

# No tu No\*

*Disability exists and is a part of the society we live in.  
We should stop considering it a misfortune or a handicap.  
The ability to manage this is to be admired,  
and can inspire everybody.*

UILDM, *Unione Italiana Lotta contro la Distrofia Muscolare* (acronym indicating the Italian Union against muscular dystrophy), is an association that deals with sensitizing people on the problem of muscular dystrophy, a disease that provokes progressive degeneration and weakening of the voluntary muscles. It is not a contagious disease because it is caused by a genetic mutation and is transmitted by parents. This organization was founded in 1961 in Trieste, thanks to Federico Milcovich, a man affected by dystrophy. The aim of UILDM is to inform people about the conditions of those affected by the illness, to promote research on genetic diseases in order to beat the illness, to sensitize people regarding architectural, psychological and cultural barriers, and to encourage the social interaction of persons with disabilities.

The association is present in all the Italian regions and is divided into sections. In 1980, the Versilia section was founded, with headquarters in Pietrasanta, and operating throughout the Versilia area. The missions of the Versilia section are: fund raising for the telethon, free of charge physiotherapy and transportation for their members (about 20 people), and management of a *casa vacanze* (a former school adapted to host groups of people with special needs). To enhance their reputation, the members have organized events and demonstrations, and are very active in the surrounding area. At the beginning of October 2017 a walk called *la scarrozzata* was arranged in the city center of Pietrasanta. Town administrators and ordinary people gained insight into what life is like for people who are unable to walk. To make this possible, the members of the association gave people wheelchairs and they all went around the downtown area. Thanks to this experience, many problems have been pointed out, such as the presence of steps at the entrance of shops and the absence of ramps that would allow people in wheelchairs to enter. The public opinion has been mobilized in order to resolve these problems as quickly as possible.

For the 2018 edition of Viareggio's Carnival, the first-category float by Massimo Breschi is now under construction. The float deals with this theme: people who have to struggle every day with architectural barriers. It consists of Pulcinella sitting in a huge wheelchair. Pulcinella is a masque (or character) of the *commedia dell'arte* who always overcomes the difficulties of life with a smile on his face, defending the most vulnerable. UILDM members are participating in the parade; they are the dancers in



front of the float. These people teach us how to always see the glass at least half full! These are strong people who don't want merciful glances, but rather encouragement and sincere support. In spite of their disabilities they have achieved important results and now are showing us how to fight for the possibility of an independent and real life without constraints.

On Rai 3's television program *Inviati Speciali* (4 January 2018), Simona Atzori was interviewed. She was born without arms, but she became a dancer and a painter. She showed her strength and optimism, and thus people could see only what she had, and not what was missing.

— by Laura Benedetti, Liceo A. Vallisneri

\*The title refers to a popular Italian song by Enzo Jannacci.