



Director's Message
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Dear students, parents, and friends of the Victoria German School,

As the crisp autumn air settles in and the leaves turn to vibrant shades of gold and crimson, we're excited to share all the exciting things that have happened at VGS this fall so far, as well as to give you a heads-up about the upcoming events. We have a few obstacles to clear, but also plenty of reasons to look forward to the months ahead. On the downside, we are facing massive cuts in the German government grant for this coming school year, which we'll try to compensate somewhat by putting on a few fun-loaded fundraising events early next year, so stay tuned for more information.

On a more positive note, I am happy to inform you that many teachers from previous years continue to teach at VGS, giving our students a sense of continuity. The same applies to our administrator, Debbie Sherwood, who is still very committed to help the school. I would like to thank outgoing teachers Sonja Urzinger, Emma Eisner, Tugce Demir and Lisa Manzeneder, who have left us after many years at VGS. They have contributed tremendously to the school. All of them are still in contact with us, and we will surely see them from time to time at some of the school events like the Stammtisch or as substitute teachers in the classroom. New on the teaching team are Christine van der Stege, Stefan Dollinger and Christian Schmidt. You can find out more about them in this newsletter.

All in all, we have had a successful start to the school year. Our class sizes have grown a bit, but are still in a very reasonable range, the largest group consisting of 13 students. We were also able to find three volunteer class helpers for the larger groups and for the *Spielgruppe*: Leonie Horst, Nina Dollinger and Sienna Meyer are volunteering their time on Saturday mornings.

If you would also like to contribute in any way to our school, we would love to hear from you: Also, please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions. We are always happy to talk to you!

I would like to thank all of you for your continued support – Ich wünsche uns allen ein gutes Schuljahr!

Ralf

Save the Date!

December 8, 2024, 3-5pm: Star Sunday at St. Barnabas Church, 1525 Begbie St.

Hot apple cider, waffles, bonfire and lots of crafts. Create homemade Christmas gifts. All ages welcome!

December 10, 2024: Last day of Tuesday classes before the Winter break

December 10 is the last day for the Tuesday students, but we hope to see many of them at the Christmas party on the 14th.

December 14, 2024: VGS Weihnachtsfest at Christ Church Cathedral School, 912 Vancouver St.

The Christmas party will take place on the morning of December 14 in lieu of a school day.

New teachers at VGS for the school year 2024-25



Christine van der Stege (Kindergarten/Klasse 1) grew up in the beautiful Rhineland region in Germany. She is an Ethnobotanist (UVic), a forest school educator (Victoria Nature School) and the mum of two boys (Liam 8 & Noah 10). Christine believes in a learning environment that includes lots of play, exploration, nature, movement and group games.



Stefan Dollinger (DSD1) is a linguist at UBC and the proud holder of an Austrian teacher's degree for secondary and high schools. A few years ago, he taught German as a Foreign Language in Vienna. Nowadays he is doing much more abstract things with language (Canadian English, Austrian German, Chinook Jargon), so he has been looking forward very much to joining up with the DSD1 students to guide them towards the "Deutsches Sprachdiplom 1".



Christian Schmidt (A1 Klasse) moved to Victoria from Germany three and a half years ago. He was born and raised in Thuringia. Christian completed an apprenticeship as a bookseller ("Buchhändler") in Erfurt. After working in Weimar and Bremen, he moved to Leipzig in 2010, where he completed a degree in librarianship, a profession in which he still works today. Since 2022, he has been working at the UVic library, directly opposite the Clearihue Building, where VGS has its premises.

New ZfA Language Advisor (“Fachberater”) for Western Canada

What is the ZfA, and what does a language advisor do?

The language advisors for German as a foreign language work for the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA) and support schools with extended German programmes, which generally lead to the German Language Diploma of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (DSD). They advise the schools on the implementation of the DSD programme, conduct the DSD examination and provide the German teachers with subject-specific and methodological/didactic training. The language advisor for Western Canada is based in Edmonton and supervises German programmes in public and private schools in the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. (S)he is responsible for organising workshops and conferences as well as supporting schools with modern teaching and learning materials.

Andreas Meckes is leaving, Irene Mrázek is coming



After 8 years of being the ZfA language advisor for Western Canada, Andreas Meckes has returned to Bavaria, Germany. We will miss his expertise and his personal and friendly approach to liaise with VGS teachers and students. Andreas is followed by Irene, who moved to Canada in August 2024, after being based as a language advisor in Denver, USA from 2013 -2019 and working in teacher training in North Rhine-Westphalia

from 2019 – 2024. Irene will be visiting VGS for the first time in January, conducting the oral DSD2 exams. We are sure that she will be able to fill Andreas’ shoes.



Did you know?

A total of 92 students in all of Canada took the DSD1 exam in the 2023/24 school year, and 46 took the DSD2. VGS has contributed to these numbers by having conducted 8 DSD1 and 2 DSD2 exams!

Meet the new VGS School Board 2024-25

At the last AGM on Nov. 2, a new school board was elected. To the outgoing board members, I would like to express the community's heartfelt thanks for your service during your time on the VGS board. Your contributions have been valuable in guiding our school, and we appreciate the time and effort you've dedicated to help students and teachers alike. And voila - here is the new board:

President: Deborah Weber



Deborah has been with the Victoria German School since 2018. She is originally from Switzerland and has been living in Canada for 19 years. Deborah is a high school teacher, and loves chocolate, cheese, and languages, particularly Swiss German. She has two young children who are happily

enrolled in the VGS Saturday classes.

Vice President: Torsten Schoeneberg



Torsten comes from Dortmund and now lives with his Canadian-German family in Fernwood. He teaches mathematics for UVic and Camosun College. His daughter is in first grade at VGS, learning to read and write in German.

Treasurer: Tamino Yueksel



Tamino came to Canada in 2020 right at the beginning of the Covid crisis. Tamino works as a project coordinator at a construction company and his two kids, age 6 and 11, are both attending VGS.

Secretary: Alejandra Hergert



Alejandra was raised in Vancouver and moved to Berlin in her 20's where she met her "schwäbisch husband", Benjamin. While in Berlin she taught English at an International Kita, the kids in return, taught her "Kinder-Deutsch". The family lived in Vancouver for 9 years and had Sebastian, 8 and Romy 6 there, before relocating to Victoria in 2021. Alejandra loves traditional German Apflekuchen, Christmas markets and

the Pfand deposit slots for bottles in supermarkets."

Member at large: Trevar Pearce



Trevar is from Victoria and married into a German family. He has studied and traveled in Germany, most recently with his family, including his two daughters who both attend the VGS.

Member at large: Orion Emmerich



Orion is from Victoria, but has a German wife, and family throughout Germany who he likes to visit. His eldest daughter is currently in Kindergarten Klasse on the weekend.

Photo Gallery: Fall Impressions and St Martin!

