

The 44th Slovak Heritage Festival in New Jersey

The Slovak American community gathered on Sunday, September 25, 2022, for the 44th Slovak Heritage Festival, the largest Slovak festival in the US, which took place at Middlesex County Fair Grounds in East Brunswick, New Jersey. The annual event commenced with a Greek Orthodox mass with the main celebrant, Fr. Martin Vavrák, pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

The program, moderated by Katarina Vizina, commenced with an introduction of the Chairman of the Slovak Heritage Festival, Marek Soltis, and Co-Chair Jane Konzelman (Branch 716) as well as Nina Holy (Branch 716) who was recognized for her leadership of the event for 30+ years. Joining the festivities and addressing the 1,500+ attendees was Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár who was joined by wife Andrea Mlynárová and Matej Salon, Deputy Consul General of the Slovak Republic in New York. Members of First Catholic Slovak Union Branch 746 (Linden), 716 (New York City), and 45 (New York City) were in attendance to support the event including Director of the Slovak Institute in Cleveland and the Program Director of the Slovak Radio Milan Kobulsky (Branch 450) and FCSU Region 1 Director, Sabina Sabados (Branch 746).

The colorful program included performances by Limboráčik, the Children's Folklore group from New York; Lipka, the Children's Folklore group from Linden, New Jersey; and Pajtáši from New York. Special guests from Slovakia included Labirsky Be'are, a folklore trio from Medzilaborce and the Komajota band from Prešov which brought the audience to its feet. Attendees of the Slovak Heritage Festival had the opportunity to try various Slovak foods from the multitude of vendors including traditional bryndzové halušky, grilled kolbasa, nut rolls and poppy seed rolls, and so much more! Vendors should a variety of products including traditional Slovak kroj (folk costume), artisan designs, personal care products, home-made honey and so much more. Some of the vendors included: MaHli designs by Maria Hlinková, products by Slovak designers presented KITnDO, and hair accessories Mishka Designs. Slovak-Czech Varieties (online ordering available) was on hand to sell Slovak and Czech chocolates and other favorite goodies.

Congratulations to the entire Slovak Heritage Festival Committee for another successful event. The 44th Slovak Hertiage Festival was made possible by the support of the Úrad pre Slovákov žijúcich v zahraničí (USZZ).

The photos feature Jednota members in attendance.

Submitted by Sabina Sabados



