Fischer Middle School, believes that unless "culture is passed onto the next generation it will perish. What Mr. Manfredonia and teacher Felicia DiLeo have done for us is a great honor. We hope that this is only the beginning of future cultural events so that everyone will realize that there is another world out there."

DiLeo reported that the students were "still talking about the performances. They enjoyed it profoundly because it was culturally enriching for the children and staff as well."