

There are many ways that I could answer the question "What does my Italian heritage mean to me?". The first things that come to mind is the importance of family, traditions and values.

My mother and grandmother have always stressed the importance of family to me while I was growing up. There is nothing more important to me than spending time with my family and friends that have become my extended family. I especially enjoy hearing stories about my grandfather, Peter Esposito. Even though he passed away before I was born, I feel like I know him from these stories. I can only imagine how proud he would be that only two generations after coming to this country, his granddaughter is applying to college. By applying for the Sons and Daughters of Italy scholarship, I feel a special connection to my grandfather and his Italian heritage.

We have continued many family traditions, especially those related to Sunday dinner and holidays. We look forward to getting together and enjoying hand made meatballs and sauce just like my mother did when she was growing up. My grandmother Terry continues to make lasagna for all major holidays. To be honest, our family prefers lasagna to turkey for Thanksgiving. We especially like the Italian pastries that we enjoy on Saint Joseph's Day.

The Italian culture is important to me. My mother and grandmother have traveled to Italy and have told me about how beautiful the country is. I dream about visiting Italy, especially the Amalfi Coast. This is where my great grandfather was born. I also would like to visit Naples where my great grandmother was born. Who knows, maybe I would discover some long, lost family members. That would be so much fun!

Being Italian is more than just a nationality to me. My Italian heritage has shaped me into the person that I am today. I am hard working, respectful of all cultures and value the sacrifices made by my Italian ancestors that allow me to have the life I have today. I am proud to say that I am an Italian American.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn MacDonald