



Polish
American
Association

The Link

Serving Polonia Since 1922

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The Gifts of Time and Talent...

Volunteers are the backbone of many non-profit organizations. PAA is no exception. Without the volunteers that provide their time free-of-charge to PAA, the organization would be unable to meet the extensive needs of the community that it serves. PAA volunteers range from people who help with literacy tutoring, to doctors and nurses, who staff health screenings and provide free immunizations. Gandhi once said that, “the best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others.” This is exactly what our volunteers do.

During the last several months PAA has had a variety of fantastic volunteers provide their time to aid in numerous projects. Over the summer PAA’s website was revamped, summer art classes for youth were instituted, health fairs took place, and children were tutored to get ready for school in fall. These programs would not have been possible without volunteers.

Here are a couple of stories about our volunteers and how they opened their hearts and minds to the community and clients of PAA.

Kasia Ozga, a college student, is beginning her third year of a five-year program at Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, this



Young “artists take part in “Malowane Wakacje”

fall, after a busy summer. Ozga, a resident of Glenview, was four years old when her family first immigrated to the United States from Poland. In an effort to improve her Polish, Ozga originally came to PAA a few years ago as a peer leader for Snowball—PAA’s youth substance-abuse prevention program. “Kasia was very different from other young people her age. She made the effort and succeeded at getting along with everyone,” said Kristina Lukawska, PAA’s youth counselor. “She is a very positive role model.”

At Tufts, Ozga was selected as an Omidyar Scholar and received a grant, which she used to help community organizations to update or develop visual identity materials such as websites. “I wanted to provide the kind of service that most organizations need, but usually can’t afford,” she said.

When asked why she picked PAA as her public service project, she stated, “I had such a positive experience with PAA as a Snowball leader and participant, and I knew the organization was effective and provided necessary services to the community. An organization’s website serves a valuable function for getting information out to the community at large.” *Check out PAA’s new look at www.polish.org.*

Beata Wolankiewicz and **Zaneta Vencil**, also Polish immigrants, came to volunteer at PAA together. Through the



Kasia Ozga, who spent part of her summer redesigning PAA’s website, works with PAA staff member Lukasz Gresik to put the finishing touches on the project.

time they have generously donated to PAA, a new program called “Malowane Wakacje”, or “Painted Vacation” was started. They conducted weekly arts and crafts classes for children at PAA’s Cicero Avenue location. The children took part in painting, drawing, and other hands-on activities.

“I’ve always wanted to help others. And, when my friend introduced me to PAA, I instantly realized that I wanted to be a part of the organization,” said Vencil. Wolankiewicz expanded on her thoughts about volunteerism, “Helping others makes me feel better as a person. When I am able to make someone’s life better, I feel happier. It is important to volunteer—to live is to be able to give.”

Both women concurred that their experience at PAA not only enriched their lives, but also gave them a sense of accomplishment and a new, different perspective on life. The children left the classes with their paintings and pictures in hand and smiles on their faces, while the volunteers left with warmth in their hearts.

From the Chairman ...

It's hard to believe that summer is already coming to an end and children have returned to school. PAA was blessed this summer with several unexpected and welcome first-time volunteers who wished to share their time and talent with our clients and us. I would like to thank them for their services on behalf of the many people whose lives they have touched. I would also like to thank all the volunteers who help us on an ongoing basis. We need you, and we appreciate your gift of self!

Community involvement is the largest contribution we can make to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood and our city. Philanthropy is the basis of how organizations like PAA operate. If it were not for financial contributions, in-kind donations and the numerous volunteers that give their time to PAA, we would be unable to provide many of our services.

And, though we are fortunate to benefit from the generosity of some, we know there are more people in the Chicago area that have the ability to contribute their time, talent or resources to help us serve the more than 3000 clients that seek our help each month. I encourage and challenge you to think about the many blessing you have been given, and find a way to share them with your community. What you receive in return is a feeling like no other.

The benefits I gain from my volunteer experiences, such as serving on PAA's Board of Directors, and coaching volleyball at my daughter's school, are endless. It is a truly wonderful feeling to know that the time I give to PAA yields the organization the means to better serve its clients.

PAA is constantly seeking people to volunteer for our programs—maybe it's being an English tutor, volunteering in our youth program, helping in our food pantry, or donating services such as graphic design or printing. Maybe it's something we haven't thought of. As you read through the rest of our newsletter, you will run across other people's experiences at PAA. We hope that you can join our growing list of PAA volunteers and donors. If you would like to help PAA in any way, or have questions regarding volunteering for us, please contact Joanna Augustynski at 773-282-8206, ext. 308.

We look forward to seeing you at our Annual Gala in October!

Stanley Jozefiak



Nine students participating in the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development Summer Youth Initiative, worked at PAA's North and South Side offices for six weeks this summer, bringing with them energy and much needed helping hands. This was a first job for many of these kids, and PAA is grateful for the wonderful job they did.

Attitudes about Illegal Immigrant Workers

Below are a few highlights of a recent bipartisan nationwide survey of 1000 likely voters conducted by the Tarrance Group and Lake Snell Perry & Associates on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

- Before knowing the specifics of a legalization proposal, voters are divided on the issue. Voters split 40 percent in favor and 49 percent opposed to a bill that would legalize undocumented workers when no criteria are specified. Voters split 41 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed to a guest worker program that would allow an increase in the number of temporary foreign workers.
- When voters hear details about a potential proposal—that it would legalize a limited number of undocumented immigrants who can prove they have been living in the United States, working at a job, and paying taxes, support climbs to 59 percent in favor (27 percent strongly favor) and 34 percent oppose (23 percent strongly oppose). A strong majority of every demographic group and every political party supports the proposal.
- The most important criteria for legalization are that the immigrants pay regular U.S. taxes every year, that they have no criminal record, that they learn English and have steady work. The same criteria appeal to whites, blacks and Hispanics. A specified time limit does not make a noticeable difference in support and is not rated as very important.

PAA Announces Free Wills Seminars

PAA, in collaboration with Chicago Legal Clinic, will host two public service seminars in English and Polish on the topic of wills. Presenter Edward Grossman, JD, Executive Director of the Chicago Legal Clinic, will discuss what you can accomplish with a will, why it should be part of your family's plan, and how to get one. A PAA representative will translate the presentation into Polish. **The seminars are free**, but registration is required. Dates and locations are listed below. Please call Ruth Hansen at (773) 282-8206 x309 for more information or to register for one of the sessions.

Tuesday, November 6, 7:00 p.m.
PAA Southwest Office
6276 W. Archer Avenue, Chicago

Tuesday, November 13, 7:00 p.m.
PAA Main Office, Community Room
3834 N. Cicero Avenue, Chicago
(enter building from Berenice)

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*Editor: Joanna Augustynski
Contributing: Maggie Koziol*

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Reaching Beyond U.S. Borders...

As a Chicago-area, community-based organization we are often surprised and delighted to learn that word of our programs and services travels as far as Poland. In recent months, we've had two opportunities to showcase our programs and services and serve as a model for policies and organizations being developed in Poland to deal with social problems that have always existed, but are now being addressed more openly.

PAA was recently contacted by representatives from Poland's State Agency for Prevention of Alcohol Related Problems (SAPARP) in Warsaw. SAPARP is a professional, government-based institution created to construct the foundations of the state's healthcare policy concerning the improvement of

alcohol abuse prevention, treatment and public education.

Leaders of this institution were interested in spending time at PAA to learn about our comprehensive programs dealing with this issue, as they develop policies for Poland. They were drawn to PAA because of our multi-faceted approach to substance abuse and prevention.

The visitors were especially interested in PAA's DUI educational program as laws regarding driving under the influence are changing in Poland. In addition to PAA's DUI Program, PAA's Domestic Violence Program for victims and offenders, as well as the Youth Development Program were scrutinized in order to better construct the future

governmental policy toward such social issues in Poland.

Governmental representatives are not the only people from Poland who have shown interest in PAA. Bogdan Worowicz, M.D., Ph.D. along with the Rev. Wieslaw K., a recovering alcoholic, came and spoke with several groups regarding their own experiences. Their interest in PAA has further enriched the connection between the Poles on this side of the Atlantic and the Poles in Poland. Although PAA's focus is to positively impact the lives of Poles in Chicago, we are thrilled that the benefits of our programs and experience are being shared with organizations back in the native land of many of our clients and staff members.

Hats Off To...

Bishop Jerome E. Listeki, Michelle Kurzydowski and Jeanne Sowa were recently appointed to PAA's Board of Directors. Bishop Listeki, who currently serves as pastor of St. Ignatius Parish, was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Chicago in January 2001. Bishop Listeki holds degrees in theology, civil and canon law, serves as an Army chaplain and has taught at Mundelein Seminary. Sowa is currently the Senior Vice President of Marketing and Corporate Relations for Easter Seals, and volunteers her time and talent to serving on the boards of two other non-profit organizations. Kurzydowski, a former registered nurse, is now a full-time mother to her three children and an active volunteer. She is married to Henry S. Kurzydowski, M.D. and resides in South Barrington.

PAA's Learning Center received high marks for performance in its Employment and Training programs from the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD). Of three PAA programs funded and monitored by MOWD, the following scores were awarded:

Employment Placement:
186.5 out of 200 points

Core and Intensive Services:
198.9 out of 200 points

Training and Placements:
192.6 out of 200 points

Congratulations to the Learning Center staff, teachers and volunteers for their commitment to helping our clients make succeed.



Volunteer nurses from West Suburban Hospital help administer back-to-school immunizations at PAA's July health fair.

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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Dance the Night Away ...

Please save the date of Saturday, October 20, 2001 for PAA's Annual Gala at the Ridgemoor Country Club in Chicago. The recipient of PAA's Presidential Award, who is being honored at this year's event, is Ernest R. Wish, chairman of Wish Enterprises and a dedicated PAA board member and volunteer. Seating is limited. For early reservations, please call 773/282-8206 ext.308.

