Advisor Spotlight: Renée D’Elia-Zunino (Italian Club)

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Renée D’Elia-Zunino has served as the advisor of the Italian Club since 2003, when the club was first created.

- **What student organization do you advise?**

  I advise the Italian Club.
• **How long have you served as a student organization advisor?**

I have served as an advisor since 2003, when the Club was first created.

• **What is the most rewarding aspect of serving as a student organization advisor?**

First of all, it is an honor to be asked by a student organization to serve year after year as an advisor! I enjoy the opportunity to be around students who are eager to dedicate their time to Italian Club, which means they have a passion for the language, the culture, and the multifaceted dimension this all can bring to our campus. When members share their visions to serve the community, and organize events, I feel very proud. The outreach is an effort on their part to share, help, and make a small difference, and together they learn and grow from the experience. Members bond and forge everlasting friendships, and stay in touch after years, even with me.

• **What is your favorite memory with your student organization?**

Students have interesting ideas, and sometimes they can really impact our small UTK world. I’m thinking, for example, about the Mini Soccer World Cup we started in 2013. The Italian Club invited MFLL (Department of Modern and Foreign Languages and Literatures) to participate in a soccer tournament that challenged 9 languages (teams), and this event has since become a yearly tradition for our department.

Another favorite is when we had an immersion weekend in Buffalo Mountain, TN, and it snowed for two days in a row. We were improvising outdoor gear and activities, and it was so much fun to see the Club members help students learn overnight new Italian terminology in preparation for a winter treasure hunt.

Finally, I have to mention the Italian Angel Tree. The Club started this tradition years ago, and fundraises for “Italian” gifts to be donated to Children’s Hospital before Christmas, in the form of books, and Italian produced toys.

• **What advice do you have for other student organization advisors?**

My advice is to give students the opportunity to come up with ideas, and get organized, and then let them go ahead and work hard. They have so much energy, and really enjoy the learning experience that helps them grow as a small community within the Club. Helping them become resourceful and successful is my personal satisfaction.