

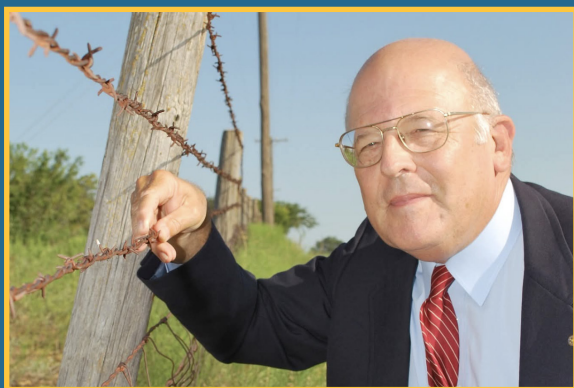


# Chairman's Column

By: Aloys Notzon,  
PHC Chairman and President

It has been four years since Bishop John W. Yanta died, but his spirit and vision continue to motivate the Polish Heritage Center, impressing visitors from throughout the United States and the world. Our ongoing activities include family histories and genealogy, an active website, student tours, cooking schools, and virtual academic programs as well as providing a wonderful location for family gatherings before or after weddings, funerals, and graduations. Ours is also a community meeting place for businesses and social organizations. This all speaks to the quality of the facilities, the expertise of our staff, and Bishop Yanta's guiding hand.

On Saturday, October 3, 2026, the Center will host a celebration marking Polish contributions to the 250th anniversary of the birth of the United States, the 95th anniversary of Bishop Yanta's birth, and the 5th anniversary of the opening of the Polish Heritage Center. Please save the date for this joyous occasion.



It is with sadness that we mark the passing of two extraordinary individuals. T. Lindsay Baker, PHD, died on June 11. He was a noted Texas historian recruited by Bishop Yanta to be the official historian in the development of the Polish Heritage Center. Bishop Yanta was aware of Dr. Baker's role in developing the Kenedy Ranch Museum-South Texas and his book, *The First Polish Americans: Silesian Settlements in Texas*, written in 1975 while he was the Fulbright Lecturer at Wrocław Polytechnic University in Poland. Dr. Baker donated his collection of Polish research to the Polish Heritage Center.

Louise Jurgajtis died July 3. Not only a cousin of Bishop Yanta, Louise was also his right hand in the formation and continuation of the Polish American Priests Association where she served as secretary and treasurer for many years.

She was solely responsible for typing and mailing out over 2000 invitations for PAPA's organizational meeting, as well as helping to organize many of their gatherings throughout the US. It was impressive to see her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and other relatives play active roles in her recent funeral mass in Cestohowa.





## SAVE THE DATE!

PLEASE JOIN US AS WE HONOR BISHOP JOHN W. YANTA'S  
LEGACY AND VISION PROMOTING  
POLISH CULTURE AND HISTORY, AND THE 5<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE  
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER.

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### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026

POLISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH!

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MINI-SYMPOSIUM, "CELEBRATING THE 250<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE...  
POLISH-AMERICAN STYLE!"  
AT THE POLISH HERITAGE CENTER,  
FEATURING PROMINENT POLISH-AMERICAN HISTORIANS:  
2:00-4:00 P.M.

MASS: 4:30 P.M.

BISHOP YANTA'S 95<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY  
CELEBRATION OF LIFE  
RECEPTION WITH ENTERTAINMENT AND  
HORS D'OEUVRES: 5:30 P.M.



# | Polish Cooking School at the PHC... What Fun!

By: Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

June and July were deliciously exciting months at the Polish Heritage Center as we welcomed young chefs and adults to our summer Polish Cooking School. The PHC hosted eight Thursday cooking classes for students and two Saturday classes for adults, filling our building with laughter, learning, and the irresistible aroma of Polish cuisine.

Our youth classes included hands-on cooking, lunch, PHC scavenger hunts and exhibit tours, and guided tours of the Immaculate Conception Church and St. Joseph's Museum. Classes filled immediately, welcoming 92 enthusiastic young chefs from 3rd through 9th grade. In June, students mastered: Placki (potato pancakes), Kołaczki (Polish cookies), Kotlet Schabowy (breaded pork chops) and of course, pierogi stuffed with farmers cheese and potato.



July brought even more culinary adventures with Kołaczki (because one batch of cookies is never enough), Kluski Noodle Chicken Soup, Polskie Ciasto Miodowe (Polish honey cake), and another round of everyone's favorite—pierogi! Each young chef went home with a chef's apron and hat, plus a cookbook featuring all the recipes they prepared throughout the summer and a box full of samples to share with their family.

A heartfelt thank you to Chef Heath of Apolonia Catering in Round Rock, who made the trip to Panna Maria to teach our students the art of crafting the perfect pierogi. His expertise and enthusiasm made the class unforgettable.

## Adults Join the Fun

Our first adult cooking class, held on Saturday, July 11, welcomed 27 excited participants. The morning began with mimosas and group photos as everyone donned their aprons and chef hats. Working in teams, our chefs learned step-by-step techniques for making pierogi, and they mastered the craft quickly, producing nearly 400 beautiful pierogis before lunchtime!



Our chefs were served a delicious lunch which featured their own freshly made creations. Our next adult class will focus on Polish cookies—look for photos and highlights in the September newsletter.

We extend our deepest thanks to all students and adult volunteers who made this summer's cooking school such an awesome success. Special appreciation goes to our dedicated volunteers: Susan Moczygemba-McKinsey, Susie Kotara, Laura Dylla, Shirley Palitza, Becky Bexar, Sandra Yanta, Joni Huwe, Beverly Hedtke, Bobby Poore, Diane Pollok, Barbara Gilley, Brian Griffin, Linda Griffith, Carrie Tinsley, Makayla Janysek, Ty Kopecki, Alyssa Pawelek, Tanner Krawietz, Tyler Pawelek, Ariel Estrella, Kinley Wiatrek, and Luke Campbell.



# | History, Art and a Whole Lot of Summer Fun at the PHC

By Alice Poore, PHC Executive Director

Summer kicked off in grand style on June 12, when we welcomed the Pettus Elementary Summer ACE students for a lively morning of Polish culture, history, and hands-on discovery. Thirty-two energetic students joined us for the remarkable story of the first Polish settlers who made Texas their home. After watching the documentary on the community's immigration journey, the students split into three groups and set off to explore.

Their morning included a spirited scavenger hunt through Bishop Yanta's exhibit, stories of the immigrants' travels told throughout the Gallery, a stop at the iconic oak tree for photos, a tour of St. Joseph Catholic School, and a visit to the beautiful Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church. John Wojtasczyk, PHC Visitor Associate, and Joyce Rives, President of the Panna Maria Historical Society, guided the tours—sharing their own treasured stories of Panna Maria along the way.

The day wrapped up in the Bishop Yanta Ballroom, where students discovered the colorful tradition of pisanki, Polish decorated eggs. With help from Susie Kotara, PHC board member and Education Specialist, each student created their own eggs to take home—a sweet reminder of their visit and a small piece of Polish folk art.

Thank you, Pettus ISD, for sharing your wonderful students with us, and a special thank you to Nancy Allen, Pettus Elementary ACE Site Coordinator, and Leslie Lewellen, ACE Grant Director, for providing local students with enriching field trips throughout June. We look forward to welcoming you back every summer.



## Special Thanks to H-E-B!

We are thrilled to announce that the PHC was awarded a \$1,500 H-E-B grant, along with a \$100 gift card, to support our cooking school. These funds will help supply ingredients and complete four of our ten cooking stations with essential kitchen equipment.

Thank you, H-E-B, for your generosity and continued commitment to ensuring that our children and community experience the history, culture, and culinary traditions of our Polish immigrants.



## Donation Details

Have you wondered how to donate to PHC?

Here are some ways to consider:

- Cash or Check
- Make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) and satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) requirement
- Leave a Specific Bequest
- Set up a Donor Advised Fund
- Ask your Company to Fund a Matching Gift
- Sponsor an Event
- Make PHC the beneficiary of a life insurance policy

Scan the QR Code below





**THE  
POLISH HERITAGE CENTER  
AT PANNA MARIA**

13909 N FM 81  
PO Box 25  
Panna Maria, Texas 78144



PHC Hours: Tues. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
[www.polishheritagecentertx.org](http://www.polishheritagecentertx.org)  
(830) 310-8612

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

### St. Hedwig Rosary Circle Visits Panna Maria

