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I can still remember my first day of kindergarten very clearly. Everybody was having the time of their lives: coloring, playing with blocks and toys, and speaking in English. Being the child of two Polish immigrants, I did not know any English walking through that classroom door. My classmates would be saying the Pledge of Allegiance and talking amongst each other in this foreign language called English that I could just not understand. After my mother picked me up from school that day, I said that I absolutely hated the Polish language because it ended up complicating my life and I felt like a complete outsider. She simply replied, "You will thank me for it one day". Being the youngster that I was, I caught onto the language within the next few weeks and even began teaching my younger sister.

At around the age of six or seven when I was in second grade, my mother informed me that I would be attending Polish Language School every Saturday. The only thing that ran through my mind at that point was: "Awesome, another school to go to. More homework. How great." I did not consider all of the long-term advantages that this would have on my life. But then again, what seven year old thinks about what they are going to be doing when they are about to graduate high school and go to college.

Not only were the teachers at Polish Language School some of the most intelligent people I have ever met but the curriculum was incredible. Along with learning how to read and write in my native language, I also learned more about where my ancestors came from and all of the challenges that Poland had to go through in order to be the country that it is now. For example, I learned about all of the dynasties and

monarchies that ruled Poland and how they impacted history. I also learned how Poland went from being one of the most powerful countries in the world to being completely wiped off the face of the planet at one point.

I graduated Polish Language School in 2004 in the top of class where I received a special reward and certification from the Ambassador of Poland in the United States. It was a great honor. Since then, I have still been at that school almost every Saturday. I was a volunteer for about two years where I would assist teachers and patrol the hallways. After that, I was hired as Secretary where I still get to observe all of the students that are enrolled. For some reason, I just cannot seem to leave Polish Language School, even four years after my graduation.

My younger cousins who are about seven years old right now are in the first grade at Polish School. At first, I thought that they were losing their Polish because of their attendance at their normal everyday school. But even after only a few months at Polish school, they are more fluent in Polish than they ever have been and can read, write and recite the whole Polish alphabet and numbers without a stutter.

I can sincerely say Polish Language School has deeply affected my life and that without it, I would not be able to help all of the people that have helped throughout the years or gotten accepted into some of the colleges that I have applied to. Polish School has given me so many opportunities that I will be eternally grateful for.

Thank you.