

People to People

Sheboygan--Esslingen Student Exchange 5-Month Reciprocal Exchange Program

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 170 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. Applications for the exchange are due by November 15.

Applicants are usually first semester freshmen or sophomores. Applications should be returned by November 15, and the selection of students, which will include a family interview, is usually completed in December or 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 fall semester and leave for Germany in mid-February, returning in late July or early August. Essentially they will miss the second semester of their sophomore or 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: \$35 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. 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 and are currently between \$1,400 – 1,600. The expense of having another member in the family for 5 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. The Sheboygan Area School District provides the Esslingen students with cafeteria meal tickets, activity tickets, and book rental. Arrangements may be slightly different at other area schools. Membership in the YMCA and other community organizations are also sometimes available.

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 proceed! 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 four 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 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!

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