

WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS WHO WANT TO STUDY ABROAD



Dave and Bev Pfeifle, graduates of Williamston High School (Dave in 1963 and Bev in 1961), have recently established a memorial fund in their son's name to provide financial support to Williamston High students who wish to travel and study overseas. While now living in Colorado, the Pfeifles have especially strong ties to Williamston. Dave spent a full year in Germany as one of our first foreign exchange students. Bev is the daughter of Burnett Vauck, principal here from 1956 to 1969. Their ties to WHS, coupled with their very strong belief in the value of educational and cultural exchange, inspired them to make this generous gift.

Jeffrey David Pfeifle was killed in a car accident near Sherman, Texas in April of 1999. Jeff was 29 years old, and his death cut short a very special and promising life. Jeff graduated from high school in Iowa and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he obtained a degree in mechanical engineering. He married in 1994 and moved to Texas where he worked for Texas Instruments. In that setting he also coached high school students in robotic design and competition.

Jeff excelled at many things. He was extremely bright, exceptionally caring, his humor was contagious and he was a friend's true friend. He had a remarkable ability to make friends and relate well to others in a wide variety of circumstances. He credited that ability to his exposure as both a child and young man to other cultures and people on a far deeper level than most experience during the typical "foreign vacation." He had a great appreciation for the differences in language, customs and lifestyle of the friends and acquaintances he made so very far from home.

Dave's foreign exchange experience in 1962 began a relationship that continues today, and Jeff had the opportunity to become a part of that relationship. While Jeff and his sister, Christie, did not take part in a formal exchange program, they both traveled often with their parents and individually. They spent significant time with Dave's 'German family,' and experienced many of the diverse cultures that can be found in Europe.

The Pfeifles recognize the tremendous value of the continuing relationship with Dave's host family and the many broadening cultural and experiential opportunities that started with this exchange that took place nearly 50 years ago. They want to help make it possible for other students and their families to have similar experiences. The Jeffrey David Pfeifle Memorial Fund has been put in place to ensure that monies are available to assist students today and in the future.

Through the Pfeifle foundation funding, Williamston students have multiple choices in studying abroad, either long term (a semester or year), or short term (through the German Exchange program).

Long Term: Students interested in studying abroad for a semester or year should see Mrs. O'Rourke for an application and explore <https://greenhearttravel.org/> for more information. Students from Williamston have traveled to Australia and Ireland in the past few years and come back thrilled with their experience. Students stay with a family for the time abroad and go to school in the country of their choice. Studying abroad is a unique way to set yourself apart from the rest, meet new people, learn about the culture of another country and truly experience more of what the world has to offer.

Short Term: As part of the German exchange, families will host a German student from our sister school Wilhelm Gymnasium in Braunschweig Germany for 10 days in September or October depending on the year. At the end of the school year, students participating in the exchange will travel to Germany they will stay with a host family for 10 days. While they are in Braunschweig, the group will tour the area, experience German Schools, visit a castle, and create long lasting friendships. After the time with their host family, the students and 2 teachers will also travel to Berlin. In the past, groups have explored locations such as Museum Island, the Berlin Wall, the Reichstag, Jewish Museum, Berliner Dom, Brandenburg Gate, the Holocaust Memorial, and more. The German exchange is a great way to make connections and new friends.

Many opportunities are available for students to study as an exchange student in a wide variety of countries. Additional information is available through Mrs. O'Rourke. If you have specific questions, please contact Megan O'Rourke at orourkm@gowcs.net or 655-2142 extension 7950