

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jean Hruby
00-1- (708) 420-7589 or klasmuseum@gmail.com

CZECH/SLOVAK COMMUNITY LEADERS FORM NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO RAISE FUNDS TO PURCHASE AND RESTORE THE HISTORIC KLAS RESAURANT BUILDING

Cicero, IL – In response to the May 5, 2021, inclusion of the Klas Restaurant building on Landmarks Illinois' list of Most Endangered Historic Places in Illinois.

(<http://www.landmarks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Klas-Restaurant.pdf>), Czech and Slovak community leaders have formed a new 501(c)(3), non-profit organization, the Klas Museum, for the purpose of fundraising to purchase, rehabilitate, and operate the Klas building as a pillar of activity for the Slavic and Hispanic/Mexican American communities of Cicero/Berwyn and all of Chicagoland. The facility will once again include a restaurant, bar, and event space but, in addition, provide exhibition space and programming reflective of the area's multi-cultural, immigrant population.

Established in 1922, Klas was the best-known Chicago-area Czech and Slovak restaurant, bar, and event venue until 2016 when its doors closed to the public. Generations of Czechs, Slovaks, and later Mexicans from the Cicero/Berwyn communities held celebrations, weddings, funerals, musical concerts, and more at Klas. Nearly every Czech President and many Czech Diplomats and U.S. officials have been to Klas. It is a building of historic importance from the past and now for the future. Returning its role as an important anchor of the Cermak Road commercial corridor will contribute to a key revitalization goal of Cicero's 2017 comprehensive plan which states, "Promote Cicero's traditional commercial corridors, such as Cermak and Roosevelt Roads, and smaller neighborhood shopping districts as transit-oriented, mixed-use places that support small businesses and the entrepreneurial and creative uses of buildings and spaces." [20170627 Cicero Comprehensive Plan Adopted Plan 6-27-2017.pdf\(Shared\)- Adobe Document Cloud](#)

The Klas building is in disrepair and needs a complete rehabilitation. With the support of friends in Chicagoland and beyond, the leaders of the Klas Museum are confident in their mission to save this irreplaceable building. The entire rehabilitation, including final funds for purchase and code upgrades, is anticipated at approximately three million dollars. Klas Museum has negotiated with the seller a 120-day contract purchase offer if \$500,000 is raised with a 90-day extension if needed. A three-phase fundraising campaign has been launched: First phase – \$500,000 to finalize the purchase of the building and repair its roof to halt further water damage. Second phase – \$1,000,000 for mechanical, electrical, and plumbing repairs. Third phase – \$1,000,000 for exterior and interior renovations to return Klas' distinctive artistic décor, representative of Eastern European culture and architecture, to the truly magical place it once was on Cermak Road for over nine decades.

Klas Museum has established a **GO FUND ME SITE** at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-the-historic-klas-restaurant-in-cicero>. A bank account has been established at First American Bank in Riverside, Illinois. The bank has agreed to accept donations either in person or by mail. Checks should be made out to Klas Museum. Tax deductibility of donations are pending approval from the IRS.

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