



Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon,
PHC Chairman and President

It is wonderful to set challenging goals for the Polish Heritage Center for 2026 as we enjoy the successes of 2025. We are so fortunate to have Bishop Yanta's vision as our guide. We thank all of you who made our Capital Campaign such a success as well as those of you who continue to support the Center.

As we look forward to meeting our 2026 goals, I would like to thank the donors, the board members, and our staff as well as the wonderful volunteers who keep the Center alive and vibrant.

We have been able to update our permanent exhibits, replace electronic equipment such as projectors, and enhance our Religious and Veterans exhibits.

This spring, we will offer tours, blessing ceremonies in the PHC Chapel for the 13 original communities, virtual and educational programs, family events, cooking classes, art contests, and much more. We are updating our donors' book to allow access with the push of a button to a list of all of our fantastic donors by last name. These programs are all possible because of your donor support. We encourage you to come, bring friends and relatives to visit this incredible Polish Heritage Center. Enjoy the fantastic history and experience the updated exhibits. We are with you in prayer during this Lenten Season.

PHC's 2025 Success Story

By: Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

2025 was a phenomenal year for the Polish Heritage Center!!! Our Board of Directors, the PHC staff and I feel very blessed for the role each of you has taken in the success of this beautiful center. Whether it's a phone call, a note in the mail, or a donation, you inspire us to go beyond the goals that we set each year.

I first want to recognize our dedicated Board Members whose constant support and guidance are a major contribution to the success of the PHC. With all the activity, it also became necessary to hire additional staff. In January, we welcomed Christina Griffin as the assistant to the Executive Director.

August brought us Harley Garcia, our new Technology Director, and Rebekah Pawelek, PHC's Marketing Director. As of October, John Wojtasczyk, is now the full-time Visitor Associate. I am so blessed to have such a strong, talented team and no doubt, they are the reason our events run so smoothly.

We established a Docent program this past year, and I want to recognize these special individuals who step in to assist with school tours, Polish cooking school, Polish art contest, and many other events: Becky Bexar, Shirley Palitza, Sandra Yanta, Linda Griffith, Joni Huwe, Judy Scheffler, Beverly Hedtke, Sandra Carter, and Kathy Patton. We also have three student volunteers – Makayla Janysek, a Bishop Yanta scholarship recipient, and seniors Ty Kopecki of Poth High School and Claire Laskowski of Falls City High School.

It truly was a remarkable year in which we definitely exceeded our goals and then some.

As most of you know, 2025 was the Jubilee Year of Hope, and Panna Maria's church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a designated jubilee site. The PHC hosted 13 Jubilee celebrations for churches all over South Texas. In partnership with Father Wieslaw and the Panna Maria Historical Society, visitors celebrated mass, toured the PHC, along with a Polish craft and lunch. Then PMHS volunteers stepped in to provide tours of the church and St. Josephs school.

Our Educational Outreach program has expanded to ten school districts. We hosted 22 school tours this past year with almost 2,000 students learning about the Polish immigration and culture, making a Polish craft, and with the PM Historical Society, enjoying tours of the historic Church and the Museum. The PHC also sponsored the Bishop John W. Yanta Scholarship, awarding recipients with two \$10,000 scholarships, and the Polish Heritage Center Scholarship, funded by the Bobby Moczygemba Estate, for two \$5,000 recipients.

Our events were ongoing and many times record breaking. Here is a quick recap: we celebrated three wedding anniversaries and three wedding rehearsal dinners; one Quinceanera; 9 family reunions; 3 funeral luncheons; 2 Deanery luncheons; 3 tours for Seniors at Independent living facilities from San Antonio and Sequin; and 5 local organizations' meetings, lunch and tours.

We hosted a group of students from the Edith Stein School from Poland; 2 Events coordinated by Dr. Jim Mazukiewicz, which included Polish Ag students and a group of Scottish farmers; the second annual White and Red Gala which is our largest fund raiser; the First Polonia Youth Day, with 283 students from Houston, Austin, Dallas, UT Austin and Texas A&M; the Polish Art Contest with 152 entries; and the Polish Cooking School with 80 little chefs.

Last fall we welcomed the Archdiocese Jubilee Assembly, which was officiated by 9 priests from our Deanery and included breakfast and religious seminars for 150 celebrants; observed the Bishop's Celebration of Life; and participated in the 2nd annual Oktoberfest in San Antonio. We had the grand opening of the Bishop John W. Yanta Meeting room at St. Paul's Community Center and the grand opening of the Bishop John W. Yanta Exhibit at the PHC.

November saw the Felician Sisters celebrating their 150th anniversary at the PHC; the Polish American Council of Texas (PACT) Annual Meeting; and events for the President of the Polish American Association and the coordinator of the American Program of the Polish International Affairs. In December, we celebrated our annual Dziękuję donor appreciation event and the Falls City National Bank Christmas Party.

That's 82 incredible events !!!

And almost 4,000 visitors!

In marketing we have expanded our advertising opportunities and are now highlighted in 11 publications in South Texas, New York, Chicago, and Florida. On behalf of the PHC, I made two live Facebook interviews, an interview for San Antonio Catholic TV and two television commercials. As you can see, we have surpassed the goals we established for 2025, and with your continuous support we can exceed the goals we have in place for 2026. So, Dziękuję, thank you, for the confidence you have placed in me, our board of directors and my staff to continue with Bishop Yanta's dream! I sometimes wonder if Bishop ever dreamt all this would happen, but I know he is extremely pleased.

PHC Goals for 2026

At the conclusion of each year, the Executive Director, PHC staff, and the Board of Directors evaluate our accomplishments, discuss our needs, and determine new avenues to ensure continued growth for the coming year, always remaining true to the vision and direction of Bishop John W. Yanta. After numerous team meetings, we developed ten goals which we feel will contribute to the continuing success and growth of the Center. Here they are with some of their new objectives.

1 – Increase Donor Participation

Launch Annual Donor Campaign

2 – Expand the Educational Outreach Program

Expand the Educational Outreach Program
Recruit additional school districts and ACE summer programs; Extend invitations to private Catholic schools; Promote the Bishop John W. Yanta and Polish Heritage Center Scholarships

3 – Increase Special Events and Cultural Opportunities

Host Spring Polish Book Fair; Organize Saturday Matinees featuring Polish Films; Provide tours of Czerner House in Panna Maria; Participate in the Pulaski Parade in New York City; Plan the May 20th Texas Historical Marker ceremony in Hemisphere Plaza with Texas Historical Commission; Participate in the September 250th anniversary celebration of the US in Washington DC, representing Polish immigration, history and culture; Investigate interest in Polish language classes

4 – Launch New Marketing Opportunities

Launch New Marketing Opportunities
Generate new advertisements in national Polish publications; Update Polonia Database; Design new ad for PACT Directory; Design advertisements in the South Jettie News; Update information in Texas Heritage Travel Guide; Coordinate music & dance for Historical Ceremony at Hemisphere Plaza; Increase number of Docents and student volunteers; Publish stories of historical events/heroes in the PHC newsletter

5 – Generate Additional Retail

Expand sources for new merchandise opportunities;
Utilize the expertise of merchandise suppliers;
Redesign display layout and physical arrangement of gift shop

6 – Improve and Maintain Technology

Rebuild and update new PHC website; Update visual around Religious Vocational and Veteran's Interactives; Create a new digital Donor Book Application; Research emerging technology and analyze current systems to detect inefficiencies

7 – Increase Grant Funding Opportunities

Research and apply for 5 grants per calendar year

8 – Support Exhibits

9 – Monitor Building Maintenance

10 – Increase Rental Opportunities

Increase Rental Opportunities
Design promotional ad for rental opportunities;
Highlight celebrations/rentals in PHC newsletter

Once again, we have set the bar high to increase the visibility of the Center, both nationally and internationally, with goals that differentiates our Polish Heritage Center from others and with those that truly showcase the PHC as a national treasure.

| School Days



Yorktown 7th Grade



St. James Apostle 4th Grade



Pettus 8th Grade



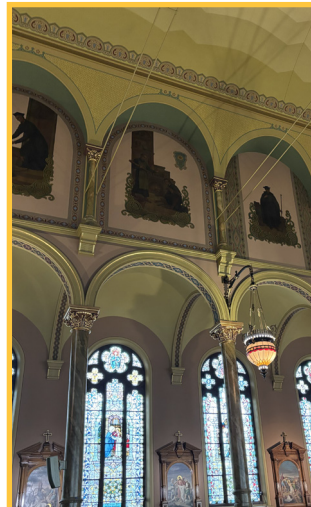
Karnes City 7th Grade

| A Shared History with Chicago

By Susan Moczygamba-McKinsey, PHC Board Member

During our recent visit to Chicago, Alice Poore, Susie Kotara and I were able to visit the beautiful St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church, which has a rich shared history with Panna Maria.

In 1864, Father Leopold Moczygamba was one of very few Polish priests in America and among the first to minister to Chicago's Polish community. He visited with the city's Polish leaders, including Peter Kiolbassa, a transplant from Panna Maria, and the result was St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church, established in 1867. By 1899, it was the largest Polish parish in America, with 8000 families totaling 30,000 parishioners, and 12 Masses each Sunday. By the 1970s, with an influx of Spanish families, the church became trilingual, and to this day offers Masses in Polish, English and Spanish.





**THE
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER
AT PANNA MARIA**

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Panna Maria, Texas 78144



PHC Hours: Tues. – 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.

TAX ID: #46-0561240

News from the Heritage Communities

Congratulations to the 2026 Lumen Gentium Awardees
Archdiocese of San Antonio honors lay people in each parish

Anunciation of the BVM, St. Hedwig
Holy Trinity, Falls City
Immaculate Conception, Panna Maria
Nativity of the BVM, Cestohowa
St. Ann, Kosciusko
St. Anthony, Elmendorf
St. Anthony, Runge
St. Boniface, Hobson
St. Helena, Helena
St. Stanislaus, Bandera

Bryan & Donica Morson
Greg & Mary Wiatrek
Dorothy Yanta
Melvin & Michael Kolodzie
Alice Felux
Mildred Moczygemba
Adrian Yanta
Patricia Brysch
Michael Janysek
Steve Jureczki