



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Finlandia Cultural Campus of Finland in America
A Video Statement from Anne-Mari Paster
President, Finlandia Foundation National

March 14, 2023

Hello:

I am Anne-Mari Paster, president of Finlandia Foundation National.

Our non-profit organization was founded in 1953 in Pasadena, California, to connect and strengthen Finnish communities across the United States.

Our founders recognized that it was important for generations of immigrants to understand and respect their roots in Finland, even while adapting to life in this country.

Now, 70 years later, Finlandia Foundation is the largest, independent champion of Finnish culture, heritage and contemporary Finland in America, which we support through our grants and scholarships, and in live and online programming.

March 2nd was a sad day for all of us. When we learned of the decision to close Finlandia University, in Hancock, Michigan, I called an emergency meeting of the board to discuss how Finlandia Foundation National could become involved.

There was no question that we should, and would, take action. The board unanimously agreed it was vital to preserve the university's Finnish American Heritage Center, and other, related cultural assets.

This includes the irreplaceable archives, which hold the most extensive collection of Finnish North American materials in the world, as well as the living culture of the folk school, the Finnish American Reporter, the war museum, North Wind Books and the Art Gallery.

We immediately formed a task force to work with the university to determine how Finlandia Foundation could lead the effort to maintain and protect what we recognize as the Smithsonian of Finnish America.

We have worked in earnest and partnered with Finlandia University in this good faith, collaborative effort to make the highest and best use of these important cultural and historical assets.

I know that you, too, are passionate about preserving these treasures. Your outpouring of interest and concern over their future confirms the importance of securing this legacy for generations to come.

This is a part of our identity that is too precious, and too important to lose. Keeping it alive embodies our mission. It is why Finlandia Foundation was founded 70 years ago. And it is our obligation and privilege to lead this effort.

With your help, we will honor the many contributions of Suomi College and Finlandia University, and keep Finland in America. Finnish-American history is American history, and that's why it matters to us all.

Thank you for your comments and questions. We appreciate your involvement. Please follow our social media and website, where we will share information along the way.

We promise to keep you informed about our progress as we move forward together.

Kiitos.

Finlandia University: Finlandia.edu

About Finlandia Foundation National, Inc.

Fiercely Finnish since 1953, we champion our culture and heritage across the United States by supporting educational opportunities and promoting diverse, relevant, and enriching programs.

Finlandia Foundation National aims to connect, inspire and strengthen the Finnish-American community in the United States through a network of chapters. The Foundation raises funds to strengthen its endowment and ensure the continuation of its programs, which highlight outstanding contributions and achievements from Finnish-American artists and academics.

Finlandia Foundation National, Inc. awards dozens of grants each year, providing critical funding to maintain cultural traditions that represent the heritage of Finlandia and the diverse interests of Finnish America.

For more: FinlandiaFoundation.org

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