Advocating for German language and culture

AATG members were invited to apply for Deutsch macht Spaß grants supporting local campus or community events to promote German learning and engagement with German culture. Thanks to funding through the German government’s Netzwerk Deutsch program, grants of up to $500 were awarded to support numerous creative and innovative projects.

Read what members are doing—how they are advocating for German, making sure German is visible and prominent in their schools, and reaching out to the broader community to spread the message that Deutsch macht Spaß!

Prairie Ridge High School German American Friendship Day Celebration

Our event was the first of its kind in Crystal Lake, and we were extremely pleased with the event coordination, planning, and community support. A volunteer group of 24 students and parents organized and executed the event and worked together to put on a really fun community experience. Participants enjoyed the Basteln and Tanzschule, along with short German lessons. The food was fantastic, the educational stations were fun and student-led, and our silent auction was extremely well supported. We were extremely pleased with the support from our local German organizations. The event truly helped to build connections among local German organizations and demonstrated strong support from the community at Prairie Ridge High School.

—Jameson Higgins, Prairie Ridge High School, Crystal Lake, IL

Spielabend at University of Richmond

Strains of Falco and Kontra K accompanied teasing declarations of “Drecksau!” that rang through the corridors at the University of Richmond. Passing students peeked in, enticed to join one of five simultaneous tables where students and faculty enjoyed world-renowned board and card games. With appetites quenched by Brezeln, Spätzle, Spekulatius, Fladenbrot, and Börek, the gamers practiced and played with German culture, and shared German knowledge in a friendly and informal atmosphere with friends and family new to the language and culture.

Students and faculty from Computer Science, Math, History and Languages, Literatures and Cultures went on an odyssey through gaming worlds imagined by Austrian, German and Swiss designers and publishers. In changing groups of players, ranging from 16 to 35 each evening, gamers enjoyed exposure to games that won or were nominated for the German Spiel des Jahres while listening to German hip-hop and feasting on German and German-Turkish delicacies catered by local establishments. The games were arranged in the themes of Collaboration, History, Energy, and Commerce to help players develop negotiation and collaboration strategies, while learning vocabularies from semantic fields infrequently developed in the language classroom. Students explored exotic and endangered animals (Fauna: Das tierisch gute Wissenspiel), the Europe of ancient Rome (Augustus, Concordia), and early modern trading (Oh, meine Güter!, Port Royal), to name just a few. German professors were responsible for acquiring the games and catering the event, and were able to involve student teaching assistants who served in leadership roles in teaching the games and setting up the event space. Deutsch hat wohl Spaß gemacht!

—Kathrin Bower, Katrina Nousek, qand Caroline Weist, University of Richmond, VA
German Outreach in Idaho

We focused on building positive relationships with counselors at our feeder junior high schools. Before the school year started, we delivered gnome and ‘Pilze’ cookies to counselors and administrators to thank them for their continued support of our German programs. Before incoming students registered for classes, we again reached out to the counselors at our feeder junior high schools, delivering thank you letters and German goodies. We hope that making contact with counselors multiple times throughout the school year would make it impossible for them to forget about German!

We also used part of the grant to make our programs more visible within our buildings and community. We purchased buttons for our current German students to wear, plus buttons to give to future German students. We made buttons for junior high students who plan on taking German when they get to high school. We also made posters to promote our GAPP exchanges to hang in our buildings as well as the junior high schools. We are very thankful for the Deutsch macht Spaß grant for helping us promote our programs!

—Amy Burkholder, Boise High School, and Toni Gorton, Capital High School, Idaho

Teaching German at a Local Elementary School

Every week, the German Club at Mississippi State University has been visiting a first-grade classroom at Sudduth Elementary School in Starkville to teach German to the students. Using grant funds, the German Club collected teaching materials to use in future projects at the elementary school. They also laminated materials to save on future printing costs and to help build up a reserve of materials to be used for lesson creation.

We worked with our first graders over the semester on topics such as numbers, colors, the alphabet, animals, action verbs and music. We provided each student with a bilingual German-English coloring book to bring home. It surprised many of our volunteers how quickly the students were able to pick up on German. It’s heart-warming to hear a six-year-old say “You didn’t say bitte!” after saying “Steht auf!” or “Setzt euch!”.

We will be returning in the spring semester and hope to start visiting a second classroom. We look forward to seeing our old students again and hope to get to know even more.

—Cody Fondren, Mississippi State University, MS

Stille Nacht: Bicentennial Celebration 1818-2018

The German Club at Catholic University partnered with other language clubs—Italian, French & Francophone, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Irish—and even Greek & Latin and the Medieval Society. Each club had a booth at our Weihnachtsmarkt, and presented Christmas-time traditions in their regions. Many also offered a craft or homemade regional treats for a small donation to a local charity who focuses on refugees in our region. The Medieval Society Festival Schola Cantorum choir performed holiday classics while participants enjoyed hot chocolate, coffee, tea and shortbread cookies. Amanda Sheffer gave the history and the legend of the creation and first performance of _Stille Nacht_ in Oberndorf, Austria. The choir sang the German version and each language club came forward to sing the song in their language. All texts were available in a song book printed for the event. Then the entire room sang the song in English together in unity. Next, we had a sighting of Sankt Nikolaus who came to hand out gifts and read a poem in German. Then the Catholic University Brass Ensemble played Christmas tunes as students continued to walk around the booths. Approximately 300 people attended the event, which also attracted lots of attention on social media.

—Amanda Sheffer, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC
Kinder Lesen Deutsch—German Story Hour

Pennsbury High School’s German Club kicked off its inaugural Kinder Lesen Deutsch (German kids story hour) at the Yardley Makefield Branch of the Bucks County Free Library with approximately 10 kids. “Die Kleine Raupe Nimmersatt” was chosen to celebrate Eric Carle’s German American heritage and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the book. Our story hour was led by five high school students, who led a greeting circle, taught the students phrases in German, and helped the younger kids create their very own Raupen. Much fun was had by all and we are very much looking forward to our next session with “Brauner Bär, Brauner Bär, was siehst du denn da?”

—Linda Smith, Pennsbury High School, Fairless Hills, PA

Deutschabend 2018

Several administrators called it ‘the social event of the year.’ Hundreds of community members poured in the Hammarskjold Middle School cafeteria to enjoy an evening celebrating German-speaking cultures sponsored by an AATG “Deutsch macht Spass” grant!

All families prepared a dish from one of the D-A-CH countries to share in pot luck fashion. After consuming a variety of delicious specialties, participants visited immersion stations students prepared to teach the community about the topics they are learning in school—entirely in German. People who did well at the stations were entered into a raffle to win German school supplies and sweets. Students performed various songs on stage, awards were presented followed by dessert, and then the prizes were raffled off. The evening was a huge success!

—Brian Lavery, Hammarskjold Middle School, East Brunswick, NJ

“Sehen und gesehen werden” - Increasing the Visibility of German Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

At the University of Wisconsin–Madison, students wear their pride. When they are not wearing Bucky Badger gear, UW–Madison students don t-shirts and sweatshirts that reveal their allegiances — whether a school or college, a major, a sport, or a club. Until now, German undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty had no way of showing their solidarity with the German program. That’s changed, thanks to the Deutsch macht Spaß grant.

Students in my advanced German film class were giving an in-class assignment with the option of creating a film poster for a movie we had watched or to sketch a t-shirt design. All of the students decided to work on the t-shirt design. The ultimate design features Van Hise Hall, the building the language departments and classrooms are housed in, along with various greetings from across Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in speech bubbles, including German Studies at UW–Madison in its own speech bubble centered on the back side. I look forward to seeing our undergrads, graduate students, and my colleagues across campus showing their German studies spirit! I am confident that our new shirts will increase the prominence and visibility of German studies in the UW College of Letters & Science as well as intrigue many students about what it means to study German.

—Jeanne Schueller, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Deutsch macht Spaß!

#SRDeutschRocks

The Deutsch macht Spaß grant supported our #SRDeutschRocks (Kindness Rocks) project. The goal of the project is to support a culture of kindness at Slippery Rock High School and to promote the German language both in the school district and in the community. We paint rocks and write encouraging and positive sayings in German on them—for example: Aller Anfang ist schwer or Die Welt braucht dich. We then hide the rocks out in the local communities. When someone finds one, the directions on the rock tell them to send us a picture and to hide the rock in a new spot. I then post the picture they send us on our SRDeutschRocks Instagram account — which has over 100 followers and over 200 posts.

Within the school district, both students in German and ones who are not in German are following our Instagram site. When students who don’t know German find a rock, they are curious to find out what the saying means and they ask the students in German or me for a translation. The rocks are not only promoting German within the school community, but because we are hiding them throughout the local neighborhoods, we are fostering a positive image of the German language in the community. We want to get the whole community involved in the project, not just the German students and not even just the high school students. As community members find rocks and re-hide them, they too become a part of the project.

—Megan Kramer, Slippery Rock High School, PA

Jump-Starting the Growth of the Arlington Public Schools German Program

Students of German worked in advance to prepare materials to display at the High School Information Night. Trifold posters, designed by students at three high schools, adorned the table, and each school’s poster had a different focus. A flyer was created including student responses to the questions, “What is it like to learn German? Why learn the language?” German board games, funded by the grant, were also on display. We had tremendous traffic at our table, and hope that the information materials, student testimonies, the sample packets of Gummi bears, student posters, and the presence of the students and me as the teacher have made an impression on our incoming high school families and to the community about our German program. I hope that it will add to increased enrollment for the next school year and in the future.

—Silke Reeves, Arlington Public Schools, VA

Let’s Spread the Holiday Cheer!

All students of German at the University of Maryland Baltimore County were invited to participate in a day to celebrate German holiday traditions, along with students of German from Mt. Hebron and Centennial High Schools. Students experienced traditional German Kartoffelsalat and Wiener Würstchen and all kinds of seasonal Lebkuchen, Pfeffernüsse, Spekulatius or Marzipan. Students could do crafts and design and assemble paper star ornaments. To prepare for this activity, we found easy instructions on how to make a paper star ornament, which our upper level German translation class translated into English. At another station, students could test their knowledge of German holiday traditions in a Feiertagsquiz. Some lucky students won prizes, but all students could try their singing chops at Oh Tannenbaum. Thanks to the efforts of our exchange students from Universität Kassel in Germany, students played a fun interactive game called Werwolf (not holiday-themed!). The day was a big success and brought much visibility to German at our university.

—Susanne Sutton, University of Maryland Baltimore County
Career Days, Concerts — Deutsch macht Spaß!

German Day at South

Our Deutsch macht Spaß grant brought local high school German classes from three schools to the University of South Alabama’s (USA) campus for a morning of competition. The events allowed students to use their German skills in areas such as poetry recitation, group song performance, and a geography bowl. USA faculty and students served as judges, and winners received certificates. All participants went home with an “Explore Germany” bag provided by the German Embassy, and we used grant funds to purchase goodies to fill them, including pencils, buttons, wristbands, and flag pins. Grant funds also paid for the school buses that transported the students to and from campus. Given budget constraints at all institutions involved, we would not have been able to provide with as rich of an experience without the Deutsch macht Spaß grant funds, and we greatly appreciate the support!

—Christine Rinne, University of South Alabama, Mobile

Weihnachtskonzert

German faculty and students of the East Carolina University Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures hosted a Weihnachtskonzert at the Greenville Museum of Art in Greenville, North Carolina. The musical program included traditional carols, solos, and instrumentals by composers such as J.S. Bach, Johannes Brahms, and Michael Praetorius. Songs were performed by faculty and students of the ECU School of Music, as well as Greenville community members, who volunteered their time and talents for the evening. Concertgoers were able to sing along with the choir on the final two songs, “Stille Nacht” and “Kling, Glöckchen, Klingelingeling,” as the lyrics were printed in the concert program. Student volunteers from German classes, the German Club officers, and German majors and minors staffed the tables at intermission, serving Glühwein and mulled cider as well as Lebkuchen, Stollen, Spitzbuben, Vanillekipferl and other traditional German cookies. Over eighty students, performers, and community members attended and were delighted by the beautiful music and delicious German Christmas treats!

—Jill Twark, Eastern Carolina University, Greenville, NC

German Career Day

Our German Career Day was a great success! The program was very well-received, as more than 420 Wisconsin high school students learning German took part. Five large area universities were on hand to talk about their German majors, minors, and exchange programs, and more than a dozen corporations explained to the youngsters the multiple ways they are connected with Europe, as well as several reasons for the youngsters to continue their studies in German. Guest speakers included Vizekonsul Dr. Götze from Chicago, Geneva Scurek of the German-American Chamber of Commerce, and Jim Paetsch, Vice President of the Milwaukee 7. Frau Scurek mentioned the ICATT apprenticeship initiative, and Herr Paetsch explained the preponderance of German and manufacturing corporations in Wisconsin and highlighted the establishment of Haribo’s production facility in Wisconsin. The participants in the panel discussion included Aaron Rehfeld, Carly Kroll, Alex Dye, and Amanda Peterson, who presented the high school students with wonderful advice, ideas, and anecdotes. The support of and collaboration with the DSSV (Deutschen Sprach- und Schulverein), the Goethe House of Wisconsin, and the Goethe Institut were invaluable and outstanding. Numerous pictures were posted to multiple social media platforms in efforts to spread the impact of the event. A drawing was held with prizes for posts on the event’s Twitter page.

—Michael Koch, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI
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**German American Week in The Woodlands, Texas**

We invited the 4000 students at our school (grades 9-12) to get involved with our pretzel-trivia scavenger hunt, our black/red/gold dress-up day, and taking photos with our scenic picture board. Our 400+ German students also participated in creating traditional gingerbread hearts (made of paper), coloring famous people, scenes, art, and landmarks from Germany, making posters, writing why they chose to study German, listing many inventions by Germans that make our daily lives better and easier, listing their favorite German word, listening to German music, listing German cognates, playing interactive group games regarding German soccer players, winning tons of prizes, folk dancing, eating HARIBO gummy bears and miniature Ritter Sport bars, trying mineral water for the first time, and watching a German movie after school. We publicized the activities in our local newspapers, yearbook, and Facebook. Our German Folk Dance Troupe performed at an International Festival and received a glowing review in the city newspaper. One of our three German teachers, Steven Wynne, was interviewed for a spot on the local school news show, where he talked about the fun week. The students had a fabulous week and can’t wait for next year’s German American Week!

—Trina Powers, Laura Dunn, and Steven Wynne, The Woodlands High School, The Woodlands, TX

**T-Shirts and Gingerbread Houses**

In order to promote the German program, the German Club at Connellsville Area High School held a T-shirt contest, and the winning design was used to create this year’s shirts—which were a huge hit among students, and can be seen all over the school. Deutsch macht Spaß funds

The German Club also held a Winterfest in which the club sponsored a Gingerbread House building contest. There was a great turnout of members and non-members, with over 10 teams competing in the contest. A few club members also dressed as St. Nikolaus and Krampus and introduced their roles in German and Austrian culture. This program was a great success, and sparked interest in students to add German to their schedules for next year.

—Jared Schneider, Connellsville Area High School, Connellsville, PA
**Building Connections, Crafts, and Curiosity**

To inform middle school students about the opportunity to meet high school German students, learn some German, and have some fun together, German students at Williamsville North High School German decided to create a video, with a student acting as the teacher announcing a field trip, and others asking questions. The light-hearted video, shown during announcements, sparked interest among the middle-schoolers. At the meetings, high school and middle school students decorated tote bags with German text and images. Another fun activity was learning and playing games like Mau-Mau and Das verrückte Labyrinth. The board games have also been popular at the German club and German national honor society meetings.

Students also put together Weihnachtstüten to give to the guidance departments at the middle and high school, filled with German treats and holiday greetings. We hope that the gesture will help grow the relationship with the German program — and lead to more students learning German!

—Maria Seewaldt, Williamsville North High School, Buffalo, NY

**History of the Athenaeum: German Americans in Indianapolis**

Students from Hamilton Southeastern High School worked with a board member of the Indiana German Heritage Society to research a section of the Athenæum’s history. They took the bus to the Athenæum and enjoyed an authentic dinner in the Rathskeller before presenting their research at the Society’s Stammtisch. Student the created German/English vocabulary lists and activities to share their research with the class. A second trip to the Athenæum featured a private lecture in German for the students, along with exploration of the building, land earning more about its history. A reflective essay written in German was the culmination of the project. The Indiana German Heritage Society also allowed us to display its Wegweiser—which shows Indiana locations named after German cities—in our library.

—Nichole Mathews, Hamilton Southeastern High School, Fishers, IN

**Cooking in German Class**

Presenting hands-on learning and cultural cooking experiences in the German program at Alonso High School was the project goal. I wanted students to taste German foods without having to pay for an expensive field trip or restaurant visit. The German class cooked or baked four times. I worked hand-in-hand with the school’s culinary instructor to choose traditional recipes, such as Käsespätzle, Schnitzel, Knödel, and Lebkuchen. The culinary classes took place in my German classroom and the German students were allowed to use the kitchen stations in our culinary room. The grant allowed us to make several batches of four recipes with some ingredients to spare in case students made a mistake during the recipe, which often occurred! We worked hard to leave the kitchen immaculate after our project and continually thanked the culinary teacher for her support.

It was a great showcase for the active learning we do in German class; students carried their food around with them and created a spectacle about the German program each day we cooked. It was also an outreach opportunity to have a few parents volunteer to assist in the kitchens and start chaperoning other events with me and their children. Possibly most significantly, I feel this project finally got the guidance counselors and new assistant principals on-board for pushing students into German class. This was a perfect example of active, creative, hands-on learning that kids love. We are very thankful for the Deutsch nacht Spaß grant for helping us cook, eat, and advertise this semester!

—Melinda Zeliff, Alonso High School, Tampa, FL
Famous German Americans

Learning about famous German Americans, students at the German Language Program of Portland came across poets, writers, actors, scientists, painters, and artists. The students researched their choice of German immigrant, reading up about him or her and writing about them in German, making posters and finally presenting their work to a big audience. This project truly opened up a rich discussion about our heritage and the students are eager to learn more about the old country and its valuable cultural pioneers. The project not only kindled a deeper desire for the German culture but really made German lessons fun! Our whole community enjoyed the presentations, and we will have an exhibition here, and also post them in Portland neighborhoods. Thank you for the Deutsch macht Spaß grant and thank you for helping us promote our program!

—Brigitte Bonfield, German Language Program of Portland, OR

Nimm MINT – Full STE(A)M ahead with German

High school students visited the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. They toured the campus, visited the engineering and science labs, and met with the Associate Dean of Engineering, Camille George, who explained the senior design projects to the group. They then met up with students from the university, and went together to SICK Sensor Solution. At SICK, they learned about the company, intercultural differences, and got to know each other better. Daniel Thomas, Business Development Manager, and Stephanie Stanton, HR Talent Manager, gave an informative lecture and answered many questions. Before a visit to the production-floor, students engaged with each other during a STEM mini-lesson on sensors. During this hour, students worked in groups to answer questions and then used their own human sensors to guess objects in a bag.

Jae Cody also participated in the STEM/Engineering Day at Glacier Hills Elementary, a STEAM feeder school for Apple Valley High School. She took part in a panel discussion about the role of culture and language in design, then facilitated a group design challenge activity for elementary students and their parents. Two German 1 students from Apple Valley High School came to help support the event and talk to students and their families.

—Jae Cody, Apple Valley High School, and Susanne Wagner, University of St. Thomas, MN

Jump into German at the Maverick Move-Up!

In order to increase enrollment and awareness about the German program at Mt. View High School, I met with Geography, World Civilization, and Band teachers at all of the feeder middle schools, as well as with the counseling staff at each school, to let them know about the great opportunities the German program at our high school offers incoming freshman.

At the Maverick Move-up event for incoming freshman, the German department created a “show stopper” table display consisting of a tri-fold display with information about the fun things German can offer students like the GAPP exchange, culture days with food, and the fact that students can receive university credit for taking upper level German 3 and German 4 classes. We created a “Top 10 Reasons to take German” brochure and stapled Haribo Gummibären to each brochure. These brochures were handed out to the students. I was able to meet and greet and talk to lots of parents and middle school students who now know about the MVHS German program and are interested in signing up for next school year.

—Cassie Shelton, Mountain View High School, Meridian, ID
Art Class in German

A collaboration with the Currier Art Center allowed us to present art in German! We began with introductions in German, followed by a presentation on the artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser and his work. Participants learned terms in German and English: city names, building styles, colors, hues, the color wheel, shapes, forms, and other art terms. Participants created a piece of art based on Hundertwasser’s work. Using acrylics and 12x12 panels they first sketched their ideas on paper and then on the panels. It was great seeing them using the terminology they had just learned in order to ask for certain paint colors and how to mix them to create new colors. The participants were pleasantly surprised at how similar some of the terms were in English and German and how much they could figure out from having listened and watched a powerpoint slide in English/German. The workshop generated positive publicity for, and enhanced knowledge of, German among the community, particularly among the art students, art educators, and parents.

—Lauren Keriazes and Christa Franke, New Hampshire Germanic Association (NHGA)

Ashford Park Movie & Entertainment Night

The Movie & Entertainment Night was an amazing way to engage the community around our school. We are a German immersion elementary school, along with offering German as a weekly special to all other students. We have been looking for a way to bring the greater German speaking community to our area. Our movie night was just the ticket. The event drew a mix of school families and native German speaking families. We offered some tastes and sounds of Germany prior to the movie. We created a party like atmosphere with Radio Teddy Berlin playing the latest hits and kids songs. We showed the movie Trolls in German, which was a big hit with all of the children. Many younger siblings were in attendance and loved it just as much! Not only did we grow the Brookhaven area’s understanding of our German programming, it gave us a platform to forge new relationships with the Atlanta German community.

—Kate Kaufmann, Ashford Park Elementary School, Brookhaven, GA
**Deutsch macht Spaß!**

**Deutschland kommt nach Alabama!**

Germanfest at the University of North Alabama was a resounding success! With the help of publicity from social media, posters around campus, and newspaper and television coverage before the event, this year’s Germanfest brought people out from local schools and from the surrounding community, including those who would not normally have come, such as retired professors; students from K-12 schools; German exchange students from local high schools; parents who were interested in our German program; and a German family wanting to keep their kids in touch with their German heritage—all dressed in Dirndl and Lederhose!

To help promote German at UNA, we created and distributed free t-shirts to the first 75 guests, and ran out in 20 minutes! Participants enjoyed exploring various booths, such as a photo backdrop and props; flags of German-speaking states; learning German words and phrases from German club members; and information on scholarships. The German food was a hit — including Wurst, Sauerkraut, Spätzle, Hotdogs, Senf, Rotkohl, Gummibärchen, und Kekse aus Deutschland. We added 18 members to the German Club. Several people asked about taking German class next year.

—Rebecca Linam, University of North Alabama

**Focus on STEM—Immersion Day for Teachers & Students and Career Day**

High school and college German students and teachers in New England had a unique opportunity to learn about the combination of STEM and German. A German STEM week was held in November 2018, in synergy with the 21st Annual Colloquium on International Engineering Education, the University of Rhode Island, German teachers from the New England AATG chapters, the Goethe Institute Boston, and the DAAD.

During the German-STEM Immersion Day, students and their teachers from high schools in New England experienced STEM through German in hands-on experiments and workshops. Students and teachers from the German International Engineering Program at the University of Rhode Island presented various topics in German, from building bridges to guerrilla gardening, from catapult construction to logic circuits. A highlight was the keynote presentation “No fear of science!” by German science entertainer and author Jo Hecker.

Immersion Day participants were able to come a day early to experience the International Engineering Colloquium and attend parts of the program, such as an alumni panel and poster exhibits. During the Colloquium, the Goethe Institute Boston organized a Career Fair, which showcased opportunities for high school and college students to explore possible career paths that include using the German language or working at/with German companies. DAAD organized a professional development workshop, during which teachers learned how to integrate STEM topics into their classrooms.

These combined activities helped put Germany on the map for students’ future career choices, and helped motivate them to continue with the study of German culture and language.

—Niko Tracksdorf, University of Rhode Island