



Partnerstadtfreunde

Youth find exchange tasty and transforming *Food and friendships create lasting memories*

This summer FOF celebrated its 34th year of Youth Exchange. Sixteen area youth age 16-19 landed in Friedrichshafen on July 13th for an international experience that would exceed their expectations. The Peoria Club had a robust program that we jumped into feet first less than an hour after landing.

Nervous excitement fueled us at the Welcome Party after a 22-hour journey. We were greeted warmly and with open arms. This hospitality extended through our entire stay. We felt welcomed and were treated as honored guests. Not only was each student and chaperone adopted into a real family, but the depth of caring, engagement and connection of our host families with and for our group was heartfelt.

This is the FOF Youth Exchange in a nutshell. A 'foreign' experience that promotes growth and understanding. An often life-changing event that makes students understand that being nervous or afraid doesn't have to limit them in life. Opening our hearts and minds to new opportunities can achieve outcomes we hadn't been able to imagine.

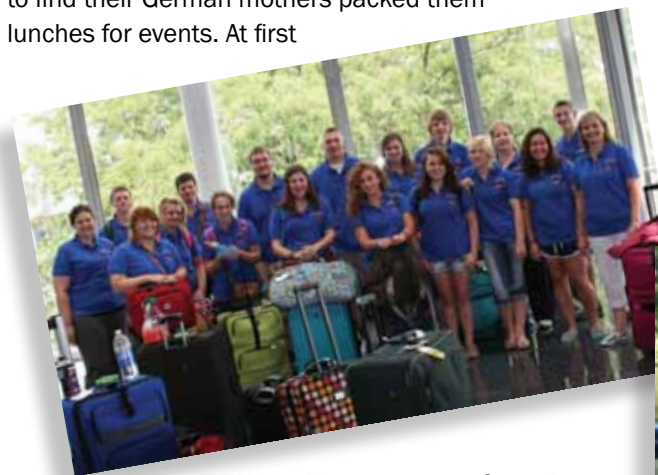
But enough of lofty goals, what about the food? A frequent concern we can soundly put to rest ... it is great! No one went hungry, not even our vegetarian student. What did we eat? Whatever they put in front of us! Students were delighted to find their German mothers packed them lunches for events. At first

some didn't want to inconvenience their moms and said they would just buy something. "She looked so hurt I said okay, I'll take a lunch. Boy am I glad I did. This is great!"

We were very active during our stay with a variety of activities including museum visits, picnics with pick up soccer games, a float trip, meeting the mayor, airplane rides, high ropes course, trips to Munich and Constance, and the city festival Seehasenfest. Many families planned special trips with their students. There was a bicycle trip from Switzerland back to Germany, a bicycle race, visits to castles, medieval re-enactments, and trips to the Black Forest, Berlin, Italy, and France just to name a few. Everyone's favorite activity, as always, was hanging out with friends. This is what the exchange is all about.

So we left 22 days after we arrived, richer for our experiences and so sad to leave our new friends and families. Some are anticipating hosting German siblings next year. A few promise to make plans outside the program as German students are only allowed to travel once to the US with the program. The connections we made this summer are strong, though. A little time and distance will not break them. We will always remember we are 2012 Youth Exchange Alumni.

Tammie Roesler
Youth Exchange Chaperone 2012



Above: The group poses for a photo as they wait for their plane at O'Hare airport.

Right: Kayaking was enjoyed by all.



Above: Enjoying the water at the Farewell Party — boys will be boys whether in the U.S. or Germany.



Still More in 2012

Please join your fellow Friends of Friedrichshafen members at our upcoming events. On September 8, we'll have a booth at the Peoria WorldFest in the Exhibition Hall of the Peoria Civic Center. Two weeks later, Sept. 21-23, stop by and say "Hi" at the Oktoberfest on the Peoria Riverfront.

At both events, we'll have a display about Fasnet, featuring borrowed items from our friends in Friedrichshafen. Come see what makes their Carnival celebrations unique!

Help Needed! If you believe in our programs, can't you please give us some of your time? If you can "man" our Oktoberfest display for an hour or two, please contact FOF VP Events, Sue Ramey at sue.ramey@rlcorp.com or (309) 697-3590.



Fasnet is the Lenten celebration in southern Germany. See several exciting artifacts loaned by the Peoria Club — including an adult-sized mask — at our WorldFest and Oktoberfest displays.



In October, we will welcome Oberbürgermeister Andreas Brand back to Peoria. He and Zeppelin CEO Peter Gerstmann will be on hand for the unveiling of the Caterpillar Visitor Center and the Riverfront Museum. We might plan a member event with these dignitaries, but are awaiting their final travel plans.

Watch your mail and email boxes for announcements about additional activities.

Friedrichshafen's Oberbürgermeister Andreas Brand speaks at the 2011 Civic Leadership Luncheon during the 35th Anniversary events in Peoria last October.

Never too early to apply for Youth Exchange

Our latest exchange just ended, but we're always recruiting for the next great adventure! If you know a teenager 15 to 19 years old – or know someone who has a teenager – they can apply NOW for next year's exchange. We will host guests beginning in late July.

Applications can be downloaded from the Friends of Friedrichshafen website and returned to the address listed on the form. Please help us spread the word about a fantastic, unforgettable opportunity!

For additional questions, please call FOF Youth Exchange Chaperones Tammie and Patrick Roesler at 309-689-0069.

Renew your membership

Our current members are listed on an enclosure with this newsletter. If you are a current FOF member – thank you for your support! If not, would you please consider renewing your membership today? A membership form is included for your convenience.

The Friends of Friedrichshafen receives no support from the City of Peoria. Only through memberships and donations of individuals and organizations can we carry on our mission of promoting friendship and understanding across cultures.