

Translation of Sicilian Article from "Il Giornale della Sicilia," 15 December, 2009

COMMUNICATION: Child from New York in contact with her ex-classmates from Marina Elementary, thanks to the computer.

"Hi, I'm Chiara, can you see me?"

Technology makes the distances shorter between even the youngest children, giving birth to a bridge between Sicily and America. An audio-video computer conference is certainly an unusual way to introduce two elementary school classes—one in Marina di Ragusa, Sicily, and the other in Chatham, New York. The idea came from little Chiara Lucia Perni, an Italian-American, who is at school in New York this year and feels nostalgic about her Ragusan friends. "Chiara," says her mother, Sally Veillette, a pioneer of relational tourism in Ragusa, "attended her first elementary school year in Marina di Ragusa last year. She misses her companions a lot! We have moved to New York for her to learn the English language and, above all, to be with her grandparents. Almost each week we organize Internet calls with her best friends in Sicily to calm her nostalgia. As a consequence was born the idea to do the same thing directly from Chiara's new school, with the help of the school master Sandy Lynn and my assistant Bozena Nowak in Ragusa. The teachers were very touched and would like to repeat the experience." 19 American students were present. They introduced themselves, talked, and showed their school room. They also sang an English song. The next time the Sicilian students will do the same.

By Barbara La Cognata, Ragusa, Sicily