



ANABAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Pointing people to Christ

Spring 2023 | Issue 78

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Breaking barriers through teaching English

by Matthew and Deborah Gingerich



On an ordinary Monday morning in September, a sign appears at 25 Kazikowskiego Street, announcing, “Registration for English Lessons.” Former students, some who are like old friends, climb the stairs to find smiling Americans awaiting them in Gateway to English’s cafe room. There they are matched with an appropriate teacher and class, and asked to sign the requisite documents by the secretaries. New students also appear up the stairs, somewhat unsure of how to proceed, but after preliminary conversations to determine their English level, they begin to feel more at ease speaking a foreign language.

The following week, a fresh school year begins, and the teaching team brings out their best-polished lessons. As the year progresses, the lessons become perhaps less shiny, but more practical, as students dig in and slowly become more confident in speaking English. This confidence in a foreign language is part of GTE’s mission statement, which is

“To provide professional English lessons in a conversational setting, empowering our students to speak English confidently, accurately, and naturally. Our ultimate goal is to show the love of Christ through all of our interactions, so that our students would come to know Christ.”

Every year, the teachers wrestle with the dual goals of teaching excellent English lessons and showing Christ’s love to students. Sometimes these goals feel at odds with each other, but often, excellent teaching is found to be a part of loving our students well. Asking good questions and listening well is a huge part of helping students feel comfortable to try speaking and often talking openly about their private lives. GTE isn’t a counseling center, nor do we try to manipulate our students into hearing the Gospel, yet, the Holy Spirit gives us many opportunities to share truth about God.

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spread the atmosphere of warmth and care they experience at GTE with their friends and neighbors, breaking down more barriers in Poland’s traditionally cold social climate.

Volunteer teachers at GTE are a significant part of providing the excellent teaching and approachable learning atmosphere our students have come to expect. Without their faithful lesson planning and coffee-making, the school would cease to exist. Through their hours of conversation lessons, the teachers often develop deep friendships with students that continue even after the teachers move back to their home away from Poland.

The teachers are also known for the events they put on, specifically Small Talk, a monthly gathering on a Friday evening that allows students and other friends of our American community to come hang out and practice speaking English together. The final Small Talk of the year is a picnic in the GTE parking lot on a Saturday in late May. A folding sign appears once again at Kazikowskiego 25, inviting one and all to games and snacks to celebrate another year together of learning English. Happy children eat many cookies and have their faces painted, while adults chat about summer vacation plans with the teachers. In the end, the sign is folded up, the party scraps are swept away, and everyone rests after a profitable year of learning English. ■

Recently one of my students told me something to this effect: “I am so happy to have lessons with you, because I really need to learn better English. I am really happy to talk about what you believe, too; I know only one other person with whom I can talk about God.” It is music to a teacher’s ears to hear a student express their eagerness to study with you!

Over the years, our students have shown us hospitality by welcoming us into the community of Minsk Mazowiecki. Through many hours spent together, they have helped us better understand Polish culture, and to feel like Minsk Mazowiecki is our home, too. This is an enormous gift, one which those who began GTE could only have dreamed of. Our hope at GTE is to give back to our Polish students and neighbors some of what they have given to us. Our desire is that students can



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

SHERYL HERSHEY, MARK AND JANA KAUFFMAN



Sheryl Hershey
English Teacher
-Hayward, WI

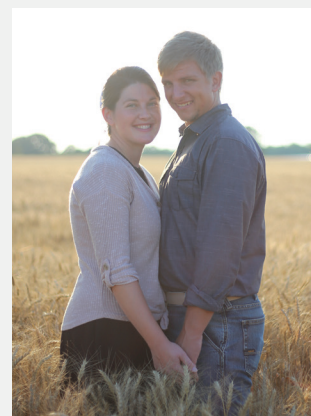
My pastimes include writing, reading, art, playing guitar, and singing. I also enjoy outdoor recreation such as hiking and exploration.

My journey to Poland started the winter of 2021. I found out that my father had been involved in AIM in the early 2000’s. At the

time, I was praying about my next steps for the coming year. I emailed AIM about any need for volunteers and found out there was a position for an English teacher. Through a lot of prayer and many conversations with family, I took the leap and decided to apply. The following summer, I flew to Poland.

The experience of living in a new culture with a new language has been humbling. In the past months as a teacher, I have often felt inadequate, but I also have felt very clearly God’s presence as I learn to know my students. Teaching has given me the beautiful opportunity for relationship, to know the hearts of young people in Poland. I often pray for wisdom and guidance in my words before classes. I have detected loneliness and confusion in their words. I desire that they can know and sense a greater love for them.

I would appreciate your prayers as I work alongside the staff at AIM and begin to know and become a friend to those around me.



Mark and Janae Kauffman
Refugee Relief Coordinators
-Pulaski, TN

We enjoy being outdoors and doing things with our hands- anything from cooking to leather work to hunting- especially if we can do it together.

We wanted to grow in faith and get more involved in ministry and we were interested in teaching English. When the

war broke out our focus turned more to refugees and how we could minister to them.

We are enjoying learning Polish, and learning to know the culture. The team here has been so welcoming and great to work with. One of the most rewarding and difficult things we are experiencing is communicating and connecting with people with whom we don’t share a language.

Something that is stretching us is the unpredictability of this type of work, and not having the structure of a regular schedule. Working with refugees can also be emotionally taxing.

Since the February 24, 2022 invasion of Ukraine, our donors have provided us with funds for:



UKRAINE AID REPORT

HOUSING

Provided housing for 25 refugees



FOOD & CLOTHING

Sent over \$36,000 worth of food and clothing into Ukraine



LANGUAGE MATERIALS

Funded Polish language materials for local refugees



MINISTRY WORK

Supported Ukrainian ministries working locally in-country



REMOTE EDUCATION

Purchased laptops for remote education for local refugee children



RELOCATION

Assisted two families with relocating to North America



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AIM FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1 – December 31, 2022

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Available balance July 1, 2022 | \$70,824 |
| Restricted funds July 1, 2022..... | \$220,489 |
| Income | |
| Unrestricted donations..... | \$78,315 |
| Restricted donations..... | \$45,987 |
| English lessons..... | \$22,812 |
| Hope Singers Income..... | \$34,500 |
| Other Income..... | \$1,211 |
| Total income | \$182,825 |
| Expenses | |
| Labor..... | \$64,562 |
| Administrative..... | \$2,571 |
| Facilities..... | \$4,712 |
| Personnel..... | \$14,711 |
| Public relations..... | \$1,929 |
| Publications..... | \$22,359 |
| Supplies..... | \$1,746 |
| Travel & Events..... | \$308 |
| Utilities..... | \$1,816 |
| Hope Singers Expense..... | \$36,287 |
| Ukrainian Refugee Exp & Grants..... | \$71,326 |
| Other Expense..... | \$171 |
| Total expenses | \$222,498 |
| Change in Net Assets | -\$39,673 |
| Assets released from restriction | \$109,732 |
| Restricted funds December 31, 2022..... | \$156,744 |
| Available unrestricted funds | |
| December 31, 2022 | \$94,896 |



LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

We have an opening for a male and a female volunteer teacher to provide instruction in conversational English at Gateway to English, starting late summer 2023, for a two-year term. Teaching experience is preferred but not absolutely required. To volunteer or to recommend someone for these positions or for more information, please contact **Matthew Gingerich** at personnel@aimpoland.org.

PERSONNEL NEEDS

AIM