



Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon, PHC Chairman and President

It is so appropriate for our January Polish Heritage Center newsletter to highlight student tours of the Center. Alice Poore has been instrumental in setting up student tours from the nearby communities and has designed a unique experience for each of the visits. Bishop Yanta was very clear on his wanting to have the younger generation enjoy the benefits of the Center.

I was fortunate to be able to participate as a tour guide for 20 elementary school students from Karnes City and to experience their enthusiasm firsthand. There were three groups of 20 going through the Center, and Alice had worked out a 5-part alternating schedule for each group. Susan Moczygamba-McKinsey, Sam Kotara and I were able to get assistance from Alice throughout the tours.

My group began with each student using their creative skills to paint and then decorate wooden eggs with seeds of various colors, much like our Polish ancestors would have done. We next moved to the Cestohowa 150th Anniversary Exhibit with a picture questionnaire about items and facts in the exhibit. We then moved to the Main

Exhibit gallery and each student could use information wands to study areas of their interest in the gallery.

The group then moved on to a scavenger hunt for information such as dates and details in the exhibits. Next was a tour of Panna Maria's oldest Polish church in America and then lunch to complete the tour.

I was so impressed with the pre-work done by Alice and her team and volunteers, their supporting materials, and the well-organized process. More schools and school districts will be added in 2024.

In the new year, Alice will also expand not only our educational programs, but also encourage visitors through effective advertising. She will be marketing the PHC library and resources including the Bishop John Yanta room as well as promoting tours from outside the region.

Contact Alice Poore if you are interested in organizing a group for a tour. director@polishheritagecentertx.org.

We're giving you a flavor of the student tours with lots of pictures. We are also sharing student thoughts about the PHC, though we did take the liberty of correcting some spellings.

Here's wishing you a blessed New Year.



Panna Maria 4-H Club Christmas party and Toys for Tots drive



FC students are quizzed on their knowledge of Polish heritage



Falls City 3 graders gather at the PHC

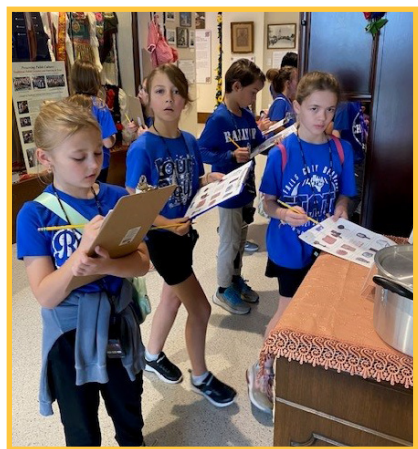
“The coolest thing I saw was the gallery and listening to the little things. It was very fun and very very cool. Thank you for having me today.”
 – Emma Bishop, Falls City, 3rd grade



KC student learns about Fr Leopold



FC students making poppy flowers with Susie Kotara



FC 3rd graders figuring out Cestohowa artifacts

“I learned a lot about Leo Moczygamba. He is a church priest and the best person ever.”
 – Javier, Karnes City, 5th grade
 “My favorite exhibit was doing the scavenger hunt. I wish we can come here again, it was fun. Thank you.” – Dustin, Falls City, 3rd grade

“I learned a lot about the gallery room. It was so cool in there and you get to learn a lot of new things and see cool pictures.”
 – Madilynn, Karnes City, 5th grade
 “My favorite exhibit was everything because it was all good.”
 – Ryan, Falls City 3rd grade



Karnes City 5th graders fill the PHC theater



KC 5th grade searching for scavenger hunt answers

“My favorite exhibit was the gallery because it included art from famous Polish people and it will tell you the back story behind it.”
 – Julian, Karnes City, 5th grade
 “I learned a lot about the Polish church and the Polish Heritage Center and it is a really amazing and fun place to come to.”
 – Pailyn, Karnes City, 5th grade



Egg decoration

Shared Thoughts from the recent Sowa reunion at the PHC

Randall Sowa, Grapevine, TX

“The Center is more than I was prepared for. It will put the Poles of Texas on the world’s stage as an international destination. It was a perfect venue for our reunion, and I believe we all came away with new knowledge and appreciation of our humble but rich history in Texas. The Bishop’s vision was well beyond what we as collective souls could have imagined was possible.

The location in the farmland and pastures of South Texas is beautifully complementary to the facility in that a visitor has a sense of presence in a quiet place before entering the building. And upon leaving, that quiet openness of the land becomes even more present to the mind and imagination.

Had the Center been placed in an urban environment, that raw organic feeling of ‘sense’ would have been lost. And having an historic church on the same property only magnifies that feeling of spirit and healthy enthusiasm toward life, struggles, and human endeavor.”

Kosciuszko Foundation Scholarship to Poland

The Kosciuszko Foundation is accepting applications from American students, both undergraduate and graduate, interested in studying in Poland.

The Exchange Programs to Poland scholarship helps fund a year abroad, attending Polish language courses at Jagiellonian University, one of the oldest continuously operating universities in the world.

The application deadline is March 22, 2024.

Contact: Malgorzata Dymkowska

ExchangeToPoland@thekf.org

212-734-2130

Photos courtesy of Alice Poore, John Wojtasczyk and Susan Moczygamba-McKinsey.



Polish pilots training in Texas visit the PHC



Sister Jane Gawlik during her visit home from Pennsylvania



Board members Randy Pawelek and Susan Moczygamba-McKinsey with great PHC friend Elizabeth Burda at donor appreciation event



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AT PANNA MARIA**

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PHC Hours: Wed. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
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The Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria
Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization.

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News from the Heritage Communities



Cestohowa's Sister Jame Gawlik visits PHC
with her family



Kosciusko seniors at the Center