

People to People Sheboygan--Esslingen Student Exchange

Information for Interested Students and Parents

The Sheboygan Chapter of People to People International has been sponsoring an annual exchange with Sheboygan's sister city, Esslingen Germany since 1970. Since that time over 150 Sheboygan County high school students have participated in this unique program. Many have made life long friendships. Esslingen is a charming city of about 100,000, located in southwestern Germany on the banks of the Neckar River, near Stuttgart.

Applicants are usually sophomores in their second or third year of German. Applications should be returned by December 27, 2007 and the selection of students, which will include a family interview, will be completed the first week of January. Since classes in Esslingen are conducted in German, applicants should be strong students and have good study habits. The German students arrive the following July and stay until mid-December. The American students finish their first semester and leave for Germany in mid- February, returning in late July or early August. Essentially they will miss the second semester of their junior year.

American Families selected for the exchange are expected to:

1. Provide the visiting student with his or her own bed--preferably in a separate room.
2. Spend time with their German student and include him/her in family social activities and show him/her places of interest in and around Wisconsin.
3. Participate in People to People activities and gatherings for exchange families.
4. Provide transportation for the student.
5. Provide parental supervision at all times.
6. Share family meals together.
7. Meet the Esslingen student on arrival at airport and transport to airport for departure.
8. Join the People to People Sheboygan Chapter. (Annual membership: \$30 family)
9. Exchange student and parents support with the People to People Brat Fry by selling tickets before the event and working the day of the event. The Brat Fry is on Sunday March 15, 2009. This fund raising event financially supports the program.

Costs

The cost of the program includes the round trip airfare and the personal expenses of the Sheboygan student while in Germany. Plane ticket costs change from year to year. Personal expenses range from \$600 to \$1000. The expense of having another member in the family for almost six months is offset by the fact that there will be one less family member at home while your student is in Esslingen. It may also be helpful to consider that the money you are now spending on your student here (allowance, music lessons, shampoo, clothes etc.) can be the personal expense money for Germany. If your student is now driving, you can cancel their car insurance for the approximately six months they will be away, as they will not drive in Germany. Each year People to People provide the participants with a stipend from \$ 500 – 600, which is the money raised through the annual fundraising events. The amount varies from year to year, and depends somewhat on the number of students selected. The Sheboygan Area School District provides the Esslingen students with cafeteria meal tickets,

activity tickets, a yearbook and book rental. Arrangements may be slightly different at other area schools. Membership in the YMCA and other community organizations are also sometimes available.

School and Grades

Parents and students often have questions about the exchange's possible effect on graduation requirements and class rank etc. In the Sheboygan Area School District, the GPA is frozen and students are granted three elective credits on a pass/fail basis (no grade). However, in Sheboygan's weighted grade system, other students will take honors courses while your student is gone and his/her rank may change. All graduation requirements must still be met, which usually means taking 2nd semester American History and the missed semester of English in the senior year, along with whatever other classes are needed. Other schools may have different procedures—one should check early on with the high school to prevent later misunderstandings.

Other Questions

You may have other concerns about having an unknown person in your family for a time. If your student is selected to participate, the exchange committee will provide more information and suggestions. However, we know that you might want some of your questions answered before you decide to apply! The advice that has worked for many others is to treat the student as you treat your son/daughter--it is just too difficult to have a guest for five months. An advantage to this program is that your student will be going to live in your German student's home, so the exchange is really between families. The committee uses the application information to make the best matches possible.

The German students will arrive here with at least six years of English, so communication is not a big problem. You may have to speak a little slower at first and explain some slang. (On the other hand, the American students go to Germany with far less experience with the German language, and they will find that it will take them longer to get up to speed.) You will need to help your German student enroll in high school, and help them make good class choices. You can also help them get involved with things that interest them, which may or may not be what your son or daughter is involved in. Very few of our extra-curricular activities are available through the schools in Germany and they are usually happy to try out all sorts of new things here--sports, musical productions, clubs and the like. You will NOT have to entertain them!

You may have many more questions as you try to decide if you want to apply. Please feel free to call and ask questions—we've been in the same place! If you have school related questions, we can try to put you in touch with a parent from your school that has participated recently. (Receiving an application does not obligate you to apply.)

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