

Polish American Association

Resources for Changing Lives

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Thank You

.....to Bogna & Walter Solak for generously hosting the delightful Vienna Café and Benefit Concert for PAA at their home . . . to all those who made donations and contributed their time to make the Vienna Café and Benefit Concert a success: Jacek Wojcicki, Oak Mill Bakery, LOT Polish Airlines, Stanley Stawski Distributing, Zbigniew Habina, Bart Pituch, Bozena & Arie Zweig, Grazyna Auguscik, Paderewski Symphony Orchestra, and Kasia's Deli. . . those who made generous donations to the Miracle Fund, and those who supported the Vienna Café and Benefit Concert, especially: Anthony James Builders, Artifex, Jasia Barsh, Teresa Drake & Jarek Zak, Stanley & Susan Jozefiak, Zbigniew Karas, Alice & Jack Kopis, Roger & Judy Kovack, Grazyna & Jan Krynski, Michelle & Dr. Henry Kurzydowski, Geraldine Gedroic Lichterman, Bogdan & Jadwiga Lodyga, Mario & Maria Machnicki, Dorota & Jerzy Malachowski, Grazyna & Marek Maneykowski, Beata & Slawek Maneykowski, Ted Martin, Bozena & John McLees, Open MRI of Chicago-Medical Resources, Inc., Andrzej Orzechowski, Peoples Energy, Polish Women's Alliance of America, Karen Popowski, Kasha & Mario Puharic, Tadeusz Rogozinski, Neil Rosenberg, St. Bruno Church, St. Constance Church, ServiceMaster L.P., Barbara & Stanley Siembida, Ryszard Skibicki, Isabel & Henry Smogolski, Society of Young Polish Professionals, Bogna Solak, Jeanne Sowa & Craig Mitch, Estate of Frank Stanis, Ewa Staniszewska & Jarek Maculewicz, Stanley Stawski, Polish-American Medical Society, Ewa & Dr. Grzegorz Turowski, Wieslawa & Zdzislaw Tysler, Mitchell & Fran Wiet, Ernest & Joan Wish, Leslaw Wozniak, Irena Zawadzka, Malgorzata Zawadzka, and individuals who contribute through United Way... to the foundations that generously provide support for our programs: Home Depot, Michael Reese Health Trust, Polk Bros. Foundation, Sovereign Military Order of Malta, and to all those not mentioned here, but who have given to PAA in time, money and prayers, Dziękujemy bardzo!

Dance the Night Away . . .

*Please save the date of
Saturday, November 23,
2002 for PAA's Annual Gala
at the Chicago Marriott
O'Hare. The recipient of
PAA's Presidential Award,
who is being honored at this
year's event, is Bogna
Iwanowska-Solak, president of
Oak Mill Bakery and a
dedicated PAA board member
and volunteer. For early
reservations, please call 773/
282-8206 ext.308. We look
forward to enjoying the evening
with you!*



Polish
American
Association

The Link

Serving Polonia Since 1922

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A Cause for Celebration: 80 Years of Resources for Changing Lives

There are so many reasons to celebrate anniversaries. For us at the Polish American Association, it's the pride and satisfaction of knowing that, thanks to the commitment of our board, staff, volunteers and donors, PAA touches thousands of lives each year. It has now been 80 years since PAA



(then the Polish Welfare Association) first opened its doors. And, each additional year that we can be here for those who need a helping hand in overcoming hardships and difficulties is a milestone for all who support us.

On August 16, 2002 PAA kicked off its 80th Anniversary celebration, by hosting a Media Appreciation Day for members of Chicago's Polish-language media. When thinking of a unique way to celebrate the success of 80 years of providing Resources for Changing Lives, our staff immediately called to mind the impact of the Polish-language media. It is through their support and understanding of our mission that PAA staff has ready access to the pages of their publications and time on their airwaves.

Polish-language media has been instrumental in PAA's ability to reach out beyond the walls of our buildings to those near and far who are overwhelmed with the challenges of life in a foreign land and often have no one to turn to for help. In addition, the Polish media has helped our staff to break through the cultural and language barriers that prevent people in desperate situations from seeking help. After years of education and media outreach in the Polish community, PAA has seen the impact of its efforts. More domestic violence victims are coming forward to seek the help and protection they need; parents are recognizing the early signs of drug abuse among their teens and seeking help before it's too late; more working poor families have the courage to ask for help.

Sometimes the help we receive from the Polish-language media is simple, but meaningful to the community. It may include announcing PAA's ESL and citizenship class offerings or allowing our staff airtime on a moment's notice to talk about sudden changes in immigration policy.

More than 60 members of the Polish-language media were invited to the recent Media Appreciation Day held at PAA. Individual members of the media received framed "Community Service Award" certificates. Seven media outlets were presented with "Distinguished Media Service Award" plaques in appreciation for their continuing and outstanding cooperation with Polish American Association. The recipients of the "Distinguished Media Service Award" are: Polvision, WVNR 1030 AM, WPNA 1490 AM, WCEV 1450 AM, *Dziennik Zwiazkowy*, *Monitor* and *Chicago Forum*. PAA looks forward to ongoing cooperation with the Polish-language media as we continue to fulfill our mission of serving the diverse needs of Chicago's Polish community and others in need.

From The Chairman . . .

Anniversaries – sometimes they are an occasion to celebrate, other times they are an occasion to remember and reflect on an event that has changed or drastically impacted our lives. When we remember September 11 and those who were lost on that day, there isn't a whole lot of good anyone can find in what happened. But there is so much that day taught us on which we can reflect as we commemorate this anniversary. I felt hope and inspiration when I saw the response of the people of our nation to the tragic events of that day.

The outpouring of compassion and generosity shown to strangers demonstrated the enormous capacity of people to reach out to one another in times of crisis. Human nature and instinct is to help those in need and those suffering from personal tragedies. That is how the Polish American Association came to be 80 years ago.

Life for immigrants in the U.S. in the early 1920s was especially harsh. Work was strenuous, conditions at the workplace were oftentimes risky and reprehensible, and pay was meager. Many things could and did go wrong. People died. Spouses sought solace in alcohol. Youngsters quickly learned that a shoplifted vegetable tasted better than no food at all. Authorities did not have the ability to cope with people who did not speak English.

Fortunately, established Polish Americans living in Chicago saw all this and wanted to help. The members of The Chicago Society of the P.N.A., leading citizens of Chicago, active in politics, government, business and education, realized that ignoring the ills of society only intensifies problems.

On August 16, 1922, due to the efforts of The Chicago Society, Polish Welfare Association (PWA) was incorporated as a nonprofit organization. Officially, "delinquency" was the reason for its existence. On November 15th of 1923, quarters were opened at 308 N. Michigan Blvd., with Mrs. T. Sakowska, as Superintendent, and Miss Zajackowska, as Stenographer. This building also housed 16 American social and welfare agencies, such as the United States Charities, Infant Welfare, etc. Thanks to the compassion and generosity of a few, Polish immigrants now had a place to turn for help.

As we celebrate PAA's 80th year of giving people hope and the resources to make positive changes in their lives during times of personal crisis, we also remember the spirit of generosity of those who came generations before, and their lasting gift to the future

Stanley Jozefiak

The Link is a publication of the Polish American Association.

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Design: Barbara Sobocka

A Profile in Generosity

Henry and Isabel Smogolski have made a donation in excess of \$38,000 to Polish American Association's annual Miracle Fund. The Smogolskis have been generous supporters of PAA since 1996, and are the only individual members of our Solidarity Circle, for lifetime giving of \$50,000 or more.

Henry and Isabel are both Chicagoans of Polish descent. Henry, retired Chairman and CEO of Northwestern Savings Bank (now MidAmerica Bank), has been very aware of Chicago's Polish community - a substantial portion of the bank's clientele is Polish. Many of the tellers are bilingual, and Northwestern was the first bank in Chicago to work with PKO to wire money directly to Poland.

Henry and Isabel realized how valuable the services are that PAA provides to recent immigrants from Poland, and have chosen to support PAA as one way to give back to the community. We are grateful for their very generous annual gifts and for their help in providing resources for changing lives!

Then... And Now

	1922	2002
Gallon of gas	25¢	\$1.61
Bus fare	5¢	\$1.50
Ford vehicle	\$490	\$19,700
First class stamp	2¢	37¢
PAA employees	2	180
Polish immigrants in Chicago	148,268	125,000

Dom 2002...



PAA's Housing Resource Center hosted a housing fair "Dom 2002" for the Polish community in June. The event was aimed at linking potential homebuyers and current homeowners with resources to facilitate home purchasing, decorating and remodeling. Plans are already in the works for a housing fair in 2003. For more information, contact 773-282-8206 ext. 342 or 336.

"Malowane Wakacje"... Painted Vacation

By popular demand, Polish American Association expanded "Malowane Wakacje," its summer program for children six to 12 years old. More than 40 children participated in this year's six-week long summer day camp, which met four days a week from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., and was held both on the northwest and southwest sides of Chicago. Camp activities included arts and crafts, indoor



and outdoor games, and activities that focused on developing communication and other interpersonal skills.

In addition to expanding the program's offerings, duration and locations, PAA hired teens to assist PAA staff. The

11 counselors were Polish teens participating in the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development summer Youth Initiative. The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development Summer Youth Initiative is intended to prepare young people ages 14 to 16 for their first jobs, teach punctuality, responsibility, and familiarize them with the formal requirements of the hiring process.

PAA had an additional goal — to make sure that the children and youth who come to us receive positive examples that will become a creative force in changing their lives. The dynamic connections and meaningful relationships that developed between the teen counselors and the young children surpassed everyone's expectations.

The teen counselors pointed out that the program helped them to better understand the dynamics of a group setting, learn to be more responsible, become more sensitive to the needs of others who may be dependent on them, and appreciate the effective results of teamwork. Fourteen year-old Magda had this to say about her summer job as a counselor: "I've



experienced how it is to be responsible for others and for what we do together." Teen counselor Agnieszka Budz said, "This experience made me more open and taught me to work with people very different from myself. It felt good to have the young kids look up to us." Arek Kowalczyk said he noticed a difference in himself and the other counselors. "In the beginning we worked more as individuals, but then quickly learned the benefits of teamwork."

PAA Youth staff member Zaneta Vancel said the most rewarding part of her experience was seeing the personal growth in both the teen counselors and the children. "During the beginning week or two of camp, many of the young children were very shy, and did not know how to problem solve in a group setting. The changes and bonds that grew in everyone after a few weeks surprised and delighted me," said Vancel.

"The small kids began to open up to the teen counselors and, with their help, solved problems that sometimes occurred during playtime. The teen counselors would sit down at the end of the day to talk about what worked and what didn't. As a result, everything began to come together and work really well."

The last day of camp was fun with a costume party and dancing, complete with witches, cowboys, and Dracula. A hint of sadness hung in the air as the "Painted Vacation" came to an end, but the memories, lessons and experiences will remain throughout the year.



PAA was once again fortunate to have twelve bright and energetic students, who were participating in the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development Summer Youth Initiative, working at our North and South Side offices for six weeks this summer. For many of these young people, this was their first work experience. PAA thanks them for their enthusiasm and the wonderful job they did.