

GENEROUS PAGEANT CONTRIBUTORS FOR 2025

We are celebrating the 38th Miss Czech-Slovak US Pageant and anticipate an exciting competition. This year, we are thrilled to have nine (9) outstanding contestants vying to be Miss Czech-Slovak US 2025-2026.

Our colorful and entertaining national ethnic event is made possible through donations and sponsorships. Without the support and generosity of the following individuals, the Miss Czech-Slovak US Pageant would not exist. Additionally, we recognize the countless hours volunteered by the pageant committee and our volunteer network.

The young lady crowned Miss Czech-Slovak US 2025-2026 will win a scholarship of \$2,000 sponsored by the Czech Embassy in Washington D.C. and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in

Chicago. She will also receive a \$250 educational scholarship in memory of John C. and Alice T. Rokusek, sponsored by Dr. Cecilia Rokusek. The newly crowned Miss Czech-Slovak US will also receive \$2,500 towards a trip to the Czech Republic or Slovakia.

The Miss Czech-Slovak US 1st Runner-Up will receive a \$1,500 scholarship, sponsored by Czech Slavnosti. The Miss Czech-Slovak US 2nd Runner-Up will receive a \$1,000 scholarship, funded by Sokol Omaha. Thank you to the generosity of the Kotouc Family, the 1st and 2nd Runner-Ups will receive a \$250 educational scholarship to enhance their educational experiences during their reign.

The pageant contestants stay at the historic Hotel Wilber during the pageant weekend. Each room sponsor contributes \$250 towards the cost of the pageant weekend housing. The 2025 room sponsors are:

Czech Heritage Foundation - Iowa

Czech Heritage Society of Texas

Czech Language Foundation

Miss Czech Slovak MN Pageant

Nebraska Czechs

Oklahoma Czechs Inc.

Security First Bank

United Moravian Societies

Wharton County Czech Heritage Club

Wilber Care Center

Wilber Sokol

The pageant would also like to thank the following award sponsors. The late John and Lois Fiala support the Grand Talent Award of a \$750 scholarship and a \$500 scholarship for the Talent Runner-Up. Tim and Lisa “Karpisek” Messman support the Kroj category awards in memory of Lillie Vesely, Richard Karpisek, and Kathy Kubicek. Kroj awards include individual awards for Accuracy and Knowledge, which will receive a \$500 scholarship, and garnets and awards for Family Story and Poise, which will receive a \$250 scholarship. New this year, we will recognize three Kroj merit recipients for their outstanding performance in the kroj category. All recipients will receive a \$100 scholarship made possible by Jennifer Krejci.

A special Czech/Slovak gift will be presented to the Oratory Winner,

donated by Dr. Cecilia Rokusek, Slovak Honorary Consul of Florida, in memory of her mother, Alicia “Fiala” Rokusek. The oratory winner will also receive a \$250 scholarship supported by Candyce Vana Ingwersen and Bohemian Crystal.

The John & Lois Fiala Spirit Award recognizes the contestant who

best exemplifies the spirit of the Czech/Slovak Heritage. A \$250 cash scholarship and Bohemian Crystal will be awarded to the winner, sponsored by John S. Fiala on behalf of John and Lois’ grandchildren, Adele, Lisa, John S, and Chris Fiala. TJ Sokol of Wilber donates a \$100 scholarship and Bohemian Crystal to the contestant with the best Sokol-like Talent, plus a \$75 scholarship and Bohemian Crystal for the Sokol Runner-Up Award. The Gruntorad-Stastny Heritage Award gives a \$450 prize scholarship and Bohemian Crystal to the contestant who showcases the most significant involvement in their heritage. This award is sponsored by Jerry & Donna McNeil, Jim & Caralee Gruntorad, and Bob & Eulalia Dory. The Miss Congeniality Award is sponsored by Olga and Peter Ptak, who provide a \$200 scholarship and Bohemian Crystal. Our Cultural Preservation Award is supported by Kathy Podsedink, Texas State Pageant Director, and Pivovar Waco. This award honors a contestant dedicated to preserving our heritage traditions and awards a \$300 scholarship along with Bohemian crystal.

The Božena Award recognizes the contestant who strives to make the world a better place, aids those around her, and inspires others

to do the same. The recipient receives a \$500 scholarship and a special Slovak gift. This award is given in Marie (Božena) Root’s memory by her daughter, Kimberly Horikoshi; Marie’s sister, Kathy Pagnatta; and Marie’s sister-in-law, Patti Turik.

The pageant's livestream is made possible by support from Candyce Vana-Ingwersen and the Candyce Vana Ingwersen Law Office.

A special note of appreciation to the following businesses and organizations for supporting our general pageant fund.

Czech Alaska Society

First State Bank Nebraska

Food Mesto of Wilber

Phillips Czechoslovakian Community Festival Inc.

Western United Mutual Insurance of Wilber

Doris Ourecky, Miss Czech-Slovak US Pageant co-founder

The pageant would like to thank the generous individuals who are members of the Miss Czech-Slovak US Alumnae Association.

Danielle Blattman

Cynthia Czaperacker

Amanda De Hoedt

Heather (Vilka) Dobias

Christy (Dowling) Thomas

Stasia (Kricanek) Fine

Meagan (Kurmel) Gibbs

Lauren Gerik

Aspen Hein

Drew Hejna

Angela (Kochan) Rankin

Maria (Chladek) Kolek

Susan (Kokes) Sigmon

Jennifer Krejci

MaryElizabeth (Kasper) Lackey

Lauren Luchetti

Christina (Ptacek) Mullender

Mary (Kostrubanic) Nunnery

Taylor (Pflughoeft) Nunnery

Rhonda (Ptacek) Punches

Sandy (Ptak) Carey

Jana Riley

Mary Smolka

Paula (Svaty) Gray

Jennifer (Soukup) Stuckey

Brianna Tichy

Anna Tombazzi

Sherry Truhlar

Candyce (Vana) Ingwersen

Sara (Vytacil) Hagan

Michelle Wiedel

Beth (Westlake) Blanco

Melanie Zavodny

We are incredibly thankful to our Hospitality sponsors, Larry and Teri Shestak. Their support provides refreshments for our contestants and the Royal Court throughout the weekend. Together with Laura Shestak Barlow, they host a post-pageant party at the Sokol Hall following the crowning ceremony on Sunday evening.

The pageant committee would like to thank the following sponsors for their in-kind support. Bradley Kalkwarf with Kalkwarf & Smith Law Offices, LLC, for acting as our legal counsel. The Nebraska Czechs of Wilber for the use of the Outdoor Theater and their gracious hospitality during the pageant weekend. The Czech Slavnosti provides generous print coverage for the Miss Czech-Slovak US Pageant year-round. Andrea Volf with Baba Tillie's - Czech and More partners serves as our garnets supplier. Wilber Floral is our official floral partner.

We are excited to recognize our "Little Sisters" who are escorts for the pageant contestants during the weekend. They are introduced during the pageant ceremonies and listed in the pageant program.

The contestants and pageant committee attend a special breakfast sponsored in memory of Richard Mares on Sunday morning at St. Wenceslas Church.

The pageant committee consists of National Pageant Director Alexandria Cervený Sandall and pageant committee members: Brenda Cervený, Ellie Cervený, Debbie Koslowski, MaryElizabeth Lackey, Emily Manning, and Julia Ourecky. Other people who share their time and talents include Brianna Tichý and Donna Stehlik, who audit the scores, and MaryElizabeth Lackey, who served as the Master of Ceremonies for the pageant. Kurt Kiesel, John S. Fiala, and Izzy Adcock serve as stage support. The 2024-2025 Royal Court, including Trinity Pesko, Aspen Hein, and Cami Kotouc, will serve as hostesses to the contestants at the historic Hotel Wilber.

All of these individuals and organizations are partners in America's most colorful, exciting, and entertaining ethnic pageant. We hope all will join us for the 2026 Miss Czech-Slovak US pageant on August 1-2 at 7 pm at Wilber's beautiful outdoor theater.