

THE KOSCIUSZKO FOUNDATION, INC



## HISTORY OF THE TEIP PROGRAM

In 1991, the Polish National Commission for UNESCO and the Polish Ministry of National Education invited the Kosciuszko Foundation to cooperate in meeting the growing English language needs of Polish youth after the fall of communism. The Kosciuszko Foundation developed the *Teaching English in Poland Program (TEIP)* to provide Polish high school students with vibrant and enriching interactive English language immersion experiences and practice in conversational English within an American cultural context at summer camps throughout Poland. It also incorporated principles of democracy, entrepreneurship, business etiquette and volunteerism to provide Polish students with the basic tools needed to ease the transition from communism to national independence and prepare them for participation in international arenas. From its inception the program was intended to give American teacher and student volunteers the opportunity to become acquainted with the people, history, language, culture and educational system of Poland.

The Polish National Commission for UNESCO bestowed its prestige and patronage to the project. It offered nationwide publicity for the program and would become an important vehicle for recruiting Polish students as evidenced by its record of promoting and sponsoring foreign language camps in Poland since the 1950's.

The role of the Polish Ministry of National Education (MEN) was to fund the boarding school campuses and educational centers designated as camp sites, to compensate the Polish staffs required to work with the students and Americans, and to cover the costs related to the operation of the camps. Polish camp Directors (Administrators) would also receive funds to provide the American participants with a small stipend, classroom and extra-curricula facilities, room and board, experiences in Polish culture and life, complimentary excursions to local places of historical and cultural interest and an end-of-program tour.

It was determined that in order to execute the TEIP Program effectively, the Kosciuszko Foundation would have to rely on outside resources to financially support its role in the project. Its primary responsibilities for this program were to recruit, select and organize the American staff for each camp, arrange group flights to Poland, provide a program and curriculum guide and accident-medical insurance for its American participants and raise funds to cover basic costs related to launching the program. The TEIP Program was implemented by volunteer staffs of certified/experienced American teachers and student assistants recruited on a nationwide basis by the Kosciuszko Foundation.

The Western New York Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation recruited ten American teachers to implement the 1991 pilot program at a boarding school in Bydgoszcz. One hundred Polish students enrolled in the program that summer. In 1992, Christine B. Kuskowski, Kosciuszko Foundation member and Colorado and New York state educator and curriculum specialist, authored and presented the first official *Teaching English in*

*Poland Program and Curriculum Guide* as a volunteer in preparation for leading an American staff and implementing the TEIP Program for high school students in Łomża. The Guide was also used by an American staff from the Western NY Chapter for launching the program at a camp in Ustka. This Guide was afterwards revised annually to accommodate the needs of American volunteers and Polish students and to keep in step with changing times and venues.

In 1993, the President of the Kosciuszko Foundation, Joseph E. Gore, Esq., appointed Christine B. Kuskowski as the Director of TEIP. As Director, Mrs. Kuskowski was responsible for publicity, communicating with Polish camp Directors, recruiting, selecting and notifying American participants, organizing camp staffs, updating the Program and Curriculum Guidelines, obtaining accident and medical insurance for KF participants, securing group flight accommodations, raising funds, and supervising the camps on-site. Under her vision and leadership, the program expanded rapidly reaching a record high of nine camps per year in 1995-1997 at various locations including boarding schools in: Gdańsk, Iława, Kraków, Limanowa, Łomża, Myślenice, Olsztyn, Płock, Przytok at Zielona Góra, Puławy, Tczew, Ustka, Warszawa and Zakopane.

At that time, it was presumed that the program would serve Polish high school students for only a few years. As studying the English language became a popular option in Polish schools, the TEIP Program grew in demand and was also opened to upper elementary and junior high school students. The curriculum and model for the upper elementary group was developed by Dr. Mary Kay Pieski in 1997 and was implemented at the Warsaw camp. For the first time, peer tutors were partnered with Polish students. The curriculum focused on assisting the students in refining their English language conversational skills, on motivating them to develop self-confidence while applying those skills, and on preparing them to engage in international endeavors.

As the English language became a popular foreign language in Polish schools, parents eagerly sent their children to TEIP camps. From 1998-2001, the Kosciuszko Foundation staffed six camps per summer. In 2001, the Educational Enterprise Foundation of Poland funded the program with 40,000 PLN enabling expansion to seven camps in 2002-2003 and four in 2004-2008. In 2003, the NIDA Foundation organized a six-day workshop for forty-one Polish teachers of English in cooperation with the Kosciuszko Foundation. Two American TESOL-ESL teacher-trainers were recruited by Mrs. Kuskowski to introduce current methodology in teaching English and in resolving contemporary classroom challenges. Mrs. Kuskowski and Anna Utecht, a former teacher certified in Poland who served as the assistant Director of TEIP, supervised the sessions held at a conference center near Warsaw. That year, Kent State and Marywood Universities offered graduate credit to American participants. During these later years, the Polish Ministry of National Education gradually reduced the number of camps in anticipation of possible budget cuts in 2009.

The Polish National Commission for UNESCO nominated Christine to be awarded the “*Commission of National Education Medal of the Republic of Poland*,” the highest award that the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Poland can bestow on an individual person for outstanding merit in the field of education... in appreciation for (her) personal contribution and devotion to the Kosciuszko Foundation Teaching English in Poland Program... for considerable accomplishments to promote educational and cultural relations between the United States and Poland...with thanks for that long-lasting collaboration”. She received the award at a ceremony that took place at the Polish Ministry of National Education in Warsaw on October 14, 2007.

During the program’s foundational years, Mrs. Kuskowski was assisted by Regional Coordinators United States Army Colonel Anthony J. Smaczniak (Retired) and Mrs. Theresa Rivard of the Western New York Chapter; Mr. Walter J. Kuskowski, a former Social Studies teacher in the New York City public schools and co –founder Polish American Teacher’s Association; and by several teachers including veteran Camp Staff leader Mary Kay Pieski who contributed valuable volunteer service. The efforts of the staff of the Kosciuszko Foundation Warsaw office Robert Kirkland, Agata Kwinto and Joseph Herter, were invaluable in facilitating the program’s pre-camp arrangements and on-going implementation at all TEIP locations in Poland.

In 2009, the Polish Ministry of National Education withdrew its financial support from all summer foreign language camps. As a result, The Kosciuszko Foundation accepted the invitation of two administrators of former camps, who were able to find independent support to organize camps at their sites in 2009 and 2010. In 2009, through the initiative of Assistant Director Mary Kay Pieski, the Foundation introduced the Arts Enriched English Language Camp for students thirteen to fifteen years of age at the Polish Scouts Organization’s (ZHP) educational, environmental, and recreational center, “Nadwarciański Gród”, located in Załęcze Wielkie. The Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation supported the development of the Arts Enriched camp by providing over \$14,000 in grant monies to purchase musical instruments. The traditional TEIP language and American culture program was also conducted simultaneously at that site for upper elementary school students. A camp for senior high school students was held at the Ks. Janusz St. Pasierb Associated Schools for Economics Campus in Tczew near the Baltic city of Gdańsk for the thirteenth consecutive year.

In 2010, the Arts Enriched English Language Camp at the ZHP site was expanded to accommodate students twelve through eighteen years of age. A camp for senior high students was held for the fourteenth consecutive year in Tczew. The NIDA Foundation of Poland (Nidzicka Fundacja Rozwoju) supported the program at both camps by enrolling sixty scholarship students.

In 2011, the fifteenth annual Camp at Tczew that was scheduled to continue did not take place. The Arts Enriched English Language Camp at Załęcze was conducted for the

third consecutive year but for two separate groups of young people: twelve - fourteen year olds and those fifteen through eighteen.

In 2012, the Arts Enriched English Language Camp was held at Załęczce for the fourth year. A new English Language-American Culture Camp was secured by Dr. Pieski at the Internat Zespołu Szkół Zawodowych im. Stanisława Staszica in Barlewicki with the support of the non-profit group Kwidzyńskie Towarzystwo Pływackie and under the patronage of the local city government of Kwidzyń and the Polish National Commission for UNESCO. The elementary camp enrolled Polish students ages nine through twelve in a session lasting two weeks. The Arts Enriched English Language Camp took place in Załęczce for Polish students ages 12-18 and lasted for three weeks. The NIDA Foundation did not support any students in 2012. Mrs. Kuskowski withdrew as active Director in 2012 to care for her ill husband but continues to assist as consultant. Dr. Mary Kay Pieski, Ph.D. founder of the Ohio Chapter of the Kosciuszko Foundation, was appointed as the new Director of the TEIP Program and Dr. Teresa G. Wojcik, Ph.D. President of the Philadelphia Chapter as Assistant Director.

The year 2013 marked the seventh anniversary of collaboration with the Ośrodek Szkoleniowo-Wypoczynkowego, ZHP "Nadwarciański Gród" at Załęczce Wielkie. It also marked the fifth consecutive year that the Arts Enriched English Language Camp had been active at the same site. As we celebrated these accomplishments, two new camps were introduced through the efforts of Dr. Pieski and Dr. Wojcik one Arts Enriched English Language Camp at Otwock and one traditional TEIP Program in Pińczów. The Kosciuszko Foundation was grateful that the NIDA Foundation supported the students at the ZHP site once again. It should also be noted that UNESCO offered its honorary patronage to the camps in Załęczce.

In 2014, the TEIP program witnessed continued growth and new opportunities to expanded numbers of Polish students and American teachers. A new program was introduced for Polish high school students (15-18 years old) at the Otwock Camp with emphasis on conversational English in addition to continuing the Arts-Enriched English camp model for the younger students, aged 10 to 13. A site at Pińczów, secured for the program by Mr. Joseph Herter of the Warsaw Office, established a new cooperation with the local high school that will now offer its students the opportunity to attend the camp in addition to those students traveling from Przemyśl. The dates for the program in Załęczce were altered with the two-week camp for younger students taking place in early July and the three-week Arts Enriched camp occurring in late July. To accommodate requests made by our American and Polish teachers and students, the TEIP Program has embraced flexible scheduling regarding camp dates that would attract a greater number of participants. A new day camp was added in Mińsk Mazowiecki for local elementary students ages 10-13.

Seven camps are being offered in 2015: two at Załęcze Wielkie, and one each at Otwock, Pińczów, Siennica, Bielsko-Biała and Kraków (secured by Dr. Teresa G. Wojcik).

Enthusiasm and praise for TEIP and its benefits continue to spread both in the United States and Poland with recruitment sessions taking place throughout the fall in the United States. In anticipation of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the TEIP Program, Drs. Mary Kay Pieski and Teresa G. Wojcik presented a session on the program to an international scholarly audience at the World Congress of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, which took place in June 2014 at the University of Warsaw.

Participation in the TEIP Program under the aegis of The Kosciuszko Foundation presents a unique opportunity for American volunteer teachers, their assistants (American college/university students), and Polish educators and students. As experienced educators and cultural representatives of the United States, members of the volunteer American teaching staff offer their cumulative professional expertise and collective personal commitment to the youth of Poland.

In its first quarter century, the TEIP program under the aegis of the Kosciuszko Foundation has hosted 124 camps throughout Poland at twenty three locations: Bielsko-Biała, Łomża, Utska, Kraków, Płock, Gdańsk, Iława, Olsztyn, Zakopane, Puławy, Przytok at Zielona Góra, Myślenice, Tczew, Warszawa, Goldap, Gorzów Wielkopolski, Limanowa, Załęcze Wielkie, Barlewicki, Otwock, Pińczów, Mińsk Mazowiecki and Siennica. More than 12,500 Polish students and almost 2000 Americans have benefited from this program.

The American volunteer participants in the TEIP program are vital in effecting the Kosciuszko Foundation's mission of promoting educational and cultural exchanges between the United States and Poland and of increasing American understanding of Polish culture and history. Under the present leadership of the Kosciuszko Foundation President and Executive Director Dr. John S. Micgiel, Dr. Mary Kay Pieski, Director of TEIP, Assistant Director of TEIP Dr. Teresa Wojcik and Professor Piotr Wilczek of the Warsaw Office, TEIP continues to be dedicated to furthering its long-standing tradition of commitment to excellence, intercultural exchange, and educational innovation.

Heartfelt thanks to our partners in Poland who have participated in and supported the Teaching English in Poland Program: The Polish National Commission for UNESCO for promoting the program under its patronage and the Polish Ministry of National Education for providing funds in Poland for camp sites (1991-2008) and their operation, for hiring Polish staffs, and for providing funds for the stipends and end-of-program tours for American participants. The following foundations and organizations in the United States and Poland that contributed to the functioning and development of the TEIP program include the following: Educational Enterprise Foundation, The Kosciuszko Foundation Wysocki and Frees Funds, The Polish American Teachers Association, Marie

Sklodowska Curie Professional Women's Association, Nidzicka Fundacja Rozwoju, Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation, The Chicago, Ohio and Philadelphia of the Kosciuszko Foundation, Polish National Youth Baseball Foundation, the Cleveland Society of Poles, The Pulaski Association of Professional Men etc. and individual donors.

We extend warmest thanks to the Polish Directors and staffs for their hospitality and efforts in introducing KF American volunteers to "everything Polish"; and soliciting funds to make the camps affordable for Polish students by partnering with community leaders and organizations.

We applaud the administrators and Trustees of the Kosciuszko Foundation for their foresight and trust by enabling an atmosphere of viable outreach in accepting TEIP as a vital component in promoting the mission of the Kosciuszko Foundation. In particular, we applaud Mrs. Christine Kuskowski for her visionary leadership and steadfast commitment to the program's success.

We look to the future, building on the achievements of the first twenty-five years to even greater successes in years to come.