

**Poggioreale in America  
2022 Student Scholarship Essay**

**by**

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**Throughout my family lineage, my immigrant ancestors faced many struggles and hardships which paved the way for the lives that we are living today. Maria Messina, the first of her sisters to come to the United States, shows the importance of the values of initiative and perseverance as she was the first to take the leap to immigrate to a new country and a new life, despite the hardships that she would encounter when she arrived.**

**In 1909, my great-great-grandmother, Maria Messina, left Poggioreale, Sicily to pursue a new life with new opportunities in the United States of America. Just like millions of other immigrants she ended up on Ellis Island, New York, a hotspot for immigration in the early 1900s. Quickly after arriving, Mrs. Messina was detained because she had no money, a young child, was illiterate, and spoke no English. Mrs. Messina was labeled as an LPC (Likely to become a public charge) and was held in New York for two weeks as she had come alone with no money and a child needing support. Pietro (Peter) Maniscalco, Maria's husband, immigrated to the States before her and she had to wait for money to be telegraphed from Pietro in order to be released from detention on Ellis Island. After her release, Maria took a ship to Galveston, Texas where Pietro and Maria were able to finally meet and settle down to nurture the family that we know today.**

**The traits of initiative and perseverance that Maria displayed are still maintained and modeled today throughout our family. For example, my uncle came from a middle-class family, and through years of hard work and dedication, he became a successful entrepreneur by starting his company. He continues to work hard to grow his company and sets an example for our family of taking initiative and continued dedication to achieve your dream. By seeking a higher level of education for myself, I not only embody the initiative that Mrs. Messina once showed, but also display my dedication and determination to succeed for my family.**