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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Preservation League Awards Grant from Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund *DNIPRO Ukrainian Cultural Center in Buffalo Secures \$8,600*

ALBANY, NY – January 30, 2017 – The Preservation League of New York State recently made an **\$8,600 grant** to **Dnipro Ukrainian Cultural Center in Buffalo**, part of the Ukrainian American Freedom Foundation, a not-for-profit organization whose mission includes preserving Ukrainian language, culture and history.

Located at 562 Genesee Street, the Dnipro Ukrainian Cultural Center is a fixture in Buffalo's Downtown East neighborhood. It is a vibrant part of the rich cultural, ethnic and architectural landscape of Western New York. Dnipro is both a repository of Ukrainian culture for the region and part of the thriving Buffalo arts scene as a venue for the Torn Space Theater and Squeaky Wheel. It is a site for many large-scale events for a wide range of organizations including Sister Cities and more.

The sprawling three story, 44,000 square foot structure was purchased by the Ukrainian-American community from the City of Buffalo in 1955. Constructed in 1914 for a German fraternal organization, it changed ownership several times, fell into disrepair and was eventually abandoned before being purchased in 1955 for the Ukrainian Cultural Center.

Dnipro is named after the largest river in Ukraine, the Dneiper, which flows past the capital of Kiev south to Odessa and empties into the Black Sea. Most of the founding members were Ukrainian immigrants displaced by World War II. They sought to establish a community center to express their cultural identity, share their heritage and celebrate important events. The founders worked in local factories by day and repaired and restored the building on evenings and weekends. The building houses classrooms, a credit union bank branch, library, a lounge with a vaulted ceiling, and upstairs theater.

The Ukrainian Cultural Center sought funding for a conditions assessment and code analysis of the building. This is the first step in developing a master plan for the building and expanding uses to the larger Buffalo community. The \$8,600 grant has allowed them to retain HHL Architects to complete a condition assessment of the exterior and interior, a mechanical systems analysis, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) code assessment, and gather information on underutilized sections of the building. The Ukrainian Cultural Center provided a \$500 retainer for HHL Architects.

(more)

The grant is the fifth made from the Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund of the Preservation League of New York State.

“The League is New York’s only statewide organization providing comprehensive – and predominantly pro-bono – services to New Yorkers seeking to identify, preserve, protect, reuse, and promote historic resources as community assets,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “The mission of the Dnipro Ukrainian Cultural Center, with its focus on the arts, history and heritage as a fulcrum for community revitalization, is a perfect match for our Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund. We’re so pleased to be able to help them realize their goals.”

The Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund was established in 2010 and is funded through a permanently endowed charitable contribution from Thomas J. Schwarz. The primary goals of the Donald Stephen Gratz Preservation Services Fund are to fund professional services for important preservation projects that: illustrate the benefits of the New York State Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, leverage other public and private investments, and enable the League to react quickly to preservation opportunities with financial resources. Previous recipients include CiviCure in Hoosick Falls; Friends of Fort Plain in Montgomery County; Adirondack Architectural Heritage in Keeseville, Clinton and Essex Counties; and GARNER Arts Center in Rockland County.

As a metal fabricator in Long Island City, Donald Stephen Gratz worked with modern architects, industrial designers, sculptors and furniture designers from Mies Van der Rohe to I.M.Pei to Barnett Newman and Bill Katavalos. But he always had a soft spot for historic preservation and enthusiastically supported the work of his wife, Roberta Brandes Gratz, a longtime Preservation League Trustee. He loved attending League events.

Thomas J. Schwarz, who endowed the fund, is a member of the Preservation League’s Trustees Council. He serves as President of Purchase College, SUNY, and is a board member and alumnus of Hamilton College with great affection for upstate New York.

For more information on the Preservation League, please call 518-462-5658 or visit the League’s website at www.preservenys.org.