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Professional Development Grant Report

“Io son venuto in America per cercar mia madre”: Emigration and Nation in
Edmondo De Amicis’ American Writings
American Association of Teachers of Italian International Conference
Cagliari, Italy, June 2018

The Professional Development Grant I received in 2018 allowed me to travel to the annual international conference organized by the American Association of Teachers of Italian in Cagliari, Italy. I delivered a presentation entitled, “ ‘Io son venuto in America per cercar mia madre’: Emigration and Nation in Edmondo De Amicis’ American Writings,” in which I explore how the writer Edmondo De Amicis, who envisioned his cultural role in post-unitary Italy as that of pedagogue of national consciousness and national cohesion, addressed the blatant failure in the nation building project represented by the exodus from the nation of the poorest among its new citizens in the immediate aftermath of the country’s political establishment. The paper was very well received and I was invited by the panel chair to expand it into an essay for a collection to be published by Peter Lang in 2019.