

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE POLISH & SLAVIC FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Dear Members,

In this New Year of 2018 we will celebrate an important anniversary in Polish history. 100 years ago, after 123 years of non-existence, Poland regained its independence. Many people and many factors contributed to that historical event. Neither can we overlook the contribution of the Polish-American community, providing 20,000 volunteers to form the so-called Blue Army, which later fought on European fronts, with the main goal of restoring Poland's independence. The crucial moment in Poland's return to the map of the world was the support of United States President Woodrow Wilson, who in his address to Congress strongly rallied for the existence of an independent Poland with access to the sea, and that support was later voiced in the wording of the Treaty of Versailles.

This year's calendar of the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union is dedicated to the fathers of Polish independence.

In 1926, over 5,500,000 inhabitants of Poland signed wishes for Americans on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of United States independence, also thanking America for the support shown to Poland and Poles when the country regained its independence in 1918. The signatories included Polish President Ignacy Moscicki, Prime Minister Kazimierz Bartel and Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.

In celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Poland's regaining its independence, we



would like to repeat the initiative of Poles back in 1926. The Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union invites all Polish American community organizations, parishes, schools and individuals in the United States to join in the signing of a petition thanking the United States for its contribution to the cause of Polish sovereignty. The signatures obtained during the campaign throughout the year will be them handed to the United States Government. We thank you in ad-

vance for your involvement in this form of observing the 100th anniversary of Poland's independence.

At the same time, I would like to wish all Members of the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union and the entire Polish community much success and many achievements in the newly-begun year of 2018.

Bogdan Chmielewski
PSFCU CEO/President

Polonia Declaration on the 100th Anniversary of Poland's Independence



We, the sons and daughters of the Polish Nation, on the one hundredth Anniversary of Polish Independence, wish to extend our thanks to the United States of America for its enormous contribution to the cause of Polish sovereignty.

My, synowie i córki Narodu Polskiego, w setną rocznicę niepodległości Polski pragniemy wyrazić naszą wdzięczność Stanom Zjednoczonym Ameryki za nieoceniony wkład w sprawę polskiej suwerenności.

The Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union has initiated a campaign to gather signatures for a declaration by the Polish community, to be submitted to the United States Government. For the centenary of Poland regaining its independence, this is our way of thanking America for helping in Poland's rebirth in 1918, as well as its later support, such as the successful attempt to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the presence of U.S. troops protecting the territory of the Republic of Poland.

"We, the sons and daughters of the Polish Nation, on the hundredth anniversary of Polish Independence, wish to extend our thanks to the United States of America for its invaluable contribution to the cause of Polish sovereignty." This is the declaration that any Pole or American of Polish descent living in America will be able to sign. Signatures (along with first and last name, city and state) can be submitted on specially printed sheets available at all PSFCU branches and at Polish organizations that

work with the PSFCU. Signatures may also be submitted online at:

www.poloniadecoration2018.org

The goal of the campaign is to collect a large number of signatures (we are thinking of several hundred thousand) of Poles and Americans with Polish roots in gratitude to the American People for helping to regain our independence: in recognition of the international role played by the '13th point' of President Woodrow Wilson's declaration in January 1918 regarding the restoration of an independent Polish state with access to the sea, the commitment of future President Herbert Hoover to provide food aid for the newly emerging Poland, and of the military contribution of the American volunteer pilots of the Kosciuszko Squadron fighting for a free Poland. We also remember America's support in recent years, expressed in its definite "yes" to Poland's accession to NATO and the stationing of U.S. troops in Poland.

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PSFCU In Numbers

information as of November 30, 2017

Assets

\$1,864,152,029

Loans

\$1,051,366,337

Net Worth

\$179,796,442

Number of Members

92,802

Christmas Meeting with PSFCU Members



A large group of PSFCU members and friends took part in the Christmas carol evening in NYC

As every year, there was the sharing of the traditional wafer, Christmas wishes and carol singing, as well as an opportunity to meet personally. For the first time, the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union held its Christmas carol events separately for our New York, New Jersey and Illinois members.

“This is the nicest time of the year, when we can meet in such a wonderful group, experience Christmas spirit together and sum up the year,” said Bogdan Chmielewski, PSFCU’s President and Chief Executive Officer commencing the Christmas cere-

mony in New York. “This triple celebration is a symbol of how our Credit Union is growing, and it is growing thanks to PSFCU members like yourselves,” he added.

The host of the meeting, Chairman of the Board Krzysztof Matyszczuk, emphasized that nearly 93,000 members now belong to the PSFCU as primary account holders, and over 130,000 people now make use of our services in New York, New Jersey and Illinois, as well as through our online or mobile applications. “Our Credit Union’s success is a very clear testimony to the

financial success of Polish-Americans, and we should be very proud of that.” Not only has that contributed to our financial success; it also enable us to help Polish organizations and young people and make use of this potential,” added the Board Chairman.

The Christmas wafer sharing meeting for PSFCU members from New York was held at PSFCU headquarters in Greenpoint. Our New Jersey members enjoyed themselves at the Cracovia Manor in Wallington, NJ, and those from Illinois, at the Lone Tree Manor in Niles, IL. All three events featured the reading of a letter sent to our members by Polish Secretary of State Adam Kwiatkowski on behalf of President Andrzej Duda. “Thank you for your involvement in community activities and charitable aid for our countrymen who are in a difficult situation in Poland and across our eastern border. I am grateful that you and the Office of the President of the Republic of Poland undertook the initiative enabling us to conduct the first edition of the Presidential internship for American college students of Polish descent this year,” wrote Minister Kwiatkowski, sending best wishes for Christmas and the New Year for all PSFCU members on behalf of the President of Poland.

Polonia Declaration...

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Signature collection has started at the beginning of January and we are planning the culmination of the campaign for the traditional Pulaski Day Parade, to be held on October 7 on New York’s Fifth Avenue. All signatures collected will be showcased in beautifully bound volumes that will be presented to the representatives of the highest United States authorities. We plan to organize a special celebration for this purpose in the U.S. capital, Washington DC, in late 2018.

PSFCU’s initiative has its historical reference in the campaign of 1926, when 5,500,000 Poles signed wishes submitted to the United States on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The handwritten signatures were placed on 30,000 beautiful pages that were collected in 111 volumes. “With eternal gratitude in our hearts (...) we desire to wish your country and your nation all possible prosperity (...) Long live the United States of America!” said the first page of the great book of birthday wishes that was solemnly given to President Calvin Coolidge on October 14, 1926.

Bringing Christmas to the Homeless and the Lonely

For yet another year, PSFCU hosted the “Bringing Christmas to the Homeless and the Lonely” event organized by Greenpoint volunteers led by Eryka Volker.

The community room of the PSFCU McGuinness branch in Greenpoint, NY was host to several dozen people: the homeless and lonely, as well as the volunteers who organized the annual Christmas wafer sharing ceremony. “We welcome everyone in the heart of New York’s Polish community, Greenpoint, and want everyone to feel at home,” said the hosts, PSFCU Directors Bozena Kajewska-Pielarz and Leszek Wojtkowski, in welcome. “We gather here every year because we must have hope that tomorrow will be better,” said Eryka Volker to those in attendance. She also reminded them about the need to stay in touch with relatives in Poland, because that helps overcome the loneliness of living in America.

During the encounter, participants shared the Christmas wafer, which was traditionally blessed by Reverend Ryszard Koper,

the volunteers’ patron, and everyone sang Christmas carols. They also had the opportunity to light candles from the Peace Light of Bethlehem, which came to Greenpoint straight from the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem through New York’s Podhale Scout Troop. New York’s Poland’s Consul General Maciej Golubiewski emphasized that “like all Poles, all of us here are one big family” regardless of financial situation, political views or social status.

The musical setting was provided by the children’s choir of Stanislaus Kostka Parish School in Greenpoint, directed by Bozena Konkiel, which presented a concert of Polish and English Christmas carols. There was the traditional performance by senior citizens from the Amber Club. “It’s time to start singing carols / And take over all of Greenpoint / Let the young people take example / How to keep our traditions / At this wonderful time!” brilliantly sang the seniors to the melody of “In the silence of the night”.

Individual Retirement Accounts at PSFCU

Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union currently offers Traditional and Roth IRAs at competitive rates.¹ Both Traditional and Roth IRAs offer special tax advantages. You can choose to contribute to either kind or to both depending on your eligibility.² Also, you can save for your retirement even if you have an employer sponsored retirement plan at work, but with an IRA you have control over your own money.³ Even though investment into an IRA is a wonderful opportunity, the choice of a retirement plan that is best suited to your needs is a complex decision which requires careful planning. **You are advised to consult a competent tax advisor when making any decisions involving your IRAs.** IRAs are federally regulated and you bear full responsibility for any decisions and actions involving IRAs.

Traditional IRA

Contributions you make to a traditional IRA may be fully or partially deductible, depending on your circumstances, and are tax-deferred until distributed. The deduction may be limited if you or your spouse is covered by a retirement plan at work and your income exceeds certain levels.³ Distributions prior to age 59 ½ are considered early distributions and are subject to an early distribution penalty of 10%, unless your distribution qualifies for an exception to the early distribution penalty.⁴ Distributions are required to be taken by Traditional IRA owners at age 70 ½ (Required Minimum Distribution - RMD).

Roth IRA

Contributions to Roth IRA are not tax deductible. However, interest earnings can accumulate tax-free. Contributions can be distributed tax-free and penalty-free at any time and at any age. Earnings can be distributed tax-free and without a 10% penalty if the Roth IRA holder made a first Roth IRA contribution at least five years earlier and one of the following events occurs: attaining age 59 ½, incurring a disability, payment for a qualified first home purchase (subject to a lifetime limit of \$10,000), or payments are made to beneficiaries after death. Distributions are not required by Roth IRA owners at age 70 ½.

There are four ways of transferring your retirement savings to an IRA at PSFCU:

Direct Rollover

If you are eligible to receive a distribution from an employer-sponsored retirement plan (401(k), pension plan, etc.) you can rollover your funds to your Traditional IRA at PSFCU. Direct Deposits are reported to IRA.

IRA Transfer

You can transfer Traditional IRA or Roth IRA held at another financial institution to the same type of IRA at PSFCU. There is no limit on the number of transfers, they do not have to be completed within 60 days, and they are not reportable to the IRS.⁵ If you are age 70 ½ or older you can transfer the entire IRA balance, including the RMD

(Required Minimum Distribution), but you must remember to take the full RMD amount by the deadline.

IRA Rollover

IRA Rollover is a two-step transaction. The IRA funds are distributed to IRA owner and must be re-deposited (rolled over) within 60 calendar days to the same kind of IRA at the same or different financial institution. As opposed to the trustee-to-trustee transfer, rollover is a reportable transaction so the distribution and the re-deposit (rollover) are reported. If you are age 70 ½, or older in the year you receive a distribution from your Traditional IRA, you are not allowed to rollover the RMD amount.⁵

Conversion

Besides allowing annual contributions to Roth IRA, the law also allows individuals to convert their Traditional IRAs to Roth IRAs. The conversion amount is subject to federal income tax, but without a 10% penalty. Currently, anyone can convert Traditional IRA to Roth IRA without regard to income level and tax filing status. In general, the converted amount is taxed at the rate effective during the year in which such conversion was completed.

- 1) PSFCU also offers SEP and SIMPLE IRAs.
- 2) Consult your tax advisor on your eligibility to contribute to a Traditional or Roth IRA or any other decisions involving your IRA.
- 3) Consult your tax advisor to determine your eligibility to claim a deduction.
- 4) Consult your tax advisor to ascertain that your penalty-free distribution is qualified.
- 5.) Other restrictions apply.



**Fulfill your New Year resolution
and take care of your financial future**

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE
PROMOTIONAL IRA TERM SHARE
ON 2017 AND 2018 CONTRIBUTIONS**

2.25% APY* FOR 5 YEARS



*APY-Annual Percentage Yield as of 01/01/2018. Promotion is valid for term shares opened between January 1 and April 17, 2018. Funds required to open the term share account must be deposited to a new or existing IRA account during the promotional period. Minimum balance of \$500.00 is required to open a term share account, up to the maximum amount of contribution determined by the IRS for years 2017 and 2018. Early withdrawal penalties may apply. Additional information may be obtained at PSFCU branches or by calling our Member Services Center at 1.855.PSFCU.4U (1.855.773.2848). Consult your tax advisor before making any decision related to an IRA account. Additional information about other term shares offered by PSFCU is available at www.psfcu.com. Offer for PSFCU members only. Membership restrictions apply. Other restrictions apply.

PSFCU Scholarships for College Students

January 15 marked the start of recruitment for the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union Scholarship Program for PSFCU members requiring financial aid to continue their higher education. You can also apply for the 'Presidential Program', a study trip to Poland under the patronage of President od Poland Andrzej Duda. This is the second and third part of the PSFCU Scholarship Program for 2018; earlier, high school seniors had the opportunity to apply for financial aid.

Who Can Apply?

You must have been a member of our Credit Union for at least a year, have an grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0, and be studying at an accredited school in academic year 2017/18. The Scholarship Committee will take into account good academic standing as well as active participation in the Polish community, such as in a Polish parish or a Polish club at your school. You can get an application at one

of our Credit Union's seventeen branches or download it from www.psfcu.com. Applications must be accompanied by the required documents and two essays of up to 300 words in English. Application deadline is March 1, 2018.

The Presidential Internship

Just as last year, young and talented members of our Credit Union will be able to apply for aid from the Scholarship Program organized under the patronage of the Office of President of Poland Andrzej Duda. Ten applicants selected by the Scholarship Committee will go on a study trip to Poland. There they will meet with the Polish President and political and business leaders, and visit leading Polish companies. Applications can be submitted by college students who are our Credit Union members and US citizens or permanent residents. You must complete an application and write an essay in English. See www.psfcu.com for details.

The application deadline is March 1, 2018.

Program Information

Detailed information on the PSFCU Scholarship Program is available at the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union website www.psfcu.com ('About Us' tab, 'Scholarship Programs' folder), where you can also download the required forms. To obtain additional information, please e-mail scholarships@psfcu.net or contact Ms. Ewa Kotulska, Marketing Specialist, at 973-808-3240, ext. 6133.



At PSFCU Branches

At the seventeen branches of the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union, December was spent working for the traditional fundraising campaign for sick children, the Children's Holiday Smile, with visits by Santa Claus, and visits to Polish Saturday schools at Christmas wafer sharing ceremonies and Christmas plays.

Santa Claus at Our Credit Union

As every year, Santa Claus did not disappoint the youngest members of our Credit Union. All PSFCU branches held meetings for children with the traveler from distant North Pole, at which there was the opportunity to take souvenir photos, play



games, and get a Christmas gift. Santa Claus did not let the children down and made it to every event, and as was the case at the Trenton NJ branch (in the photo), when he even had plow through the falling snow.

Children's Holiday Smile

Throughout December, members of the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union collected funds for the annual "Children's Holiday Smile" charity drive. All the funds are going to three children's hospices in Poland (the Warsaw Children's Hospice Foundation, the Little Prince Children's Hospice in Lublin, and the Silesian

Children's Hospice in Tychy) and to sick Polish-American children, via the Children's Smile Foundation, the co-organizer of the fundraiser. In the photo: employees of PSFCU Ridgewood Branch encourage members to take part in the PSFCU charity drive.

The PSFCU for Children

In the "This is Poland" art competition organized by the Patriciaart Studio Imagination Factory, the top prizes in two age categories were funded by our Credit Union. The awards were presented by Bozena Bielecka, PSFCU Branch Manager in Schaumburg, Illinois.

