



In the month of December our team focused on reaching out into the community of Santa Maria delle Mole with a message of Christ's love through some unusual means. We wanted to not only make people aware that a group of people who wanted to love on them had come into the community, but also to let people know that Christ was the best gift they could receive at Christmas. Also, our teammates wanted to share the same Christmas spirit with their friends with a great American tradition: Christmas cookies, treats, coffee and cider. Read on to find out what's been going on.

HOPEFULLY A SWEET SURPRISE

Christmas is a time when Italians spend a lot of time preparing for a great big Christmas dinner. This dinner is eaten in the evening of the 24th and usually consists of lots of seafood and pasta. Since the tradition of opening gifts takes place on that evening as well, Italians also spend time shopping for gifts and making sure all is ready for the big night.

We knew that people are out and about making plans and shopping, so we thought if we had a cookie and coffee giveaway people would take notice. Our goal was to get our name out, to get the message out that Christ was the best gift God sent and touch the lives of those who would be handing out the cookies. We asked two shop owners (a travel agency and my hairdresser) if they would distribute the cookies for us. The cookies would be placed in a bag with a small card telling who was giving away the cookies and why. Sara, our niece, owns the travel agency and loved the idea. She is a Christian, but the co-owner of the agency and their employee are not. We thought this might be a way to show how unselfish God's love is that he gave His son freely just like we were giving the cookies away for free.

Well, I am not sure about Sara's colleagues and clients, but my hairdresser sure was impressed! When he agreed to hand out the cookies he was under the impression that we were doing this as a fund raiser. I told him that we didn't want any money, but he didn't believe me and said: *"let me talk to your husband!"* When Andrea got in the store he confirmed my story. At that point, Enrico said:

****%#@**! I could kiss you both! Maybe I should tattoo your faces to my chest! No one just gives something away without expecting anything back!! You both are the first ones I have ever met!!!"*

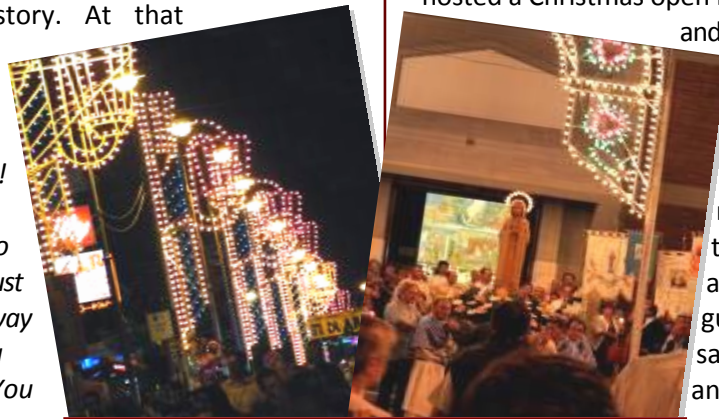
To say the least, that was an incredible response. We tried to let him know that it wasn't us, but Christ who was working in us, but it didn't quite register with him. On the 23rd, I went back to give him a little thank you gift of some apple muffins and he told me that people loved the cookies. There were even some school kids he gave them to. He looked at me differently and welcomed me warmly. Andrea and I are praying that this will be a big opening for us to create a better friendship and even more opportunities to share the gospel with him and his wife Barbara.

That same day, we went to the café where we usually have our weekly team breakfast meetings to pay for the coffees we would be giving away. I gave the owner thank you muffins and Andrea gave him the little cards to hand out. The idea was that on the 24th anyone who came in to order an espresso would get the little card telling them their coffee was paid for as a Christmas gift. We are hoping that it brightened someone's day, even though we haven't heard anything from anyone yet.

We pray that through these events some seeds have been sown into Santa Maria delle Mole. We pray that God can use the little things we do to create some interest in knowing more about him. We will see what response we get in the next few weeks.

Our teammates, Jen and Francesco Volante. Also hosted a Christmas open house for their friends and the co-workers of their

tent-making jobs. Jen had made some really wonderful cookies, candies and munchies and spread them out beautifully on a large buffet table. The guests could come and sample the food, coffee and apple cider from 4 until 9 on a Saturday evening. It was a lot of



Santa Maria delle Mole During The Christmas Season

From The Appian Way
The Gentile's Newsletter From Rome

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A Word from Doug Lucas

(Team Expansion founder and President)



Dear partner in the Task,

Did you know that, right now, at this moment, Team Expansion workers are busy the world over doing...* Community Health Evangelism (CHE) -- Asking lots of questions first, they determine what kind of help is needed, designing local initiatives that work, then sharing life lessons, among which is the Good News of Jesus Christ.* Bible Storying -- Originally conceived for primary oral learners, Team Expansion storytellers are busy on every continent, sharing the gospel through creative story-telling. It multiplies quickly!* Medical outreaches -- Team Expansion has doctors in multiple locations, healing physically as they heal spiritually. Please lift them up.* Bible translators -- Thanks to the work of 2 Team Expansion workers, 51 out of 66 biblical books are already being distributed to tens of thousands of members in villages throughout the region. They figure they'll be completely done in 18 months time.

With hope for the future,
Doug Lucas
President, Team Expansion



MONEY TALK

OUR FINANCIAL REPORT

DECEMBER 31, 2011



REMEMBER:

All your donations should be sent to:

Team Expansion
c/o Dave and Debra Miller
61 Laconwood Drive
Springfield, IL 62712-8727

NOTE:

Write checks to **Team Expansion**.
Do not earmark checks, but add a separate note stating that your offering is for:
Andrea & Heather Gentile

fun to be there and see the Italians enjoying good food and the gracious hospitality of their hosts. We pray that this would make a lasting impression on their friends and co-workers and lead to conversations about their other job outside of their paid work



ISABELLA
AT HER SCHOOL'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

INCOME

Donations	
For Andrea & Heather Gentile	\$ 6,557.50
For Italiano Francesca	\$ 467.50
Bank Interests	\$ 0.34
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 7,025.34

EXPENSES

BENEFITS

100 Salary	\$ 947.45
111 Special Medical Expense	\$ 303.87
150 Housing Allowance	\$ 324.77
170 Education for Children	\$ 11.41
180 Contributions	\$ 95.08

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

330 Other	\$ 8.32
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EVANGELISM

435 Short-term Projects	\$ 299.41
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MISCELLANEOUS.

920 Banking Fees	\$ 21.18
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PROMOTIONAL - REPRESENTATION

740 Representation	\$ 25.00
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TRAVEL

800 Car - Transportation	\$ 257.91
810 Meals (traveling)	\$ 122.39
820 Fees - Tolls	\$ 111.73
830 Housing (traveling)	\$ 505.11

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 3,033.63
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Our Prayer Requests

- Pray that we may have many opportunities to share the gospel not only with Enrico and Barbara, but with others we are beginning to come into contact with.
- Pray we may see more fruit from our cookie and coffee outreach over Christmas.
- Pray for our upcoming planning meetings where we will be discussing further ministry and evangelistic plans for the next year. Ask God for guidance, wisdom and clear discernment of His desires for Santa Maria delle Mole.
- Praise God we could rest and relax at the Mid Winter Rally, a retreat for missionaries from all over Europe. Isabella enjoyed playing with other English speaking missionary kids and did not want to come back home.
- Praise God that Heather is feeling better and the second trimester of the pregnancy has brought the long hoped for reprieve from constant nausea and frequent vomiting. Please pray that the baby will continue to grow strong and healthy.
- Pray that the work in the house will continue to progress without any hitches and that the kitchen will be in working order by the end of January.



ISABELLA HELPS WITH OUR
HOME IMPROVEMENT