



SHEBOYGAN/ESSLINGEN HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Information for Interested Students and Parents

The Sheboygan Chapter of People to People International has been sponsoring an annual reciprocal student exchange with Sheboygan's sister city, Esslingen, Germany, since 1970. Since that time over 180 Sheboygan County high school students have participated in this unique program. Many have made lifelong friendships. Esslingen is a charming city of about 100,000 located in southwestern Germany on the banks of the Neckar River, near Stuttgart.

Applicants can be freshmen or sophomores. Although there is no German language requirement for applicants, some knowledge of German would be helpful to the students. Applications should be completed and returned **by November 15** and the selection of students, which will include a family interview, will be completed in December. If a student is accepted for the program, he or she will be matched with a student from Esslingen. The German students arrive in the Sheboygan area in July and remain with the host family until mid-December. The American students leave for Germany in February of the following year and return in late July or early August. They will miss the second semester of their sophomore or junior year. **High school credit is given for participation in this program for those students who attend school in Germany and fulfill the requirements for participation.**

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 Sheboygan.
3. Participate in People to People activities and gatherings for exchange students.
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 the airport and transport him/her to the airport upon departure.
8. Become a member of the Sheboygan People to People Chapter (Annual membership is \$35).
9. Support the People to People fundraiser, a brat fry normally held in mid-March, by selling tickets before the event and working the day of the event. This fund raising event supports the exchange program.

Costs:

The cost of the program includes the round trip airfare and the personal expenses of the Sheboygan area student while in Germany. Plane ticket costs change from year to year. Personal expenses range from \$800 to \$1,200. 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. There are NO administrative fees charged by People to People for a student to participate in the exchange program.

School and Grades:

Parents and students often have questions about the exchange's effect on graduation requirements and class rank. In the Sheboygan Area 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 requirements and procedures – one should check early on with the high school guidance office 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 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 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, etc. 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!

For more information, contact Jon Keckonen at 920-457-4318 or visit the chapter website at www.ptpsheboygan.org. Applications for the program are available on the website.

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