

Malgorzata & Mariusz Bembenek
121 Grenadier Rd.
Toronto ON M6R 1R1
(416) 538-4801

Mr. Rory McGuckin
Director of Education
Toronto Catholic District School Board
80 Sheppard Ave.
Toronto, ON
e-mail: rory.mcguckin@tcdsb.org

March 31, 2020

Dear Mr. McGuckin,

**RE: SUPPORT OF NOTICE OF MOTION BY TRUSTEE TERESA LUBINSKI TO
DECLARE MAY 3rd AS POLISH HERITAGE DAY AND MAY AS POLISH
HERITAGE MONTH IN THE TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
(TCDSB)**

We, the undersigned, Malgorzata and Mariusz Bembenek, are writing this letter in support of the notice of motion by Trustee Teresa Lubinski to declare May 3rd as Polish Heritage Day and May as Polish Heritage Month by the TCDSB. Due to the current public health situation, we are not able to be physically present at the meeting on April 2, 2020 and we would like to express our support through this letter.

We are proud parents of four children and three of them are students of the TCDSB. Our oldest already graduated into post-secondary education, while Agata is a grade 11 student at St. Joseph College and our younger boys Artur and Karol are students at St. Vincent de Paul School. Both of us were born in Poland and grew up there. Even though we have lived in Canada for over 25 years, our nationality and Polish culture plays a very vital part of our family life. We want our children to know where their roots are and to be proud of it, we do our best to teach them the language and pass on the legacy of their heritage. We are very grateful to the TCDSB for helping us by offering the International Language Program where our children during Saturday classes are able to learn the Polish language. By officially declaring Polish Heritage Day and Month Board wide our children furthermore can feel more proud and be a part of this beautiful multicultural mosaic the board represents.

The Polish Canadian community has contributed significantly over the years to the growth and development of this country. There are many great Polish Canadians such as Sir Casimir Gzowski or Janusz Zurkowski, just to name some that have greatly contributed to advancement in Canada. Polish culture is very rooted in Christ and Catholic values. This year marks the 100 anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest Poles, St. John Paul II who was a vocal advocate for human rights and a pilgrim that traveled all around the world and shared the Word of God. We are sure that the students of the Toronto Catholic School Board will benefit from the participation and celebration of Polish traditions and culture as it was observed at my children's school on several occasions in the past. Personally, we remember ourselves as graduates of St.

Mary's Catholic Secondary School taking part in such an event many years ago, sharing our talents and polish history with other students.

We support May 3rd, to be declared as Polish Heritage Day at the TCDSB as it is Constitution Day in Poland and annually celebrated as Poland's most important Civil Holiday as well as religious holiday, known as Our Lady, Queen of Poland Day. If you require any more information please do not hesitate to contact us at the above number. Thank you for consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Malgorzata Bembenek



Mariusz Bembenek