



CASTELLI INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL (CIS)

Via degli Scozzesi 13, 00046,  
Grottaferrata, Rome

Tel. & Fax. No. 06 94315779  
office@castelli-international.it  
www.castelli-international.it

# CRISIS 危机

DANGER  
OPPORTUNITY

It was a Dream... how to start a school, to include a rich and vast Italian programme into an international school curriculum. It was a dream ... to create a unique school where, for children coming from all over the world, learning becomes a continuous and exciting experience of joy, hardships, perseverance determination and final realization that all obstacles in life can be overcome with patience, respect, consideration, acquisition of culture and love.

Thanks to: an unforgettable parent who introduced Steiner education and believed that I, unknowingly, was a 'Steinerian' educator; an exceptionally creative and intelligent Science teacher who gave birth to the name and the quick 5 minute sketch of the school that became the school logo; my two daughters who were the first students and my first son born in July of 1977, the school opened in September of 1977! I still remember the first day of school when our excited students received the very first huge whiteboard, a gift from a very loyal and supportive parent, which we still use in our library! Many parents continued to contribute their energy, passion and know-how to keep the school spirit going.

Forty years ago the school was rustic, to say the least, with 5 professors and 7 students starting at 11 yrs, through 16yrs. The location was an abandoned peasant abode amidst a declining wine producing enterprise. Building is not allowed because the property is environmentally protected.

As the Chinese proverb says above "Danger Opportunity". In a crisis "be aware of danger but recognize the opportunity." This is exactly what our students did! With their mad headmistress they delved into dangerous schemes to enlarge their beloved school.

The kitchen became the science room, the bedroom, a library and the living room the classroom. The students began to arrive from north and south Rome and Castelli. The 'adventure' began. During cold days we went out to chop wood to warm the antique clay stove that was our central heating. As the school kept growing we moved into abandoned cantinas, wine cellars, stables, chicken coops and pigstys. With our creative instincts and the hard work of our students, storage rooms were emptied. The wine cellar became the library, cement wine vats were transformed into reading cubby holes. An old swimming hole was made into the science room.

The remaining stables, pigstys and chicken coops became classrooms! And the last storage room full of bottles, kegs, and even snake skins, was transformed into Kids Point, named so by my second son, which is the central social gathering and snacking place for students and parents.

We were the first school to acquire a Sharp computer. There were no websites, no apps, no internet connections. Our students had to learn how to program their own work! They succeeded in creating tests for their peers, preparing reports without the 'help' tools and ready made sites available today. The school kept growing until there were no more cantinas or storage rooms left to 'exploit'. A waiting list began. Sadly, we could not accept everyone but had we been allowed to build, our healthy green environment would have been destroyed.

Here we are forty years later, the physical appearance of the classrooms is much improved and the need to fit them into the existing structures, made each classroom original and unique. What is most precious to this 'dream' is that the spirit remains: one of adventure and learning, forging ahead as the world around us continues to change, thanks to our faculty, staff and staunch support of our parents and friends.

**MS. P**

Head of School

