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Celebriamo insieme – Commemorative Tree-Laying Ceremony

Kent Syverud
Syracuse University

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Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud

Delivered on Friday, May 31, 2019

Location: Villa Rossa, Piazza Savonarola 15

Remarks: Celebriamo insieme – Commemorative Tree-Laying Ceremony

The Chancellor was introduced by Director, Syracuse Florence, Dr. Sasha Perugini

Good afternoon. Thank you. Before I begin, I'd also like to acknowledge the people that have helped make this event possible:

- Thank you to the City of Florence and our local dignitaries
- Our students
- Thank you to the local schools for allowing our students to work on conversation skills
- And thank you to our homestay families.

The feedback we always hear from our Syracuse Abroad alumni is that living with Italian hosts is one of their fondest memories.

Thank you for opening your homes and your hearts to our students. Some families have done this for decades, and a few over multiple generations. These families start out as “hosts” but by the end of the semester, they are truly “family,” and students are adopted into it. They give our students a perspective on Italian life that really no one else can provide.

Today we celebrate six decades of Syracuse Students learning in and experiencing Florentine culture with the planting of six Orange trees.

Orange trees are symbols of generosity and wisdom. These trees are symbols of life and growth, of taking root and flourishing – which is

something the program has done over the last sixty years. Each tree is symbolizes of a decade of this partnership. They're also durable and sustainable, which speaks to our future.

Often our Discovery Students, who spend their first college semester in Florence, decide to return.

Alessandro Pugliese is one example who returned. Alessandro was awarded a special recognition by the Town Hall of Florence, during Welcome Day. He spoke at the Salone de Cinquecento the most prestigious space in Florence, inside Palazzo Vecchio. Only three students out of the thousands that come to Florence each semester were selected for this recognition for special merit. Alessandro has returned three times and ended up taking all his courses at the University of Florence, in Italian.

We are living in an interconnected world, more so now than ever before.

Offering opportunities to work, study and live in Florence teaches our students we have more in common with other nations and people than we have differences.

Thank you for teaching our students how to make connections and engage in your culture.

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