



A one-year study abroad program in beautiful Freiburg, Germany, at the foot of the Black Forest.
Program sponsored by the University of Wisconsin, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University.

Academic Year in Freiburg

2016

Fall-Winter

Willkommen in Freiburg!

This year's AYF cohort includes students from China and the U.S., among them dual citizens of Hungarian, Serbian, and German extraction. All are pursuing bachelor degrees at Michigan State University (8), University of Iowa (7), University of Michigan (8), the University of Wisconsin (12), and Purdue University (1). These students study a variety of subjects within the Humanities, the Social and Behavioral Sciences, the Natural Sciences, and Computer Science. Immersing themselves in a new culture, adapting to a new lifestyle, and making new friends while dramatically improving their German is already beginning to show a noticeable impact. We are quite proud of our AYFers 2016-17 and are happy to share student and alumni news in the following pages.

*To all our alumni Happy Holidays
and a peaceful year 2017!*



Season's Greetings!

As the year winds down, we reflect on an exciting and rich fall with our 2016-17 AYFers. Getting to know 36 young men and women in September has been a pleasure. They joined us in Freiburg for a year filled with explorations of city and region, of Germany and European destinations far and wide. But our thoughts were also back home in the U.S. with the Presidential election a topic of lively debate among our students. Our hope remains strong that mutual understanding may emerge and broader perspectives gained from traveling and studying abroad!

Prof. Sarah Fagan, UI / Resident Director
Ulrich (Ulli) Struve, Associate Director



AYF Alumni Reunite in the City They Love

By Erica Cameron, AYF 2006-07

In early October 2016, members of the AYF class of 2006-07 met in Freiburg for a ten-year reunion. After a Welcome Reception at Haus zur Lieben Hand, the group relived their days as students with dinner at the *Mensa* (university cafeteria) and conversations with current AYF students, followed by a night of reminiscing at the Feierling Brauerei.

Meeting at the Uniseum the next morning, we learned that Albert-Ludwigs-Universität was the first university in Germany to admit women and that there was a university prison where students were incarcerated for bad behavior. Needless to say, we were thankful that this *Karzer* did not exist while we were studying in Freiburg ten years ago!

When we weren't visiting our former dorms or hanging out in our old neighborhoods like Stusie and Vauban, we would gather together for fantastic group dinners to enjoy some of the dishes from the *Badische Küche* we had missed over the years. Did someone say *Flammkuchen*?



One of the highlights of our trip down memory lane was the group wine tasting and dinner at the rustic Weingut Sonnenbrunnen. Jörg Scheel, an expert vintner and owner of the vineyard, led an intriguing wine tasting where he educated us (entirely in German!) about local wine made from organically grown grapes.

Reflecting on our year spent in Freiburg, one of the main takeaways was the strength of the friendships that were built that year. Even though it has been a decade, we came together just like we used to: with on the one hand, deep conversations about culture, politics and of course, all things German; and on the other hand, plenty of laughter. I believe that the experience also gave us a sense of confidence in approaching new situations and the unknown. The time we spent in Germany, for that year, transformed us and opened up new opportunities. Ten years later, each of us has maintained a special connection with Germany, whether personally, professionally or both.



AYF Reunion Class of 1966-67

Participants of the Junior Year in Freiburg class of 1966-67 will hold a 50 Year Anniversary meeting at the University of Freiburg during September 14 -16, 2017. Of the 49 students from the University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Wayne State University and other U.S. locations, 24 remain in contact. They have gone on to successful careers related to the German language, high school and college education, natural science, economics, law, computer science and family raising.

The JYF 1966-67 program was directed by Prof. Valentine Hubbs of the U. of Michigan German Department. It was an exciting time still influenced by the post-war Wirtschaftswunder, with relatively few available automobiles, four DM to the dollar exchange rate, many borders to cross and currencies to comprehend, and new vistas of learning with respect to languages, history and cultures.

While not all members of our class will be able to attend, a substantial number are enthusiastically looking forward to seeing the changes in Freiburg, to comparing JYF with AYF, to enjoying again local cuisine and specialties, to reminiscing over past events, and hopefully meeting the new 2017-18 AYF students about to gather experiences that will undoubtedly change their lives.

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Once again the AYF participants are fortunate to have received a variety of scholarships. 4 students received a Baden-Württemberg stipend, 2 students garnered a prestigious Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) scholarship and a large number of students were awarded funds from the Max Kade foundation.

AYF participants Jacob Bradford and Ethan Gabrielse (UW-Madison), recipients of the Freiburg-Madison Scholarship 2016-17, were welcomed on behalf of the City of Freiburg by Herr Günter Burger, Director of the Office of International Contacts, and Frau Ariane Hötzer, university relations and Freiburg-Madison coordinator.



Spreading My Wings

Katie Choike, AYF 2016-17, University of Michigan, DAAD Recipient

I've seen more of the world in the past three months than I have during the first 21 years of my life. As a first-generation college student from a low-income family, the odds have never quite been in my favor. Despite this, I've been fortunate enough to have opportunities that I never would've thought possible.

In high school, I thought I had my future figured out; however, after the first semester at the University of Michigan, I saw my plans crumble around me. My major changed drastically as well as my aspirations beyond undergrad. The most drastic change, though, was my attitude towards planning for the future. I realized that all of the good things that happened to me were paths that I took on a whim, ones that I chose to take after going with my gut despite the mental blueprints I made. As someone who is anxious about uncertainty, this new approach had me terrified but I decided to see where it would take me. Little did I know that this approach would literally take me to Germany.



Katie Choike at Ballycastle in Northern Ireland.

Until last year during my fifth semester at U of M, it had never occurred to me to look into studying abroad. It was something I had written off as being too expensive. Once the idea of going abroad got planted in my head, though, I talked to advisors and looked at the projected budget for the Academic Year in Freiburg program. I realized that it was feasible with my financial aid.

Through all of this, I didn't stop to think about whether or not I could handle this type of change. I moved in autopilot because stopping to think for a second would've caused me to lose my nerve. It was only after I finished applying for a passport and filling in paperwork that I paused to think about what this meant for me. I knew that, given my financial situation, there would never be a better time than now for me to leave America. I wanted to see the world and to increase my independence. If I could start over in a foreign country where I knew no one, I should be able to do anything, right?

Here I am one year later, comfortable with my new life in Germany. I powered through my anxiety, and now I'm doing things that I never imagined myself doing — the biggest of which has been traveling alone.

As a huge music fan, a benefit to moving to Europe has been the concerts. Most of the genres I listen to, particularly punk rock and post-punk, are not as popular in America as in



The Specials in London

Europe. Since arriving in Freiburg, I've spent most of my spare time traveling around Germany, Northern Ireland, and England for concerts, largely on my own. I had never set foot on an airplane before 2016, and now it feels like I take a plane at least a couple of times each month.

I've had so many brilliant new experiences, and I've done it all on my own. I've faced countless issues, from language barriers to getting lost to nearly being stranded in England because of a problem with my plane ticket... yet somehow I've managed to overcome all of these situations unscathed.

My family and friends back home are shocked. I often face reactions of "Who even *are* you?" because they no longer see me as the meek, anxious girl I've always been. Many of the new friends I've made since moving to Freiburg have been surprised when I tell them that I've always been painfully shy and paralyzed by fear. Just the other day, a couple of my friends told me that they respect me for being self-assured and brave. I'm not brave, though, and I don't think you need to be brave to do what I've done.

In the months before I moved to Freiburg, a very important woman in my life told me that there's a difference between bravery and courage: "Bravery is not having fear. Courage is pushing yourself further despite your fears." That stuck with me and I think about it often. Very rarely will you face a life-changing experience that won't make you fearful. Fear doesn't mean you're weak, but pushing through fear *does* make you strong.



NOTE: The AYF Alumni Newsletter is published two to three times a year for all Freiburg alumni who studied at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität under the auspices of the Junior Year in Freiburg or the Academic Year in Freiburg.

Please forward the Newsletter to other JYF and AYF Alumni with whom you are in contact. Thank you! To update your contact in-formation, please go to www.ayf.uni-freiburg.de/alumni/intouch

For more information about the Academic Year in Freiburg, visit our web site at www.ayf.uni-freiburg.de

For more information about our alumni club, visit their web site at www.ayf-alumni.org