

etc.

Refugees

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how to get things done. They are punctual, hard-working, sophisticated people, and they need less help."

The area they do need help in, though, is in acquiring English. The San Antonio Literacy Council, a privately funded, non-profit foundation, specializes in helping non-English speakers learn the language quickly.

Its executive director, Margarita R. Huantes, says the council, working through volunteer teachers, can provide free training up through high school level.

The council is arranging free classes for the refugees at the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa on the south side. The problem, Huantes said, is finding a teacher.

"We are all-volunteer now, and finding the right volunteer can be a problem," she said. "It

used to be easier when we had teachers whose salaries were paid by the CETA program; the (Reagan administration's) cutbacks have hurt us pretty badly. But I'm sure we'll find someone soon."

This group won't be the first group of Polish immigrants the council has taught at the shrine.

Ten years ago, a group of nuns of the Seraphic Order, led by Sister Hedwig, fled Poland and settled at the shrine, which had been the Polish-American Center. The council trained them in English, and 10 years later, the nuns proved instrumental in settling the current group of refugees.

"When we came, Sister Hedwig let us stay in the convent, she fed us, she clothed us, she did everything," one refugee said. "We wouldn't be here if not for her."

In addition to supporting them their first weeks in America, Sister Hedwig has arranged

traditional celebrations for the refugees at holidays, including the Christmas Eve dinner and mass.

But the main support for the refugees has been their sponsors. Holy Spirit Parish, located in an upper-middle-class section of the north side, sponsors seven of the immigrants.

The people they sponsor include Maciej, a former mining engineer now working in a gas station; Maria, his wife, who was a lawyer but is now peeling vegetables in a cafeteria; Stanislaw, an electronics technician who is waiting for his wife to arrive from the Austrian camps; and Janusz, an electronics engineer.

In addition to providing them with food, clothing and apartments, the parish has done a number of things for the refugees. They have helped all of them find jobs and paid for night-time English courses.

The parish is also trying to

tailor its help to the individual refugees. They are trying to find Maciej some kind of work where he could use his engineering knowledge; they are looking for a law office for Maria to work in; and they are helping Stanislaw and another of the refugees to bring their families over from Europe.

And other sponsors of refugees are doing the same. St. Thomas More sponsors Marek, Krystyna and their two daughters. Marek is working as a cadet engineer at a local utility, and although he can speak a little English, his wife speaks none. So the parish has engaged the services of a tutor, who visits the couple at home during the evening.

But for their 6-year-old daughter Dominika, Marek and Krystyna decided immediate entry into the parochial school would be best.

Dominika's teacher, Sister Cabrini Foley, says she is having

a rough time.

"The children chatter at her in English, and she talks back in Polish," Foley said. "I know she gets frustrated, not being able to understand them, but she can often understand me and she is very determined to learn."

And this determination to make it in America is a trait all the refugees share.

"In Poland, everyone is (equal); a few at the top have everything and the rest have nothing," Marek said. "But here you have the contrasts: big money, some money, little money, no money. And the contrasts are what push you, make you want to get ahead."

All the refugees said they feel the push. Every one of them said he or she was planning to learn English, save some money and then go back to school.

School is the way back to the professions for which they were trained in Poland. For Maciej, training means returning to the

coal mines; for Maria, the law. Marek and Janusz want to move up the engineering ladder. Andrzej, a computer systems designer, wants to return to computer design while his wife Anna, a former university English teacher, wants to return to education.

To all of them, America is the promised land, the place where they can raise their children without fear or oppression. And it is the place where life has more to offer than a three-hour wait

for a stale loaf of bread. "We come to this golden land and we see around us that there is a land of opportunity," Andrzej said. "Here, work hard and you can achieve something worth there is nothing you can't achieve."

"And we Poles, we are highly-trained, and we know how to work hard."

"Come back and do as we do in 10 years."

Employment

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can do about the cut backs since they are the result of federal action.

"It's just something we're going to have to live with," Ford said.

Sharon Lapaglia, a TEC worker who lost her job Dec. 31, said layoffs had been expected in the Bryan office.

"We had been prepared," she said. "It really wasn't a shock."

But Lois Schaffner, laid off in the second round of staff cuts, said after she was spared in the first series of layoffs, she expected to keep her job. She was out of the office when word came that she would be laid off Friday.

"I was the last one to be cut," Schaffner said. "I thought I was set for a long, long time."

Baker said five of the 12 Bryan workers laid off have already found new jobs.

The latest series of federal budget cuts, which reduced

TEC's budget by 14.3 percent, will cost 700 commission employees their jobs as of Saturday. Earlier cutbacks led to the layoff of 800 employees on Dec. 31.

The commission will end up with a staff of about 2,800 this year, compared to 4,300 in 1981, a difference of 61 percent.

The budget cuts that brought on the latest layoffs are part of the continuing resolution passed by Congress to keep the government running during this quarter of the 1982 fiscal year.

Although there will be fewer TEC staffers, employers will still pay the tax that funds the commission, Baker said.

"We are state employees, but we are federally funded ... through the Federal Unemployment Tax Act," he said. Under this act, employers pay taxes into a fund which finances employment services like TEC and pays some unemployment insurance.

Texas employers paid almost \$250 million into this fund last year, Baker said.

FUTA taxes still have to be


paid even though the budgets for the agencies they fund have been cut, Baker said.

"There just aren't any winners here," he said. "On paper, the number of state employees gets reduced, but there's no tax reduction for Texas employers."

Because many states have higher unemployment rates than Texas, a large part of the FUTA taxes Texas businessmen pay ends up paying unemployment benefits in other states, Baker said.

Ford said Clements would like to see FUTA taxes reduced.

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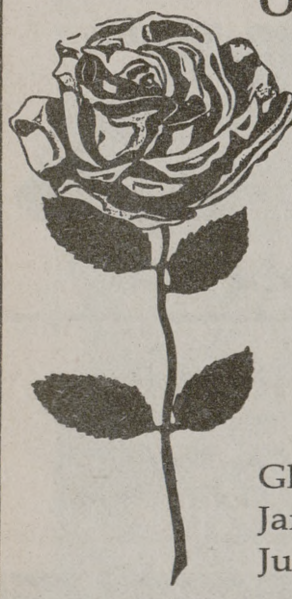



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