

Kendallville area residents invited to meet Italian group

In just over four weeks, a group of Italians from the Turin area will arrive in Kendallville to spend nine days with host families.

When they leave on April 14 they won't say good-bye. The Italians and the 10 host families will say "Ciao" — which means "See you later" in Italian.

"See you later" because the Italians and their Kendallville-area hosts will be reunited in June 2008 — in Italy — when the Italians welcome their Hoosier hosts.

Area residents who would like to meet these Italians — who are involved in professions such as dentistry, social work, law, engineering and computer programming — are invited to a "Meet and Greet" at 4 p.m. Monday, April 9, hosted by the Kendallville Area Chamber of Commerce. At that time members of the CIAO (Creating Italy/Indiana Adventures Opportunities) group will tell a little about themselves and Kendallville Mayor Suzanne Handshoe and people involved in Noble County tourism will give an official welcome.

Prior to that, at 3 p.m., Terry Housholder, president of KPC Media Group Inc., will conduct a walking tour of Kendallville's historic Main Street.

Other activities and destinations the CIAO group will enjoy are the Mid-America Windmill Museum, Maplewood Nature Center, Easter services at Notre Dame, Noble High School,

Shipshewana, Fort Wayne's historic areas, a tour of an industry and a farm and a work/exchange day spent with people in professions similar to theirs.



GRACE HOUSHOLDER

We have plenty of host families, but if anyone would like to help out with the driving to any of the events (and participate in the tour or activity) please contact me. It's always nice to have a few extra volunteers and it allows the Italians to meet more local people. Every day the pick up/drop off location will be

the Best Western on U.S. 6 East.

How did CIAO come about?

One day while enjoying coffee together in their hometown of Ivrea, Italy, Cathy Linsenmayer and her friend Gloria Defillippi said simultaneously, "Why do the kids have all the fun?" The two AFS volunteers have spent many years arranging for Italian students to go abroad with AFS and for foreign students to come to Italy with AFS.

Several months later when Cathy was at her summer home on Sylvan Lake, she and I were talking and the same question came up: "Why do the kids have all the fun?"

That gave birth to CIAO. "Ciao" is Italian for "Hi there!" "Welcome," "How's it going?" or "See you later." Cathy and I came up with that name through a series of e-mails after she returned to Ivrea in northern Italy, near Turin.

Cathy, who has relatives in

Fast Facts

WHO: 13 Italians (mainly adults) from the Turin area

WHAT: CIAO — Creating Indiana/Italy Adventure Opportunities

WHEN: April 5-14 for the Italians in Indiana; late June 2008 for the Hoosiers in Italy

WHY: A low-cost fun way to meet new friends and learn about another culture.

WHERE: The Italians will stay with 10 host families in the Kendallville area and the host families will stay in the homes of the Italians.

AFS: Most of the Italian CIAO participants have connections with AFS, the world's oldest international student exchange organization. AFS was founded in Italy 60 years ago.

Fort Wayne, is an American. Her work took her to Italy at the end of the 1980s where she has lived since then. She and her husband Antonio bought a home on Sylvan Lake three years ago and they come here during the summer. Cathy's mother Carolyn Linsenmayer is a volunteer at the Gene Stratton-Porter Memorial on Sylvan Lake.

I urge area residents to try to attend the "Meet and Greet" at the Kendallville Chamber and/or consider being a volunteer driver and joining us in one of our activities.

Call me at 347-0738 or e-mail me at graceh@kpcnews.net if you would like more information.

Ciao!

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