

Our Members in publications

An excerpt from *Polki i Polacy w Pracy* a book by Agathy Rae describing the biography of Alina Deja – owner of the Poland Academy of Canada – a PCCC member company.



What I truly care about is for the Polish teenagers, who participate in the Canada Study Tour, to learn to see themselves from a different, better perspective because Canadians' opinion of Poles is that they're very nice, thoughtful and hardworking people.

I am one of the main coordinators of the Canada Study Tour project and the founder of Polish Academy of Canada. I am a very optimistic and energetic person, incredibly passionate about Canada. I am Polish, with Silesian roots, I live in Berlin with my husband and my son, but I am also in love with Canada and I kind of live in three countries: Poland, Germany, and Canada. I graduated from English and Canadian studies at University of Silesia, in Katowice. I remember one time when Professor Sojka showed us a film about Canada and it was something that moved me instantly, a love at first sight, one might say! And so, since my sophomore year, I started to engage in Canada. It wasn't easy at first – lots of books and articles to read, speaking with University's Canadian guests and visitors. I took care of them during their stay in Katowice and, at the same time, I was getting more and more familiar with Canada. I realized our guests were remarkably modest, communicative and one of the things I learned from them was the Canadian leadership, something I want to pass on to the young people through my Polish Academy of Canada project.



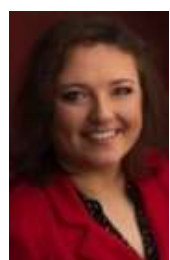
During my PhD studies, I started to engage in EU projects and, along with only twenty-seven people from the whole of Europe I managed to take part in EU-Canada Study Tour, a project organized by the European Commission. I went to Canada for six months. During that time I worked in the Polish consulate, in leadership institutions, we also visited various Canadian governmental institutions – this experience helped me understand Canada from political, cultural and economic points of view. I came back to Poland only to fly to Canada again two or three months later. I felt so great there that it became like a drug to me, I simply needed it. Later I started professional cooperation with Canada, so I was there once every three or four months.

I've always wanted to do something that'd inspire people. In 2013 I started Polish Academy of Canada (...). The idea to connect my project with the Canadian leadership occurred to me a bit later. I remember I was driving and a thought struck me – I felt I wanted to make changes, to give people what I have - that happiness the connection with Canada is giving me. I felt I wanted to give them a place where they would always want to go back to develop, to feel better, where they'd experience the same impulse that made me push changes in my life. So, as I was driving I thought to myself – What is it that you really like doing in life? And the answer was easy – going to Canada!

The very first Polish Academy of Canada trip was inspired by young people. I'd decided to pass on them my own experience from the EU-Canada Study Tour and show them the real Canada by organizing meetings with Canadians – teachers, lecturers, politicians – that they were to participate in. At that moment I made a decision to tighten the cooperation between the EU and Canada, not only in the area they call "leadership of the heart", but in a way to make Poles more familiar with that country, to make Canada more popular, so that more people would go there instead of the States. Of course, not everyone catches that Canadian bug, and that's understandable. During the process of choosing teenagers who will take part in our tours, we're looking for people who will soon have to make big decisions regarding their future and their lives. What I'm teaching them through Polish Academy of Canada is that the leadership, which in Europe is based more on hard skills, consists also of soft skills. That youth must be helpful, must serve its society, must think of others. One of the differences between Europe and Canada is that Canada's been teaching their kids, for over four decades now, how to be good human beings. That's something they have worked out for themselves as a nation and as a society. Those teenagers who come back from our tours, come back with a different approach to themselves and others. What I care about is to create responsible, self-aware, confident, happy young Europeans who will be ready to face the world. (...).

Agatha Rae

A Polish writer from Gdynia, Agatha Rae, made her debut in 2013 with a novel "Oenone". Later on she had her duology "Tangents" published both in the US and in Sweden and later on two novellas "The Belt" and "The Garden" were released. She made her Polish debut with a mystery young adult novel "Psychopomp" which won the grand prix of the 20th Costerina Literary Festival.



In December 2021 her very first non-fiction book was released, "Polki i Polacy w pracy," with a collection of more than 80 interviews with Poles who talk with Agatha about the details of their jobs and professional lives. She's a huge fan of Canada, writes a blog about Canadian popular culture (maplecorner.pl) and loves hockey.

