German Exchange Program

VFTH

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The educational exchange between Germany and America continues to grow here in Bowling Green at the high school and college level.

Amy Bingham shows us how the program has come full circle in this week’s View from the Hill.

WKU student teachers training in Germany, a German student teacher working here in Bowling Green and high school students from both countries getting to immerse themselves in each others culture.

Vera Banfer \ Student Teacher, BGHS

Kelli Ralston \ Union County Middle School Teacher

Heike Armbrust \ German Educator

Jill Price \ Treasurer, GAPP

Dr. Laura McGee \ WKU Dept. of Modern Languages

 “I’m kind of proud of it that I’m the first student teacher from Germany teaching in Bowling Green. “

Vera Banfer, a university student from Germany, is making the most of her five month student teaching stint at Bowling Green High school.

 “I’m allowed to prepare the labs, I’m allowed to correct the tests and quizzes.”

WKU graduate Kelli Ralston had a similar experience in Germany last spring.

 “It definitely inspired me to grow as a teacher and I became more confident in front of the class.”

Ralston now teaches social studies at Union County Middle School.

 “It’s good for me to have that international perspective. A lot of times it does interest students that you’ve been to a foreign country and I know all these tidbits about Germany and can share my personal experience.”

Both opportunities have a connection to Heike Arbrust, a German educator who is passionate about these collaborations.

 “There is more I can do to make the world smaller, get people interested and get more Germans to Bowling Green.”

Over the past six years, Armbrust has expanded the German American Partnership program or GAPP to three Warren county high schools.

 “It really is a special program where you’re just immersed in the culture and find out how alike we are.”

German high school students get to experience what life is like in Kentucky and vice versa.

 “It’s not just host a student once and it’s over, it’s lifelong friendships and it’s spreading through families and in the community.”

Dr. McGee says the high school exchange often has a spillover effect.

 “For me as a German professor here at WKU it’s so neat to see the students who want to continue German because they had that short term experience.”

For Vera, she looked no further than Heike, her 11th grade teacher, to help her find a student teaching opportunity in the states.

 “It’s a pleasure for me to be here. She’s a star in Bowling Green, everybody knows her name, everybody loves her.”

 “That kind of closes the circle for me”

Armbrust says another of her former students is scheduled to student teach at Warren Central High school next year.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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