

Polish American Association

Resources for Changing Lives

3834 North Cicero Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60641

Phone: (773) 282-8206
Fax: (773) 282-1324
Email: paa@polish.org

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Stanley R. McNeil Foundation, Karol Uryga-Nawarowski Foundation, Near-North Greatland Target, The Owens Foundation, Sara Lee Foundation, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, Morton & Angela Topfer Family Foundation . . . and to all those not mentioned here, but who have given to PAA in time, money or prayers, Dziękujemy bardzo!



Polish
American
Association

Serving Polonia Since 1922

The Link

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Rebuilding Shattered Lives...

"Kasia" and her daughter were so thrilled to finally be joining her husband in the United States after months of being separated as he worked and paved the way to bring his family here. She envisioned how happy and full of opportunity their new life would be in the U.S. Her dream quickly began to unravel shortly after her arrival. Her husband became very verbally abusive. At first she thought it was just stress and a matter of getting used to each other again.

However, his abuse increased and became physical. She was afraid for herself and her child, but did not know where to turn for help since she had not yet learned English, was still in the process of applying for permanent residency, and had no close friends or family in Chicago.

Kasia then heard PAA's domestic violence counselor during one of her regular guest spots on a Polish-language radio station. Kasia realized she is not alone and can do something to free herself and her daughter from the fear in which they constantly lived. It took her several months before she actually made the call to PAA, but now she and her daughter are on the road to self-sufficiency and rebuilding their life.

For years studies have shown that domestic violence is a leading cause of injury for women in the United States. The Chicago Police Department responds to an average of over 500 domestic violence calls a day.

Domestic violence is a pattern of physical and psychological abuse, threats, intimidation, isolation or economic coercion used by one person to exert power and control over another person in the context of a dating, family or household relationship.

Domestic abuse tends to be an ongoing cycle, which gets increasingly severe over time and impacts the entire family. In homes where violence occurs, children are at high risk of suffering physical and psy-

chological trauma. The psychological effect on a child who continually witnesses violence in the home is similar to that of being a victim of child abuse. Research also indicates that children from violent homes are themselves much more likely to become victims and perpetrators of domestic violence as adults.

Although domestic violence cuts across economic, cultural and ethnic lines, immigrant women's limited access to information, services and legal protection make them particularly vulnerable to spousal abuse.



Sara Lee Foundation is a Major Corporate Sponsor of PAA's Women's Services program. This program is also made possible through partial funding from the Illinois Attorney General's Office, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Chicago Department of Human Services and Kraft Foods.

For some immigrant women, the violence in their families started in their homeland; for many others the violence begins shortly after their arrival in the United States. The stress of coping with starting a new life in a foreign country can lead men to use violence against their spouse.

An immigrant woman who is a victim of domestic violence, particularly one whose immigration status is dependent on her husband, often fears that she will have no access to legal assistance, financial assistance, shelter,

employment, or food. She may think that she faces deportation, that she will have to give up her children, or that no judge would believe her. She may feel it is her duty to stay with her husband, or decide that it is in the best interests of her family to stay and not do anything to antagonize the situation. Cultural norms often present barriers for women to gain the courage to come forward. In some cases it's the belief that she must accept inequality and hide her views for the sake of her family and that family is the only appropriate forum for dealing with such problems.

The Polish American Association's Domestic Violence program has been assisting Polish-speaking immigrant women to assess their alternatives and regain a healthy home environment for themselves and their children. We provide culturally sensitive, Polish-language counseling on both an individual and group basis, art therapy for children in violent homes, court advocacy, assistance with emergency shelter, and other services, such as employment and vocational training, that may be necessary to make a sustainable change. Ultimately, it is up to each woman to decide how to improve her situation – PAA educates and supports her as she chooses her path. Services are offered on a highly confidential basis at no charge to our clients.

One of the critical components of PAA's services to victims of domestic violence is our continuing outreach to the Polish community. Through radio appearances and newspaper articles, PAA provides information and educates the community about what constitutes domestic violence. Our staff addresses common misconceptions that immigrant women have about domestic violence and lets victims know that they are not alone, and that they do not have to accept their situation.

For more information on PAA's domestic violence or counseling services, please call (773) 282-8206. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

From The Chairman . . .

In the interest of national security, our country's lawmakers are examining many of our country's immigration and immigrant integration policies. I think we can all agree on the need for safe borders. However, we also need to urge our lawmakers to enact legislation that is fair and promotes the integration of the many immigrants who have made this country their home and have contributed to its economic and social well-being.

According to a recent study "Education for All: Chicago's Undocumented Immigrants and Their Access to Higher Education" more than 64% of undocumented Illinois high-school graduates are qualified to enter college. However, because they are charged out-of-state tuition rates, which in most cases are double or triple the in-state tuition rate, these bright young people can't realize their dream of attending a university. This study was done by the Center for Urban Economic Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with research assistance from many organizations, among them Polish American Association.

Many of these young people, such as "Gosia," were brought to the United States when they were young children, speak English fluently, make straight A's, and have dreams of becoming doctors and lawyers. When they graduate high school, they are hit with the brutal reality that although they live in the U.S. they will never be able to live up to their full potential and contribute their talents to the country that they call home. Gosia dreams of being a psychologist, however because she is an undocumented immigrant, she and her family can't afford the out-of-state tuition rates she would need to pay to attend college and have no access to student loans. She does not want her college experience to be like that of her sister, who had to drop out because she could not afford it despite living at home and working nearly full time.

Gosia had the courage to tell her story at a recent press conference, because she believes maybe somehow her plight and that of thousands of Illinois students each year will change current law, which allows virtually no mechanism for undocumented students who were brought to the US as children to legalize their immigration status and attend college.

Many federal and state legislators realize the tragedy of this situation for all of us and are working to enact laws that will enable these students to live up to their full potential and to contribute their talents to our society. I urge you to support the many young people in our community affected by this situation by contacting your state and federal legislators to express your support.

Stanley Jozefiak

The Link is a publication of the Polish American Association.

Editor: Joanna Augustynski

Design: Barbara Sobecka



The Polish American Association expresses its heartfelt thanks to all who helped us spread the joy and hope of the Holiday Season to our clients: **Krakus Foods** for generously donating Krakus hams for our food pantry clients; **Jewel-Osco** for donating Thanksgiving & Christmas dinners to our homeless shelter; the **parishioners of St. Constance Church** for donating Christmas gifts for the children of needy clients; and **The Chicago Society** for hosting a Christmas party for disadvantaged children.

Chairman's Brunch 2003

This year's Chairman's Brunch will take place on April 6, 2003. The Polish American Association (PAA) is pleased to announce that **Chef Michael J. Baruch** will be our honored guest. A sixth-generation Pole and a native of the Northwest side of Chicago, Chef Baruch has recently written and published *The New Polish Cuisine*, a superb collection of never-before published original recipes that the chef has reinvented for the American palate. Hailed by critics as a Midwestern classic, this book is a true visual masterpiece that accentuates the body and soul of Polish American cooking.

The Chairman's Brunch is one of the PAA's major annual fundraisers, which provides the organization with much needed funds to support many of our programs.

For more information or to receive an invitation, please call Joanna Augustynski at 773/282-8206 ext.308.



The Polish American Association celebrated 80 years of service to Polonia with a **Roaring 20's Dinner & Dance Benefit** on February 8, 2003 at the Avalon Banquets in Elk Grove Village. Agata Paleczny served as the master of ceremonies for the evening's festivities. More than 230 guests, many adorned in "swanky" 20's attire, enjoyed an evening that was the "cat's meow" while raising funds for the PAA.

PAA Opens a Community Computer Resource Room At Its Southwest Side Office

Perhaps it was serendipity that Stella Zierden found herself at PAA with her care giver Grace, who was attending an ESL class, on the day computer tutor Christopher Szykula announced the opening of PAA's new computer resource room. Now 84 year-old Stella is a regular at PAA's computer room, emailing family, listening to music, writing letters, sending holiday cards to her care giver Grace's family in Poland and socializing with the increasing number of community residents using the computer room.

Through a grant from the Illinois Community College Board, PAA was able to establish the community computer resource room at its Southside office on 6276 W. Archer Avenue in Chicago. PAA's computer room offers free computer and Internet access to those seeking employment, needing lab time to learn or improve basic computer skills, and in some cases providing people with

an opportunity to stay connected with family and friends living far away.

The computer resource room can be used by job seekers to write resumes, conduct Internet job searches, and improve office skills on current software applications. There are also computer software programs available for those wishing to improve their typing, English language skills or to use email or the Internet. The computer resource room is staffed by a tutor, who is available to answer questions and help people get started.

PAA's Southwest Side Resource Room located at 6276 W. Archer Avenue is open Monday through Thursday from 1-9 PM, Saturday 10 AM-6 PM, and Sunday 12-4 PM

PAA's Northwest Side Resource Room located at 3815 N. Cicero Avenue is open Saturdays 9 AM - 5 PM and Sundays 12 - 4 PM.



New Congressman Tours PAA...

PAA was pleased to host 5th District Congressman **Rahm Emanuel** at its Northwest Side office. Congressman Emanuel met with staff and toured the facility in February to learn more about the issues that are important to his district's Polish community. Illinois' 5th Congressional District has one of the largest Polish populations in the state.



2002 PAA Presidential Award Winner

Bogna Iwanowska-Solak, a member of PAA's Board of Directors, was the honoree and recipient of PAA's "Presidential Award" at PAA's Annual Gala held on November 23, 2002. She was recognized for her selfless commitment and her outstanding contributions of time, talent, enthusiasm and resources to the Polish American Association among the other charitable causes she supports in Chicago and its Polish-American community. ABC 7 Anchor Alan Krashesky served as the master of ceremonies for the gala, which was attended by more than 350 supporters and well-wishers.

Hats Off To . . .

PAA Board Member and Pastor of St. Constance Parish **The Most Reverend Thomas Paprocki**, who has been appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago. Bishop Paprocki's episcopal consecration took place at Holy Name Cathedral on March 19, 2003. In his role as Episcopal Vicar for Vicariate IV, Bishop Paprocki will serve as liaison to the Chicago Archdiocese's Polish community.

New directors have been recently appointed to serve on PAA's Board. **Edward B. Bleka** is the president and CEO of Quantum Foods, a family-owned meat processing company he founded. **Michael J. Faron** is president of W.E. O'Neil Construction Co. a leading construction manager. **Christopher R. Hill** is senior vice president and director at Grubb & Ellis, one of the world's leading providers of integrated real estate services. Rejoining PAA's Board, **Geraldine Gedroic Lichterman** is president of Kenard Management Corporation, a successful property management firm. **Barbara Bury Olendzki** is the executive director in portfolio management for Sara Lee Corporation.

PAA Homemaker Program Supervisor **Joanna Tkacz** received an Honorable Mention for Supervisor of the Year from the Illinois Association of Community Care Program Homecare Providers.

Wanted: Angels

We are seeking people to support our Miracle Fund. First time and experienced donors welcome!

Benefits: Help 14,000 people this year!

Requirements: A good heart, a stamp, and a checkbook.

Next Step: Use enclosed donation envelope.