



## Germany 2010: Student Newsletter

### What's Inside:

**Introduction:** Who, where, when, and why . . . **Page 1**

**Celebration:** 20 years of student exchange programs between the U of L's Kent School of Social Work and KSFH . . . **Page 1**

**German Healthcare and Social Service Agencies:** Taking a look at the similarities and differences . . . **Pages 2-4**

**Day Trips:** Seeing the sights in and around Munich can be both exhilarating as well as sobering . . . **Pages 5-6**

**German Culture:** A look at German cuisine and other cultural aspects . . . **Pages 6-7**

**Back Page . . . Page 8**

### This year's class:



*From left to right: Top row, Dr. Tom Lawson, Chris Bratcher, Peter; middle row, Takisha Haynes, Beverly Lemmons; bottom row, Dr. Peter Lenninger, Rose Leach, Carri Taylor, and Molly Robison.*

### Introduction:

This year's class was small, with only six students crossing the Atlantic to Munich, Germany. Many reasons for this were discussed—with most agreeing that the recent economic downturn had played a big role.

The 2010 exchange students were: Beverly Lemmons, Chris Bratcher, Rose Leach, Molly Robison, Takisha Haynes, and Carri Taylor. Along with Dr. Tom Lawson, we six students left Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday, March 6, and arrived in Munich, Germany on Sunday, March 7. For the next two weeks we attended seminars, visited local social service agencies, and traveled across the German countryside to visit historic locations such as Nürnberg, Augsburg, and Dachau. It truly was an experience that none of us will soon forget. We hope that this newsletter will not only inform future students about the exchange program—but that it will also inspire students to take advantage of a rare opportunity to witness firsthand the differences and similarities of international social work practice.



### Celebration:

The 2010 exchange program marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the partnership between U of L's Kent School of Social Work and the Katholische Stiftungsfachhochschule München (KSFH). Students of this year's program were delighted to see Dr. Tom Lawson and his counterpart in Germany, Dr. Jakob Braun, honored for their hard work and dedication in making the exchange program a 20 year success. During the program, students of both current and past exchange programs heard from students who had participated in years past as they too gave thanks to those who had made the opportunity possible. We would like to offer a special thanks to Dr. Lawson for making our trip such a memorable experience.





# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

## German Healthcare and Social Service Agencies

### Healthcare in Germany:

During our time in Germany the U.S. achieved a major victory in the struggle for health care reform. With a 219-212 vote our healthcare system has changed forever. Like German citizens, American citizens will now be required to have health insurance. But who is to pay?



In Germany the health care system is a social ethic based on the principle of social solidarity. This means that healthcare is financed on the basis of the individual's ability to pay while maintaining that "everyone" receives healthcare on equal terms.

From the looks of it everyone is covered equally regardless of age, illness, employment, or ability to pay. But again, who is to pay? Well for the average German citizen making an average salary the total tax liability is almost 50% of your income with about 10% of this portion contributing directly to healthcare. Social workers are constantly faced with the need for healthcare for their clients who have an inability to pay. Learning about another country's healthcare system has provided me with an opportunity to compare and contrast two systems both striving to make the best decisions for their citizens. ~ Beverly Lemmons

### Social Service Agency: A24 GmbH

*Zukunft Aktiv gestalten*, "actively shape the future," is the agency's slogan on their brochure. A24 GmbH is one of the agencies we visited while we were in Germany. This is an agency that provides services for 130-135 youth, ages seventeen through twenty five. This agency is a labor ministry that matches the interest of the youth with the agency. It is an agency where the clients can work on cars, motorcycles, or bicycles. The youth have the option of working in the office which is a three year program; body work on the cars which is a three and half year program; bike work for two or three and half years; service mechanic for two years; or the garage where they clean and detail the vehicles which is a two year program.

A24 is the only agency that has their own hands-on garage. Most of the men and women that come to this agency are referred from ministries or a labor union. Most of the youth will find employment when they leave and around seventy percent must find employment sixth months after leaving. While the youth are working at A24, they receive a small wage that is around 1.50 Euros a hour.



There are a few social workers that meet with ten clients a week. They work with the clients with case management and talk about their progress reports. The social workers also have social trainings where they discuss issues with self esteem and self defense. The clients do not receive counseling like social workers in America but it is kind of similar.

At A24 GmbH there was one garage where the youth work on motorcycles and bicycles. The clients were busy on working on four hundred bicycles to get them ready for a fund raiser. They were half way done and the event takes place in April. This was an interesting agency to tour because all of the youth were busy working on cars, bicycles, and motorcycles. We also noticed some youth studying for tests. They are tested every week over what they are learning at A24 GmbH. ~ Carri Taylor

You can find out more about this agency at: [www.a24.de](http://www.a24.de)



## Social Service Agencies **Continued**

### Social Service Agency: **Women's Therapy Center of Munich**

On a snowy afternoon in Munich we were met with hot coffee and pastries by Ms. Claudia Sussman, a psychologist with the Women's Therapy Center of Munich. In its 32nd year the Women's Therapy Center is serving about 1,000 women a year. They have 10 programs offering services including: substance abuse counseling, crisis intervention, self help groups, and many more.

In the beginning, WTC was run on a voluntary basis. It currently employs 106 people including psychologists, social workers, clinical social workers, occupational therapists and psychiatrists. WTC is financed with a 5.5 million € budget with funding from the County of Upper Bavaria, City of Munich, European Social Fund, health and retirement insurances, fines and fees from the legal system, and donations.

With the working principles of taking the women's side and feminist concepts, WTC has become a safe place for women and their children needing mental health services in Munich. WTC focuses on trauma sensitive methods, safety and empowerment. They provide their clients with a woman only space to engage the women and make them feel comfortable while receiving services. It is through these efforts, the employees and the volunteers that Women's Therapy Center has become an important and influential part of the mental health system in Munich.

As a social work student it was a great experience to learn about methods used to serve the women of their community. It gave me an opportunity to view how I serve clients that I interact with and gave me a new perspective on helping women within my own community. ~ Beverly Lemmons



*Carri Taylor presents Claudia Sussman with a small token of our appreciation: a Kentucky Derby glass complete with all of the race's winners since its beginning. Giving small gifts such as these to agency and college staff is a nice way to say "thanks."*

### Social Service Agency: **Adolph-Mathes Haus**

In Munich there is a network of at least 20 facilities that provide services for the homeless population. The facilities focus on people with different issues such as substance abuse or mental health issues; there are also facilities for the elderly which are usually permanent. Another agency called "BISS" produces a magazine written and put together by homeless people. It is even sold on the streets by them. It deals with social and political issues relevant to that population. One facility that we visited was the Adolph-Mathes Haus. It is a facility specifically for homeless men with a goal of reintegrating them into society.

At the Adolph-Mathes Haus men are referred to the house by other facilities or sometimes from jail. They also accept walk-ins if there is room. These men learn about work ethics and have the ability to learn a skilled trade under a master Craftsman. They stay an average of 18 months and are hopefully rehabilitated to the point that they can enter (or re-enter, depending on the age) the work force.

*Continued . . .*



## Social Service Agencies **Continued**

### Social Service Agency: **Adolph-Mathes Haus Continued**

The trades taught at Adolph-Mathes are: pottery, carpentry, metal-working, culinary, or housekeeping. The work is considered a form of therapy; however men can earn wages for their work. The work therapy teaches them not only a skill but work ethic as well. Men learn how to be on time for work, work a full day and be productive and respectful. All of which are skills necessary in any job setting. Some of the pieces created by the men at the house are sold in a craft shop attached to the facility or at a weekly market close-by.



*Kent School students meet with agency staff at the Adolf-Mathes Haus. The agency acts much like coalitions for the homeless in the U.S., providing services through cooperation and networking between a varied array of agencies.*

The Adolph-Mathes Haus and others like it get most of their funding from what would be our equivalent to local and state government. This money originates as taxpayer dollars. According to social workers in the field there are currently only about 300 homeless people in Munich thanks to these agencies. Unfortunately, when asked, they were unable to produce data to back this figure up.

It appears that the city is doing a lot of things right when it comes to caring for their homeless population; even if they can't prove it on paper. ~ *Molly Robison*



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM

## Day Trips: Traveling Across the German Countryside

### Germany at a glance:

**Population:**  
81,757,600

**Capital:**  
Berlin

**Government:**  
Federal Republic  
(Parliamentary)

**Ethnicity:**  
91.5% German  
2.4% Turkish  
6.1% other

**Religions:**  
63% Christian:  
32.3% Protestant  
31% Catholic  
5% Islam

**International  
Calling Code:**  
049

**Time Zone:**  
CET (UTC +1)

### Places we visited:

#### Key terms for rail travel in and around Munich:

**Hauptbahnhof** (Main train station)  
**S-Bahn** (Suburban metro railway)  
**U-Bahn** (Underground rapid transit)



### Getting around:

Getting around in and around Munich is surprisingly easy, despite being so densely populated; this is due to the excellent rail system comprised of subway, interurban, regional, and intercity services.

Getting a map of the rail system and quickly learning the different routes and schedules is essential to anyone wanting to travel in and around Munich.

## Augsburg: Social Work History

Visiting Augsburg allowed us to witness something that is uniquely relevant to students of social work: The Fuggerei. Located in the heart of the bustling town, the Fuggerei is the world's oldest social housing complex, and it still operates to this very day. The housing complex was founded in 1516 and gets its name from the Fugger family—a prominent and wealthy family residing in Augsburg. For needy families who needed housing both in the past as well as today, the rent of one Gulden per year (roughly 1 Euro by today's standards) meant affordable housing was an option for those in need. Interestingly, a tradition was established in the 1500s that required residents of the housing complex to offer three prayers per day for the owners and operators of The Fuggerei. This tradition remains today. For students of social work, visiting the 147 apartments, neatly arranged in the 67 "houses," is a reminder of the important role that social services have played throughout the history of civilization. ~ *Chris Bratcher*



One of the many "streets" in The Fuggerei.



## Day Trips: **Traveling Across the German Countryside Cont.**

### Dachau: A Day to Remember

The last Saturday of our stay in Munich a few students and I decided to visit Dachau. On the S-Bahn I tried to prepare myself for what I might see upon arriving at a former concentration camp. I have visited the Holocaust museum in Washington D.C. and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam so I thought I was prepared. I imagined all the atrocities I had read about in history class, the confinement, gas chambers, crematorium, and barbed wire. What I wasn't prepared to see was that this dark mark in history was surrounded by nice condos and cute little houses with yards backing up to the concentration camp gate itself.



*The infamous "freedom through work" gate that greeted prisoners when they arrived at Dachau.*

*Standing next to the crematoriums is a sobering experience.*



Dachau was very well known for its "training." Many SS guards were trained at Dachau to operate and work in other camps, including Auschwitz, that were established by the Nazi government. While walking around, I learned that the Dachau concentration camp was established in 1933. It was a work camp for political prisoners who were overcrowding the prisons. In addition to the forced labor and cruel conditions, the prisoners were subjected to medical experiments by German physicians. Many of these experiments including high-altitude experiments using a decompression chamber, malaria and tuberculosis experiments, hypothermia experiments, and experiments testing new medications. Prisoners were also forced to test methods of making seawater drinkable. Hundreds of prisoners died or were permanently disabled as a result of these experiments.

During the 12 years Dachau was run by the Nazi government, the prisoner population grew from 4,200 to over 30,000 at liberation in May 1945. There was a total of 188,000+ prisoners that entered the camp during this same time, many of which never lived to see the liberation. This experience will always have a place in my heart. I found it to be an experience that as a social worker reminded me of the importance of understanding past histories. Genocide continues to destroy lives in our world everyday and this trip reminded me that we must continue to fight for social justice and to bring peace through our skills when we can. ~ Beverly Lemmons

*... in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.*

~Anne Frank



## German Cuisine and Other Cultural Aspects

### The Neue Pinakothek:

New York has the MET, Washington, D.C. the Smithsonians, France the Musee de l'Orangerie and the Louvre. Munich has the Neue Pinakothek (among others).

Built in 1853, the original building was destroyed during the World War II. It was rebuilt and designed by Alexander von Branca and opened in 1981.

The Neue Pinakothek contains over 4,000 works of art. I couldn't think of a better way to spend the afternoon than by viewing works by French realists and impressionists (Manet, Monet, Degas) and English and German landscape artists. ~ Beverly Lemmons



Among many of the classics found at The Neue Pinakothek, Vincent van Gogh's Sunflowers (third version) stands out as a member of one of the most recognized series of painting in the world today.

### Eating Out: A Vegetarian's Guide

Munich is a city rich with culinary wonders. From the schnitzel to the wurst most are able to find a pleasing platter. As a vegetarian venturing to Munich I worried that this Bavarian cuisine would not have much to offer me. Munich offers many differing cuisines such as sushi, Italian, Indian, Turkish, burger joints, and even vegetarian cafes.

Although Munich provided many cuisines I knew were vegetarian friendly, such as Indian and Mediterranean, I vowed to stick to the Bavarian specialties. A few of my favorites were Käse Spätzel, Spätzel Champignons, and Vegetarische Strudel. Käse Spätzel is a popular dish I found at many restaurants. This dish entails medium size shell noodles with a rich cheese sauce topped with fried onions Spätzel Champignons is a traditional Bavarian dish I ate on more than one occasion! The taste and seasonings differ between restaurants, but entails rigatoni noodles with a creamy mushroom sauce. My absolute favorite dish, and one you must seek out if you should take the international course, is Vegetarisch Strudel. Although this may not be a traditional Bavarian cuisine it has all of its elements.



The strudel itself is buttery, light, and crisp. It's filled with a variety of fresh vegetables in a light cream sauce and topped off with a thin slice of sharp cheddar. When scanning a menu there are a few rules or warnings I'd like to share with fellow vegetarians.

1. Avoid anything with the word "Fleisch". This literally translates to flesh or meat.
2. Always ask if something is "vegetarisch". This means vegetarian. Even though something may be labeled as vegetarian, the dish could have a sauce with a meat-based broth.
3. When in doubt ask Dr. Lawson! Dr. Lawson was wonderful at picking out dishes I may like and telling me what to avoid! ~ Rose Leach



## The Back Page

### Taking a Closer Look at KSFH:

Katholische Stiftungsfachhochschule München (KSFH), University of Applied Sciences, has been in conjunction with University of Louisville Kent School since 1990. KSFH offers program studies in social work at the bachelor's and master's



level. The university offers studies in two sites, Munich and Benediktbeuren. In accordance with the international exchange program, we attended one 2-hour lecture per day for seven days with KSFH, followed by agency visits within the city of Munich. Lectures were given on topics such as the Social Work in Germany, Social Welfare in Germany, Germany's Education System, etc. Luckily for us, the lectures were in English. The professors discussed the various topics, while we listened attentively. The lectures usually ended with a comparison and contrast of Germany and the United States. It was interesting to gain knowledge of how social work is taught in Germany and the services the country provides. While the exchange program is the perfect opportunity to travel and experience life abroad, it allows a great learning experience as a student. So remember, as you decide on whether you will attend the 2011 international exchange program, "being out of the country, does not exempt classroom learning". ~  
*Takisha Haynes*

### In Closing . . .

All during our trip to Munich, we were under the impression that we would have to "perform" a skit, or something similar, at the 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration. Unfortunately, circumstances did not allow us to wow our audience with a great performance. Still, in preparing for our moment in the spotlight that never came, we had come up with a Top 10 list that we had planned to deliver during our skit. For the sake of prosperity, and as a special nod to our esteemed guide and mentor, Dr. Lawson, we've decided to include the list in our newsletter. Thanks for reading, *auf Wiedersehen!!*

#### Top 10 Reasons why we love Dr. Lawson:

- 10.** He taught us our first German words: Weiss Bier and Dunkel.
- 9.** He made the U-Bahn map more sense than just a bunch of colored lines.
- 8.** It's easy to pick out his hat and mustache in a crowd.
- 7.** He's capable of a dinner suggestion at almost any restaurant in Munich.
- 6.** We found out how much history we missed when he wasn't our tour guide on our trip to Salzburg.
- 5.** He took us girls shopping for a Dirndl.
- 4.** He points out all the good photo ops and then takes our picture.
- 3.** His words of encouragement and guidance at breakfast help us start our day.
- 2.** Even though he's made this trip for 20 years He still shares in our excitement of seeing the Glockenspiel for the first time.
- 1. We are the best group in 20 years and we are all getting A's... Right?**



This newsletter was written and published by Beverly Lemmons, Chris Bratcher, Rose Leach, Molly Robison, Takisha Haynes, and Carri Taylor. All copyrighted material used with permission by original owner. For more information about the International Social Work Student Exchange Program, please contact: Dr. Tom Lawson: Phone: 502-852-6922 E-mail: tom.lawsom@louisville.edu

The Kent School International Exchange Program started in 1990. Since that time Kent students have studied in Germany, Italy, Hungary, South Africa, Argentina and Russia. Students receive lectures on social welfare programs and interact with students formally and informally from our host universities. Visits to social welfare agencies differ in each country but have included agencies for: elderly, homeless, substance abuse, hospitals, child welfare, community centers, and numerous others. Time is provided for students to experience the culture of the host country as well as historical and tourist attractions. Since 1990 over 150 students from Germany have visited Kent School as part of our international exchanges and we have had 11 Fulbright student scholars to study full-time at the school who have received the MSSW degree.

Newsletter edited by Chris Bratcher.