

**Celebrating Our 40th Anniversary of Polish Club,
40th Anniversary St. John Paul II Polish School,
And the 20th Anniversary for dance group „Polanie”**

Save the Date: 02/22/2020. Look for our invitation for the Jubille
at the Crystal Grand Banquet, 12416 S. Archer Ave., Lemont, IL 60439



Lemont, December 09, 2019

Dear Friends,

We are filled with gratitude and honor to present to you the history and mission of the Polish Club of Lemont, John Paul II Polish School, as well as our Dance Group “Polanie”.

It all started when Fr. Edward Witusik, influenced by Pope John Paul II, wanted to come up with a way to unite Polish immigrants living in Lemont, IL. The community was growing, but the Polish people did not have a place to cultivate their traditions. None of the local churches had Holy Mass in the Polish language. Father Witusik wanted to change this. He invited all the local Polish people to work together as a group, and after long conversations and deliberations, Saint Cyril and Methodius Parish Church Pastor, Father Jozwiak, gave permission to start the Polish Club of Lemont in the Parish. The Polish people were very happy; finally, someone had listened to them and they could pray at their church in Polish. The first meeting took place on November 20th, 1979. Nearly a hundred-people attended. The committee was elected, and the main goals were established.

The Polish people of Lemont wanted their children to speak Polish, so they opened a Saturday school where students could learn the Polish language and learn about the history, geography, and traditions of Poland. This soon became the main concern of the Polish Club of Lemont. On January 24th, 1980, school bylaws were created, as well as the official declarations of curriculum. The first classes took place in the Saint Cyril and Methodius parish building. There were only 41 students at the time. Since then our enrollment has grown tremendously, increasing to 800 students in the 2009/2010 school year. There was a need to add more grades, expand the hours, and start to offer classes on Friday evenings as well as Saturday mornings. We are very happy with all the growth we had achieved.

Our St John Paul II Polish School is also a part of the Association of Polish Teachers in America and the Illinois Board of Education. Our classes are credited by colleges and universities in the United States. The Polish School, along with the Polish Club soon became an integral part of major events and celebrations such as Christmas Eve, Caroling, Nativity Scene Plays, Carnival Balls, skiing trips, campfires, Easter Egg painting, Palm Competitions, Polish Constitution Day, and family picnics. Events providing information for immigrants, lectures by politicians, artists, and professors, as well as a variety of other kinds are organized by the Club. There are also events to raise money and resources to help Polish people living in Ukraine, Belarus, and even Kenya. Every year we also celebrate our patron’s day, John Paul II Day, to preserve his legacy and the values that he preached. This is a very important day for our community.

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In 1997, for the first time, our 8th grade students had a chance to go to Poland and explore its beauty as part of their curriculum. Since then, every year our school organizes two trips to Poland: one during spring break to visit the northern parts of Poland, and one during fall break to explore the southern parts of Poland. It is a great chance to practice the language and to learn more about the history and geography of Poland.

In the year 2000, we decided to give our students a great opportunity to enjoy Polish culture even more. The Polish Dance Group “Polanie” was established. Our dancers, dressed in traditional Polish costumes dance traditional Polish dances for a variety of events and shows. They greatly represent our school and community not only in United States, but also in Europe and various Polish Dance Group festivals.

Over the past 15 years, the Polish Club of Lemont collaborated with the community to organize Polish Heritage Day in Lemont. At this event, the Polish Club proudly provides information about Poland, its beautiful landmarks, and interesting history. During this day, the Polish Person of the Year is announced. This is an award that recognizes individuals who have made a great contribution to our Polish community in Lemont. Thanks to the Polish Club, Lemont had also gained an honorary street named in honor of John Paul II which is located by the parish.

Throughout the subsequent years, we have continued to grow and prosper successfully. After 40 years, our mission still stands to uphold the traditions, customs and language of our Polish heritage, and to unite Polish community through our Catholic roots. Even though our society and surroundings are changing, the goal of the Polish Club of Lemont along with the St John Paul II Polish School remains as the preservation and cultivation of our Polish heritage. We have high hopes that the generations to come will continue this Legacy of the Polish Club of Lemont, St John Paul II Polish School, as well as the Polish Dance Group “Polanie”.

So, as we celebrate this 40th Anniversary, we would like to invite you to our celebrations. A celebratory Holy Mass will be taking place in ss. Cyril and Methodius Parish in Lemont on February 16, 2020 at 1:30pm as well as a reception to follow on February 22, 2020 at Crystal Grand Banquets in Lemont. We ask for you to grace us with your presence. We would also like to ask for a letter that we would be placing in our commemorative album.

We thank you for all your help and support throughout the years and would like to ask if you would once again be a sponsor in this great celebration of ours.

Sincerely,

Anniversary Event Committee:

Margaret Sniezko | Halina Szyrzyzna | Ryszard Witkowski | Myron Cislo