

## Stand with Ukraine through Film

For Immediate Release

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For More Info

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### ***Stand with Ukraine through Film* passes \$100,000 in money raised Grants for Ukrainian relief now being awarded**

**World Central Kitchen, International Organization on Migration, and Plast among first recipients**

Salem MA -- *Stand with Ukraine through Film*, a cinema industry project launched at Cinema Salem, has begun awarding grants for humanitarian aid. World Central Kitchen, the International Organization on Migration, Plast, and the Ukrainian Studies Fund are among the groups receiving the first funds raised from American cinemas that have screened *The Guide*, a 2014 Ukrainian film.

Cinema Salem hosted the first theatrical showing of *The Guide* on March 13, 2022. Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker, Congressman Seth Moulton, Mayor Kim Driscoll, and Dr. Yuri Shevchuk of Columbia University were the headline speakers at the Cinema Salem premiere, which raised \$12,000.

More than 600 cinemas across the U.S. and Canada have followed Cinema Salem's lead, screening *The Guide* and donating all ticket revenue to support Ukraine. The amount raised has now passed \$100,000.

Donated funds are being administered by Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt corporation that created a special Ukraine Relief Fund for this project. Grants are being awarded as funds are received from cinemas.

*Stand with Ukraine through Film* is supported by numerous corporations within the film and cinema industry including Digital Cinema Distribution Coalition, Falling Forward Films, Paper Airplane, and Deluxe. Regal Cinema and Angelika Film Centers are among the cinemas that have shown *The Guide*. A full list of supporting organizations is on the next page of this release.

"The support that cinemas and others within the film industry have been giving to Ukrainian relief has been stunning," observed Marshall Strauss, the project's organizer. "We were amazed at how fast the Salem community came together to raise funds," he added, "but now we are seeing the same energy and commitment spread across the country." Strauss and his wife, Elaine Gerdine, bought Cinema Salem in the fall of 2020 after it had closed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Strauss has a long history in nonprofit leadership and human rights activism.

Dr. Shevchuk, an internationally known expert on Ukrainian language, culture and film, has been a key part of *Stand with Ukraine through Film* since its start in early March 2022. "The Guide, which is set in the 1930s, tells a powerful story of tragedy and hope at a time when the Soviet Union was systematically killing millions of Ukrainians," Shevchuk said. "That so many Americans are seeing this film now, eight years after it was released in Ukraine, sends a powerful message of support to Ukrainians who are today fighting against another Russian effort to wipe out Ukrainians and their culture," he added.

More information about this project is available at <https://www.standwithukrainethroughfilm.org/>.

**Supporting organizations are listed below. All entities donated all services.**

**Cinema Salem** – Based in Salem, MA, Cinema Salem is a three-screen cinema that shows first run and repertory films. Closed during the pandemic, the cinema was bought by Elaine Gerdine and Marshall Strauss in late 2020 and re-opened in the spring of 2021.

**Ukrainian Film Club at Columbia University** – Founded in 2004 and led by Dr. Yuri Shevchuk, the Club regularly screens Ukrainian films at Columbia as well as at other North American universities.

**Pronto Films** – Based in Kyiv, Ukraine, Pronto Films released the rights to *The Guide* with the single condition: All ticket proceeds must go to Ukrainian relief.

**Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America** – A tax exempt 501(c)(3) corporation established in 1994, HCROA has been part of the U.S. government’s Combined Federal Campaign for decades. It regularly receives federal employee donations and transfers these funds to eligible nonprofits across the US. HCROA administers the Ukraine Relief Fund on behalf of *Stand with Ukraine through Film*.

**Digital Cinema Distribution Coalition** – DCDC is a pioneering venture formed by Universal Pictures, Warner Bros, AMC Theatres, Cinemark Theatres, and Regal Entertainment Group, delivering content to more than 3,000 exhibitor sites representing over 33,000 screens across the US.

**Falling Forward Films** – Acting as the project’s “distributor,” FFF is working with cinemas across the US to collect ticket revenue and forward the funds to HCROA’s Ukraine Relief Fund.

**Paper Airplane** – A marketing firm that supports the release of hundreds of films a year, Paper Airplane has made marketing assets available to participating cinemas.

**Deluxe** – A leader in the distribution of films to cinemas, Deluxe assisted DCDC is ensuring that *The Guide* reached movie theaters quickly and without cost to the cinemas.

**GoTheatreMarketing** – Led by Jeremy Devine, GTM led the efforts to secure press coverage for *The Guide*.

**Powster of Vista Group** – Vista Group is an international firm with offices in numerous countries. Powster created one of the two key websites for the project.

Other supporting organizations and individuals include:

- The Creative Collective led by John Andrews – marketing and creative support
- Richard Guerin who secured a donated performance by Paul Leonard-Morgan
- Tamara Wolfson and Olga Gernovski – donation of art for the Salem, MA premiere
- Stampede Studios - marketing
- 2656 Marketing
- The Prenner Group – press
- Total Cinema Solutions – technical support
- Criterion Pictures and Wolfman Productions – promotion of *The Guide* to universities and live performance venues
- Lisa Vucelich – press