

POLISH INSTITUTE SPONSORS CHILDREN'S PROGRAM AT THE 30TH ANNUAL ANN ARBOR POLISH FILM FESTIVAL

The Polish Institute understands how critical it is to support language development at a young age. We were thrilled to sponsor a program that can be enjoyed by our newest generation of Polish Americans. Polish language cartoons play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the Polish language and culture.

The Film Festival took place on November 10-12, 2023 at the State Theater in Ann Arbor. It is an annual event organized by the Polish Cultural Fund in cooperation with the Ann Arbor Polonia Association and the U-M Polish Student Association. Since its inception in 1993, the festival has featured contemporary Polish documentaries, animated shorts, and feature films offering diverse perspectives on a range of Polish and global issues. The festival features a juried film competition in three categories: documentary film, short narrative film, and film debut.

HERE ARE SOME REASONS WHY CARTOONS ARE IMPORTANT • *by Ania Biciuk*

LANGUAGE PRESERVATION • Polish language cartoons provide an opportunity for children of Polish descent to learn and practice the Polish language. By watching cartoons in Polish, they can develop their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation skills. This helps them maintain a connection to their heritage language, ensuring its preservation for future generations.

CULTURAL IDENTITY • Cartoons are not just about language; they also convey cultural values, traditions, and customs. Polish language cartoons expose children to Polish folklore, history, and traditions, fostering a sense of cultural identity and pride. They help children understand and appreciate their Polish heritage, even if they were born and raised in a different country.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION • Watching cartoons in their native language can evoke a sense of nostalgia and emotional connection for Polish American children. It allows them to feel closer to their Polish roots and creates a sense of belonging. This emotional connection can be a powerful motivator for them to continue learning and engaging with the Polish language and culture.

MULTILINGUALISM & COGNITIVE BENEFITS • Research has shown that bilingualism or multilingualism has numerous cognitive benefits, such as improved problem-solving skills, enhanced creativity, and better academic performance. By exposing children to Polish language cartoons, they have the opportunity to become bilingual or multilingual, which can have long-term cognitive advantages.

BRIDGE BETWEEN GENERATIONS • Polish language cartoons can serve as a bridge between different generations within Polish American families. They provide a common ground for grandparents, parents, and children to bond over shared cultural experiences. Watching these cartoons together can facilitate intergenerational communication and strengthen family ties.

COMMUNITY BUILDING • Polish language cartoons can contribute to the formation of a Polish American community. They provide a shared cultural experience and can be a catalyst for organizing cultural events, language classes, or community gatherings. This sense of community helps Polish Americans connect with each other, fostering a supportive network and a sense of belonging.



KICIA KOCIA ('KITTY KOTTY')

dir. Marta Stróżycka, animation, 2019, 49 min

