



Newsletter

Volume 42 Number 2

Spring 2026

Frühlingsgrüße!

Before we embark on the upcoming annual meeting and symposium in Jasper, I would like to summarize the organization's many accomplishments in 2025, which included several notable achievements and celebrations.

Cultural Enhancement Fund

In 2025, IGHS launched the Cultural Enhancement Fund (CEF) to support events and exhibits that preserve and promote German heritage in Indiana. The CEF provides grants of up to \$2,500 per cycle, with application deadlines in April, August, and November.

CEF grants supported projects across the state, including:

- The Indianapolis Liederkrantz German Band's expanded 2026 Spring Konzert, helping secure a larger venue and fund targeted marketing in response to growing participation.
- Fort Wayne's GermanFest FamilienFest, which attracts approximately 4,000 attendees annually. Funding will enhance German Story Time through interactive performances by costumed, German-themed characters.
- Sister Cities of Jasper's visual exhibit highlighting its 40-year partnership and shared stone-carving heritage.
- The Fishers Historical Society's installation of a historical marker commemorating Germantown at Geist Reservoir, established in 1834 as Marion Coun-



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Jasper Deutscher Verein

The Jasper Deutscher Verein proudly celebrated its 45th Anniversary in 2025. The idea for a club came from the Jasper Action Team, a committee of the Jasper Chamber of Commerce, following the first Strassenfest.

The initial purpose of the club was to keep the German Theme alive all year long. The first meetings of the organizational group were held in the fall of 1979. The first official meeting was held in January, 1980 with 320 paid charter members and by April, the number had grown to 372.

The first big event was "Fastnacht" in February, 1980, their first trip to Germany was in 1981, and the first German Food Stand was at the Strassenfest in 1983, and the club was off and running. Proceeds from their events benefited

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APPLY FOR AN IGHS CULTURAL ENHANCEMENT FUND GRANT

The Indiana German Heritage Society supports cultural events and exhibits in Indiana as a key part of our cultural enhancement mission to support and preserve German culture, heritage, and traditions. The IGHS cultural enhancement fund accepts applications for limited funding in line with those goals. See application form below. Next deadline is April 1, 2026. [FUND GRANT](#)

Lawrence Welk By Marcia Gascho

As a kid in the 1950s and 1960s I visited my grandparents in Montana periodically. They let us watch whatever we wanted on TV during the day. However, at night they fol-



lowed a rigid schedule of TV shows which included the Lawrence Welk show! I enjoyed the show as a little kid but later, when I discovered the Beatles, I thought the music was old-fashioned. I also wondered why Welk spoke English with a strange accent.

Years later I found out his family was German and he didn't learn to speak English until he was 21! My grandpa enjoyed the show because he was a music lover and the son of German immigrants.

Lawrence Welk (March 11, 1903 – May 17, 1992) was an American accordionist and bandleader. He hosted The Lawrence Welk Show from 1951 to 1982. The program was known for its light and family-friendly music. The easy listening music featured became known as "champagne music" to his radio, television, and live-performance audiences.

Welk was a native of North Dakota who was born to German speaking immigrants from Russia. ("Black Sea Germans") His father bought him a mail order accordion for \$400. He left school after the 4th grade and worked on the family farm until age 21 to pay it off. He began his career as a bandleader in the 1920s in the Great Plains. He gradually became more known throughout the country due to recordings and radio performances. In the 1940s he and his orchestra were based in Chicago where they had a standing residency at the Trianon Ballroom. Welk relocated to Los Angeles and began hosting his television show, first on local television, before going national when the show was picked up by ABC in 1955. The show remained popular over the years and focused on inoffensive entertainment. It was embraced by conservative audiences as an antidote to the counterculture of the 1960s. Welk vigorously upheld this "clean-cut" reputation and managed

both the on- and off-camera reputations of his show's performers. He controlled the costumes they wore and fired one female singer for showing too much knee.

In 1971, ABC cancelled *The Lawrence Welk Show* as part of a trend away from programs aimed at older or more rural audiences. (In 1971 CBS also had a "Rural Purge" that cancelled shows like "Green Acres" and "Petticoat Junction".) Welk then continued his program in broadcast syndication until he retired in 1982. In the last decade of his life, he managed various business interests and packaged reruns of his show for broadcast on PBS. Classic episodes from the 60s and 70s can still be seen on PBS.

Welk's highest-charting song was an instrumental version of "Calcutta", a German pop song written by Heino Gaze in 1958. It was originally titled "Tivoli Melody" but was renamed Calcutta. It became a hit in 1961 and stayed at the top of the US pop chart for two weeks. At the time "Calcutta" reached #1, Welk, who was 57, became the oldest artist to have a number one pop single in the U.S. Whenever I hear this song today, it fills me with nostalgia for my childhood, watching Lawrence Welk with my grandparents.

It's [St. Benno Time!](#)



St. Benno Fest is one of the longest-running German heritage events in Indianapolis, dating back to at least 1913. As the patron saint of Munich, St. Benno made a lasting impact on the Catholic faith, and his legacy

continues to thrive through fascinating folklore and long-standing traditions.



July 23-25, 2026

Indianapolis German Language School - Past, Present, and Future

By Claudia Grossmann, PhD

Who We Are

We are a traditional Saturday school that brings families together to learn German through culture, language, and hands-on experiences. Our program blends meaningful instruction with fun activities, events, and traditions that help children and adults connect, participate, and immerse themselves in the German-speaking world. Above all, we are a welcoming community where families learn, volunteer, and grow together. We currently offer classes for children from PreK through Middle School, as well as short courses for adult learners.

Our History

The German Saturday School, a language and cultural immersion program, has a very long history. In the wake of the tricentennial of German immigration to North America, German faculty members at IUPUI joined forces with members of the Indiana German Heritage Society (IGHS) to form an enrichment program for young children. They founded the *Indianapolis German School – Indianapolis Deutschschule* which offered its first classes for children from Kindergarten through Middle School in August of 1983. Classes were held on Saturday mornings on the campus of IUPUI, with the School of Liberal Arts and the German Program providing the administrative structure and oversight. Recognizing the mission to serve not only the university community but the community of central Indiana, particularly its large German-American population, the German department initiated this program which was taught concurrently with the thriving ‘Weekend College’ at the time. Thus, adult learners even had the opportunity to take German classes for college credit.



Dr. Claudia Grossmann took over leadership of the program in August of 1985 and continued until the School had to suspend operation during the COVID pandemic. Following Dr. Grossmann’s retirement from IUPUI, the school was dormant for two years until it reopened again in the Fall of 2023. It now operates as an independent 501c3, with Lucy Wright as president and several IGHS members serving as board members. It is financially supported by IGHS and parents’ tuition. The new name is *Indianapolis German Language School*. Classes currently meet on the campus of the International School of Indiana. The school continues this tradition with a strong volunteer board, new and returning teachers, and classes for both children and adults.

Our Teachers

Our teachers are native or bilingual German speakers with a deep commitment to share their cultural heritage and language expertise with young students. Adult classes were recently also added. Curricular oversight is provided by Angelika Becker, president of the American Association of Teachers of German. Not only was she one of the first teachers of the School, she also returned to the newly founded program as an instructor recently.

Our Curriculum and Rationale

Research has proven that achieving proficiency in another language requires several years of study and practice and should start as young as possible. However, German language instruction in Indiana is generally not offered until high school. Indiana has a large population with German ancestry. The state also has strong economic ties to Germany and other German-speaking countries. Our curriculum is guided by the standards and principles of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), specifically the action-oriented approach which is

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Dear Friends and Families of the German-speaking community,

Since 1983, the German Saturday School program has been a cornerstone of cultural and language education in Indianapolis. The IGLS Board of Directors wants to ensure that the language classes truly meet the needs of families in the area.

Whether you are a current family or just considering German education for your children, your feedback is vital. We are conducting a brief feasibility study to help us plan for upcoming semesters and ensure the school remains a sustainable, high-quality resource for years to come. None of this would be possible without the support of IGHS!

Please take time to share your thoughts here—
[German Saturday School Interest Survey](#) Vielen Dank!



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the Strassenfest and students learning the German language at Jasper High School. And this remains the same today.

The Jasper Deutscher Verein is responsible for the Maypole at 6th and Newton Streets which was dedicated in 1985 and was responsible for the new mural at the same location in 2016.

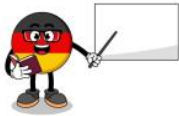
Through the years, the Jasper Deutscher Verein has supported many projects in the area such as participating in many parades and festivals spreading the Jasper German heritage, has taken several trips through the US and Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, continues to have a food booth and pastry booth at the Strassenfest, sponsors a scholarship program for area students learning the German language, established the Jasper Deutscher Verein (German Club) German Heritage Endowment at the Dubois County Community Foundation, introduced the Glockenspiel at the 2022 Strassenfest, established a Facebook page, and in 2025, redesigned the website, www.jaspergermanclub.org.



Auf Deutsch

Eins, zwei, drei, vier, fuenf, sechs, sieben,
wo ist denn mein Schatz geblieben?

Ist nich hier, ist nicht da,
ist wohl in Amerika!



In English

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
what happened to my sweetheart?

He isn't here, he isn't there,
he might well be in America!

The first president was Dan Wehr, and he and his wife, Linda, remain club members in 2026; the club is currently presided over by Laura Grammer. Also, the Jasper Deutscher Verein and Patti Goepfrich were named the Co-Recipients of the 2024 Hoosier German-American of the Year by the Indiana German Heritage Society.



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rooted in a constructivist paradigm. This approach takes task-based learning to a level where the class and the outside world are integrated in genuine communicative practices. Our students learn by doing. Cultural explorations and practices are an important part of the curriculum.

IGLS is a member school of the German Language School Conference, the umbrella organization which supports Saturday School across the country. See <https://germanschools.org/>

Our Future

The School aims to expand its course offerings in the future, in order to better address the needs of students at different age levels and skill levels. We are also working towards creating a dedicated director's position starting with the new school year. We welcome financial contributions of any kind to our program to help us achieve these goals.

It Takes a Village!

Our school benefits from the involvement of parents and other volunteers, both in the classroom and in organizing cultural heritage events, such as Oktoberfest,



St. Martin's Day and St. Nikolaus

Day in the Fall and Fasching/Karneval and Fruehlingsfest in the Spring.

If you are interested in volunteering or teaching, please contact us to find out how you can help. You can find us on Facebook and on the IGHS website.

Please visit www.ighs.org for more information, to register, or to donate.

In the name of the entire IGLS Board: "VIELEN DANK!"

Indiana German Heritage Society Newsletter

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ty's oldest township.



Education

2025 Essay Contest

Indiana college and high school students participated in the essay contest, themed "Exchange Programs: Connecting German-Speaking and Hoosier Communities."

Winners:

College Division: "Bridging Classrooms Across Continents: The Impact of GAPP on German Language Education" — **Kerri J. Easton**, Purdue University

High School Division: **Marley Hamm**, Terre Haute North Vigo High School

Study Abroad Scholarships

In summer 2025, IGHS awarded six \$6,000 scholarships for a five-week immersive study program in Austria. Students attended German language and Austrian culture courses, lived with host families, and participated in excursions in the Graz region. The program, administered by Indiana University, required participants to speak only German except in emergencies.

Scholarship recipients:

- **Katherine Rogers**, Fishers High School
- **Noah Kiang** and **Eli Jackson**, Bloomington North High School
- **Aidan Glass** and **John Loesch**, Marian High School (Mishawaka)
- **Graham Kappock**, West Lafayette High School

Unfortunately, the IUHPFL program is currently on hiatus.

Indianapolis German Language School

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Essay Contest Results Wendy Westphal, PhD

High School Essay Contest Winner

Jasper and Pfaffenweiler By: Marley Hamm

This year, **thirty-two students from high schools across Indiana** submitted essays on the topic of **“Exchange Programs: Connecting German-speaking and Hoosier Communities.”** The committee was impressed by the high quality of all of the research and writing, making the selection process a difficult one for the committee members.

For the school with the most essay contest submissions, IGHS sponsors monetary awards to pay for a **German-themed class party. The award (\$200) goes to Frau Cantin and the German program at Terre Haute North Vigo HS!**

The IGHS high school essay contest winner is **Marley Hamm of Terre Haute North Vigo High School** with her essay on **the Jasper & Pfaffenweiler exchange.** Ms Hamm’s essay is published in this IGHS newsletter and she will receive a \$300 award. *Gratulation!* In addition, we commend our second award recipients (tie): **Ellen Rozmaryn** and **Allison Washburn**, both of Carmel High School, our third place recipients (tie): **Abiola Olutayo of Fishers HS** and **Michelle Park** and 6 runners-up. In addition to the monetary awards, award recipients will receive a complimentary annual IGHS membership, so they may stay informed about German events in Indiana and continue to learn about the impact of German-Americans in Indiana and the Midwest.

The award recipient for the IGHS College Essay Contest is **Kerri Easton, a student at Purdue University** who wrote about the **German-American Partnership Program (GAPP).**



**Celebrate Your
German Heritage!
Join the Indiana German
Heritage Society &
Belong Today!**

Indiana has strong ties to Germany, with many partnerships or sister cities between the two. Most notably, there are ties between Indianapolis and Cologne, Carmel and Seiffen, and Columbus and Löhne. There is also a partnership between Jasper and Pfaffenweiler, which has a rich history relating to heritages. Between the shared cultural events and the student exchanges, the two cities are strongly connected, and have been since the 1980s. They both cherish, celebrate, and appreciate their bond to each other.

During the 1800s, it was very common for Germans to immigrate to the United States of America. Many of them were escaping some sort of hardship, whether that came from poverty or religion, and wanted to build a better life. America was ample for this, due to the fact that there was cheap and open land readily available. Most of this was found in the Midwest, which is why many Germans chose to settle in these parts. The town of Pfaffenweiler was experiencing some hard times during the 1840s. The bad weather conditions had ruined their crops, which caused a potato famine and economic troubles. The article, *Sister Cities of Jasper, Inc.*, mentions, “Father Joseph Kundek, who at that time was establishing St. Joseph's parish in the newly platted Jasper, knew the people of the Pfaffenweiler area -- predominantly Catholic -- were having difficulties... Father Kundek invited residents of the poor German town to join his new parish (Sister Cities of Jasper, Inc).” So, the Germans came; 85 of them to be exact. They left on March 24, 1847, and it took 52 days to sail to America. They would finally reach Jasper on June 18, 1847, and quickly began to settle in and spread their heritage.

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138 years after the Pfaffenweiler contact in Jasper was formed, the two cities would become forever coupled. It all started in the 80s, when the partnership was first suggested. The article, *Sister City- Pfaffenweiler, Germany*, says, “In the early 1980s, Sabine Jordan, Humanist-in-Residence for Jasper, suggested that Pfaffenweiler could become an ideal partner since many settlers in Jasper and the surrounding communities were immigrants from Pfaffenweiler and neighboring villages (City of Jasper, Indiana).” She would spark the idea of sisterhood, and the flame would never go out. A timeline, published via a website by the Jasper German Club, shows that 39 people from Jasper visited Pfaffenweiler in 1984 to inquire about forming a partnership (Jasper German Club). With them, they took a phone book and discovered that Pfaffenweiler had many similar last names. An article by the Jasper Chamber of Commerce notes, “Today’s local family names such as Bachman, Barth, Bauer, Beck, Conrad, Cramer, Daschle, Dick, Dilger, Eckert, Eckert, Fry, Fuhrman, Gutgsell and others can also be found in the phone books at Pfaffenweiler (Jasper Chamber of Commerce).” In May of 1985, the paperwork would be signed, and the sisterhood would become official.

Since their coupling, the cities have had wonderful educational and cultural ties. Every year, both cities present opportunities to students to experience each other’s cultures. Through their exchange program, students can spend 4 weeks in the other city with a host family, which really promotes the sharing of culture. One website adds, “This program has positively impacted our communities and has strengthened the bond between the Sister Cities. Many of our students and host families consider each other family and continue to keep in touch (Sister Cities of Jasper, Inc).” Besides this, they also have annual community events to keep each other’s culture thriving. In Jasper, they celebrate the sisterhood every five years by throwing a party or an event. They invite the community members in both Jasper and Pfaffenweiler to attend. Another article adds, “Among the visitors were members of various Pfaffenweiler community bands who combined their talents to perform on several occasions during their

visit. Those appearances included the Strassenfest Opening Ceremony, a German Mass at St. Joseph’s Church, the Strassenfest Parade, and the 30th Anniversary party of the Sister City Partnership (City of Jasper, Indiana).” The last celebration was in 2025, and it was the 40th anniversary of the partnership. Another example of shared cultural events would be the German Wine Queen. A piece published by the International Center says, “Each wine queen must be an expert in oenology and winemaking technology, as well as proficiency in foreign languages and knowledge of the export business...the Wine Queen has many duties, which include serving as the ambassador for Germany’s wines domestically and abroad (International Center).” The 74th and 72nd Wine Queens actually visited Jasper, Indiana, in the winter. They met with the Indiana-Germany Business Council for Cultural exchange and had a wine tasting. There’s no better way to spread culture than through food and drink.

Through the sisterhood and partnership of these two cities, anyone can see that it’s possible to make a strong connection overseas. What began as a few people immigrating has grown into an everlasting bond that has been built on heritage and respect. Through student exchange programs, visits, and community events, both cities continue to honor each other and keep their culture alive. The sisterhood is a great reminder that good international relationships rely on friendships and a strong community that is willing to keep history alive for those to relive in the future.

Frühlingsfest

Our 10th Annual Frühlingsfest: Indy’s Spring Festival Weekend is Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, April 30-May 2.



Frühlingsfests are a unique experience of German culture, and were brought to Indiana by our immigrant ancestors in the mid/late 1800s. They were very common in Indiana until WW1.

College Essay Contest Winner:

Bridging Classrooms

Across Continents:

The Impact of GAPP on

German Language Education

Kerri Easton - Purdue University

If one were to approach a current German teacher and asked how they perceive the future of German education, their response would likely be one of concern. German language education is not currently a top area of study within university education departments, particularly in Indiana. World language teaching programs are so limited that it has become difficult to fill open world language teaching positions when they arise. As a result, many world language programs—especially German—have been discontinued at high schools and middle schools across the United States including Indiana. Additionally, recent changes to Indiana’s world language requirements have contributed to a decline in student interest, as taking a world language is no longer necessary to fulfill graduation requirements.

Despite these challenges, there have been a variety of efforts to maintain and strengthen opportunities for learning German. One such initiative is the German American Partnership Program (GAPP), which continues to promote cultural exchange and keep interest in the language alive.

A History of GAPP

The German American Partnership Program (GAPP) began in 1972 at the Goethe-Institut in Boston, Massachusetts (Goethe-Institut, 2023). As part of Germany’s foreign cultural and educational policy, the program was created with the mission of bringing together American and German students. For the first ten years, GAPP operated independently; however, as the number of participating schools and partnerships grew, it became increasingly difficult to manage.

Fortunately, the German State Department intervened.

In 1982, the Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (PAD)—an organization representing the federal states of Germany—became involved to help strengthen international relations (Goethe-Institut, 2025). Since PAD was already associated with Germany’s Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, its involvement helped the German government and its officials gain a clearer understanding of GAPP’s work in the United States. Many officials recognized the program’s potential and sought ways to provide additional support. Eventually, PAD assumed responsibility for organizing the exchanges, relieving GAPP of much of its administrative burden.

By 1989, relations between the United States and Eastern Germany began to improve following the decline of Soviet control in the region. Previously, exchange students had faced significant challenges when attempting to enter Eastern Germany and surrounding areas. Consequently, this political shift opened many new opportunities for exploration and connection (Goethe-Institut, 2025). As tensions continued to ease after the reunification of Germany, the GAPP program began reaching record numbers of participants throughout the 1990s (Goethe-Institut, 2024). By this time, GAPP had connected more than ten thousand students and continued to expand its reach each year (Goethe Institut, 2023).

Of course, no discussion of the program would be complete without considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the widespread availability of digital technology, GAPP did not have to look far for ways to adapt. As much of society was confined to their homes during the pandemic, GAPP launched the German American Virtual Exchange (GAVE) as an extension of its original program (Goethe-Institut, 2023). This innovation allowed schools to continue participating in the exchange despite global restrictions with the adoption of a virtual format. Students and teachers were still able to build meaningful relationships with their international partners from home free of cost. GAVE also introduced specialized content-area

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collaborations, such as a STEM-focused workshop on data breaches and personal data protection (Goethe-Institut, 2023).

GAPP in 2025

The federal Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs continues to support the program stating, “GAPP exchanges are an important part of citizen diplomacy efforts of the United States” (“Final Programs,” 2019). The Department of State went as far as to recognize Ms. Elsa Nicolovius with the annual Citizen Diplomacy Award, recognizing her efforts to strengthen relations between the United States and Germany (“2019 Citizen Diplomacy,” 2019).

The GAPP program is thriving not only at the federal level today but also locally. Amanda Beck, a German teacher at William Henry Harrison High School in West Lafayette, Indiana, has participated in the program for a large portion of her teaching career. The GAPP program has had a significant impact on her both professionally and personally:

“GAPP has been one of my most rewarding personal and professional experiences. I now have a whole circle of friends who have become family over the years, and I love that our families have connected and bonded as well. Because my colleagues and I work together in both German and English, my language and intercultural skills have grown, as I am communicating with others about all sorts of topics both during the exchange and in between cycles” (interview, October 2025).

Through the program, Amanda’s students develop a greater appreciation for the world around them, noting that the GAPP exchange “gives a good look into how other people live their lives” and even joking that the



“Fanta is better” in Germany (interview, October 2025).

Spending time abroad has also deepened one Harrison student’s understanding of countries neighboring Germany, as he had the opportunity to live with a host family that included

Ukrainian refugees. He reflected, “It was interesting to learn a little bit about the war and how it was affecting people inside of Ukraine” (interview, October 2025).

Harrison students were excited to reconnect with the German GAPP students this September when they spent a week and a half attending classes with Harrison students in West Lafayette. During the visit, they took a field trip to the Menno-Hof Museum in Shipshewana, Indiana, where they learned about Amish and Mennonite culture—an experience that was new not only for the German visitors but also for some Tippecanoe County students, as central Indiana has a smaller Amish population compared with northern Indiana (personal observation, September 2025). The visit provided a fun and engaging learning opportunity for all participants. Students also spent a day exploring Indianapolis with their German peers and enjoyed informal cultural exchange throughout the week in their Indiana homes, fostering friendship and cross-cultural understanding.

The German American Partnership Program remains a strong effort to preserve the educational value of world language and cultural exchanges in the twenty-first century. The program is truly unique, as no other high school exchange currently offers all the opportunities included in

GAPP—such as the chance for both school groups to attend each other’s classes overseas (personal communication, October 2025). Ultimately, the GAPP program provides a powerful example of what can be achieved in cultural awareness and international relations when two countries are brought together through education and the building of friendships.



Proclamation

WHEREAS, the mission of the Indiana German Heritage Society is to understand, promote, and celebrate the contributions of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants to the multi-cultural heritage of the state and nation; and

WHEREAS, we are gathered here at the Dubois County Museum in Jasper, Indiana and hosted by the Jasper Deutscher Verein who has just celebrated their 45th Anniversary and Sister Cities of Jasper who has just celebrated their 40th Anniversary of their Partnership with Pfaffenweiler, Germany; and

WHEREAS, we are celebrating our German heritage and ancestry and learning more about our German culture during our annual Symposium; and

WHEREAS, such a gathering is important for all of our communities and our citizens, as we learn from each other and celebrate our proud German heritage together. Prost!!

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dean Vonderheide, Mayor of the City of Jasper, do hereby proclaim March 14, 2026 as

German Heritage Day



I have set my hand and cause the seal of my office of the Mayor to be affixed this 26th day of January, 2026

Dean Vonderheide
Dean Vonderheide, Mayor

IGHS ANNUAL MEETING AND SYMPOSIUM

JASPER, INDIANA

DATE: MARCH 14 & 15



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Celebrating 42 Years



1984 - 2026



**Today is a good time
to renew your
[IGHS membership](#)**

High School Essay — 2nd Place

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Program

By Ellen Rozmaryn

Snow falls delicately onto the ground as German carols can be heard all around. The smell of sweet Belgian waffles, crispy Kartoffelspieß, and fresh Döner immerse the senses. The sky is lit with the glow of Moravian stars and the magic of the Christmas season can be felt by all. The Carmel Christkindlmarkt is the proud recipient of countless awards and is recognized as one of the greatest German Christkindlmarkts in the nation. What sets this market apart from all other German festivities is truly its authenticity; the market is committed to accurately replicating the sights, sounds, and tastes of a real Christkindlmarkt in Germany. In fact, the Carmel Christkindlmarkt has been named the USA Today Best Holiday Market for 5 years, an Indianapolis Best Things award winner, and many more accolades honoring its prestige and accurate recreation of the season's festivities.

A market and cultural representation as successful as this begs the question: how did it start and how did the city of Carmel manage to build it so effectively from the ground up? The answer lies unsuspectingly in a program that has impacted the lives of over 25,000 young people since its inception more than 40 years ago - the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange.

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange is an agreement between the United States and German governments that was established in 1983. The program was created amidst the Cold War with the goal of positive cultural exchange experiences and strengthened friendship between both nations. The Youth Exchange program is unique to other cultural immersion programs available to students due to its nature as a "homestay" experience and no requirement of prior German language experience. This makes application to the program, although competitive, accessible to all students interested in the opportunity. Participants such as former Carmel Christkindlmarkt President and

CEO Maria Rosenfeld are placed within a family that has volunteered to host students in their exchange country, providing a realistic live-in experience of German life.

Today, the program offers three unique opportunities with a scholarship for high school students, vocational students, and young professionals. High school students between the ages of 15 and 18 can participate in a year long study abroad in which they maintain academic rigor equivalent to their home high school, keeping on track to earn their diploma. For individuals that want to participate but have already graduated high school, the vocational studies program provides a unique career exploration experience unparalleled to alternatives in an individual's native country. The vocational studies program is open to students aged 18 or 19 and can cover fields of interest such as architecture, education, culinary arts, engineering, healthcare, business, and more. Many applicants to this specific category of the program treat it as a gap year of exploration prior to entering college. This exploration takes place through a combination of volunteering, internships, and vocational training. Finally, young professionals aged 18-24 years old can work and study in Germany through a multi-step experience that includes two months of language training, a semester of university study, and a practical work experience.

Although there are many different ways for young adults to take advantage of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, all opportunities are guided by the same principles. While immersed in their time abroad, participants will explore society, history, and politics through a perspective that is authentic to everyday life in that country. Similar to many other German exchange programs, the Youth Exchange emphasizes the importance of students bringing a level of understanding and awareness back to their community to further strengthen the international relationship between the two countries. As previously mentioned, unique to the Youth Exchange, participants are not

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Let's Welcome Our Upcoming New IGHS Board of Directors

Chad Jones is honored to serve on the board



of the Indiana German Heritage Society, bringing a strong personal and academic connection to German language and culture. He and his wife, Kate, are graduates of the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts German program (Indianapolis), where they met through IUPUI's German Club and the Deutsche Theater-spielen undergraduate course. Both are conversationally fluent in German and spent extended time in Germany in their youth, experiences that shaped their appreciation for German-speaking heritage. Chad lives in Danville, Indiana with Kate and their two sons, Owen (6) and Oliver (3), and is proud to support IGHS's mission to preserve and celebrate German culture in Indiana.

Professionally, Chad brings more than 15 years of executive leadership experience to the Board. He has spent most of his career with a private equity-backed e-commerce and digital brand services company, serving as a brand development leader, operations executive, and most recently Interim President, where he led key strategic initiatives and an operational merger. He brings a practical combination of P&L ownership, financial discipline, and hands-on execution, and is currently pursuing his MBA through the Kelley School of Business.

Angelika Becker, "2025 Hoosier German-American of the Year", and teacher of all levels of German at the middle and high school level, currently



teaches at the Indianapolis German Language School. She earned her BA from Indiana University and her MA in Curriculum and Instruction with Focus on German Language Pedagogy through the GOLDEN Program at UNL. She served as president of the

AATG Board for the last 2 years in addition to her work as an Advanced Placement Lead Consultant. She is an active presenter and gives workshops across the US. She is the treasurer of the Indiana AATG chapter and the administrator for the AATG Educator Forum, an active Facebook group for German educators of all levels.

Her other volunteer activities include involvement with the Carmel Seiffen Sister City group as the secretary and her neighborhood association as the vice-president. She is also a board member of the Indianapolis German Language School, in addition to teaching elementary students on Saturday morning.

Angelika resides in Indianapolis with her husband Ted and her cat Gus. In her free time, she loves to knit and crochet and spending time with her grandsons.

Dr. Marc Rathmann, a native of Essen, Germany, has been teaching German language and culture on the college level since 2000.



He is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Languages and Cultures at Purdue University in West Lafayette. He received his undergraduate degree in International Business and American Studies from the University of Passau in Germany and his Ph.D. in German Studies from Michigan State University.

Prior to teaching at Purdue, he was a Lecturer in German at the University of Texas at Austin for three years. During that time, he also spent a summer in Würzburg as the Resident Director of the UT Würzburg Study Abroad program. Marc usually teaches German courses on the advanced language level including Business German and German for Science and Engineering. Marc is also an instructor of adult German language at the Indianapolis German Language School (IGLS) where his son is also a student.

(Continued from page 5)

The German Saturday School, offered in collaboration with Indiana University Indianapolis, concluded a successful semester and transitioned into an independent 501(c)(3) organization, the Indianapolis German Language School, to support continued growth.

Preservation

St. Mary Catholic Church

St. Mary Catholic Church in downtown Indianapolis reinstated its original German name, *Sankt Marienkirche*, fulfilling a long-held vision of former IGHS President Jim Kienle.

Telegraph & Tribune Marker

The historic Telegraph and Tribune marker, missing since 2017, was recovered and repaired and was subsequently relocated to a safer site along the cultural trail just south of Lugar plaza.

2025 Hoosier German-American of the Year:

Angelika Becker

Angelika serves as president of the American Association of Teachers of German and was named its 2017 Outstanding German Educator. Her leadership, AP training, and mentorship have strengthened German programs across Indiana and the nation.

A native of Germany and longtime Carmel High School educator, Becker has built exemplary German programs while actively promoting German culture through the Carmel Christkindlmarkt and the Carmel Seiffen Sister City Committee, fostering lasting German-American connections.

Programs and Public Engagement

IGHS participated in GermanFest, the Indy International Festival, and the Carmel and Athenaeum Christkindlmarkts, including special Sankt Nikolaus celebrations.

Financial Strength and Organizational Growth

IGHS remains financially strong and well positioned for the future. Proceeds from the Carmel Christkindlmarkt generated positive revenue, with 75% supporting the Cultural Enhancement Fund. The

organization enters 2026 ahead of budget, maintaining stable operating and reserve accounts, and continues to invest in education, preservation, and outreach.

Membership growth remained steady, with 20 new memberships added early in the year and strong renewal rates. Active board and committee engagement ensured effective governance and long-term planning.

Looking Ahead

With solid finances, expanding educational initiatives, and continued preservation efforts, IGHS is well positioned to increase statewide visibility and deliver lasting value to members and communities. IGHS remains committed to preserving, promoting, and advancing German heritage in Indiana.

I look forward to our new Directors joining the IGHS Board, as they will bring fresh vision and leadership. I would also like to personally thank our past Directors—Maria Rosenfield, Dr. Travis Jerde, and Lucy Wright—who are moving on to new endeavors but remain steadfast in their commitment to promoting and perpetuating German culture.

Danke sehr to our members, supporters, and friends for your generous support.

I hope to see you at the Annual Meeting and Symposium on March 14 and 15., 2026 We have prepared a very interesting program and look forward to visiting Jasper and the Jasper Deutscher Verein. Please join us as this is our first time returning since 2008. For more details about the program, please visit ighs.org.

Beste Grüße,

Brian Griesemer
IGHS President



(Continued from page 11)

required to speak German prior to their exchange because they receive intensive German language training upon arrival to kickstart their time abroad.

For Maria Rosenfeld, the mastermind and curator behind what is now a nationally recognized German Christkindlmarkt, the experience was both academically and personally fulfilling. Rosenfeld participated in the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange program between 2005 and 2006 and quickly fell in love with German Christmas traditions. Although she began her visit in the summer of 2005, a postcard depicting the traditional Christmas pyramid caught her eye and drew her into a fascination with the culture and magic of this tradition. By developing the first German Christmas market in Carmel, Indiana, Rosenfeld was able to use her exchange not only to experience German culture, but masterfully bring it directly back to a state with deep roots in German ancestry. Additionally, Rosenfeld was recently appointed as the first American board member to the European Excellent Christmas Market Association Board, highlighting the impact of this program on her cultural intelligence and remarkable achievements.

Rosenfeld is not the only individual whose career path was deeply influenced by the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange. For example, because of the program, Mark Tomkins, a 1990-91 participant, pivoted from his goals of becoming a mathematician to instead establish a career presiding over the German-American Chamber of Commerce Midwest chapter. Marlene Albershardt, a participant in 1987-1988, is now a partner of the Carmel Christkindlmarkt. Albershardt's experience was unique because of political unrest during the time period of her exchange in Germany. However, her experience further emphasizes the importance of programs such as this and expanded her perception of freedom and awareness of other nations.

Each year, the Carmel Christkindlmarkt is keeping German culture alive and accessible to Americans from across the country, and it all stemmed from one

exchange program. Exchanges such as these are essential to sustaining intercultural vibrancy within communities and supporting international relationships. The lives of the youth that have participated in these programs are changed forever, and the impact that they are able to bring back to their communities is limitless. Whether it be through the GAPP exchange, sister city partnerships, study abroad programs, or the fantastic Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, it is undeniable that these programs are continuing to enrich Indiana's German cultural and linguistic experiences and do not plan to stop any time soon.

Staatskongress Update

Kim Warner

Saturday, February 7 was a wonderful German day! Over 270 Indiana middle and high school



students attended the Indiana Association of Students of German's Staatskongress at Hamilton Southeastern High

School. They attended culture sessions, competed in academics, enjoyed a German lunch, talked



German to our Bergwanderer who gave them Sprechgeld that students spent in our Jahrmarkt. Thanks to your contributions, our Jahrmarkt had a GREAT selection. Some students sought out more Bergwanderer to speak even more German so they would be able to "shop" for more items! Our day always ends

with a dance, and again this year the Jay Fox Band from Northern Indiana delivered. Students waltzed, polkaed, played cow bells, and had a wonderful time being with other teens who speak German. Thanks so much for your continued support of our annual convention.

After a very cold and snowy winter, there finally are signs that spring is on the way! This feeling of hope and yearning for the return of life and light is masterfully expressed in the below poems by Eduard Moerike and Wolfgang von Goethe.

Eduard Moerike was a German Lutheran pastor and poet of the Romantic Period, who lived from 1804 – 1875. In 1829, he wrote the poem **Er Ist's**, meaning He (der Fruehling) is on the way!

Auf Deutsch

Fruehling laesst sein blaues Band
wieder flattern durch die Luefte.
Suesse, wohlbekannte Duefte
streifen ahnungsvoll das Land.
Veilchen traeuemen schon,
Wollen balde kommen.
Horch, von fern ein leiser Harfenton:
Fruehling, ja du bist's,
Dich hab' ich vernommen



In English

Spring is unfurling his blue ribbon
And letting it again flutter in the air
Sweet, well-known aromas
Are wafting ominously through the lands.
Violets are already dreaming
Want to come soon.
Listen, there from afar
A faint tone of the harp:
Spring – YES, it is you
And I have heard you!

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) included the poem **Osterspaziergang** in his epic work Faust. Most Germans know just the first few lines by heart, which are reprinted and translated be-

Osterspaziergang

Vom Eise befreit sind Strom und Baeche
Durch des Fruehlings holden, belebenden Blick
Im Tale gruenet Hoffnungsglueck.
Der Winter, in seiner Schwaeche,
Zog sich in rauhe Berge zurueck.
Von dort sendet er, fliehend, nur
Ohnmaechtige Schauer koernigen Eises
In Streifen ueber die gruenende Flur.
Aber die Sonne duldet kein Weisses.
Ueberall regt sich Bildung und Streben,
Alles will sich mit Farbe beleben.
Doch an Blumen fehlt's im Revier,
Sie nimmt geputzte Menschen dafuer.

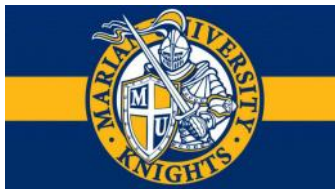
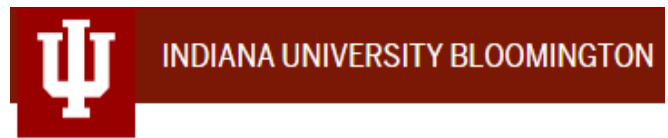


Easter Walk

Set free from ice and snow
Are the stream and the brooks
By the dear and invigorating glance of spring,
The valley is turning green in a sign of hope and
happiness.
Winter, in his weakness,
Retreated into the mountain wilderness
From where he is throwing, while fleeing,
Inconsequential showers of icy sleet
In bands onto the greening flora.
But the sun doesn't tolerate anything white.
Everywhere there is stirring of growth and life
Everything is trying to come alive in color.
But since the flowers are still missing,
Well-dressed people are serving as substitutes.



Indiana Universities and Colleges offering majors or minors in German!



NCSA Literatur

The publishing arm of the Indiana German Heritage Society, the Max Kade Center for German-American Studies at IUPUI, and the Irvington Historical Society

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Search Amazon BOOKS for “NCSA Literatur”

Indiana German Heritage Society Mission:

The mission of the IGHS is to understand, promote, and celebrate the contributions of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants to the multi-cultural heritage of the state and the nation.

We are guided by a commitment to learn and an obligation to share our knowledge with accuracy, integrity, and respect for all heritages.

Indiana German Heritage Society Vision:

The vision of the Indiana German Heritage Society is to be the catalyst for the preservation and celebration of the state’s German-American heritage, and to support groups and communities in activities that coincide with our mission.





Indiana German Heritage Society

Hoosier German - American Of The Year

Nominations Sought for 2026 Hoosier German-American of the Year

Each fall, the IGHS recognizes an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to the cultural and historical heritage of the Hoosier German-American community. This individual or group must have been active in the German-American Community of their area for a minimum of 10 years.

Nominations are now being accepted from the entire IGHS membership for The Hoosier German-American of the Year for 2026.

Please send us the name of the individual or group you would like to nominate for this prestigious award. Be sure to include an explanation of why you believe that this individual or group should be chosen to receive this award. Please send your name, address, telephone number, and email address along with your nomination to:

IGHS Awards Committee
401 E. Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
or email to: ighsmembership@gmail.com
Nominations are due by August 1

The award will be presented at the German-American Day presentation held in October at the Athenaeum German Fest, with proclamations by the Governor and the Mayor. The recipient will receive a plaque and the recipient's name will be permanently displayed at the Deutsche Haus/Athenaeum.

For information pertaining to the requirements for Annual Hoosier-German American Award please go to [LINK](#)



PAST RECIPIENTS OF THE IGHS HOOSIER GERMAN-AMERICAN AWARD:

- 2007 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
- 2008 Dr. Carl Sputh
- 2009 Dr. Eberhard Reichmann
- 2010 Reverend Arthur Schwenk
- 2011 Professor Ron Warner
- 2012 Hon. Senator Richard Lugar
- 2013 Dr. Ruth Reichmann
- 2014 Jürgen Jungbauer
- 2015 Othmar Grueninger
- 2016 Dr. Giles Hoyt
- 2017 Matthias Hilger
- 2018 Sven Schumacher
- 2019 William Selm
- 2020 Friends of Wyneken, Inc.
- 2021 Dr. Claudia Grossmann
- 2022 Indianapolis Liederkrantz
- 2023 Gerhard Klemm
- 2024 Patricia Goepfrich and
Jasper Deutscher Verein
- 2025 Angelika Becker





Indiana German Heritage Society

Membership Form

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Please enter / renew my membership:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit \$50.00 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time Student \$5.00
(with teacher's signature) | <input type="checkbox"/> Library Rate \$15.00 | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> German Teacher \$5.00 | |

Second person for family membership

Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ - _____

Country: _____ Phone: (____) _____ - _____

I would like to receive the IGHS Newsletter: E-Mail US Mail

Specific Interests:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Exchanges /
Sister Cities | <input type="checkbox"/> General | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> German Language Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Materials |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Traditions & Folklore |

Knowledge of German Language: None Some Fluent

Knowledge of Old German Script (Sütterlin): None Some Good

I am willing to help with activities (Circle one): Yes No

I wish to make an additional tax-deductible donation of \$ _____.

This is a gift membership. Name of person providing gift membership:

Please make checks payable to: **Indiana German Heritage Society**. Send your membership form and payment to Indiana German Heritage Society, Membership Chair, 401 East Michigan Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

To join or renew online, go to IGHS.org!





INDIANA GERMAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE CALENDAR STAMMTISCH AND PROGRAMS



Wednesday, 11 March: The German Roots of St. Francis Hospital presented by Sister Marlene Shapley, OSF. **Location:** Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Wednesday, 8 April: An Interview with a German Immigrant featuring Inge Davies.
Location: Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Wednesday, 13 May: The Duties of an Honorary German Consul presented by the Indiana German Honorable Honorary Consul Sven Schumacher. **Location:** Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Wednesday, 10 June: Familie Gutwein, Inc. presented by Harvey Gutwein, CEO - Gutwein Popcorn.
Location: Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Wednesday 12, August: Concert of The Indianapolis Liederkrantz German Band at German Park led by Kapellmeister Patrick Rutledge. **Location:** German Park - 8602 South Meridian St.; Indianapolis, IN

Wednesday 9, September: Scholarship Students presented by Frau Dr. Prof. Claudia Grossmann.
Location: Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Wednesday 14, October: Kurt Vonnegut: Indianapolis and Dresden presented by William L. Selm.
Location: Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Wednesday 11, November : An Ami with the Bundeswehr presented by Daniel Haynes.
Location: Wilkie Room, Athenaeum (Das Deutsche Haus)

Future STAMMTISCH and PROGRAMMING will be posted on [ighs.org](https://www.ighs.org) and in the next newsletter

All Stammtisch programs are presented in English, are free of charge, and are open to everyone. The programs begin at 7:30 PM. Most programs are offered both in person or via Zoom. (see [ighs.org](https://www.ighs.org))

Registration is required for all Zoom events. Use the links in sent emails to register in advance for each program. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*Did You Miss One of Our
Stammtisch Presentations?
Or Do You Just Want
to Hear One Again?
Now you can!
[CLICK HERE](#)*



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Dankeschön

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2026 Baden Wine Queen/Badische Weinkönigin—Tina Glur
 and the Sister Cities of Jasper



Annual Meeting and Symposium



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