



Victoria German School

SPRING 2021



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Deborah Weber

Dear students, parents, and friends of the Victoria German School,

As we are leaving behind the dark, cold days of winter, we are approaching spring break and the end of Term 2. We are looking forward to some much-needed sunshine, and potentially even the end of this pandemic that has made life challenging for so many of us.

For the past two terms we have successfully run both in-person and online classes. Most of our younger students have been meeting in person on Saturdays, first at Lansdowne Middle School, and now at St. Margaret's. The children have been enjoying seeing their German School friends, and exploring the great outdoors and playgrounds nearby. Our older students continue to meet online and after visiting their virtual classrooms, I am happy to report how engaged they continue to be in their lessons. A huge thank you to our teachers who have been working diligently on their

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online teaching skills, as well as on adapting their in-person program to suit the safety protocols during the pandemic.

One of our achievements last term, apart from keeping everybody healthy and motivated, was the completion of the ambitious German History and Culture project. The project was financed by the German Embassy in Ottawa and allowed us to create a new website (<https://deutschprojektvictoria.weebly.com/>) to display student work. Find out more about the project in this newsletter.

As we look toward the third and last term of the school year, some of our older students will have the opportunity to show what they have learned thus far by completing language assessments in March and April. We wish all the A1, A2, and DSI students good luck: we know they will do their very best!

Thinking ahead to the time after assessments, we have been planning our school-wide end-of-year project. This year, our students will read and discuss a novel of their choice. Our school has invested in new literature for children and teens in the past year, and we are very much looking forward to getting our students' feedback on the shiny new books. Their thoughts will be published on our new website (see link above) and will give all of us a chance to see what our children like to read, and might want to read in the future.

Finally, looking towards next school year, we are envisioning some significant changes to our school structure which we hope will bring lasting improvements to our school. More on this issue in this newsletter.

As always, we thank you for your continued support, and are very much looking forward to continue learning, playing, and laughing with you and your children.

- Deborah



PROJECT: DEUTSCHE GESCHICHTE & KULTUR



Last term, our school successfully completed the *Deutsche Geschichte & Kultur Projekt*, which was graciously supported by the German Embassy in Ottawa.

The aim of this project was and is to spark interest in German language and culture. At the beginning of the school year, students and teachers in all classes started brainstorming ideas, and defined specific themes, questions, and issues they wanted to focus on. Our younger students explored and experienced German traditions, like St. Martinstag and Christmas. Our older learners engaged in a research projects on German history, focusing specifically on the 20th century.

The multimedia products of our students' explorations and research are showcased in an online display/exhibition which you can enjoy

here: <https://deutschprojektvictoria.weebly.com/>

Even though the project has formally come to an end, we are planning to continue publishing students' work on this website. In this sense, this project has allowed us to build an effective long term tool to celebrate and showcase our students German language learning journey.

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PROJECT: DEUTSCHE GESCHICHTE & KULTUR (CON'T)

We would like to thank:

- The German Embassy in Ottawa for its support of this ambitious project
- Andreas Meckes , German Language Advisor for Western Canada, for his time, interest, and valuable feedback
- Janine Wulz, DSDI teacher and PhD candidate at the University of Victoria, for successfully leading our school through this project, from getting a grant, to guiding students through research, to the finished product
- Nadya Schewczyk, teacher and technology specialist, for designing a visually appealing and easily manageable website that we will continue to use for many years to come
- Our teachers and students for their great work!



Thrifty's Smile Card

The Victoria German School is approved for Thrifty's Smile Card Fundraising. Here's how you can participate:

- Get a registered Smile Card from Debbie (debbievgs@gmail.com)
- Load money on the card and use it for grocery shopping at Thrifty's
- Thrifty's will donate 5% of every dollar spent to VGS. No cost to you, and it will not affect your air miles!

We can raise up to \$1200 through this program, which will enable us to provide professional development for our teachers.

HOW TO SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL



The Soap Exchange

The Soap Exchange (1393A Hillside Ave) specializes in Canadian-made biodegradable personal and home cleaning products. They have products in high demand, such as hand sanitizer and household antiseptic cleaners, and supply re-fillable bulk and commercial packaging, and encourage customers to bring their own re-fillable containers.

Let them know you are associated with Victoria German School, and they will donate a portion of the sale to VGS!

<https://victoriasoapexchange.com/> 250-475-0033



Bottle Drive

When you return your empty bottles, let them know you would like to donate the return money to VGS!

NEW CLASS STRUCTURE

Starting in the fall of 2021, we will change the names of our classes, and hope to make our school structure more transparent and accessible for everybody.

Current Name	New Name	Age	Level	Language Certification (Exams)
Spielgruppe	Spielgruppe	3-4	A1	
Grundstufe 1, 1. Jahr	Kindergarten	4-5	A1	
Grundstufe 1, 2. Jahr	1. Klasse	6	A1	
Grundstufe 2, 1. & 2. Jahr	2./3. Klasse	7-8	A1	
A1	4./5. Klasse	9-10	A1	ZfA Vergleichsarbeit 1
A2	6./7. Klasse	11-12	A2	ZfA Vergleichsarbeit 2
DSDI	8./9. Klasse	13-14	A2/B1	Deutsches Sprachdiplom 1 (DSDI)
DSDII	10./11. Klasse	15-16	B2/C1	Deutsches Sprachdiplom 2 (DSDII)

Our classes will follow the BC K-12 model, meaning that the grade your child attends in their regular school will also be the grade they will attend in German School. As we are a small school, we will usually have two grades in one class. If student numbers permit it, we will try to keep the Grade 1 class separate, as we consider this year to be particularly important for learning the fundamentals of reading and writing in German and as we would like to offer a focused alphabetization curriculum.

We are also implementing clear guidelines around the language certificates/exams that we are offering. Starting in Grade 4/5, the students will have the opportunity to take a language exam every two years. This structure will allow the students to practice the first year they are in a split class, and take the exam the second year. For example, a student in Grade 6 will get the chance to practice taking the Vergleichsarbeit 2 and will do the actual exam the next year, in Grade 7. A student who needs more preparation time (for example a student in the Immersion stream) will be given more time - it is no problem to take an exam at a later point. What we are implementing are minimum age requirements at every level in order to comply with the exam guidelines provided by the Zentralstelle für das Auslandschulwesen who issues the official language certificates that our school offers.

This new class structure has the advantage of giving our teachers and students more time to focus on important aspects other than exam preparation, such as a novel study, practicing a play, doing a research project etc. Overall, this should provide our students with a more interesting and enriching German learning experience, and will give them more time to become proficient speakers, readers, and writers of the language.

Apart from these proposed changes, we will continue to offer two streams: Deutsch (German-speaking family/background, Deutsch als Zweitsprache (DaZ) and Immersion (no or little German at home, Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF). The outlined structure applies to both streams, but exam readiness will vary, with Immersion students likely to need more preparation time for exams than outlined above.

The next year or two will be a transition phase - we do not expect every student to fit neatly into the new structure right away. There will be some flexibility in placements next year. We are happy to talk to families about their situation individually, and find solutions that work for them.

We are looking forward to working with this new system. Your input is, as always, welcome, so feel free to let us know what you think!





FEATURED TEACHER:

**Elke Schlüter (Erwachsene
Beginner 1 & 2)**

1. Woher ich komme:

Ich bin in Fulda (Osthessen) geboren und aufgewachsen in Neuhof bei Fulda. Mit 19 bin ich zum Studium nach Mainz und habe auch in Leeds, UK, studiert. Danach habe ich in Frankfurt und Hamburg gearbeitet und gelebt.

2. Seit wann ich in Kanada bin:

Seit 25 Jahren! Ganz genau: am 15. März 1996 bin ich mit Mann und 16 Monate alter Tochter in Victoria angekommen.

3. Warum ich nach Kanada gekommen bin:

Es war eine Postdoc Stelle meines Mannes, die uns nach Victoria brachte. Er hatte einen Vertrag für ein Jahr, möglicherweise 2 Jahre. So sind wir von Hamburg nach Victoria gezogen. Wir konnten nicht ahnen, dass wir hier bleiben würden. Wir sind eigentlich nicht bewusst ausgewandert. Es hat sich alles so ergeben. Da mein Mann Russe ist, schien es fair, in einem dritten Land zu leben.

4. Was ich von zu Hause vermisste:

Nur die Menschen! Meine Eltern leben noch. Sie werden 84 und 85 dieses Jahr. Ich bin mit drei Brüdern, zwei Cousins und zwei Cousinen zusammen im Dorf aufgewachsen. Wir fühlen uns auch heute noch alle sehr verbunden. Auch habe ich gute Freund*innen in Deutschland und Europa.

5. Wer bei mir zu Hause wohnt:

Seit 2 Jahren lebt nur noch mein Mann mit mir zu Hause. Unsere Tochter ist erwachsen und wohnt seitdem mit ihrem Freund zusammen.

6. Was ich sonst noch so mache im Leben (wenn ich nicht gerade Deutsch unterrichte):

Seit COVID hat sich das alles sehr geändert. Ich unterrichtete davor wöchentlich mehrere Yogaklassen an verschiedenen Orten. Online wollte und will ich kein Yoga anbieten. Seit September unterrichte ich einmal die Woche an der frischen Luft eine *Mindful Movements Outdoors* Klasse. Ich möchte die Menschen, die ich unterrichte, in ihrer Bewegung sehen, denn nur so kann ich individuelle Übungen anbieten. Ansonsten nehme ich an einer QiGong Gruppe in Victoria teil, die auch im Freien stattfindet. Seit vielen Jahren schon interessiere ich mich für Gesundheitsförderung, Prävention und Heilung. Gesunde Menschen und eine gesunde Erde sind wichtige Themen für mich. Ansonsten sind Musik und Tanz für mich lebenswichtig.

7. Wenn ich morgen mit einem übernatürlichen Talent aufwachen würde, wäre es:

Mich mal schnell nach Deutschland zum Kaffeetrinken mit meinen Eltern, Verwandten und Freunden „beamten“ können. ☺

8. Irgendwann würde ich mal gerne:

Mit einem Elektrocamper quer durch Kanada bis zur Ostküste fahren und dann auch noch den Grand Canyon besuchen. Der steht noch auf meiner „bucketlist“.

9. Eine interessante Tatsache über mich:

Mein Nachname „Schlüter“ ist mein Geburtsname und stammt aus Thüringen. Wir können unsere Ahnen bis zu Karl dem Großen zurückverfolgen – also bis zum 8. Jahrhundert.

10. Und was ich sonst noch sagen möchte:

Es macht mir immer wieder Spaß, in den Erwachsenenkursen neue Menschen kennenzulernen und ihre Fortschritte beim Erlernen der Sprache zu beobachten. Auch wie beim Yogaunterricht versuche ich, Vertrauen zu schaffen und klar und möglichst einfach zu vermitteln sowie die Begeisterung und Motivation der Lernenden aufrechtzuhalten. Das gelingt nicht immer, aber doch oft, und das ist sehr befriedigend.

FEATURED STUDENT WORK:

Amelia's research poster, presented in class last term.

Amelia is 8 years old and in the Grundstufe 2 Klasse.

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