

# Terézváros

11 October 2023  
Public, cultural and lifestyle magazine

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

## A Global Neighbourhood

Twelve pages celebrating the diversity of Terézváros



## A Global Neighbourhood

You are holding a special edition in your hands – naturally, you can find English language magazines in Budapest, but one where a district municipality addresses its non-Hungarian speaking citizens is considered exceptional. This responds to an odd situation here in Terézváros, especially since the general discourse often portrays Hungary as a closed, inward-looking country. However, while walking on Andrásy Avenue or Nagykörút, or even wandering into Szondi Street, we immerse in the undeniable everyday life of a multicultural city. The numbers make it clear that this isn't just the result of tourism. Nearly twenty percent of children attending kindergartens and schools in Terézváros are not Hungarian, while census data shows that 25 percent of the population in the sixth district are foreign nationals. Thus, addressing those living among us is not a merit but an unavoidable necessity. English has become the intermediary language, but we know that one-third of the foreigners living in Terézváros are EU citizens, and two-thirds have come from outside the Union.

Our goal was twofold: to address and to present. We provide useful information, shed light on the district's history, and Mayor Tamás Soproni speaks about the municipality's work and future plans. We also wanted to showcase those who live and work among us, or are active members of a small community in Terézváros. Even the Hungarian pages of this special issue present the diversity of our district and serve this same goal, because only in this way can neighbors turn into a community.

Accept these pages with a warm spirit – consider this an introductory handshake, a precursor to a journey of numerous amicable meetings and connections.

**Botond Csepregi**

# Your Guide to Local Administration

**Where can I get a parking permit? Who do I turn to for assistance?  
Which GP am I assigned to? Where can I access healthcare services?  
We assist you in navigating through the maze of bureaucracy, whether it concerns the local municipality, health services, or other official matters.**



PHOTO: RUDOLF KARANCSI/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

## Everything Official

**A significant part of everyday affairs can be taken care of at the mayor's office and its customer service. These include civil registry matters (marriage, birth registration), parking-related administration (more on this below), local taxes or benefits.**

The official title of the mayor's office is *Budapest Főváros VI. kerület Terézvárosi Polgármesteri Hivatal*, and its address is 1067 Budapest, Eötvös utca 3. Phone number: +36 (1) 342-0902, +36 (1) 342-0903, email address: [hivatal@terezvaros.hu](mailto:hivatal@terezvaros.hu). Our colleagues at the reception desk can also help you in English (during office hours).

The customer service office across the mayor's office (1067 Budapest, Eötvös utca 4.) can be reached at +36 (1) 351-8939. Here you can get all the forms necessary for administration, parking permits, public space use permits for containers, and also submit your administrative requests, documents and found items.

**The website of the Terézváros municipality:** [terezvaros.hu](http://terezvaros.hu)

**The opening hours of the customer service:**

Monday: 8.00–18.00  
Tuesday: 8.00–16.00  
Wednesday: 8.00–16.30  
Thursday: 8.00–16.00  
Friday: 8.00–13.30

On the cover are members of the international congregation at Vörösmarty Street, the St. Columba's Church of Scotland – Pamela Shammass and James Gordon (front, left to right), along with Pastor Aaron Stevens and Hanis Kakaba Habila (back, left to right) – in the congregation's church, on October 4, 2023.

## Terézváros public, cultural and lifestyle magazine

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**Terézváros**





PHOTO: ZOLTÁN TUBA/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

## Benefits

**In Terézváros, residents from newborns to the elderly are supported through Budapest's most robust benefit system. Hungarian citizenship is not a prerequisite for applying; one only needs to have an address in Terézváros and reside here.**

The majority of these benefits are determined based on social needs, which means our colleagues assess the requestors' financial conditions. This means that to every benefit request an official proof of income not older than 30 days must be attached. For more detailed information on various benefit eligibility criteria, feel free to inquire at the mayor's office and customer service.

However, numerous municipal benefits are available irrespective of one's financial situation, particularly those aimed at children and youth.

Here's a non-exhaustive list of benefits in Terézváros: vaccine for meningitis and pneumococcus, nursing allowance, young adults' benefit, public transport semester pass for students, disability benefits, heating benefit, prescription assistance, Terézváros Junior vouchers for people under 20, allowance for feminine hygiene products, home renovation aid, bicycle purchase support for the youth, rent aid, housing aid, washable diapers aid, allowance for language certificate and driver's licence, extraordinary rent allowance, regular child protection allowance, vacation in Siófok, birth benefits.

For detailed descriptions and more information on these benefits, visit the customer service center or the municipal website, where descriptions are available in Hungarian.

## Parking

**Parking throughout Terézváros is subject to a fee, however, residents can obtain an annual waiting permit allowing them to park free of charge within District VI.**

To be eligible for a yearly waiting permit, you need to have your permanent residence in Terézváros, and you need to be the operator of the vehicle. Residents can have one waiting permit per person, with a maximum of two per household.

The exclusive residential parking system was introduced by the Terézváros municipality in 2021 and will cover the entire district by the end of 2023. This means that between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. on weekdays, only those with a valid residential parking permit can park in areas designated by signs and road markings.

Terézváros residents are further assisted by another option: the municipality purchases parking garage spaces from providers, which those entitled to an annual residential parking permit can buy at a discounted price, with the condition that they waive their right for free public parking.

For any inquiries related to parking permits or parking issues, you can contact the mayor's office via phone at 06 (1) 351-8939, email at [parkolas@terezvaros.hu](mailto:parkolas@terezvaros.hu), or in person at the customer service centre during business hours.

Information gathered and compiled by Emese Gajdács

## Government Service Centers

Most administrative tasks in Hungary, like citizenship or property issues, construction issues, or the sale and purchase of vehicles involve government service centers (called kormányablak in

Hungarian). The one in Terézváros is near Oktogon. Address: 1062 Budapest, Andrásy Avenue 55. Opening hours: Monday: 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Tuesday: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM, Thursday: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Friday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

## Healthcare Services

**Foreign citizens living in Terézváros can access healthcare services covered by social insurance under certain conditions. The operation of Hungarian healthcare is a state responsibility, but parts of it, such as the network of general practitioners and outpatient care, are maintained by local governments.**

The district's clinic is the Terézvárosi Egészségügyi Szolgálat (TESZ), where specialist consultations are available. Its address is 1074 Budapest, Csengery Street 25. Phone: +36 (1) 321-2200, +36 (1) 999 5100. Website with all the necessary information: [tesz.co.hu](http://tesz.co.hu), social media: [facebook.com/tesz06](https://www.facebook.com/tesz06).



PHOTO: JÁNOS PELIKÁNKÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

Important care providers for Terézváros residents include:

**Maternal and Child Health Service:** For pregnant women and infants. Address: Király utca 88., ground floor 5, entrance from Vörösmarty utca 21. Phone: +36 (1)

342 4330. The nurses are available from Monday to Thursday, 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM, and Friday, 7:30 AM - 1:30 PM.

**Youth Dental Service:** For local children under 18 and children attending care and educational institutions in the district, Address: 1067 Budapest, Teréz körút 27., phone: +36 (1) 331 4795, +36 (1) 312 5653.

**Adult Medical Emergency Service:** 1073 Budapest, Dob utca 86., phone: +36 (1) 321 0440

**Pediatric Emergency Service:** 1138 Budapest, Révész utca 10-12, phone: +36 (1) 349 8601, +36 (1) 3498603

**Dental Emergency Service:** 1088 Budapest, Szentkirályi utca 40., phone: +36 (1) 317 6600



PHOTO: VALTER BEREZSI/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

# Unity in Diversity

**“We proudly and happily share all this with those who want to become an integral part of our community, coming from anywhere in the world” – says Tamás Soproni about Terézváros and its residents. In our interview with the mayor, we discussed the four years since his election, the transformation of the district’s streets and squares, and what the municipality can do to ensure that foreigners living here feel as comfortable as possible.**

**Botond Csepregi**

*– As the cover of our magazine’s special issue shows, this issue is not about daily events or the rich cultural life, but the diversity represented by the four individuals in the picture, each hailing from a different continent. Being born and raised in Terézváros, what do you see as the appeal of District VI?*

– Those who didn’t grow up here – be they Hungarians or foreigners – have chosen a small district with a wonderful architectural heritage and a supportive community that is easy to love. I might be biased, but I daresay they have chosen the most magnificent of all in Budapest. It’s not easy to discover, for we

have countless treasures: we have the highest number of theatres per person, we can drop by the Sphinx at the Opera House anytime, take a walk among the avenues of Andrassy Avenue, or have a meal in the world’s most beautiful McDonald’s at Nyugati. Past and future coexist here, the literary café of the turn of the century and the world-famous startup company. Everything is within reach, it is a quarter of an hour’s journey from one end of the district to the other – a distance we can cover with Europe’s oldest subway, the 127-year-old underground. This is the heart of Budapest, and for us “Terézvárosians”, it’s the centre of the world. We proudly and happily share all this with those who want to become an integral part of this community, coming from anywhere in the world.

*– Arriving on the street of Terézváros, in its institutions, the Hunyadi Square Market Hall, the parks, it is clear that this multicultural feeling is not caused by the tourists who come only for a few days. The data from last year’s census also supports our feelings with numbers.*

– Perhaps we can use the cliché that Terézváros has once again become a melting pot, as it was 150 years ago at the formation of the capital. It is no accident that three years ago we launched the Nations’ Festival, organised by our local cultural institute, Eötvös10 every summer, where we can experience the culture

of those coming to us: we can cook gazpacho at Hunyadi Square, marvel at Indonesian instruments we may have never heard before, and dance the sirtaki, Zorba’s dance. Beyond festive occasions, however, it really is a daily experience that people from every continent live among us: according to our data, nearly twenty percent of the children attending our district’s primary schools and kindergartens do not speak Hungarian as their mother tongue. The latest census data has just come in, showing that twenty-five percent of those living in Terézváros – nearly nine thousand people – are foreign citizens, almost three times as many as at the last census. Two-thirds of them came from countries outside the European Union.

*– Having lived abroad for a while yourself, you might have a better understanding of what it’s like to get by far from home, and what can offer solace and support in a new country.*

– When one leaves their homeland, they leave not only their friends behind but also have to secure their livelihood and housing in this new place, and often face an entirely unfamiliar bureaucracy. In an inner district of a multicultural city like Budapest, this imposes special tasks on the municipality. We are dedicated to offering information in English on our website and encourage our colleagues to assist Terézváros residents

who do not speak Hungarian. We also fund English language courses for the police to enhance their communication skills.

– *Even though municipalities don't oversee schools in Hungary, Terézváros has still provided significant assistance to local institutions to better cater to children whose mother tongue is not Hungarian.*

– We've embraced a philosophy that places the well-being of Terézváros residents above bureaucratic boundaries. If we perceive that it's a significant challenge for educators working in and for the district to teach both Hungarian and non-Hungarian speaking students together, then we feel compelled to step in and offer support. In alignment with this, the municipality funded a specialized "Hungarian as a Foreign Language" training programme, facilitated by ELTE, for twenty-seven teachers from our district at Bajza Street Elementary School in August. They acquired basic methodologies and from now on, they will consult monthly about their experiences. To augment this effort, we're sponsoring additional weekly language lessons at each school, facilitated by these somewhat trained teachers.

– *In addition to the special issue's theme, another reason for our conversation is that you've been leading Terézváros for almost exactly four years. This milestone provides an opportune moment to reflect and assess the journey so far.*

– After the 2019 election, the team, including the deputy mayors and the director of our companies and institutes, immersed themselves in the work far more intensely than previous district leaderships. Our primary goal was to settle the enduring debts that have plagued the district for years, if not decades. Our concentrated efforts were aimed at improving street sanitation, providing support to the residents, and urgently revitalizing our public spaces.

– *What specific steps have been taken to improve public cleanliness and social security?*

– We vowed to replacing disorder with cleanliness, and have found solutions to long-unresolved issues including the refurbishment of the deteriorated Bajza-Bulcsú tunnel and implementing a new container storage system to alleviate the FKF bin issues on Podmaniczky street. Simultaneously, our public cleaning company underwent a complete overhaul, with expanded weekend cleaning operations and a tripling of its budget since 2019



PHOTO: ZOLTÁN TUBA/KEPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

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**It really is a daily experience that people from every continent live among us.**

for maintaining public spaces. With the "Terézváros Stands by You" programme, we created Budapest's most robust social network by raising the income threshold for eligibility and increasing the benefit amounts. We've also introduced special provisions for the youth, offering subsidies for bicycles, BKK semester passes for students, and the Terézváros Junior voucher for those under 20.

– *How is the process of renewing public spaces going?*

– I've been openly critical of how our public spaces were neglected under former administrations. They fell short of the standards of Terézváros and had remained unchanged for many years. In our campaign slogan we promised trees instead of concrete, and from this promise came Terézváros 2030, the largest public space renovation programme of the past thirty years. Sections of Paulay, almost the entire length of Lázár street, and the inner part of Podmaniczky have already been completed. In recent weeks, the wall-to-wall transformation of Csengery street has begun, where sidewalk parking will be a thing of the past, and a formerly bare street will be graced with a line of trees. This development well illustrates the direction we are heading, and of course, we continue with Szinyei, Szondi, and so on.

– *The Terézváros 2030 program promises more than just repaving the streets – but what principles will guide this transformation?*

– The most crucial aspect would be for people to perceive our shared spaces differently than before. We believe that fostering a greater sense of value for these areas is more attainable if individuals have access to revitalized and diversely functional spaces. Currently cars occupy and utilize eighty percent of our shared spaces for their movement and parking, a trend we are committed to change. We're working towards creating public spaces that are not just healthy and safe - with measures to reduce and moderate traffic - but also greener and visually appealing. Pedestrians are at the center of this transformation. Not only because walking is the most common mode of transportation for Terézváros residents, but also because everyone becomes a pedestrian after parking their car.

– *Those who know you are aware of your preference to walk rather than use an official car within the district. Why is this important to you?*

– Living in the district for close to four decades has ingrained in me a natural inclination to walk. While strolling through Terézváros, I encounter the same issues visible to all residents, whether it's a crooked pole, abandoned trash, or an unappealing building front. Engaging with residents during these walks is invaluable; the casual greetings and brief exchanges often spotlight concerns requiring attention. This hands-on approach is integral for me, and forms a cornerstone of the ethos we're instilling across the municipal structure and affiliated entities. In fostering transparent and accessible communication, I've instituted a monthly reception day, where residents can address their concerns directly. Our responsiveness extends online, ensuring timely replies to queries on social media, and I personally attend to messages received on my Facebook page.

– *The scope of the Terézváros 2030 initiative extends well beyond the remaining year of this municipal term.*

– Tackling the longstanding debt and backlog isn't a short-term task; it's a challenge that exceeds the confines of a few years or a single term of municipal leadership. Consequently, our gaze is fixed beyond the 2024 municipal elections. We are unwavering in our commitment to advance the developmental projects initiated under our administration, and we will seek the electorate's affirmation to carry on this mandate in next year's June elections.

# No Stone Left Unturned



**This fall marks a significant phase in the Terézváros 2030 programme, the largest public space renewal program of the past 30 years. In this municipal development, streets are being renovated from wall to wall. With the liberation of sidewalks, more space will be allotted to pedestrians and cyclists, making public spaces greener and more livable.**

Terézváros has a dual character within Budapest. It is home to some of the capital's most beautiful buildings and well-known attractions, with Andrásy Avenue and its surroundings being the only World Heritage site on the Pest side of the city. Yet, there are streets where no substantial changes have occurred in twenty to thirty, maybe even sixty to eighty years, streets where parked cars crowd the sidewalks leaving no room for even a stroller, and where not a single tree can be found for hundreds of meters.

The Terézváros 2030 public space renewal programme, under the motto “trees instead of concrete”, aims to transform this situation according to the following principles set by the municipality:

- › Currently 80% of public spaces serves car traffic, which is unsustainable, and therefore a more democratic distribution is required.
- › Car-centric urban planning will be replaced by a human-oriented approach – the focus shifting from the flow of cars to livable public spaces.
- › District VI has the lowest ratio of green space per capita, and we must take every opportunity to increase it.

The principles above are manifested in these specific initiatives as part of the Terézváros 2030 programme:

- › Entire streets are being renewed from wall to wall, meaning not only the roadway or sidewalks are renovated, but whole areas are reimagined and used differently – an

example is the already renewed Jókai Square, which became greener and quieter by the summer of 2022.

- › Where underground utilities allow, trees and avenues are planted – a good example is Csengery Street, where construction is already underway.
- › Cars parking on sidewalks will be eliminated everywhere because it's unacceptable to leave less than one and a half meters for pedestrians – an example is Rózsa Street.
- › Cars will completely disappear from many short streets or street sections, transforming them into pedestrian zones or small parks – this will happen in Bajcsy-Zsilinszky köz, Révay köz, and Szobi utca as well.
- › Conditions for soft mobility will significantly improve with two-way traffic for cycling in most streets, as well as a dense network of parking spots for bicycles and scooters.
- › By 2024, all byroads of the district will fall into a 30-zone, meaning the speed limit in these areas will be 30 km/h.
- › The renewal of public spaces is also facilitated by the municipality offering unprecedented support to condominiums for facade renovations.
- › The reborn streets will also be safer: the public camera system will be renewed and become the densest in Budapest.

The Terézváros 2030 programme brings tangible change to all public areas in District VI, so that our residents can reclaim their streets and squares.



Botond Csepregi

HIRDETÉS

## PUMPKIN FESTIVAL AND NIGHT MARKET AT HUNYADI SQUARE

Join us **on October 27 from 3 PM at Hunyadi tér**, and be the one to carve the most awesome pumpkin lantern. In addition to carving, there will be a concert for kids, face painting, a crafts corner, a firefighter demonstration, strudel tasting, and tea. György Kaldenecker will give a live cooking demonstration, and to close the event, there will be a LED show.

You can buy from local producers or choose from the food truck offerings at the market. We provide the pumpkins, but please bring your own carving tools!

SEE YOU THERE!



Terézváros



# Events in Terézváros

**We would like to recommend some recurring events and communities that are accessible to, or specifically organized for Terézváros residents who have come from abroad.**

## More Than a Library

The Terézváros branch of the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library (Teréz körút 2-4) is also worth visiting as a foreigner. They are continually expanding their foreign language book collection, recently adding more titles in Spanish, French, and Ukrainian, alongside English. The grand, street-facing library, fully accessible and equipped with cutting-edge technology, serves as a community space where one can study or work. A range of foreign language databases and professional journals are available in various disciplines. The use of the community area to the right of the entrance doesn't require a membership; anyone can come in to make photocopies, print or just to meet others. The library also hosts an English lecture series aiming to share useful cultural and lifestyle information about Budapest with foreigners living here.



PHOTO: VALTER BERECZ/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

## The Land of Words and Images

Though it's mainly interesting for children, playful adults can also spend an exciting hour in the "escape room" of the Cervantes Institute (Vörösmarty Street 32). The quotation marks are there because the location is actually the institute's library, where you can find the richest collection of original language literature of Spanish and Hispanic-American cultures in Budapest. In the escape game, aside from language skills, some knowledge of Spanish literature is also required, which is guaranteed to expand by the end of the adventure. Although the Cervantes Institute primarily deals with teaching Spanish, among its programs, they also host a variety of cultural events for foreigners. For more information: <https://budapest.cervantes.es>.

## Not Just for Scots

St. Columba's Church of Scotland, also known as the Scottish Mission welcomes foreigners to their events at their prayer hall next to Vörösmarty Primary School (Vörösmarty utca 51). Anyone interested in faith or religion, regardless of whether they are a member of the congregation or not, can participate in the English-language worship service starting at 11 am every Sunday morning. Similarly, everyone is invited to the online discussion Bible circles on Wednesday evenings, and you can also make an appointment with the pastor, Aaron C. Stevens, to ask questions or receive some support through a personal conversation. The website of the congregation is [scottishmission.org](http://scottishmission.org), and the email address of the pastor is [astevens@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:astevens@churchofscotland.org.uk).



## Mondjuk magyarul!

The cultural institute of the municipality, Eötvös10 (1067 Eötvös Street 10), invites foreign speakers living in the district to join their Hungarian conversation club. Anyone can attend, regardless of their knowledge of Hungarian—from beginners to those looking to perfect their skills. The Hungarian language classes, focused specifically on speaking, are free for foreigner having a valid address card. Classes are held by Szilvia Szabó, who teaches Hungarian as a second language at the Hungarian Language School, and involve informal conversations about any topic on any level—but only in Hungarian. If necessary, English can be used as a bridge language.

**Information gathered and compiled by Orsolya Csejtei**

## Flea Market at Hunyadi Tér

It has now become a tradition that once a month, on a Sunday, the municipality organises a flea market at Hunyadi Square, using the tables of the farmers' market. Locals bring items that are still in good condition but have become unnecessary for them and which others can still use with pleasure. You can get your hands on some astonishing items at a low price here. Check out the municipality's Facebook page for the exact times and dates ([facebook.com/terezvaros.hu](https://facebook.com/terezvaros.hu)).



PHOTO: VALTER BERECZ/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

# Faces From Terézváros

**They hail from four continents, yet they all share a common thread - they live, work, innovate, and support their communities here. We highlight faces among the numerous foreigners who have arrived in Terézváros, those who not only live amongst us but also actively shape the character of this diverse district of Budapest.**



Hanis Kakaba Habila, James Gordon, Pamela Shammás és Aaron Stevens

PHOTO: JÁNOS PELIKÁNY/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

in Budapest as a foreigner. He moved here from the United States in the early 1990s to teach English for a couple of years. Hungary has by now turned out to be his true home; he has founded a family here, and his wife is Hungarian. Initially, he taught at language schools and universities, but now he is the pastor of the English-speaking international congregation at St. Columba's Church of Scotland in Vörösmarty Street.

"I've been working in Terézváros for sixteen years, and I really love it. I enjoy walking in Hunyadi Square Park and appreciate the friendliness of the market. Many buildings have a real charm. As I turn into each small street, I never know what will surprise me: an old apartment building or a quirky, colourful storefront." These are the things Aaron is still captivated by every day. He also loves to take a look inside the courtyards of the district's buildings, as these secret gems aren't always visible from the street, but inside you can find hidden gardens, beautiful tiles and grand staircases.

The pastor of the Scottish Mission, appreciates the remaining small shops in the district, yet is saddened to see that a few around Hunyadi Square have closed. "I would love to see more small businesses succeed. Since I serve in an international congregation, my greatest dream is for Terézváros to celebrate the diversity of its residents," expresses the pastor, who is a leader of an English-speaking international congregation comprised of people from various backgrounds and with different faiths or interests in religion.

Aaron stood in front of our camera with three members of this community. The four of them have arrived from four different continents: Pamela Shammás is from Syria, James Gordon is from Scotland, and Hanis Kakaba Habila is from Nigeria. Pamela and Hanis were still students when they decided to come to Hungary. She used to be a kindergarten teacher and now she is studying psychology at Károli Gáspár University, while Hanis is a student of ELTE's social integration program. Both of them came to Budapest almost exactly a year ago, on the 1st of October, not knowing anything about each other yet. James, on the other hand, has been living in Szondi utca for 7 years. He used to work in the oil and gas industry, and now he is in building management and Budapest tourism.

James and Hanis laugh as they reminisce about their experience coming to love Hungarian cuisine. "Marhaporkolt es nokedli," says the Scotsman when we ask him what he likes the most about our country. Pamela says the chance to live in this city fills her with a sense of warmth. They are all planning their future lives here—James is even about to get married to his American fiancée. After completing his master's, Hanis can imagine pursuing his PhD and building his career here, while Pamela is a bit more careful—as a Syrian, the world to her has become a bit more precarious, so she focuses on her everyday life instead of the far future.

Botond Csepregi,  
Emese Gajdács

## A 180-Year-Old Community

The history of the school building in Vörösmarty utca and the international congregation that calls it a home, St. Columba's Church of Scotland (in Hungarian The Scottish Mission), is a unique curiosity even in a district rich in extraordinary stories such as ours. The mission was established in 1841 by Scottish missionaries en route to Palestine. Forced to turn back after one of them fell off a camel, they were detained in Pest by illness on their return journey. The Scottish Mission opened a school in Vörösmarty utca in 1910, where Christian and Jewish girls studied and lived together. This was the very building from which the Nazis abducted Jane Haining in the spring of 1944. She was a Scottish teacher who met martyrdom in Auschwitz because she refused to abandon her entrusted Jewish students and was unwilling to return to her homeland.

The congregation - which belongs to both the Scottish and Hungarian Reformed Churches - currently has a pastor, Aaron Stevens, who personally knows what it's like to live



## Beyond the Clichés

“I love Hungarian cuisine, the local sausages, chicken paprikash, but I do miss the tastes of home,” admits Robert Gunnion, who turned his homesickness into a virtue and established a unique restaurant in Jókai Street. Robert – or Bob to his friends – has been living in Budapest for nearly five years and noticed that after Brexit, it became more difficult to get his hands on traditional British food. Therefore, he started cooking the flavours of home for his friends and acquaintances, and it became a hit. Meanwhile, his job here – working for international companies – came to an end, but he wanted to stay in Budapest, having met a Hungarian lady. Together with Pitó Katinka, they embarked on starting an online restaurant focusing on delivery. The business started booming, they found their customer base, and since all this was happening in a licensed hot kitchen, opening Bob’s Kitchen in March was just the

next step. Their team was completed by Brian, an Irishman they found at the right moment: he had been working in Dublin, eager to return to his Hungarian wife and children living in Budapest. “You won’t find another restaurant in Budapest where you can taste authentic British cuisine,” claim Bob and Katinka, who not only offer their dishes to the British living here but also wish for Hungarians who drop by to move beyond the stereotypes and clichés associated with English cooking. To ensure this, they serve the most typical British dishes: for instance, the Sunday roast, the full English breakfast served according to the strict rules of the genre, and the indispensable fish & chips. They’ve conjured a London atmosphere in the cozy dining area: the pictures on the walls might seem like stock photos available in interior design shops, but they are actually personal photos of a relative living in England. But



Robert Gunnion and Katinka Pitó

PHOTO: ZOLTÁN TUBA/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

now, Bob’s Kitchen is a Terézváros feature, and according to Robert, it was fantastic how their reputation spread by word of mouth even in such a downtown area and more and more Hungarians discovered them.

CSB

## The True Home

Kontonsep Monta, the soul and owner behind Monta’s Kitchen on Szondi Street, initially planned to stay in Hungary for just a year but has now been living in the country for almost twenty-five years. Monta, a Thai lady, wanted to work abroad as a masseuse and chose Hungary because this was the only country where she had acquaintances. “I found Hungary intriguing even though I knew nothing about it. When I was processing my visa at the embassy, I saw pictures of Budapest, which I really liked. I thought the Parliament building was a church in one of the photos. I arrived in November 1998. It was the first time I had seen snow, and it was so cold that I didn’t leave the house for days.” Over the years, she traveled around the country and fell in love with it. Initially, she extended her stay annually, but eventually, her daughter, husband, and siblings also moved here; her sister even started a family here. Monta now considers

Hungary her second home – or rather, her true home. She now laughs about the times people were hostile towards her due to her foreign origin, but those voices silenced immediately when they heard her speak Hungarian.

Monta switched from Thai massage – she had her own business with four parlours – to hospitality in 2014, when she opened her restaurant on Szondi Street. Over the years, she has helped many of her compatriots in finding employment in Hungary. Thanks to her numerous connections, Monta’s Kitchen has become somewhat of a hub for the nearly thousand-strong Thai community in Budapest. Many of them turn to her for advice, and she is always ready to help. The restaurant on Szondi Street is popular among the locals of Terézváros, as most of the patrons come from the immediate vicinity, always greeted with a smile here. The dishes on the menu have been tweaked to fit the European palate, as the



Kontonsep Monta

PHOTO: VALTER BERECZ/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

original dishes are so spicy and strong that they could be a challenge even for our stomachs. She adds, however, that Hungarian guests have not only grown fond of the strong flavors but are also consuming the dishes with increasing spiciness.

CSB

# Her Heart Beats for Ukraine



Irina Savchuk

Irina Savchuk, born in Kyiv and holding a humanities degree from Budapest, is the vice president of the Ukrainian minority council in District III. However, her charitable initiatives have left a significant mark on Terézváros.

Hungary is her adopted homeland, but even before the Russian-Ukrainian war, she made considerable efforts to ensure that the Ukrainian minority living here preserved their roots, language, and culture while integrating into a different culture. They rented a space in the MagNet House on Andrassy Avenue, where Ukrainian families living in Budapest gathered on Saturdays to pass on their love for their country and their rich historical legacy to their children, most of whom were born in Hungary. After the outbreak of the war, they opened their doors to refugee families as well, and the regular fifteen to twenty families suddenly surged to over a hundred. The need for a regular daycare arose, and with the help of the Terézváros municipality and Eötvös10, it was established in the Rózsa Street SportPont. Under Irina's leadership, and mainly from donations from civilians, the district's sports hall was quickly transformed into a kindergarten. The former gymnasiums

are now group rooms where seventy to eighty Ukrainian refugee children and nursery teachers, babysitters, and developmental educators, all refugees, live their everyday lives in peace. Terézváros municipality has been providing this place for them free of charge for almost a year and a half.

Irina Savchuk continuously strives to help both the refugee children and her compatriots living or fighting in war-torn conditions in her homeland through numerous charity actions. Under her leadership, they also established a school (called an educational space) in Óbuda for older children. Their motto is that children deserve a happy childhood, not war. Since their daycare institutions are self-financed and all educators work voluntarily, their events run on a donation-based system, and their efforts can continuously be supported on the gogetfunding.com website. Just search for "United for Ukraine".

CSO

# Obsessed with Sustainability



Heather Szabo

that she's better off here than in the US, even though things were considerably easier in the beginning. Heather Szabó, whose dual identity is reflected in her name, now feels at home in Terézváros, where her husband and children also have their roots.

Heather has always followed her own path in business as well. When she decided to get in touch with her Hungarian roots and move to Budapest, she began studying project and product management at CEU. Although she worked at the world's former second-largest beer-brewing company and in the banking sector, she has always had her independent projects. In Hungary she ventured into a community business based on sustainability and recycling. She's a proponent of green initiatives. In the past few years, she has organized numerous adult and children's clothing swaps, initially attended

by friends, acquaintances, and their contacts from the area. Today the project carries the name The Garment Exchange – A Circular Marketplace, where wardrobes can be renewed through exchanges and thrifting sustainably. But Heather doesn't just sell her own stuff. Credits are given for used items brought to the clothing swaps, which can be "redeemed" at occasional garage sales hosted by JOICO at Hunyadi tér 7. Every year before Christmas, she holds a "green Friday" as a counteraction to the consumerist black Friday (24 November, 6 p.m.). The aim remains the same: to avoid buying brand new items, but instead, find those among others' unneeded belongings that can offer us a new experience, and vice versa. The main message is to keep what we don't need anymore, because someone else might still use it.

CSO

She speaks good Hungarian, albeit with an accent. Sixteen years ago, she made the decision to move from Boston to Hungary to live with her grandparents in Szófia utca. She claims

PHOTO: JÁNOS PELIKÁNY/KEPSZERKESZTŐSEG

# Hungarian, Berber, Arabic All At Once

He says that his Moroccan lineage is only part of his identity; he is Hungarian now, since he speaks Hungarian with his children. Saïd Tichiti, founder of the internationally acclaimed bands Chalaban (now known as Saïd Chalaban since last year) and Tariqa, has been living in Hungary since 1998. He's been a Hungarian citizen since 2007, and whenever he travels abroad, whether it's to his home in Morocco or somewhere else, he starts to feel homesick after a while. Twenty-five years ago, he fell in love with the intensive cultural and musical life in Budapest. The sixth district is one of the dearest places to his heart: there was a time when he didn't even leave Terézváros. He was a regular at the former Eckermann Kávészó, from where he would go to Tütü Tangó almost across the street to play music, while nowadays he can be seen in the newly reopened Gödör in Király utca—both as a guest and as a performer. When he founded Chalaban in 1999, locals didn't yet know much about his Moroccan

music enriched with authentic folk and jazzy elements. And then, all of a sudden, Saïd became the Moroccan musician all across Central and Eastern Europe. Nobody can conjure up a desert blues atmosphere on the old continent more authentically than him, and since he was born on the line between Berber and Arabic desert culture (his mother is Berber and his father is a black African who speaks Arabic), he is well-versed in every Moroccan musical style. He feels like Hungarians aren't as open to world music today as they were 20 years ago, but his performances still tend to sell out. Although not in our district, he still has performances planned in several downtown venues this autumn: in Turbina on November 9 (District VIII), and in Három Holló on December 15 (District V).

He has been planning on opening an authentic Moroccan bistro somewhere around Terézváros for a while, to bring the vibe of Jemaa el-Fnaa, the main square of Marrakesh to Budapest. Until



Saïd Tichiti

PHOTO: KRISZTA LETTNER/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

this dream comes true, Saïd will continue to indulge his passion for gastronomy in Semmelweis utca's Jouri, where he is the one who puts the "Moroccan" in the restaurant's motto, "A blend of Moroccan and Arabesque cuisine".

## Tales from Terézváros' Past

**Did you know that District VI is Budapest's second smallest district, yet it has the only UNESCO World Heritage Site on the Pest side? Did you know it was named after Maria Theresa, and is home to the continent's first underground railway?**

Orsolya Csejtei

**Theresa or Saint Teresa.** Terézváros was named after the only female ruler of the Habsburg Empire, Maria Theresa. Some believe, however, that Saint Teresa is the real namesake. It is certain though that the former „Felső-külsőváros” (Upper Outskirts) has been called Terézváros since 1777, the year a church was dedicated to Saint Teresa of Ávila at the corner of today's Nagymező and Király Streets. Both of them deserve the title of „godmother”, as it was because of the queen that the church took on Saint Teresa as its patron saint.



**The Hungarian Champs-Élysées.** By the beginning of the 19th century, in terms of the number of residents and residential buildings, Terézváros had caught up with the inner city. Count Gyula Andrássy (Prime Minister of Hungary between 1867 and 1871), born 200 years ago, envisioned a grand boulevard filled with palaces connecting the city centre and the City Park to be completed by the end of the 1860s. The boulevard, opened on August 20, 1876, is the only public space in Budapest to have been named after a living person—it was named Andrássy in 1886, and the count passed in 1890. After World War II, it bore the name of Stalin, and was also called the Avenue of Hungarian Youth and the Avenue of the People's Republic – but since the political changes of 1989, it has been referred to again as Andrássy Avenue. The Hungarian Champs Elysée has been a World Heritage Site since 2002.

PHOTO: JÁNOS PELIKÁN/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG





**The Handsome Hanged Man.** Count Gyula Andrassy, regardless of the boulevard named after him, is an interesting figure in Hungarian history. He was deemed persona non grata in the country for serving as a colonel in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, and even sentenced to death by emperor Franz Joseph I. As the count had already fled to Western Europe, he was symbolically hanged—his name nailed to the gallows. He was allegedly adored by the women of Parisian saloons, who gave him the nickname le beau pendu—the handsome hanged man. The tide turned in 1867, and on the 8th of June, as the new prime minister of Hungary, Andrassy was the one to crown the same Franz Joseph who had signed his death sentence 16 years before. Andrassy is also famous worldwide for his meaningful friendship with Queen Elizabeth (nicknamed Sisi). Rumour had it that their relationship extended further than friendship, but no one has ever proven that.

**Mulberry Trees for Silkworms.** In the second half of the 18th century, much of today's Terézváros (the land beyond Nagykörút) was marshy, sandy, and uncultivated. The Spanish Valero family, which had Hungarian origins, effectively moved the center of European silk production to Hungary in 1783 by establishing mulberry orchards in this part of Terézváros, as silkworms feed on mulberry leaves. A closed park, belonging to the University of Fine Arts and enclosed by Munkácsy-Szondi-Bajza-Kmety György Streets, still bears the name Epreskert (Mulberry Garden), although not a single mulberry tree has remained.

**Terror on Andrassy Avenue.** A similar fate befell the rental building at 60 Andrassy Avenue a few decades later. The building is a multifaceted symbol: it became the nest for the Arrow Cross Party members, supporters of Hitler during World War II. In the winter of 1944, hundreds of Jews were tortured and killed in the basement. After their departure, Hungarian communists arrived, shielded by Soviet tanks. Until the suppression of the 1956 Revolution, thousands were tortured and annihilated in Andrassy 60. The building absorbed so much human suffering that it was impossible to assign it any other function: it became a museum, the House of Terror, one of the most emblematic places in Hungary after the change of the regime.



PHOTO: ZOLTÁN ADRIÁN/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

**Prettier Than the One in Paris.** Not only the gem of Andrassy Avenue, also one of Budapest's most significant 19th-century monuments is the recently renovated neo-renaissance style Opera House. At its opening gala, even Franz Joseph I was present and wisely stated: "Beautiful! More beautiful than the opera house in Paris." The citizens of Budapest, eager to see architect Miklós Ybl's masterpiece, didn't appreciate that only the prominent guests were allowed to attend, and broke through the police perimeter during the performance, flooding the foyer. It took hours to evacuate the building. The Opera House also endured several assaults during World War II: performances were cancelled after the Christmas of 1944, and its vast basement system was converted into a shelter where many sought refuge during the siege, including world-famous music teacher Zoltán Kodály, the founder of the Kodály method. After cleaning up the rubble, the Opera opened its doors once again on February 11, 1945, with its first concert held in the downstairs cloakroom, while fighting was still going on the other side of the Danube.



PHOTO: ZOLTÁN TUBA/KÉPSZERKESZTŐSÉG

**Another Eiffel Building.** The grand hall of Nyugati Railway Station was designed by August de Serres, one of the most talented architects of Gustave Eiffel's architectural design office. The area did not enjoy a good reputation in those times, was home to many sex workers and pickpockets, thus the newly built picturesque hall only allowed entry for those who arrived by coaches operated by the Privileged Austro-Hungarian State Railway Company (which was a private company despite its name). Although the Eiffel Tower had not been finished by the time construction started on the station hall in 1874, the architect's office already enjoyed great prestige, and the iron structure of the Nyugati building also evokes the symbol of Paris.