

# The Link

Polish American Association  
*Resources for Changing Lives*

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## PAA Program for Renters impacted by foreclosures will help those in need

The Polish American Association-Housing Resource Center has been promoting a residential stability among low-moderate income households by providing them with counseling, education and advocacy services designed to increase awareness about tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, address landlord tenant disputes and avoid evictions.

The project has been serving the community by providing translations of housing materials from English into Polish, organizing bilingual seminars and workshops on home improvement, and city programs. The program has also created a pattern of a regular communication with the community using Polish radio, TV, newspapers, magazines and by participation at the special events. Clients have been familiarizing themselves with opportunities through the many housing programs made available by the City of Chicago and other public and private opportunities.

The Center has been serving individuals from communities that are heavily populated by the Polish and Eastern European immigrants. Because of the lack of comparable services and resources in the Polish

language, services are offered both in Polish and in English. All marketing and educational materials are also printed in both languages.

Housing Resource Center has been helping clients with the problems like: landlord-tenant conflict resolution, lock-outs, evictions, security deposit, retaliation, discrimination, gaining access to affordable housing for special needs populations like senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.



New immigrants with their lack of knowledge of the housing law and the poor English skills are often victims of unscrupulous landlords who take advantage of hard working people and their families. We have observed the increase of unlawful lock outs, illegal evictions and breaking the Chicago Heat Ordinance, Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance or Fair Housing Act.

PAA has just been informed that the PAA Program for Renters Impacted by Foreclosure has been awarded special funds for implementation of the program for FY 2010. Foreclosures can affect anyone. If our client is a renter whose building is in foreclosure, PAA Housing Resource Center will help them to understand the laws that protect him during the foreclosure.

For more info please call Lidia Seeger ext. 356

**Yes, I will be supporting the Polish American Association to the best of my ability. See enclosed envelope for tax deductible donation options.**

The Gala Committee and the Officers and Directors of the Polish American Association cordially invite you to

## 2009 Annual Gala

& Benefit Auction

Saturday, November 14, 2009

at

the Meadows Club

2950 W. Golf Road, Rolling Meadows, Illinois

Dance by The Kings

Emcee: Alan Krashesky

Recipient of the 2009 Presidential Award is:



### POLISH AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Presidential Award is presented to individuals or organizations that have distinguished themselves in their dedication of time, talent, and effort toward the mission of the Polish American Association to serve the diverse needs of the Polish community.

**The Annual Gala is one of PAA's most important annual fundraising events. Through your support, you help sustain programs and services for those in need.**

For more information how to support PAA and reserve tickets or space in the Gala's Program Book, please call: Malgorzata 773-282-8206 ext. 315 or Barbara ext. 307 or e-mail: gosia@polish.org or barb@polish.org



Polish American Association

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Serving Polonia Since 1922

Volume XXII, Number 2, October 2009

## PAA Immigration Department Helps Immigrants to Adjust in the U.S.A.

PAA has been successfully providing immigration services to thousands of Polish immigrants since 1985, and civics, and ESL classes since 1989. In January 1995, PAA Immigration Services as the only Polish agency was accredited by the National Board of Immigration Appeals. PAA's mission is to be a catalyst and resource dedicated to the development and empowerment of the Polish community.

Every year on September 17 we celebrate U.S. citizenship Day. To celebrate the holiday this year the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration

Services Office and PAA Immigration Services co-organized the Naturalization Ceremony. The Naturalization took place at one of the most prestigious and beloved Polish community places, the Polish Museum of America. USCIS Office District Director Ms. Ruth Dorochoff was the Master of Ceremony. There was the Color Guard Presentation by U.S. Marine Corp and a Polish singer Jacek Adamski sang the national anthem. The ceremony started with Opening Of the Court conducted by Mary Ann Braasch-Judicial Assistant U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Welcome remarks were presented by PAA Director of Immigrant Services Grazyna Zajaczowska and Polish Museum of America President Maria Ciesla.

The ceremony's keynote speaker was Caroline Shoenberger Immigration Program Director at the Chicago Legal Clinic also Professor at Harold Washington College. The newly sworn citizens received also a prerecorded message from the President Barack Obama. Certificates to the new citizens were presented by Judge Martin C. Ashman and Director Ruth A. Dorochoff.



New Citizens Naturalization Ceremony at the Polish Museum of America

zanship and Immigration Services Office provided a brief overview of its services, made presentations about application processes and a mock interview of the citizenship exam. The Officers were available to answer individual questions for over 150 people who attended the workshop. PAA staff provided assistance with the following processes: citizenship application, change of address, green card replacement. The USCIS Office also distributed interesting educational materials. The workshop held at the hospitable St. Hyacinth's Resurrection Hall, was conducted by USCIS District Director Ruth Dorochoff. The event was widely covered by the Polish media.

For more info, please call: ext: 342, 341, 353

Yes, I will be supporting the Polish American Association to the best of my ability.

## From The Board of Directors...

The Officers and Directors of the Polish American Association (PAA) are proud to announce the appointment of Gary Kenzer as their new Executive Director effective November 1, 2009. Kenzer has been a professional in the non profit world for over 25 years holding executive leadership roles in several international humanitarian and community based organizations in Chicago and in the Midwest.

For nearly ninety years, the Polish American Association in conjunction with government agencies, foundations, corporate and individual donors has been the sole support for metropolitan Chicago's Polish immigrants. The current economic turbulence has severely affected each sector of our donor base causing contributions to decrease while demand for services has been increasing. The State of Illinois is increasingly delinquent in payments and is now sending letters advising us that the future will bring continued delays and substantial reductions in anticipated financial support.

As the sole social service provider for Polish immigrants, we implore our community to assist PAA in making our 2009-2010 year a year of strength, survival and success. Management, the Board of Directors and staff are united in their goal of providing service and assistance to all those in need and to continue this effort, we ask you to pledge your support. Funds to supplement our program costs and food to continue to supply our Food Pantry are critical needs at this time. Without increased assistance from private donors, many of our clients will have to be turned away.

If you have been blessed and able to survive the current economic challenges and have a little left to give, please remember the Polish American Association. Whether you are a former client or donor, become a current friend. Help us help others to help themselves to a better life. Please forward your tax deductible donation to Polish American Association.

On behalf of the clients we serve, thank you, for YOU are the much appreciated backbone of the Polish American Association.

Most sincerely,

Robert J. Paszczak, Chairman

## Women and Alcoholism

Despite the fact that alcoholism is recognized as a disease, many people still perceive substance abuse by women as a moral issue. A prevailing stereotype is that a woman-alcoholic is demoralized and worthy of condemnation. Women neglecting their traditional roles as a result of alcohol abuse are often stigmatized. What about these who work and take care of their families? Are they beyond suspicion? In reality, identifying alcohol abuse or dependence in women may pose some difficulties. They often drink excessively in secret, so that even members of their families are not aware of the disease progression. Frequently, women remain alone with their problem for a long time. Fear of stigma and shame prevent them from opening up. Significant others may also feel ashamed, and not understanding the nature of the problem, discourage women from looking for help.

At the Polish American Association Substance Abuse Treatment Program we are aware of how difficult it can be to reveal the painful secret. This is why we appreciate the courage of women seeking treatment. In the course of therapy, they have an opportunity, maybe for the first time in their lives, to talk openly about their alcohol problem. The healing environment of therapeutic groups provides a sense of security and acceptance. Such context encourages sincerity and authenticity. During the treatment one of the home work assignments is to write a farewell letter to alcohol. It is a symbolic separation from the substance, which has so far replaced the family, friends...everything.

With the permission of one of the Polish American Association's treatment participants we are publishing her farewell letter.

### "Hello alcohol! Cunning enemy!"

We met long time ago. During my childhood you were friends with my dad. Even then, I didn't like you, I actually hated you. Because of you my childhood was full of fear, uncertainty and wish for a better life. However, you tricked me. When I was going through difficult times, after the loss of a loved one, you caught me by promising life free of worries and concerns. This is how we met. I forgot about my difficult childhood

caused by you. At the beginning, we have been meeting occasionally. Over the time, I got to know you better and you became my friend with whom I gradually felt in love, to my doom. You were my cure for all problems. You



gave me confidence, courage, pain relief, and hope.

You took over my mind and body. It's truth; you became the most important thing for me. With you by my side I started the family, raised my child and worked. I was seeing you more often. Over the years, I wanted to have you with me every day because day by day I needed you more and more. The time arrived, when I became obsessed with you so much that I stopped taking care of anything else. I did not care about my child who was asking: "Mom, do not drink!" Because of you I was sent to prison, I was in hospital, I was beaten and humiliated, condemned to isolation and contempt. Then you tricked me again. You took advantage of moments of loneliness and breakdown, whispering: "Only today, only today lets meet for a moment, one glass will not hurt you... I'm so harmless, I will help you to feel better.... I am your only friend today..." I couldn't resist, forget about you, and one glass became a bottle. Again, I felt into your clutches, which was becoming harder for me to escape. My child was growing up in

suffering, my husband was feeling betrayed, but I was still seeing you every few months. However, the time has come when something in me cracked. I started to fear. I felt helpless and worthless. I had enough of police visits in my house. I started to notice your weaknesses, and the more I watched the more of them I saw. I hated you so much. Life with you has become a hell.

You were causing me pain and suffering. It was then that I turned for help to others. I met your old friends. You took control not only over me, but also over them in the past. They told me about you a lot of cruel stories, which more and more opened my eyes. They gave me wise, simple advice on how to get rid of you. Thus, I felt that I was not alone. I am not sure if you know that strength is in unity. Strength is in unity, service to others and joint recovery. I was saying goodbye to you, missing you but saying goodbye. It seemed to me that you have already gone and it was then that you knocked me with a double force. It was a fateful meeting. Angry at you, I raged and screamed. I was tossing in your grip. I attempted to end my life. Do you hear?! Life!

I miraculously survived. This was some stronger power than you that gave me my life back. You're death and I want to live! You wanted to take me away from this world and make my child and orphan! You are a murderer and destruction! Pain and suffering! You are loneliness and darkness! You are spreading everywhere and want to rule the world by disgracing human lives! I accuse you!

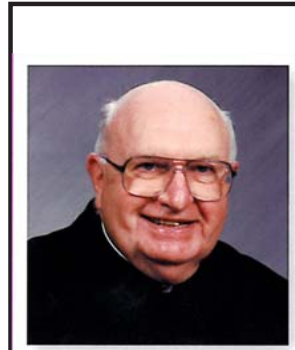
I accuse you of all wrong and I hate you! Today I'm separating from you and accusing you! I'm accusing you of tears of my child, mine and my family! I despise your taste, smell and do not want to fight with you. I'm taking off from your frontline of pain. Get away from my life! It's the end between us! Maybe I do not know what is going to happen tomorrow, but I am sure that today I will not meet with you. None of your whispers and games will help. I'm not drinking today!"

Alcoholic

**If you are looking for help please call:  
(773) 282-8206 ext. 354, 357, 349**

**Polish American Association's  
Substance Abuse Treatment Program  
sponsored by: IDHS, DASA and CDPH**

*Yes, I will be supporting the Polish American Association to the best of my ability.*



Father Edmund Julian Siedlecki  
1927 - 2009

✠  
"Rather than mourn the  
absence of the flame, let us  
celebrate how brightly it burned."

### EMPTY HANDS

Lord, on the Last Day,  
may I stand before You,  
with empty hands.

What I held  
fed the hungry.

What I held  
welcomed the immigrant.

What I held  
clothed the shabby.

What I held  
cared for the sick.

What I held  
cured the addict.

What I held  
sheltered the homeless.

What I held  
comforted the depressed.

Lord, on the Last Day,  
may I stand before You  
with empty hands.

Father Edmund J. Siedlecki

## To All Job Seekers

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was introduced and funded in 1998 in order to provide quality employment, training services and assistance for eligible individuals to find meaningful employment. WIA services are offered through the statewide and local organization. The Polish American Association (PAA) is one of the local non-for-profits receiving WIA grant from the city of Chicago Department of Community Development. Most of the services are beneficial for job seekers, for laid off workers, and for numerous employers.

In order to be eligible for the WIA program, a participant must be at least eighteen (18) years old and have a low income, as defined by the City of Chicago Income Guidelines.

The main goals of the program are:

- 1) to ensure that an applicant retains employment for at least three months;
- 2) to enhance an applicant's job search satisfaction;
- 3) and to assist employers in locating suitable workers.

There are three levels of services available to all job seekers: **CORE SERVICES** include: outreach, labor market information, an evaluation of each applicant's qualifications, and employment placement assistance.

**INTENSIVE SERVICES** include: more comprehensive assessment development of individual employment plans including counseling, and career planning. **TRAINING SERVICES** are available to: employed, unemployed adults and dislocated workers who have met the eligibility requirement for intensive services, and also have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment. Participants are able to select an appropriate training program from qualified training providers that leads to a certificate in order to obtain a specific job.

Generally, Polish American Association serves clients with limited English ability who recently entered the United States and are looking forward to starting their new work history in a new country.

Additional advantages in WIA program are Supportive Services for clients who are qualified for an Intensive Services.

Our applicants also receive the CTA Fare Cards that enable them to get to their workplace, as well as gift certificates to various department stores to purchase clothes in order to be properly dressed for a job interview.

For more info call: 773-282-1122 ext. 412

## Chairman's Brunch

Polish American Association was pleased to host a world-renowned physician and biochemist-researcher, Dr. Stanislaw Burzynski, President of Burzynski Research Institute in Houston, Texas, as its featured guest at this year's Chairman's Brunch. The fundraiser, held on April 26, 2009, at the Trump International Hotel & Tower, attracted many prominent members of Chicago's Polish community and raised funds for PAA.



Award recipient Dr. Stanislaw Burzynski (left) and his wife Barbara (center) with PAA's Chair of the Board Geraldine Gedroic Lichterman

## Taste of Polonia



This year at Taste of Polonia, the Polish American Association together with cardiology fellows from John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County conducted heart disease risk screening under POLAARIS Project founded by American Heart Association. In the long term, the project aims to raise awareness of cardiovascular diseases and provide access to medical care for the uninsured Poles living in the Chicago metro area. This project is the first of its kind, and the idea has been applauded by all the parties involved, including the Polish Heart Association in Warsaw (Poland).

## First Annual Back-to-School Party and Family Picnic

was held at the Mountain View Adventure Center last August

PAA sincerely thanks the sponsors of the event:

**Stephen & Bridget Wrobel \* Agnieszka Horvath, DDS**

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