



Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

May God continue to bless the Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, our donors, our visitors, our staff and the Board of Directors. The Center is seeing an increasing number of visitors, especially younger participants, which our Executive Director Alice Poore has been actively recruiting. We extend our special thanks to Board member Joe Yanta, who has asked the Board to explore and implement the following initiatives with funding from Bishop John W. Yanta's estate:

- A Bishop Yanta Scholarship program from the Polish Heritage Center for Catholic descendants of Polish immigrants to Texas who attend Texas colleges or universities, are practicing Catholics, and who are participating in an active Polish club or organization.
- Providing transportation for pilgrimages from other Polish communities to Panna Maria, including a tour of the Polish Heritage Center.
- Promoting and supporting Polish language classes for staff.
- Support of marketing programs to get the word out to increase visitors to the Center and to keep the website relevant and vibrant.

Bishop Yanta always wanted to make sure that the Center and its exhibits were up to date and of high quality, so updates to and maintenance of Exhibits and Technology are other needs. The Board has approved recommendations for implementing these initiatives from Executive Director Alice Poore.

Our thanks to Board member John Cebrowski for including promotion of the Polish Heritage Center on his recent trip to Poland where he met with representatives of the IPN, the Institute for Polish Remembrance, and the Wspólnota Polska for possible capital project opportunities.

We have immense gratitude for the continuing support of the Polish Consulate in Houston for our efforts, and for including the PHC in their celebration of the 233rd Anniversary of Polish Constitution Day. The event featured a fascinating talk by Consul General Monika Sobczak about Poland's example of constitutional democracy and the struggles Poland faced throughout the years to return to a constitutional democracy. Following was a concert featuring Dominika Dancewicz (Violin) and Andrew Schneider (organ) in an outstanding musical performance which received a standing ovation. The event ended with an excellent reception. It was a wonderful Polish cultural experience, and a lovely follow-up to our Duo Klavitarre concert at the PHC.



Meeting with Region 20 Social Studies

By: Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

PHC's Educational Outreach Program has taken the next step in expanding our student tours to school districts in South Texas. Ana Villareal Simpson, a consultant, and the Social Studies TIL Coach for Region 20 Educational Service Center, recently contacted me to host their Spring Social Studies Leadership Forum.

Regional District Social Studies Coordinators from eight districts - Boerne ISD, Northeast ISD, East Central ISD, Northside ISD, Stockdale ISD, Fort Sam Houston ISD, Harlandale ISD and South San ISD - attended the forum. One of the responsibilities of these district coordinators is to investigate opportunities to enhance the educational experience of their students. So, of course we wanted them to see exactly what their students would see at the Center.

The meeting began with a brief history of Bishop Yanta, his vision, and how the Polish Heritage Center came into being. They then watched the documentary that tells the fascinating story of the first Polish immigrants to Panna Maria and the establishment of the oldest Polish settlement in the United States. Next, the staff walked them through the same agenda as the students follow. Each was given an audio wand as they toured the Gallery, so they could listen to the exhibits that caught their interest. They experienced the "Name that Artifact" game in the Cestohowa exhibit, and just like with our students, there were a few items that baffled them.

Board member and tour guide Sam Kotara walked them over to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church and pointed out significant aspects within the church. The coordinators were told the beautiful story of the immigrants holding Midnight Mass under the old oak tree to give thanks for the blessing of their safe arrival. Next was a visit to nearby

Saint Joseph's, the first Polish school established in America, and these educators had the opportunity to explore all the items collected over the years by the Panna Maria Historical Society. After that, they returned to Bishop Yanta's Room for refreshments and the opportunity to create a traditional poppy flower from tissue paper. Our education specialist, Susie Kotara, led them through the design and explained the significance of the flower to the Polish culture.

At the end of the session, the coordinators were given an example of the Social Studies curriculum the PHC will provide to their teachers as they schedule their trips to the Center. This curriculum is a weeklong collection of activities that address Polish history, immigration, traditions, and culture and literature. This Social Studies Leadership Forum turned out to be a wonderful experience for these coordinators who expressed how they could not wait to share with their district teachers the unique beauty of the Center, how the depiction of the Polish immigration to Texas is so expertly done, and that the Polish Heritage Center is truly a national treasure.



End of School Trips

By: Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

Even though school is coming to a close for most local school districts, we at the Polish Heritage Center were very excited that Falls City High School decided to share their students with us for a few end-of-school trips to the Center. Over a two-week period, 26 freshmen, 35 sophomores, 16 juniors, and 29 seniors spent their morning learning Polish history, customs, and traditions. Thank you, Principal Beth DeLeon, Falls City High School teachers, and the FC Education Foundation for giving us the opportunity to spend time with these wonderful students, allowing them to experience first-hand everything Polish!

Things won't be slowing down in June, as we are greeting the ACE students. There are trips scheduled for students from Kenedy, Three Rivers and Stockdale with more to come. Never a dull moment at the Polish Heritage Center!

Last Chance to Visit Cestohowa Exhibit!

All great things must come to an end. The wildly popular temporary exhibit celebrating the 150th anniversary of Cestohowa and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church will come down at the end of June. That gives you just a few more weeks to see the artifacts and read the stories about how this heritage community came to be. So please don't miss out.

The exhibit was a favorite of our hundreds of students who puzzled over the generations-old artifacts, trying to figure out what they were all about. It was wonderful and amazing to see history preserved. Once again, we thank the Cestohowa community for sharing its history with the Polish Heritage Center.



Remember the Polish Heritage Center in Your Estate Planning

Planned gifts are a meaningful way to ensure that the needs of the Polish Heritage Center are met now and well into the future. With this in mind, the Our Lady of Częstochowa Guild has been created to recognize donors who have included the Polish Heritage Center in their estate planning. Please consider joining your friends and neighbors who have made this commitment to the PHC.

Your planned deferred giving can dramatically make a lasting difference. Your thoughtful and farsighted generosity will ensure the continuity of the Polish Heritage Center for many generations to come.

It will enable the Center to remain the preeminent site in the United States that honors our courageous immigrant ancestors, the first and oldest permanent Polish settlement in America, and the many nearby settlements and parishes that grew from the mid-19th century immigration to Texas. Your investment will help secure and maintain a first-rate teaching and learning experience for future generations and for all of our visitors.

When donors notify the Polish Heritage Center of their planned giving, we honor those individuals or families by recognizing them as members of the Our Lady of Częstochowa Guild.

Becoming a member is quite simple. If you have named the Center in your will or have otherwise included the PHC in your estate plans, you are already in the Guild. If you have not yet notified us of your bequest, please contact a Center representative to inform us of your decision and complete a simple notification form.



You may consider any of the following opportunities to include the PHC in your estate planning:

- Make a bequest through a will or trust.
- Name the PHC as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, a pension plan, or a bank account.
- Name the PHC as a beneficiary of a charitable lead trust.
- Make a life income gift, securing a guaranteed life income for yourself, and a designated beneficiary if desired, by establishing a Charitable Gift Annuity or creating a Charitable Remainder Trust.

Please meet with your financial advisor to discuss what option is best for you. The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Foundation is a Texas 501c(3) non-profit. The Tax ID number is 46-0561240.

Thank you for considering membership in the Our Lady of Częstochowa Guild. You will enjoy the personal satisfaction that comes with knowing that you have made a lasting impact.



**THE
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AT PANNA MARIA**

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The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization.

TAX ID: #46-0561240

News from the Heritage Communities

Congratulations, Father Scott!

Father Scott Janysek, son of Mark and Elaine Janysek of Panna Maria, celebrated the 10th anniversary of his ordination on May 19 at Immaculate Conception Church in his hometown. Father Scott serves as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Helotes, TX.



Photos courtesy of Tracy Yanta Hosek