

My German Immersion Experience

My name is Bridget Matthews and I am graduating from Ferny Grove State High School in 2014. During my five years of high school I have completed both the German Immersion and German Extension program and have thoroughly enjoyed them. When people ask me about my high school experiences it does not take long for the German Immersion program to come up as one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences I have been offered. Aside from the incomparable academic challenge and the life- long relationships I have made with my fellow students, the immersion program offered me something I could not have found anywhere else and that is the opportunity to form a bridge from my reasonably small, monolingual world to broader horizons and provide a larger opportunity to communicate with people different from myself.

It is too often that we take for granted the exceptional amount of skill that is required in learning a language. When we are submerged in a language from birth it can seem almost effortless to form the skills we need to communicate. However, when we begin to learn a second language, it is then that we can fully appreciate and understand the amount of effort and skill required to learn a language from a base level. It is the challenges that make the successes even more exceptional and this is what I have found to be the most rewarding part of the immersion program.

Although the challenge of learning all my subjects in German was initially quite an overwhelming one, the significant turning point for me was the German Exchange trip at the end of 2012. When we were able to practice our German skills in a practical situation it was then that my passion for languages was fully ignited. To be able to communicate with other students across the world, to be able to ask directions or



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order a coffee all in another language was for me the point at which all of the work came to fruition for there is truly no greater feeling than being able to communicate with someone in their own language and for them to understand and appreciate your efforts.

Naturally, after the German Exchange trip I was eager to further my language skills in any way possible. This came to me in the form of the German Extension program. After completing year 12 German early, I then went on to complete the German Extension program which was definitely a step towards a further career and life involving foreign languages, particularly German. As well as furthering our foundation skills, we explored a more practical application of the language such as writing a resume, reading a German novel or learning about current world issues. It was through this year-long course that I formed plans to live in Germany and complete my studies at a German university in my future.

I can safely say that, no matter whom you are, no matter where you come from or what your interests are you will benefit from taking part in a language program such as the ones offered at Ferny Grove High School. Unlike any other subject, languages have provided me with a constant challenge, irreplaceable friendships and an opportunity to learn the true value of persistence, hard work and commitment. With over 7 billion people in our world I can think of no better reason to learn a language than simply to be able to communicate with as many people in our world as possible. I would highly recommend taking part in both the German Immersion and German Extension programs to anyone that is interested in furthering their life skills and ultimately themselves as a person.