Since 1973 the Canadian Association of University Teachers of German (CAUTG) has been offering a university German language immersion program in Kassel, Germany called the Canadian Summer School in Germany (CSSG). What makes this program outstanding is the unique blend of intensive language instruction by Canadian and German professors, experienced host families (including third-generation host families), and study trips to cultural and historical sites in Germany.

In 1973, the ‘Kassel Program’ was launched under the stewardship of Professor Bernd Maurach of the University of Ottawa. The program was initiated in such a way that the students were immersed in the German way of life. The duration of the program was three months, and the students were required to work in the afternoon after classes. In 1978, Professor Herfried Scheer of Concordia University, Montreal became director of the program. When Dr. Johannes Maczewski (see above) of the University of Victoria became director in 1988, he renamed the program the Canadian Summer School in Germany. Our program is fortunate to have close ties with the University of Kassel, which is one of the leading institutions in the development of some of the most widely used German language textbooks, such as *Eurolingua*, *Aspekte*, *sowieso* and *Deutsch aktiv*, among others. Dr. Johannes Maczewski directed the program until 2003, at which point Dr. Kim Misfeldt (see above) of the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta took over the organizational leadership of the program. Some of the longest serving instructors in the program include Helen Mower (see above), teaching for over 15 years, until 2007, and both Monica Hofer and Feisal Kirumira teaching for seven years.

A special thank you to Gillian McCarron (2011, 2012) for designing the new CSSG logo and to Laken Simmons (2012, 2013) for her work creating this newsletter.
Alumni Survey

In honour of the 40th anniversary of the CSSG program, a survey of program alumni was conducted to get feedback about the program, the ways in which the program has been used by past participants and ways the program can be improved to develop an even more positive experience. Alumni were contacted through application information, e-mail, and social media to complete a survey to collect thoughts, memories, stories, opinions, and demographic information. To date we have 175 respondents. Approximately 600 students attended CSSG from 1973-1990. From 1991-2013, 1049 students attended CSSG. As a special note, the program has had two second generation students.

Why have students attended CSSG?

97.7% Interested in learning the German language
86.9% Interested in German culture
78.3% Desired an international experience
40.6% German family background
24.6% Degree requirement

Students have been from the following universities over the last 40 years:

-Acadia University
-Atabasca University
-Augustana Campus, U of A
-Bishop’s University
-Champlain St. Lawrence
-Concordia Université
-Concordia University College of Alberta
-Dalhousie University
-Grant MacEwan
-Kwantlen University
-Laurentian University
-McGill University
-McMaster University
-Memorial University of Newfoundland
-Mount Allison University
-Mount St. Vincent University
-Queen’s University
-Saint Mary’s University
-Simon Fraser University
-Trent University
-University of Alberta
-University of British Columbia
-University of Calgary
-University of Guelph
-University of King’s College
-University of Lethbridge
-University of Manitoba
-University of Ottawa
-University of Prince Edward Island

-University of Regina
-Luther College
-University of Saskatchewan
-University of Toronto
-University of Victoria
-University of Waterloo
-University of Western Ontario
-University of Windsor
-University of Winnipeg
-University of Victoria
-Wilfred Laurier University
-York University

Other reasons for attending were for research, interest in teaching, had an exchange student in high school, the program was highly recommended, for grad school, and to pass on German to a step-son.
94.8% of alumni say they have used German since attending CSSG

Alumni of the program came from many different university disciplines. They now are in a wide variety of careers, many of which are related to language skills and international experiences developed in the CSSG program.

Majors Studied by Alumni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actuarial Science</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Linguistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Behaviour</td>
<td>Environmental Science</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>European Studies</td>
<td>Media Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology</td>
<td>Film</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>Immunology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Design</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Modern Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Global Studies</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Biology</td>
<td>Greek/Roman Studies</td>
<td>Physiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Health Studies</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>International Business</td>
<td>Religious Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td>and Relations</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Hygiene</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Law and Society</td>
<td>Urban Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
<td>Zoology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What CSSG alumni are doing now:

- Freelance Interpreter
- Foreign Language Assistant
- Flight Attendant
- German Teacher
- International Trainee Coordinator
- Students
- Masters/Ph.D. programs
- Tour Guide
- Photojournalist
- Lawyer
- Physician
- Diplomat
- Composer, Singer
- Paramedic
- Engineer
- Fitness Instructor
### Hearing from alumni on how they have used German since CSSG

“Continued with BA in German, lived and worked in Köln 2011, PAD 2012-2013, also with German speaking tourists and students while working in the downtown and at my university.” Rosalie Kean (2010)

“Speaking with customers while working for Air Canada.” Melissa Ronald (2009)

“I live in a German/Ukrainian neighbourhood, so it is useful to talk to clients and customers.” Tiffany Renton (2004)

“I briefly taught as a substitute teacher at the German Language School in Regina after I returned.” Karen Jaster-Laforge (2001)

“I worked in Germany in the PAD program and as a research assistant doing data analysis (of German audio files) in the Language Research Center at U of C.” Allison Bajt (2011)

“It was helpful to better understand psychology terms (Freud).” Laura Byrtus (2007)

“Volunteering at the German preschool in Calgary, PAD.” Mindy Nevison (2011)

“My year as a Fremdsprachenassistent! I felt much better prepared for it because of visiting Kassel.” Russell Cripps (2005)

“I completed a Master’s Degree in translation (German-English) and a Ph.D. in German Language and Literature (defense date- March 2013). I now work in international relations at the U of A and use German on a daily basis.” Katelyn Petersen (2003)

“My German has come in handy at two different workplaces, and I have several German-speaking friends. I also ended up studying for one semester in Kiel, Germany, in 2006-2007.” Jordan Bober (2002)


“I changed my major to German! Studied abroad in Bamberg 2011-2012, and am now teaching an adult and middle years class at Das Schulhaus German Language School of Regina.” Kristy Sigmeth (2009)

“I have returned to Germany many times and felt I could communicate fluently. I have been directed in German and have maintained relationships solely in German.” Naomi Eberhard (2007)

“Attending evening classes with my wife so that she could learn German.” Kim Boehme (1981)

“I completed my Honours degree in German Studies and now am currently living in Germany.” M. Hilary Graham (2006, 2010)

“I have been able to speak more freely with my extended family, especially my grandparents – in person, over the phone, and through letters. It has been a rewarding experience to finally communicate with them somewhat competently in their native language, and they couldn’t be happier about it – myself as well!” Katherine Hannemann (2009)

### WSP and PAD

**9% of respondents took part in WSP (Werkstudentenprogramm- Student work program) since attending CSSG**

“I believe the WSP may have been more beneficial to me since my return to Canada. I have remained in contact with my employer and still contribute material to them from time to time. CSSG, however, provided me with the intermediate credits necessary to take advantage of the WSP.” Michael von Kreitz (2009)

**9% participated in the PAD (teaching assistant) program since attending CSSG**

“I stayed to work with WSP and am returning for the next school year for a 10-month exchange.” Alex Jürgen Thumm (2012)

Adam Franzke (2008, 2010) said he has used German since the program in “communication with relatives & friends, WSP (2010), Practicum in Leipzig (2012), teaching German at German Language School Society of Edmonton” and is working on the PAD program 2013-2014 in Leipzig.
How has CSSG been beneficial since returning to Canada?

“CSSG gave me an outstanding foundation in German, and the confidence to know I can actually speak it.” Alix Hvidberg (2010)

“It has expanded on my international experiences and made me better at interacting with people from different cultures.” Valerie Volasko (2006)

“I have been able to translate things for people and, as a singer, I can understand my German Lieder more.” Nansee Hughes (2007)

“It helped me with my studies and my degree program. It has also been beneficial to know what it feels like to be a foreigner in a country.” Travis Kerslake (2011)

“Canada is very large – it’s hard to leave here, even if we travel a long ways. Having the opportunity to be in a truly different culture and language was amazing, and it helped me see my own country differently. I also chose to change my studies to History when I returned because there were so many things I wanted to know about but simply didn’t.” Jan Buterman (1988)

The common ways in which the program has been beneficial for alumni are:

- The gained confidence and independence
- In future jobs
- Language skills
- Given many the ‘travel bug’
- Cultural awakening
- Relationships with students and host families
- Pursued further studies in German
- Respect for others and immigrants
- Outlook on Canada has changed
- Further travels to Germany or have lived there since
- Improved communication skills
What aspects of the CSSG experience were the most beneficial?

“What I found the program did an excellent job of combining the classroom experience with extracurricular activities. This way learning continued beyond the classroom, which was not only enjoyable but also allowed me to make the most of those six weeks.” — Olga MacDougall (2011)

According to alumni, the most beneficial aspects of CSSG were:

- Small class sizes
- Personalized feedback and one-on-one time with instructors
- Living with a German family
- Cultural activities
- Excursions and travelling around the country
- New friendships
- Support and advice from professors
- Immersion
- Tandem Partner Project
- Reading a novel in German
- Journal writing and presentations
- The family atmosphere of the program

Daniella Naida (Clewett 1997) said that the aspects of the CSSG experience that were most beneficial were “getting submerged in the language and experiencing the culture behind the language first-hand while staying with a family.”

Meagan Ziedins (2004, 2005) said, “my guest family is one of a kind and we are still in contact. The children were younger when I was with them and through Facebook I have connected with the kids and they have interest to come to Canada.”

“All of it was pretty great, I think living with a host family is the best part since you learn so much just from talking to them and listening to dinner time conversation.” — Jenny Lynn Morrow (2011, 2012)

“The host family was extremely beneficial. I learned just as much from my host dad as the class itself.” — Sherwin Kwong (2012)

“Being welcomed into an extended family, who were very open and knowledgeable on their history and culture and eager to share it” was the most beneficial part for Sara Mytz (2010)

“My favorite part of the CSSG experience was the wonderful relationship I developed with my host family. I learned so much from them and am still in contact with them today (10 years after I participated in CSSG). Staying with them was a hugely positive experience for me and definitely contributed to my decision to continue studying German.” — Katelyn Petersen (2003)
Along with host families and the benefits of immersion, many CSSG alumni look back on their experience as a time of developing not just language skills but friendships

“CSSG was the best thing that could have happened to me. I learned to be independent and not be afraid to go to another country, barely speaking the language and be able to be self-sufficient. Being able to connect with other Canadian students and share the experience with them and have them accept you for who you are.” Jessica Comaniuk (2010)

“In Canada, I felt more comfortable welcoming not just the German students at my uni, but any international student, because I now knew what it was like to move to a new country for a short time and try and learn as much as possible in what seems like a very short time. Friendships are important, and especially when they have no host family, that need for cultural experience is great, so what better way than to learn from your own experience and share it with other students.” Rosalie Kean (2010)

“I attended CSSG knowing no one and hardly knowing the language. I was able to meet people and form important relationships with both Germans and Canadians.” Briana Pilgrim (2011, 2012)

“The entire experience was amazing! A memory that specifically stands out to me is after classes going places with the other CSSG students and taking pictures, going out for supper, movies, studying together, it was a great way to form new relationships and it is something I will always cherish.” Ana Reynolds (2012)

“One of my favorite memories was a day some friends and I bought a Schönes Wochenende ticket to travel from Kassel to Hamburg. We rode the train for 6 hours to get there, spent about 6 hours in the city itself then took the 6 hour train ride back again. It seems ridiculous now but it was so much fun at the time! We chatted, played games, met new people… it was fantastic!” Liona Davies (2003)

About his most memorable experience, John Burbank (2007, 2008) said, “Meeting my future wife at the first program stop in Melsungen. I certainly didn’t see that one coming at the time.”

“CSSG was the best thing that could have happened to me. I learned to be independent and not be afraid to go to another country, barely speaking the language and be able to be self-sufficient. Being able to connect with other Canadian students and share the experience with them and have them accept you for who you are.” Jessica Comaniuk (2010)

“In Canada, I felt more comfortable welcoming not just the German students at my uni, but any international student, because I now knew what it was like to move to a new country for a short time and try and learn as much as possible in what seems like a very short time. Friendships are important, and especially when they have no host family, that need for cultural experience is great, so what better way than to learn from your own experience and share it with other students.” Rosalie Kean (2010)

“I attended CSSG knowing no one and hardly knowing the language. I was able to meet people and form important relationships with both Germans and Canadians.” Briana Pilgrim (2011, 2012)

“The entire experience was amazing! A memory that specifically stands out to me is after classes going places with the other CSSG students and taking pictures, going out for supper, movies, studying together, it was a great way to form new relationships and it is something I will always cherish.” Ana Reynolds (2012)

“One of my favorite memories was a day some friends and I bought a Schönes Wochenende ticket to travel from Kassel to Hamburg. We rode the train for 6 hours to get there, spent about 6 hours in the city itself then took the 6 hour train ride back again. It seems ridiculous now but it was so much fun at the time! We chatted, played games, met new people… it was fantastic!” Liona Davies (2003)

“I met my husband in 2004. We ended up being from the same university and lived only 15 minutes from each other at home. We went back in 2005 to celebrate one year together.” Martina (2004, 2005)
Some Memories Shared by Alumni

“We went looking for a city tour bus in Berlin, and instead we ended up riding this awesome five-person tandem bike and getting a personalized tour by a local guide. And we ran into Feisal, who took our picture for the CSSG brochure. Other than that, my host family was amazingly sweet. I really enjoyed Berlin and Weimar, the football game, seeing Anne-Sophie Mutter at the Philharmonie, the singing everyone did at the school (Birthday Song and Das Fliegerlied), Tanzabend, and just overall the camaraderie of the teachers and students together was great.” Sara Marsh

“My host family housed two of us from the same program during the same year and we spent most of our time in Kassel tagging along with each other and sharing our experiences. One day, our host family had asked us to prepare “ein typisches kanadisches Abendessen.” My roommate and I had to think about this for days because most of the food in Canada already has an ethnic base like tacos, Chinese, and spaghetti. I had never thought critically about what it meant to be Canadian and what exactly was Canadian about me. My mother comes from a German background and much of my childhood had this incorporated within it. I was utterly confused and do not remember the food choice we made, but what sticks out to me is that this is the point in my life that I was able to identify who I was and what it meant to be Canadian. I am grateful for my CSSG experience and am ever so thankful for the positive implications the experience had on my life.” Jessica Comaniuk (2010)

“The time a group of CSSG students were sitting in the Mensa eating lunch and a German student came and asked to sit in the one remaining place at our table. He thought we were German and we had a great and very interesting conversation with him. I have many fond memories of eating with friends in the Mensa!” Suzanna Wagner (2012)

“My sister and I made friends with some of the people at the church where the classes were held and one guy gave us a ride in his Trabant. That was exciting for us as we had just been learning about East Germany in the course we had just finished prior to coming to CSSG. It was also just great to make friends with this guy and some of the others there and realize that they didn’t really speak English. If it hadn’t been for our German, we couldn’t really have been friends with them! A lot of times people think that everyone in Germany speaks English, but unless you are in a major touristy area, you may find a lot more people than you expect who don’t really speak it or at least are not that confident speaking it.” Annette Roth (2008, 2009)
“In 2008, the parents of the wonderful host family I stayed with got married so I got to see how German weddings are performed and celebrated. It was an amazing experience and I was very blessed to be part of their special day. I think the church ceremony was my favorite part, but the reception was amazing as well and though I didn’t know anyone besides my host family, the other guests were very welcoming to me and I had a great time.” Kelly Zinger (Gress 2005, 2008)

“Landing in Germany and arriving in Melsungen was like entering a Brothers Grimm Story. This was my first impression of Germany.” Len Busse (2002)

“My summer in Kassel was one of the most memorable and enjoyable, yet it was often the excursions that left the biggest impact. I will never forget the feeling of awe as I first saw Schloß Wartburg and walked through all of the rooms that were steeped in so much German history. Afterwards, while walking through Weimar and exploring the city, it allowed German history to truly come alive. While thinking back to Berlin and visiting the Reichstag, I have just remembered one of the most memorable experiences: our Bratwurst, Bratkartoffeln and Sauerkraut lunch in Eisenach!” Victoria Moodie (2009)

“Oh so many… perhaps the most striking was the experience of going to West/East Berlin for the weekend and needing to cross through the ‘active Checkpoint Charlie’ … feeling safe within our student group, yet remembering my mother’s stories of terror crossing through before the ‘wall’ went up. She never dreamed it would ever come down, I didn’t tell her I went across until I came home… then 10 years later we cried as we saw students celebrating with champagne, sitting on that wall, chipping it away with hammers, then in 1999 we went with our children to visit the ‘museum’ of Checkpoint Charlie and buy a ‘chipped’ wall piece. The ultimate full circle is our son Niel Parker participated in CSSG in [2010]. History experienced in a family…thanks for such enriching life experiences…it ripples on forever.” Ellen Parker (1979)
Elaine Schmidt (1977) said that this “is a good shot of my host parents (Herr & Frau Hoffman) and me in their living room. My study abroad experience in Kassel, Germany had a powerful impact in forming my enthusiastic attitude about lifelong learning and my career in language education. The combination of daily language study and almost daily cultural and recreational activities in the city and the region was fun and highly effective.

Our weekend excursion, including the Rhine tour, remains an enchanting memory. I was fortunate to stay with a kind and generous host family who enhanced my experience through including me in their lives, excursions and circles of friends. Later when my parents visited Germany, they too were kindly received as guests in the Hoffman home. All these years later, I continue to smile at the memories and to feel deeply enriched by the kind people, the beautiful city, and the broad range of new perspectives I encountered in Kassel.”

Jean Snook (1973) had many fond memories of the CSSG program and said “the program was 3 months then, from May 17 to mid August. I lived with a childless couple in their 50s in the beautiful suburb of Espenau, right at the edge of the woods. They had two dogs, so we went for long walks, and I soon knew the path through the woods to the rococo Schloss Wilhelmshthal and its Rapunzel-like tower. When a Canadian friend of mine came to visit me in Espenau, we went to Schloss Wilhelmshthal, and the groundskeeper kindly turned on the fountains by the summerhouse just for us. I’ll never forget it. I’m pleased that I got to mention Schloss Wilhelmshthal and the ambiance of Kassel years later when I wrote a contract essay on the Brothers Grimm.

I also learned some German history first-hand from the couple I was staying with. The man had fought in Stalingrad, and had returned with a “nervous heart.” “I slept in a separate apartment downstairs, and in the nights I could hear him, unable to sleep, stomping to the bathroom and running water in the tub to bathe his feet. Almost all his friends who survived that battle had died of their wounds and of the stress in the interim, and I received notification in 1978 that he had dropped dead of a heart attack while walking his beloved dogs in the woods. The price of war is horrendous.

I had taken German in Grades 11, 12, and 13 in my Toronto high school, then in first and second year university, and still, my initial feeling in Germany reminded me of when I was a very small child crawling around on the floor, could hear my parents talking (English), but did not understand a word they said. Believe it or not, I had that feeling for the first six weeks in Germany; then something clicked and I became totally fluent. If I had only been in Germany for a month or six weeks, I wouldn’t have had that sudden transition into complete understanding and verbal fluency.”
Warm greetings to all alumni of the Canadian Summer School in Germany!

I am writing to re-connect with you so that you can see what we have been up to since you attended CSSG. I hope you have enjoyed the results of our survey, as well as the photos and memories of your fellow alumni.

If you have not yet completed our alumni survey, I invite you to do so. Your input is so important to us! The link to the survey is on the back page of this report.

We are proud to say that the CSSG program is still going strong after 40 years! Our work has been recognized this year in that I received the 3M National Teaching Fellowship, in part due to my work with CSSG. This is such a great honour for me and for CSSG! Two of our instructors Feisal Kirumira and Lars Richter have also both been recognized with teaching awards. Thank you again to all the students who wrote in support of these awards!

Our students need our support. To this end, five years ago I personally established an endowed scholarship at the University of Alberta for the Canadian Summer School in Germany program— the Canadian Summer School in Germany 35th Anniversary Award. A $500 award needs an endowment of approximately $15,000. I am happy to say that we have reached that goal and we are moving on to supporting a second student for $500 per year!

Katerina Strohschein, from the University of Guelph, was the first recipient of this award in 2010. In her thank you letter, she writes: "I want to thank you immensely and sincerely for the world you opened up for me. I couldn’t have gone on the trip without your support. I absolutely loved Kassel and learning German by full immersion."

I also want to include a couple of comments from CSSG alumni donors. Jordan (2002) writes: “Das Kassel-Programm hat eine ganz besondere Bedeutung für mich und mein Leben gehabt, indem es als erstes europäisches Erlebnis gilt, und mir eine Liebe für Deutschland und die deutsche Sprache gegeben hat, die bis heute besteht. Ich will, dass so viele andere Studenten wie möglich an diesem wunderbaren Programm teilnehmen dürfen, und deswegen mache ich gerne einen kleinen Beitrag..."

Dennis (1992) writes: “It was a great pleasure to see how the CSSG program is still going strong after all these years. I took part in the program in 1992 and still to this day memories of that experience still bring a smile to my face. I wish as many people as possible could experience what I experienced."

I invite you to contribute to the endowment as you know the value of this wonderful immersion experience provides to improve not only students’ German language skills but also their intercultural competence. If each former CSSG student were to donate, we would soon have enough to support two students - and then three! I have enclosed a gift reply card in the hope that you will consider making a gift. I’ll keep you informed on how we are doing!

Herzlichen Dank und alles Gute!
Thank you to our alumni!

Thank you to all our alumni and especially those we have heard from so far. We have received valuable insights and testimonies about the CSSG program and have heard many amazing memories. Please pass on this newsletter and the following link to the survey to alumni you are still in contact with so they can complete the survey. We want to develop a network and keep everyone updated on the program and its progress. Let’s keep sharing the stories!

Visit our CSSG website (link below) to view more extensive results of the alumni survey including an alumni hometown map, suggestions for improvements, and more alumni stories.

To share more about your experiences in the CSSG program you are encouraged to complete the Alumni Survey, join the CSSG Facebook Page, or contact Director Kim Misfeldt

CSSG Website:
http://www.cssg.ca

Alumni Survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CSSGAlumni

Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/262230557231567/

Dr. Kim Misfeldt
Professor of German
Chair, Fine Arts and Humanities
Director, Canadian Summer School in Germany
Augustana Campus
University of Alberta
2-147, 2nd Floor Library
4901 46 Ave
Camrose, Alberta T4V 2R3
kim.misfeldt@ualberta.ca

Feisal Kirumira
Instructor, German
Instructor, Canadian Summer School in Germany
Augustana Campus
University of Alberta
4901-46 Avenue
Camrose, AB T4V 2R3
kirumira@ualberta.ca

Thanks to the generosity of our donors to the CSSG scholarship and University of Alberta International, all of these students received funding to help them attend CSSG 2013!