



**Polish
American
Association**

The Link

Serving Polonia Since 1922

Volume XVII, Number 1, February 2002

Matchmakers for Employers and Job Seekers ...

Polish immigrants, like many immigrant groups, pride themselves on being hard working to create a better life for themselves and their family in this land of opportunity. They are fiercely self-sufficient and have a tremendous work ethic. PAA's employment program is quite successful, because many of these very individuals come to us actively seeking employment.

PAA's employment program, partially funded by the City of Chicago Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, offers job counseling; job development and placement; referral services; career counseling; and a community resource room offering free computer lab and job search resources to the public.

When a job seeker comes to PAA, the first step is a thorough eligibility screening and assessment by PAA's job counselors. They ensure the candidate's working documents are in order, gather and synthesize personal information, vocational training, previous work experience and administer a basic skills test and English proficiency exam. Based on this information and discussions with the client on the type of job opportunity they are seeking, PAA staff try to match the client with an appropriate job opportunity. In many cases PAA refers the clients to ESL classes to improve their English or to one of our vocational training programs to help the client gain more marketable skills.

PAA's employment services are very effective and available at no charge to employers and job seekers. Employers who have used PAA's employment services have been highly satisfied and regularly use PAA when they are in need of new employees. In fact, during fiscal year 2001 PAA successfully matched 150 income-eligible Chicago residents with employers looking for qualified help. These positions average earnings of \$8.43 per hour.

The tragic events of September 11 and an uncertain economy have resulted in a 93% increase of clients seeking jobs through PAA's employment programs compared to the same six-month period last year. Many of those who have lost their jobs were employed by the airline and service industries and manufacturing. At a time like this, PAA's employment services are more important than ever. For example, just days after September 11, a man we'll call "Peter" came to PAA because his job with an O'Hare airport airline food-service provider was gone. He had a wife and three children, one of whom suffers from a disability. Because he had only been employed with the company for a year, he did not have the seniority to keep him from being laid off. PAA's employment program staff were able to place him with a manufacturing company in the suburbs as a machine operator. He started his new job several weeks later, and is grateful to be working and supporting his family.

PAA maintains an extensive job bank of Chicago area employers and is always looking for opportunities to initiate new contacts. PAA's job developers and counselors are ready to make matches between employers and reliable workers. We can do much of the legwork for employers once we get a job posting, including screening and assessing viable



PAA KidCare Coordinator Anna Jastrzebska with Illinois Department of Public Aid representative as she receives PAA's award for outstanding performance as a KidCare Agent in 2001. (read more on page 3)

candidates, scheduling interviews and conducting follow-up and providing retention services. Employers looking for help should contact PAA's employment program by calling 773-282-1122 ext. 415 or 421 or e-mailing us at jobs@polish.org.

Dramatic Increase in Demand for PAA's Services . . .

PAA has seen a dramatic increase in the demand for its services from July through December of 2001, when compared to the same six-month period in 2000.

People Needing Services	Demand
Women (seeking counseling)	Increased by 40%
Battered women	Increased by 14%
Emergency services for the poor (food pantry, energy assistance)	Increased by 41%
Homeless clients	Increased by 23%
Unemployed individuals	Increased by 93%
Elderly/disabled needing homemakers	Increased by 42%
Adults taking English classes	Increased by 118%

From the Chairman ...

We at PAA hope that this new year will be filled with good health, peace, joy and the company of loved ones.

Much has happened since our last Link newsletter. Our country suffered a terrible and tragic attack. Yet our nation's citizens were able to stand together and accomplish so many miracles.

The uncertain economic times that have gripped our nation have put a strain on human service providers everywhere. Here at PAA, our counseling services, employment program and emergency services are particularly impacted (see page 1 for more information). PAA is working fervently to meet the increased demand on our services as people in our community, like many others in the nation, are faced with unemployment and uncertain futures for themselves and their families.

However, for the first time since the Great Depression, PAA is not able to fully fund our programs and services. This increased demand for services unfortunately comes at the same time that our charitable donations have decreased. PAA and its Board of Directors are working very hard to do what we can to avoid eliminating services and staff on which people rely. But, because PAA already operates on a very lean budget, there is very little we can trim without impacting services.

In addition to private donations being significantly down this fiscal year, government and foundation grants for next year will be impacted. Meaning that our situation will not get better in the near future. In fact, we have already received word from several of the funding sources we rely on that funding will be cut or eliminated next year.

Please help us serve the growing numbers of people who need us by increasing your donation or giving to PAA for the first time. We really need your help, and hope that you can find it in your heart to be generous. To make a donation, please use the enclosed insert or call 773/282-8206 ext.309.

Stanley Jozefiak

Chairman's Brunch 2002 ...

This year's Chairman's Brunch will take place on February 24, 2002. The Polish American Association (PAA) is pleased to announce that NBC Pentagon Correspondent Jim Miklaszewski will be our honored guest.

The Chairman's Brunch is one of PAA's major annual fundraisers, which provides the organization with much needed support for many of our programs. For more information or to receive an invitation, please call 773/282-8206 ext.308.

WANTED: Miracle Supporters ...

Many of our clients tell us that the assistance they receive at PAA produces nothing short of a miracle in their lives—whether it's the single mother who gains the chance to earn a living wage with new job skills; or the patient receiving assistance navigating a confusing health care system in a foreign language; or the teenager realizing that he or she can choose to not abuse drugs, and finding a more supportive group of true friends.

That's why PAA established the **Miracle Fund**. The Miracle Fund provides PAA with the ability to provide these pro-

grams, and more. Without the generous support of people like you, many fewer people would have the opportunity to access the supportive programs at PAA, which are tailored to serve the unique needs of the Polish American community.

Won't you be a part of the miracle? We'd like to welcome you to our family of friends and supporters. Contributions to the Polish American Association are fully deductible to the extent allowed by law. To make a donation, please use the enclosed insert.

Ogniwo—PAA's Polish Newsletter ...

PAA published the first issue of *Ogniwo*, its new Polish-language newsletter, in November 2001. The first issue was mailed to nearly 5,000 households and the response has been wonderful. The *Ogniwo* newsletter serves as a tool for people to learn more about PAA's breadth and depth of programs and services. It is also meant to educate recent

immigrants about non-profit organizations, which were non-existent in Poland until recent years due to the socialist form of government.

Start-up funding for the newsletter was made possible by a grant from the Retirement Research Foundation. Direct inquiries to Barbara Sobecka at 773/282-8206 ext. 307.

Literacy Tutors Needed...

Volunteers for Polish Adult Literacy Program needed. Participate in a rewarding community service opportunity by helping Polish adults prepare for English proficiency exams and more. Flexible hours, weekends. Training and materials provided. Please call Ursula at 773/282-1122 ext. 408 if you are interested in learning more.

*The Link is a publication of the
Polish American Association.*

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*A Special Thank You to
Tracy D. Hargrove at Vigil Printing, Inc.*



PAA Employment staff enjoy their expanded office space, which became necessary as demand for employment services increased significantly.

PAA Recognized for Its Role In KidCare Success ...

PAA recently earned a KidCare Achievement Award from the Illinois Department of Public Aid. We were one of ten Illinois groups, and only one of two non-healthcare groups, recognized for their outstanding work in enrolling Illinois kids and pregnant women into the state's healthcare coverage program for children of working families. This state program also helps in paying premiums of employer-sponsored or private insurance plans for those who are income eligible.

Illinois embarked on an aggressive outreach campaign to enroll as many eli-

gible children as possible in KidCare to ensure they receive adequate healthcare coverage and benefits during these important years of their development. Because of high healthcare costs, many working families forgo health insurance and do not get adequate preventative healthcare.

PAA's KidCare agent Anna Jastremska has been enrolling an average of 60 to 70 families per month. PAA staff assist interested clients in assessing their eligibility and completing their applications. Since January 2000, PAA staff

has enrolled nearly 1,000 families and pregnant women into KidCare.

Children through age 18 who are Illinois residents, U.S. citizens or qualified legal immigrants, including refugees and asylees, and whose family meets income requirements are eligible. Also, pregnant women who are Illinois residents and meet the income requirements are eligible. Income requirements vary by KidCare Plan and are based on family size. KidCare services are available at no cost or at low cost based on the family's income.

Why Immigrants Play Such an Important Role in the U.S. Economy ...

Recent events have made many Americans question immigration policies. There are many reasons why U.S. policymakers need to carefully consider any decisions that will cutback immigration levels. The reality is that immigrants play a vital role in the U.S. economy.

Hats Off To ...

PAA Board Member **Ernest R. Wish** was appointed to the post of State Superintendent of Education and Chief Executive Officer of the Illinois State Board of Education. We wish him well!

Bozena Zweig was recently appointed to PAA's Board of Directors. Ms. Zweig is a musician, composer and active philanthropist in the Polish and Jewish communities. She works in real estate and resides in Winnetka with her family. We welcome her!

Magda Dolas, Director of PAA's Education and Employment programs was presented the Outstanding Team Member Award given annually to an employee of PAA selected by their peers for an exceptional spirit of cooperation and positive attitude in the workplace.

PAA Board Member **Mitch Wiet** is being honored by the Quigley Alumni Association as a recipient of the Archbishop James S. Quigley Distinguished Alumnus Award. A well deserved honor!

PAA Board Member the **Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKI**, who was ordained as an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago a year ago, has been named Episcopal Vicar of Vicariate I, an area that includes Cook County's north suburbs and all of Lake County.

- Immigrants pay \$6.11 in taxes for every \$1 in services used. Native-born Americans pay \$2.74 in taxes for every \$1 in services.
- 68% of immigrants are in the workforce. 62% of native-born Americans are in the workforce.
- Immigrants living in the U.S. for 15 or more years pay two-thirds

- more in taxes, because many are entrepreneurs.
- In 1990, there were 35 workers for every retired worker. In 2000, there were only two workers for every retired worker. Immigrants in the labor force are an important resource to support our nation's retired citizens.



PAA's Executive Director Karen Popowski (center) with Bridgeview Bank Archer Branch President and Chicago Fire Captain Peter Nowak (left) and Deputy Consul General Mariusz Brymora (right), at PAA's Corporate and Foundation lunch held at the Polish Consulate and generously sponsored by Bridgeview Bank.

Polish American Association

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Paczki Days for the Poor

By purchasing paczki at the locations listed below on **Fat Thursday, February 7, and Fat Tuesday, February 12,** you will be helping needy families served by PAA.

- Alliance Bakery (1736 W. Division, Chicago)
- Andy's Deli & Bakery (1737 W. Division, 3055 N. Milwaukee, 5438 N. Milwaukee, Chicago)
- Cicero Deli (3206 N. Cicero, Chicago)
- Europa Bakery (4345 W. 47th St, Chicago)
- Laramie Bakery (3012-14 N. Laramie, Chicago)
- Montrose Deli (5411 W. Montrose, Chicago)
- Oak Mill Bakery (8012 N. Milwaukee, Niles; 5635 W. Belmont, 5747 S. Harlem, Chicago)
- Racine Bakery (6216 W. Archer, Chicago)
- Richard's Bakery (6006 W. Belmont, Chicago)
- Smakowski Bakery (6744 W. Belmont, Chicago)
- Vienna Pastry (5411 W. Addison, Chicago)

A portion of the proceeds from the paczki sold at participating bakeries on these days will be used to help the more than 500 needy families and elderly who use PAA's food pantry and other programs.

Thank You. . . to all those who made PAA's 2001 Gala honoring Ernest Wish a success, and those who made generous donations to the Miracle Fund, especially **Henry &**

Michelle Kurzydowski, Ernie & Joan Wish for their very generous gifts, and **American National Bank, Ameritech, Helen Archacki Trust, Dan & Sherri Boho, Rev. Martin Borowczyk, Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Cascino, Catholic Charities, Commonwealth Edison Company, Continental Materials Corporation, Cukierski & Kowal LLC, State Senator James DeLeo, DePaul University Student Affairs, DePaul University School of Accountancy, Camille Einoder, Janet Filipowski, The Foster Group, Inc., Rev. Joseph Grembla, Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Jozefiak, Kenard Management Corp., LaSalle Bank, N.A., Legion of Young Polish Women, Thaddeus Makarewicz, McDonald's, John & Bozena McLees, McMaster-Carr Supply Co., Near North National Title Corp., W.E. O'Neil Construction, Leo P. Niemiec, Parkway Bank & Trust Co., Robert Paszczak, Francis Pearman, Pekao Trading Corporation, Polish Women's Alliance, Leon Popowski, Rev. Henry Pozdol, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Andrew Przybylo, Quantum Foods, Resurrection Health Care, Rev. Edmund Siedlecki, Alice Siorek, Walter and Bogna Solak, Jeanne M. Sowa, St. Constance Church, Donald Versen, Mitchell & Fran Wiet, Kathleen Wytmar and the Heritage Foundation of First Security Savings** for a gift in memory of **Mrs. B. Cioromski** ... to all those who generously donated goods, services or raffle prizes to our Gala: **Oak Mill Bakery, Integra Communications, Stawski Distributing, Adler Planetarium, Dan & Sherri Boho, Hotel-Intercontinental Chicago, Lawry's, Restaurant, Museum of Contemporary Art, Papagus Greek Taverna, PolskArt.com—The Polish Poster Art Store, Kasha & Mario Puharic, Christopher Radko, Signature Room at the 95th, Southwest Airlines, Terra Museum of American Art, Charlie Trotter, Truefitt & Hill, Urban Retail Properties, Donald and Joan Versen** ... to all those who helped make Christmas more special for PAA's clients, especially the parishioners of **St. Constance Church, Krakus Foods International, Jewel-Osco, The Chicago Society and Integra Communications** ... to **SBC/Ameritech** for sponsoring a private film screening for our donors in conjunction with the Polish Film Festival ... to **Bridgeview Bank** for sponsoring PAA's Corporate and Foundation Lunch ... to the **Polish-American Medical Society** for donating a portion of the proceeds from the Physicians' Ball to PAA ... to **Ed Grossman of the Chicago Legal Clinic** for presenting PAA's Wills Seminars this fall ... to **Elizabeth McElroy** for her assistance with PAA's marketing efforts ... to the foundations that provide support for our programs: **The Chicago Community Foundation, Field Foundation, Kraft Employees Fund, People's Energy, Polish Roman Catholic Union of America, Dr. Scholl, Youth Outreach Services, Inc.** ... and to all those not mentioned here, but who have given to PAA in time, money or prayers, *dziękujemy bardzo!*