

(English translation of an article which appeared in “La Fiamma” on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010)

**In front of 200 guests, at the NSW Parliament House theatrette in an evening organized by the Board of Trustees of the “Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation”, Awards and Grants were given.**

## **THE HEART OF MAMMA LENA STILL BEATS IN THE WORK OF THE FOUNDATION**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> October at the Theatrette of NSW Parliament House over 200 guests witnesses a singular event which showcased once again the generosity of the Heart of Mamma Lena Gustin who during her life, and assisted by her husband Dino Gustin, spread joy, and peace of mind to those they helped. By listening, advising and involving people in their many activities, their big heart, led by an intelligent understanding of the needs of others, were key to the help. In many ways Mamma Lena knew how to mobilise daily systems, including the radio, to reach a large number of Italians in the distant suburbs of Sydney. With music, useful addresses, suggestions on how to buy a house, keeping healthy or by encouraging them to leave the house and mix with others she helped many overcome loneliness. Every year through the activities of the Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation, we are reminded of the motto that illuminated her life: “life passes but good deeds remain”.

This year’s gathering for the Annual Awards Night organized by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, saw the “Heart of Mamma Lena” certificates and medals awarded to recognize the efforts of three worthy recipients: Giulia Bonacina for her services towards the Italian community of Wollongong; Don & Katrina Oii for their generosity towards the Foundation and Rose Colombo for her work in establishing the radio programme “*Movimento presented by the Mama Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation*”.

This year’s grants were given to assistance groups operating in various sectors: “Room to Read”, “Surf Life Saving of NSW”, “Starlight Children’s Foundation” and “The Men’s Shed”.

To Raji Ambikarajah of “Room to Read” a donation for the establishment of a reading room in Zambia. Room to Read was established in Nepal in 2000 and aims to help with Children’s education in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Laos, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa, Vietnam and Zambia by providing them with books, some in their own language, in protected schools and libraries where the children can read and learn in safety. Of particular importance is the education of girls. At present, Room to Read reaches and helps over four million children.

The Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation also made a grant to “Surf Life Saving NSW” for the purchase of an Inflatable Rescue Hull for the Bellinger Valley Surf

Life Saving Club. The club was chosen given the small population base of the area in which to fund raise. The grant was given to the manager of Life Saving Services, Dean Storey, in the presence of the Director of Lifesaving John Restuccia; Manager of Sponsor and Partnership Development Kelle Storey and Life Saving Officer Luke Stigter, Member Services Officer Shane Steward, and Administration Officer Andy Crow. “Surf Life Saving of NSW” is an organization that since its beginning in Bondi in 1907 has helped to save lives on Australian beaches. The volunteer life savers count over 550,000 lives saved by giving over one million hours per year to patrolling our beaches.

The grant given by the Foundation to “The Men’s Shed” – an initiative of the Mary Mackillop Outreach Programme - will enable them to purchase new equipment and tools that the volunteers will use to transform bicycles into wheel chairs or old furniture into toys or new furniture. Present for the evening were; Mick Johnson, Woodwork assistant; Kimberley Glavas, Assistant Manager Policy; volunteers, Kenneth Curtis, Bro. Phil Reddy and John Colombo who also received the “Heart of Mamma Lena” Award. “The Men’s Shed Australia Ltd” is a non profit organization dedicated to supporting men with isolation issues throughout Australia. Isolation, loneliness and depression are among the principal causes of health problems in men. The Men’s Shed puts men in touch with their community and thus also helps with their health issues.

In 2009 the Foundation gave to the “Starlight Children’s Foundation” the funds necessary for the upgrade of the audio-visual system at the Westmead Children’s Hospital. CEO Louise Baxter assisted by Captains Starlight Avril and Lyn thanked the Foundation for their generous help. She illustrated with a playful DVD how the Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation helped bring a ray of happiness in the lives of gravely ill children and their families by offering their young patients an opportunity to be distracted from their illness and medical interventions while in hospital. This year “Starlight” celebrated 21 years of activities during which, through innovative programmes, they have shared and mitigated the suffering of children in 168 Australian hospitals often achieving small or temporary improvements to their illnesses and offering relief to their parents.

At the Awards Night honoured guests were Minister Frank Sartor and the Hon. Angela D’Amore who also hosted the evening.

A presentation of the grants given in the past few years by the Foundation, was prepared and presented by Gavina Cossa, Advisory Committee Member of the “Mamma Lena & Dino Gustin Foundation”. Elegant refreshments concluded the evening.

**Armando Tornari**