• SUCCESS STORY:
Polish American Social Services
An Emergency Fund Coalition Member

Polish American Social Services (PASS), also known as United Social Services, is a multi-service agency offering comprehensive benefits counseling, information/referral and advocacy services to constituents. PASS primarily serves constituents from the Polish/Slavic community in Southeastern Pennsylvania, many of whom face language and cultural barriers that block access to vital programs and services. In addition, PASS is an information and referral hub for six other ethnic groups.

The main objective of PASS is to keep the Polish-American community informed and aware of the services and programs which are available to everyone. Information is provided in both Polish and English, through the use of flyers, brochures, newsletters, local newspapers and radio programs.

The agency helps constituents access the following resources: utility discounts and home fuel rebates; emergency home heat assistance; property tax/rent rebates; the PACE prescription assistance program; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps; home-delivered meals for the sick and elderly; Social Security and SSI; child/spousal abuse prevention programs; and immigration and naturalization information.

PASS works to help constituents solve problems that prevent them from being self-sufficient and from enjoying a reasonable quality of life. It establishes and coordinates linkages between social service programs on constituents’ behalf; maintains a telephone helpline; and counsels constituents on and promotes employment opportunities through job fairs, job training programs, employment/unemployment services, and more.

For more information: Polish American Social Services, 308 Walnut St., Philadelphia; 215-923-1900; www.polishamericansocialservices.com; or www.unitedsocialservices.com.

• Dear Reader

We hope everyone has managed the challenges of winter weather successfully. Social workers and clergy were very active in referring consumers in crisis for help with fuel, food and a variety of other urgent needs.

The Emergency Fund Coalition invites you to mark your calendars for our 27th annual Emergency Fund Luncheon and Rose Epstein Silent Auction on Thursday, June 16 at Cannstatter’s in Northeast Philadelphia. This event is the coalition’s major fundraiser of the year, and we really need your support.

6ABC will receive the Bright Star of Aging Award for its outstanding “Art of Aging” series that does so much to inform local older adults of community resources and ways to enhance their quality of life. Community Service Awards will be presented to recipients who provide exemplary assistance to seniors. We are lucky to have Mindy Mozenter, director of community outreach for Home Instead Senior Care, returning as our host. We’re sure you’ll enjoy Mindy’s spirited leadership once again. The Liberian Women’s Chorus for Change will provide lively entertainment, and our Silent Auction is always filled with enticing items.

We also invite you to take part in the Walk Against Hunger on Saturday, April 9 and/or to sponsor a member of the coalition’s team. A portion of the proceeds from this event will benefit the Emergency Food Fund, a component of the Emergency Fund. Last year we received $5,500 from this important community effort. We hope to do even better with your help in 2016.

Remember that you don’t have to participate in a special event to help the Emergency Fund. Check out the “Donate” tab on PCA’s website at www.pcaCares.org.

Sincerely,

Mary J. Fallon
Emergency Fund Coalition Co-Chair
Executive Director
Unitarian Universalist House
Outreach Program

Mark Weber
Emergency Fund Coalition Co-Chair
Center Counselor
Center at Journey’s Way

For more news & resources for seniors, go to: www.facebook.com/PCACares.org
Host sites sought for free health workshops for seniors

Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) is recruiting host sites for the next round of its Chronic Disease Self-Management and Chronic Pain Self-Management Programs. Both programs were developed by Stanford University and are offered free of charge to Philadelphiaans, age 60-plus. “Help Yourself to Health” assists people with diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, heart disease and other chronic conditions to better manage associated symptoms, like pain, fatigue, frustration and stress. “Keep It Moving” helps seniors take charge of pain from arthritis, fibromyalgia, lower back, neck and more. Participants report more energy, less pain, greater independence and improved mental health.

Host sites must provide meeting space and storage for program supplies. Workshop sessions are 2½ hours each and take place once a week for six weeks. Sites must also be willing to recruit 15 to 20 participants who are age 60-plus. There is no cost to the site, and PCA provides all program supplies. To become a host site, call 215-765-9000, ext. 5119.

CASE STUDY

St. Charles Senior Community Center
(Submitted by Jenna Flanagan, social service coordinator)

I received a call from Mrs. G in November of last year. A 69-year-old woman with a monthly income of only $546, she faced the difficult choice of paying for food and medication or saving for upcoming winter heating costs. With Thanksgiving approaching, this was an especially distressing time for her, she said, because food is such a central part of the holiday.

After discussing options with her, I made a referral on Mrs. G’s behalf to the Emergency Fund Food, a component of the Emergency Fund for Older Philadelphians. Mrs. G was very appreciative of the Emergency Fund grant she received, which provided vouchers for a local supermarket. She was then able to direct her limited resources to pay for medication and help her stay warm this past winter. I also made sure that Mrs. G applied for LIHEAP for help with heating costs.

I counseled her on options for food assistance on a continuing basis, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and food pantries that would be convenient for her.

New senior center opens in North Philadelphia

Philadelphia Senior Center (PSC) – Allegheny Branch has opened at 1900 West Allegheny Ave. in North Philadelphia. The new 8,200-square-foot facility includes fitness, technology and multi-purpose art centers, as well as a commercial-grade kitchen for onsite preparation of hot meals, five days a week. PSC – Allegheny Branch offers a wide range of services and recreational activities, including exercise, transportation, educational seminars and classes, counseling, financial management assistance, volunteer opportunities, and referral resources. It replaces two smaller centers in the area which closed last January: PSC – Tioga and PSC – Lehigh. The new center has capacity to serve 288 members, and is about one mile from each of the two former centers. PSC – Allegheny Branch is funded in part by Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA) through a grant from the Pa. Department of Aging. It is a member of the NewCourtland Network, and the latest addition to the 5.5 acre Allegheny Senior Community campus that includes an affordable senior housing complex and a Living Independently for Elders (LIFE) program that provides supportive services and health care. PSC – Allegheny Branch is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For information, call 267-286-1455 or e-mail info@newcourtland.org. The center is easily accessible via SEPTA bus route #60 and CCT Connect. Limited onsite parking is also available.