



Sister Cities of Jasper, Inc.

Jasper, Indiana · Pfaffenweiler, Baden-Württemberg

September 2023

JHS Teachers Participate in Teacher Exchange

(The following information was taken from "We are Jasper" a publication of the Greater Jasper Consolidated School Corporation. Article was written by Gillian Blessinger)

In July, two Jasper High School Teachers, Brianna Lammers and Daniel Otto, participated in the inaugural teacher exchange program in Pfaffenweiler, Germany.

The Sister Cities Teacher Exchange and Ambassadorship Program is designed to allow teachers from GJCS and surrounding schools to spend two weeks in our sister city of Pfaffenweiler, Germany to experience the schools, the classes, the teachers, and the people that make up the community. Through this opportunity, teachers are able to expand their horizons by considering different methods of instruction, lesson implementation, and discussion. Participants will be able to live with a German family similar to how the students do on their exchange so that they get a real feel of the culture both at home and at school. There is also some time set aside for adventures with the host teachers and families so that the teacher is able to experience other parts of Germany and/or Europe while they stay. This is a fantastic opportunity for GJCS teachers to broaden their horizons and experience another culture.

The official partnership with Pfaffenweiler began in 1985, but the link between our communities can be traced back to the mid-19th century when about a quarter of the entire population of Pfaffenweiler emigrated to the United States and settled in Dubois County. JHS has been participating in a student exchange program with the Faust-Gymnasium ("Gymnasium" in the German designates a university-track high school) in Staufen, a town near Pfaffenweiler, since 1986. High school students from Pfaffenweiler who wish to pursue a university degree attend this school, thus forming the basis for the JHS-Faust exchange program.

One of the directives of our Partnership Commission and Sister Cities of Jasper is to promote ties between the communities. Generations of Jasper students have fostered lifelong friendships with their host families and others they met while in the program. Now, our communities are finding ways to broaden and deepen our connections. Heike Dürr and Bettina Schwentker will be coming to the JHS community in October from the Faust-Gymnasium to participate in the second phase of the teacher exchange. Ms. Dürr teaches French and P. E.; Ms. Schwentker teaches Theology and Ethics.

When asked why she chose to go, Lammers said the following, "I chose to go to Germany because it sounded like a cool opportunity when it was brought up at our staff meeting. I know my familial history dates back to Germany, although not specifically to Pfaffenweiler. One of the main things that I gained was the power of discussion in the classroom. Throughout many of the classes, teachers use discussion to check if the students are understanding the subjects and to work on implementing their knowledge in practical conversation. Tests are not multiple-choice or true/false but they ask the students to truly expand on their knowledge. Another key takeaway is just how welcoming the German community is, especially to those who come on exchange. I really loved getting to meet the teachers, spending time with them both in and outside of school and getting to experience English classes. I also enjoyed getting to learn about the agriculture of their region including wheat, corn, and grapes. I would recommend this experience to any teacher that is able to take advantage of this unique opportunity in the future."

When asked why he chose to participate, Otto said, "I was particularly glad to get the chance to participate because I was able to get to know the area in advance of guiding our next group of exchange students in June 2024. I got to meet several of the teachers and observe classes such as German Literature, German and French language classes, Theology, and of course English language classes. I was able to help in the language classes and answer a lot of questions about the United States, Indiana, and Jasper."

Bettina Schwentker and Heike Dürr, both teachers at Faust Gymnasium in Staufen, Germany, were in Jasper in October as part of the teacher exchange sponsored by Sister Cities of Jasper. They attended classes at JHS, met with teachers, students and administration and observed the differences and similarities in education. While in Jasper, Bettina was hosted by Dave and Sandy Wehr and Heike was hosted by Clara Fromme. Brianna Lammers and Daniel Otto were the JHS teachers who went to Staufen in July.

The following are some photos of Brianna's and Daniel's experiences in Germany.



Learning about local agriculture and viticulture!



Pfaffenweiler, Germany



Mr. Otto and his hosts, Alex and Karin Horst. Otto said, "I cannot thank them enough for their hospitality and the various ways they helped make my stay truly special."



This is the front entrance to the Faust-Gymnasium Staufen. There are about a thousand students. Gymnasium studies begin in 5th grade and end after 12th grade. Other high schools finish after 9th or 10th grade, but they feed into apprenticeships or vocational schools.



Staufen, Germany

The following are some photos of Bettina's and Heike's experiences in Jasper



Heike Dürr and Bettina Schwentker (Left to Right)
Teachers from Faust Gymnasium enjoyed their first JHS school lunch experience.



**Sandy Wehr, Betty Schwentker, Daniel Otto, Dave Wehr, Brianna Lammers, and Heike Dürr (Left to Right)
Enjoying JHS Football Game**



**Heike Dürr and Betty Schwentker (Left to Right)
at the ISSMA State Band Competition to cheer on the JHS Marching Wildcats!!!!**

This information is from the September 2023 & November 2023 Jasper DeutscherVerein newsletters