

GLOBAL & HUMANE STUDIES

GERMAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE 2024

JUNE 6-15, 2024

Hello and thank you for your interest in the **German Cultural Exchange 2024!** All of this information can be found on the Global Studies Website which you can access through the resource board or at this link: <https://sites.google.com/marist.com/global-studies/home>

It is time to start planning for the 2024 exchange program with Maristen Gymnasium Fürstenzell, our sister school in Fürstenzell, Germany. This exchange has existed for almost five decades and continues to be a significant link between two vibrant communities and cultures. We are excited that you are considering participating in this exchange as the program offers great rewards not available in other travel opportunities.

Frequently asked questions about the exchange are listed below. We hope you will get excited about this long tradition of cultural exchange with our school in Bavaria!

Why would we choose to do an “Exchange Program” compared to another type of trip to Europe?

An exchange program is quite different than any other opportunity that you are likely to have outside of your high school years. Even in university exchanges, the experience is quite different! When you go to Germany on this exchange, you are in essence becoming a German for a few weeks. You live inside a German home - not a hotel - and become a member of that family. You see things through German eyes, eat German food, and hear the German language. You become a welcome member of the German society. You are invited into situations that you cannot see as a tourist - picnic with Germans, dinners with Germans in their homes, parties with Germans in their milieu, classes in German schools, personal and social interactions with Germans in their daily lives...the list goes on and on! You are on the INSIDE while you are there and not on the OUTSIDE as an American tourist seeing Germany!

What if I can't speak German?

Don't worry if you don't speak German! Most educated Germans speak very good English and all of your counterparts will have been studying for at least 5 years. You will be able to communicate rather easily. We have had American students and chaperones on previous exchanges who have spoken NO German and they got along just fine. This is a cultural exchange where the goal is not to become proficient in a language but to learn and share experiences with Marist students from another country.

Who is eligible to go?

Current 9th graders - seniors. Graduated seniors will have to gain special permission and all students must be both academically eligible and in good standing with the Dean of Students.

Who is responsible for the trip?

The trip is under the leadership of the Department of Global and Humane Studies at Marist Atlanta and the English department at Marist Fürstenzell. The trip leader for taking students to Germany is Mrs. Jessica Askins. Mr. Jürgen Göschl and a female colleague are the leaders on the German side.

How often does the exchange take place?

Prior to COVID, this exchange happened every two years. We are hopeful to begin that pattern again. The last exchange took place in 2018.

Where is Fürstenzell?!?!?

Fürstenzell is a suburb of the much larger town of Passau. It is a small town located in the farmland just west of the city. It is about 100 miles slightly northeast of Munich.

Where do our students live when they are in Fürstenzell?

Students have the unique opportunity to live with a German family while they are in Germany. Each student is assigned a family and a host "brother" or "sister" based on interests and availability in the community.

When do the Germans come to us?

Typically, the group from Maristen Gymnasium arrives towards the end of March and stays with us for about more than two weeks. This most often lines up with their winter break and our Easter break. The projected dates for the Germans to be with us are between March 18 - April 2, 2024.

When do we go to Fürstenzell?

June 6 - 15

What do we do on the Exchange - both in Atlanta and in Fürstenzell?

When we go to Germany, we spend several days in the classroom at Maristen Gymnasium, taking classes and talking to students. In addition, we see the town, visit the school monastery and gardens and meet with the city council and the Mayor to understand more fully how German politics work. We generally have two overnight outings with our hosts to see other parts of the country, one to the Alps to visit Munich and the beautiful castles of King Ludwig, and one to Vienna to visit the Hofburg. Weekends are free for the families to fill in with cultural events - visits to nearby cities such as Salzburg, Innsbruck, and Regensburg as well as to Austria and the Czech Republic (they sound far away, but they are both just a few minutes from us!)

What is the cost of the trip?

The cost of the trip this year is \$4500. This covers all expenses except some lunches and souvenir shopping.

Do we have to host a student in order to participate in the exchange?

Ideally, the exchange works on a one-on-one basis (ie, I host a student and then stay with that same student in Germany.) Priority for travel will be given to those who can host a German student, but hosting is not a requirement to travel.

What happens if we would like to participate but are planning to be out of town during Easter break (when the German students will be here)?

There are several answers to this question. First, if the trip is more or less local, invite your German student to come on the trip with you. They will have a great time! Second, it is usually possible to make arrangements for your student to move in with another family for two or three days if the trip were far away or included airfare, etc. Sometimes we have divided the exchange with two hosts for one student - we prefer not to do this, but sometimes it just works out this way!

When do we need to decide if we are going on the exchange?

Obviously, the sooner that we have numbers in place, the better off we are. We cannot begin the process of lining up homes and partners, booking seats on flights, and setting final costs until we know how many are going. The timeline is as follows:

- Intent to Participate forms and financial aid applications are due by September 15th, 2023.
- Families who have applied for financial aid will receive their award letters by September 22nd.
- Contracts and a non-refundable deposit of \$500 will be billed and deducted on the Marist October bill

How will we be billed for the trip?

You will be billed for the trip in installments throughout the year. The billing schedule is as follows:

- October 1 - \$500 (Fully refundable until November 15th)
- December 1 - \$2000 (Non-refundable)
- March 1 - \$2000 (Non-refundable)

Is there a cap on the number of students that can go on the exchange?

While there is no specific cap on the exchange, we try to make this a one-on-one opportunity - one German to one American. We hope to have 20 Americans who would like to make the trip with us! 20 students is the optimal number for the Germans and is the most equitable for bus and hotel rentals.

Who do I contact with further questions about the trip?

If you have further questions, the best way to get quick answers is to email the trip leader, Mrs. Jessica Askins (Askinsj@marist.com) or the Director of Global and Humane Studies, Mrs. Kelly Mandy (mandyk@marist.com)

Thank you so much for your interest in the 2024 Marist exchange to Germany. We hope that many of you will take advantage of this wonderful and unique opportunity to see Germany from the inside! We look forward to hearing from you!

Mrs. Jessica Askins - Trip Leader

Mrs. Kelly Mandy - Director of Global and Humane Studies