



ANABAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Pointing people to Christ

Winter 2016 | Issue 69

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CATCH A GLIMPSE OF CHRISTMAS IN POLAND WITH THOUGHTS ON LOCAL TRADITIONS PLUS YEAR-END REFLECTIONS FROM THE NEW GTE DIRECTOR, SHANNON LEHMAN. ALSO ENJOY A CLOSER LOOK AT GTE THROUGH STUDENT AND TEACHER INTRODUCTIONS AND REPORTS.

REFLECTION AND VISION FROM THE DIRECTOR

by Shannon Lehman, GTE Director

I lock the door behind me and find my stride for the ¾ mile walk home. I glance toward the sky hoping to witness the appearing of the *pierwszy gwiazda* (first star) on Christmas Eve. Its appearance (or *non*-appearing as is often the case due to cloud cover in Poland) is anticipated as it marks the official beginning of holiday meals and traditions with family and friends as we celebrate the advent of Christ. I look forward to staying home and taking time off from work and full schedules. For the teachers here at GTE we are also closing the door on the first semester of the 2016-2017 school year. It's not exactly the middle of the year, but it's still the end of one semester and the beginning of another.

We are days away from the beginning of a New Year and the new semester. I want to thank the teachers and staff here for being steadfast and humble as they work together each day to create a warm and comfortable environment for learning another language. I appreciate their obvious dedication as they come in early to prepare lessons and their classrooms to best quiet the hearts and "loosen the tongues" of their students.

This school is a place where students do more than master the English language. Our teachers are pushing beyond the limits of this goal as they seek to converse in ways that will teach students to express their nature and feelings with words. Mastering another language brings a sense of confidence that helps us express ourselves in ways we once knew to be impossible.

A conversational language school creates a prime opportunity to develop these candid connections, which build safety and trust. Both are essential foundations for a "loosening of the tongue" that indeed represents a desire from within to learn more, grow bigger imaginations, and ultimately find ourselves being changed! At this level, language is more about listening, than forming sounds and words correctly.

I also want to thank Ela and Marzena for providing the professional services needed for billing and managing a school roster. Their support is more than just the tangible things. They bring that cup of hot tea, tell us what some Polish phrase means, and most importantly, add to the laughter around the school.

Pray that we can all Live, Love, and Serve...like Jesus!

Ela Sokolowska (seated) is the GTE secretary. Marzena Szczepanik (standing) is the AIM/Foundation secretary



GATEWAY TO ENGLISH SCHOOL: *the year in review*

GTE COMPARISONS BY YEAR

	2015	2016
VS Teaching Staff at GTE	Jewel Gingerich, Sharon Spicher, Marlin Hostetter, Dervin Martin	Sharon Spicher, Wendy Yoder, Lyndon Beiler, Matt King
Individual and pair lessons/week (highest number)	48	60
Total students (average)	120	136
Cost for individual lesson (1 hr)	55 zloty (\$14-16 USD)	55 zloty (will increase next fall)
Cost/student group lesson (90min)	32 zloty	32 zloty
Number of students who visited the East Coast in America with Dervin's tour group	16	9
Oldest Student	70	71
Youngest Student	7	6

GTE STUDENT *Testimonies*

Janusz Begowski first came to GTE because he heard about us through his co-workers. He was interested because he heard that the teachers were native speakers. Matt Gingerich was his first teacher and he also studied with Gideon Yutzy. After taking a break for three years he just returned this month because he said he needs to improve his English for his work as a pharmacist. He came back here because he notices and enjoys the calm and peaceful atmosphere and thinks that he gets help with conversation and pronunciation here.

Aneta says: "We decided to start learning English at GTE because when we traveled abroad we felt like little children because we couldn't speak English very well. We hadn't good contact with people. We knew that in Polish schools, many of the teachers have never been to an English-speaking country, and the way they taught English was a little artificial. We wanted to learn English from native speakers. We've been attending GTE for the past 3 years because we see that it has helped us improve in our English, and we like the people we've learned to know here."

Maciek says: "I learn English grammar at school, so I like to come to GTE for English conversation."

Karol says: "I like the relaxed atmosphere at GTE with no stress."

STUDENT PROFILES

An example of the student diversity at GTE

MEET LESZEK



Age: 62

Years Attending GTE: 2+

English Level: Low Intermediate

Class/Group Placement: Individual

Lessons previously taught: He will tell you what he wants and if he's bored. Sometimes brings his own books to work at!

Character Traits: Loves great conversations, kind man, energetic, has many interesting life stories and experiences.

Other Info: Tennis and ski teacher, lives in Gdynia (commutes home on weekends), lower level but loves to talk and loves to know he's understood. Loves to teach GTE teachers how to play tennis. Currently, Matt King is his tennis student. Great coach!

Former Teachers: Marlin, Lavern

MEET PIOTR (PETER)



Age: 14

Years Attending GTE: 4+

English Level: Mid Advanced

Class/Group Placement: Individual

Lessons previously taught: Random lessons and videos...read some books together.

Character Traits: Easy to have conversation with, fun attitude, relaxed personality.

Other Info: likes to talk, likes to travel and lived in Belgium for 3 years when he was younger (Dad is soldier and worked with NATO). His father, Adam, attends GTE, and his mom teaches history.

Former Teachers: Gideon, Dervin, Lyndon



POLAND: WHERE CHRISTMAS NEVER ENDS

Last year in the AIM newsletter we gave you a picture of what a typical Polish Christmas looks like. But, we didn't tell you the rest of the story... until now!

Poles love to celebrate any time of year, and when it comes to Christmas, the celebrating keeps going. After Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the Second Day of Christmas, there is of course New Year's Eve with everyone setting off noisy, colorful fireworks.

But that's not all. January the 6th is the Feast of Three Kings, (Dzień Trzech Króli) which is a national and religious holiday, commemorating the Visit of the Wise Men. Many people go to church (Poland is 95% Roman Catholic) where they get some consecrated chalk. They return home and write K + M + B 2017 (or whatever the year is) on the top of the main entrance door to their home. Most Poles think of this as the names of the three kings, Kacper, Melchior, Baltazar, in Polish. However, the original inscription was C+M+B which is in Latin "Christus mansionem benedicat" – let Christ bless this house. The pluses represent crosses. For some, it's saying - Wise Men - if you seek Christ, you will find Him in this home.

Most Poles get their Christmas tree a few days before Christmas, then leave it up well into January. Many people don't take it down until the priest makes his annual visit, called "kołęda". This usually happens in January or February. He visits each home, blesses the house, and visits with the family. Many people make a donation of money.

Many Christmas concerts and celebrations are held in January. This year for the first time we will be holding a carols evening on January 6. We are invited to the carols evening at the village school in Wiciejow on January 22.

And so Christmas lingers and the happy season of celebration continues to give joy long after the Christmas carp has been eaten. And why not...after all, Christ's coming was not a one-time event, but continues to change lives today and for eternity.



MEET THE GTE TEACHERS

SHARON SPICHER

I'm Sharon Spicher. I'm from Belleville Pennsylvania (Pleasant View). I miss the Appalachian mountains but, for the most part, I'm wildly enthusiastic about living in Poland. Many of my favourite & best experiences so far have involved bicycles, forests, and/or trains. I'm a fan of *jurek* (sour barley soup) and *oscypek* (smoked sheep cheese). I think fireflies are a delightfully bizarre idea. *The Little Prince*, by Antoine De Saint Exupery, rates high on my list.



L to R: Matt King, Sharon Spicher, Wendy Yoder, and Lyndon Beiler

WENDY YODER

Name: Wendy Yoder

Home Community and Church: Clearview Mennonite Church, Montezuma GA

If you could master another language which would it be? Polish

Best memory "thus far" from time in Poland: Experiencing the traditional Christmas Eve feast with a Polish church family

Currently Reading: *Speak Love* by Annie F. Downs

Recommended Polish food: *Pierogi*, *zurek*, and smoked sheep milk cheese

First heard about AIM through: My cousin, Lolita Hershberger

Last job before coming to Poland: 3rd and 4th grade teacher

LYNDON BEILER

Name: Lyndon Michael Beiler

Home Community and Church: Lancaster, PA — Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church

If you could master another language which would it be? Polish of course and maybe Spanish

Best memory thus far from time in Poland: Biking to Warsaw and having a campfire by the Wisła

Recommended Polish food: Anything with mushrooms, *bagietka z pieczarkami* from the little shop around the corner

Favorite Insect: fireflies

Someone who inspires you: my "little" sister Bethany

Toughest part/time of the day: waking up

First heard about AIM through: Hope Singers

Last job before coming to Poland: 911 Dispatcher

Most unbelievable Bible story: The story of Hosea

MATT KING

Name: Matt King

From: Lancaster, PA, Weavertown congregation

Best memory thus far from time in Poland: Spending time in the forests.

Recommended Polish food: *Bigos*

Toughest part/time of the day: The last class of the day

Favorite "go to" game for English lessons: Spot It

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AIM Financial Report

September 1 – November 30, 2016

Available balance September 1, 2016	\$7,261
Restricted funds September 1, 2016	\$3,477

Income

Unrestricted donations	\$16,917
Restricted donations	\$9,725
English lessons	\$13,694
Other income	\$70
Total income	\$40,406

Expenses

Labor	\$23,899
Administrative	\$698
Facilities	\$2,396
Personnel	\$7,900
Public relations	\$1,471
Publications	\$2,851
Supplies	\$1,615
Travel & events	\$22
Utilities	\$1,294
Total expenses	\$42,146

Net profit (loss)	\$ (1,740)
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Assets released from restriction	\$11,225
Restricted funds November 30, 2016	\$1,977
Available unrestricted funds November 30, 2016	\$7,021

UPCOMING: REACH 2017

Anabaptist International Ministries will have a display and personnel at REACH 2017, a gathering of fifty conservative Anabaptist ministries and Kingdom-workers from all walks of life. Farmers, businessmen, and young men and women share the vision and link arms with missionaries in Belize, food distributors in the Ukraine, school teachers in city missions, teachers and students in Bible institutions, chiefs in boys' camps, and producers and distributors of Christian literature.

More information and registration is available at

reach.fbep.org

We invite you to join us!