

German Language School Ottawa Inc.

# FFST-SGHRIFT 1971-2022

50 Jahre + 1



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## Acknowledgements

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Cover photo: Jens Urban

### Our Board of Directors



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## Message from our President & our Chair

Dear Parents, Friends, Volunteers, and Supporters of the German Language School Ottawa,

"Better late than never" could be the motto for the 50th anniversary of the German Language School Ottawa. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the weirdest two years in the history of the GLS came to an unusual end in June. Despite this unexpected delay, we are now very happy to celebrate our 50th anniversary in year 51.

It feels like we just celebrated our 40th anniversary, but here we are 10 years later. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our teachers, assistants and volunteers for continuing to promote and teach not only the German language, but also the culture of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, as well as that of anyone else who grew up speaking German around the world. In fact, around half of our students have no family background related to one of the three main German-speaking countries.

The pandemic showed the strength of the German-speaking community in Ottawa. This was achieved in spite of having to switch to online classes and even online activities, such as Kinderkino, Weihnachtsfeier and Sommerfest. This proved to be challenging with 150 participants in a single video call! Everyone adapted quickly to the evolving situation, and the main goal was to stay in touch and offer some sense that the German speaking community was there to help everyone.

In any event, GLS Ottawa will get back to normal classroom teaching this fall, and what better way to celebrate this than with a 50th anniversary party!

Much has happened during the past 50 years. Thousands of students passed through the school, hundreds of teachers and volunteers carried the school from one year to the next, and, most importantly, lifelong friendships were formed. All of these people helped to contribute to the mutual understanding and respect of different cultures and to form a strong bond between Canada and the German-speaking nations. As we can once again see by looking at the current conflicts around the world, creating connections by learning other people's language and culture is one of the best ways to understand each other and create a more peaceful world.

A special thank you goes out to the German Ambassador Sabine Sparwasser and her team for providing us with a fitting venue for our celebration, as well as the support they have provided to make this a memorable event.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our sponsors, who include: the German government, the Austrian and Swiss embassies, and private companies and donors. Your support of the school is very much appreciated and helps the school accomplish its goals.

In closing, a big thank you to all parents, students, teachers and volunteers for the continued support they have provided to our school over the last 50 years.

We are looking forward to seeing the GLS Ottawa thrive for many years to come!

Jens Kull Axel Rex President Chairman

## Message from our Principal

Liebe Eltern, Schüler, Lehrer und Mitglieder der deutschsprachigen Gemeinde,



50 Jahre gibt es die Deutsche Sprachschule Ottawa nun schon. Ich hatte das Privileg in den letzten 17 Jahren als Lehrerin und Mutter aktiv in der Schule mitzuwirken und habe aus erster Hand erfahren wie engagiert Schüler, Lehrer und Eltern sind die deutsche Sprache und Kultur zu erlernen und zu vermitteln.

50 Jahre, ein halbes Jahrhundert, hat die deutschsprachige Gemeinde die

Schule unterstützt und es den Lehrern ermöglicht, einen interessanten und lehrreichen Unterricht zu gestalten. Trotz vieler Umzüge, einiger Schulbehördenwechsel, einer Pandemie und vielen Schneestürmen, haben es Schüler, Lehrer und Eltern immer wieder geschafft die Institution Deutsche Sprachschule Ottawa zu erhalten.

50 Jahre sind vergangen und wir haben uns den modernen Lernmethoden angepasst. Videos, Smartboards, online Klassen und Webseiten gehören jetzt zum Unterricht genauso wie Bücher, Hefte und Stifte.

Als frischgebackene Schulleiterin in diesem 51. Jahr des Bestehens der Deutschen Schule Ottawa möchte ich mich vor allem bei den Schuleitern der letzten 50 Jahre für ihr Engagement und ihren Ideenreichtum bedanken. Ein besonderer Dank auch an alle Lehrer und Assistenten der Schule, die in ihrem Unterricht die deutsche Sprache und in all ihrer Vielfältigkeit den Schülern näherbringen, sie dafür interessieren und sie so gut auf die Prüfungen vorbereiten.

Ich freue mich schon auf dieses neue Schuljahr und hoffe, die Schule im Sinne der Gründer in den nächsten Jahren so zu leiten, dass sie auch noch viele weitere Jahre bestehen wird.

Kirsten Löffler Schulleiterin

### Past Principals

1972 Johanna Schmitz

1972 - 1982 Christa Renken Gert Taudien Christine Fraser Annegrete Koch

1982 - 1984 Hannelore Moeller

> 1984 - 1991 Elke Barthel

1991 - 1998 Sylvia Grambart (initially together with Christa Selka)

> 1999 - 2005 Karin Haelssig

2005 - 2006 Stefanie Marcus

2007 (6 month) Renate Krieger

2007 GLS teachers

2008 - 2010 Elke Schaettgen

> 2010 - 2022 Gabi Kaindl

## Greetings from the German Ambassador Sabine Sparwasser





Grußwort für die Festschrift zum 50. Jubiläum der German Language School Ottawa

Sehr geehrte Lehrkräfte und Schüler:innen,

von Herzen gratuliere ich Ihnen zum 50-jährigen Bestehen der German Language School Ottawa!

Die Gründungsgeschichte ihrer Sprachschule ist eine Erfolgsgeschichte. Auf Wunsch der deutschen Nachkriegseinwander:innen und deren Kindern fand 1971 der erste Deutschunterricht mit 37 Schüler:innen in den Räumlichkeiten der Martin-Luther-Kirche in der ottawa'schen Preston Street statt. Seitdem hat sich vieles verändert. Die DSS ist mit mittlerweile etwa 250 Schüler:innen sowie 19 Lehrkräften die größte deutschsprachige Organisation Ottawas. Sie bilden einen wichtigen Teil des multikulturellen Mosaiks Kanadas.

Ihre tagtägliche Arbeit bietet den Schüler:innen die Chance über den Tellerrand hinaus- und tief hinein in unsere deutsche Kultur zu blicken. Mit ihrem unermüdlichen und bemerkenswerten Engagement tragen Sie einen großen Beitrag zu einem modernen Bild unseres Landes bei. Das ist eine beeindruckende Leistung, auf die Sie stolz sein können! Besonders in der heutigen Zeit, in welcher ein Krieg in Europa an den Grundfesten der westlichen Ordnung rüttelt und in welcher Klimawandel, Pandemie, Inflation unsere Bürger:innen bedrücken und verunsichern, ist der aktive Zusammenhalt gleichgesinnter Nationen von immenser Bedeutung. Dazu leisten Sie seit nunmehr 50 Jahren ihren Beitrag, auch dafür möchte ich Ihnen von Herzen meinen Dank aussprechen.

Ich hoffe, dass die German Language School Ottawa auch in Zukunft jungen Kanadier:innen unsere schöne deutsche Sprache und die Kultur Deutschlands näher- und möglichst viele junge Menschen unserer Länder zusammenbringen wird. Denn schließlich öffnet das Deutsche Sprachdiplom II, das auch an Ihrer Schule abgeschlossen werden kann, die Tür für das Studium in die sehr guten und kostenfreien deutschen Universitäten. Ich werbe dafür bei jeder Gelegenheit in ganz Kanada – und ernte immer erfreute Überraschung.

Ich wünsche Ihnen auch für die nächsten 50 Jahre viel Glück und Erfolg!

Same Germane

Sabine Sparwasser, Botschafterin der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in Kanada

## Greetings from The Honourable David McGuinty



#### THE HONOURABLE / L'HONORABLE

#### **DAVID McGUINTY**

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR OTTAWA SOUTH
DÉPUTÉ D'OTTAWA-SUD



#### German Language School Ottawa

As Member of Parliament for Ottawa South, I am delighted to congratulate the German Language School Ottawa on your 50+1 Anniversary!

There is no greater investment a society can make than in learning. Teachers nurture a culture of curiosity in Canada, empowering our youth to shape our future. Our government is proud to celebrate Canada's outstanding educators, who are inspiring Canadian children to reach their fullest potential and to succeed in the jobs of today and tomorrow. Thank you for enriching the lives of local youth through the learning of another language and culture.

The German Language School Ottawa is preparing its students to better compete in a global economy where languages are more important than ever.

As a parent, I sincerely congratulate you on 51 years of service to thousands of local families, and on your goals to help children and teens acquire a solid foundation in the German language in terms of speaking, reading, writing, grammar, literature, geography, history and culture.

I also understand that you have cultural programs running throughout the year to offer students an opportunity to enhance and practice their language skills, as well as to enjoy a variety of fun activities while deepening their understanding of some of the key traditions celebrated in German-speaking countries. This is a terrific initiative.

Thank you to the teachers, staff, parents, volunteers, supporters, and board of directors for your dedication over the last half-century. And thank you to the students, past and present, for all of your hard work as you all celebrate this incredible milestone!

Congratulations on 51 years of excellence! Herzlichen Glückwunsch!

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## Our History

#### Early Beginnings of German Instruction in Ottawa

Before the founding of the German Language School Ottawa, German was taught at Carleton College. In 1947, Dr. R. Hoff, who was an active member of the German community in the city, founded the German Language Club. While the club aimed to help students of German with their studies, it also became a hub in Ottawa for all those interested in the German language. The club ceased its activities in 1971.

1971: 37 students

#### The Founding of the School

By 1971, it appeared that interest in the community was big enough to explore the possibility of forming a German language school in Ottawa. In order to determine just how many families would be in support of such an undertaking, Ingrid Ruthenberg conducted a survey within the German community in March 1971. This survey proved beyond a doubt that the school would be able to count on the backing of the community. As a result, the German Language School Ottawa opened its doors and began its first year of instruction a few months later, on October 2, 1971, in the basement of the Martin Luther Church on Preston Street. During the first year, 37 students filled the classes of the school. Among the teachers, in this and the following years, were many men and women who were well-known and active in the German community (in alphabetical order): Elke and Volker Barthel, Elisabeth von Blödau, Brigitta Fernandey, Szlvia Grambart, Margarete Kath, Linda und Dieter Kiesewalter, Annegrete Koch, Bärbel und Werner Layer, Margarete Maurach, Ruth Mandoli, Hannelore Moeller, Reinhold und Elisabeth Pauk, Christiane und Rolf Ratzel, Christa Renken, Ilse Scheid, Johanna und Christiane Schmitz, Gerd Taudien, to name only a few. The work of all these individuals is remembered with gratitude.

In the early years, German classes were also offered at the German St. Albertus-Church on Parkdale Avenue. These classes eventually joined the German Language School Ottawa.

Space at the Martin Luther Church was limited. The students were divided into three classes, and the most senior of them, one teacher recalls "sat in the kitchen between stove and refrigerator."

Initially, the school operated under the umbrella of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft, ARGE, an organization founded in 1970 with the purpose of providing regular meetings for presidents and heads of German organizations. The ARGE promoted the teaching of the German language and lobbied for German instruction in schools. The ARGE entrusted the operation of the school to one of its constituent bodies, the German-Canadian Business and Professional Association. Rolf Ratzel became the school's administrator and Hans Wyslouzil the treasurer. Both were to serve the school for many years with skill and engagement. While the Business Association was responsible for the school's business, the principal was responsible for the course schedule, course content, and the hiring of the teachers. For its first year the school had a budget of \$1.570 and teachers received \$10 per teaching day.



#### Further Development

The space at the church quickly became too small and was generally not suited for teaching. The school moved to the High

School of Commerce on Rochester Street. In the second year of operation there were 96 students. The GLS Ottawa benefited from the Ministry of Education encouraging local school boards to open their schools for community purposes. These were the early steps towards the Heritage Language Program. The German school now paid a small amount per student to the Ottawa Board of Education. In 1974, the school moved again. This time to Glebe Collegiate, at Glebe and Bronson Avenues, where it stayed until 1990. It shared this space with other heritage language schools for several years. After this, budget cuts and changes in the Ottawa Board of Education forced the school to move around more than it had been used to. From 1991 to 1995, it found a home in Hopewell School, in the Glebe, in 1996 in the Continuing Education Centre on Cambridge Street, and in 1997, it moved to St. Thomas More School on Blohm Drive. This move happened after a switch to the Ottawa Catholic School Board. The credit classes had been separated earlier, and they were located first at St. Patrick's High School and later at St. Pius X High School. This arrangement provided difficulties for parents who had children in both elementary and secondary classes, but the board preferred it for reasons of efficiency.

It was important for the school to have a relatively central location to allow equal access from all parts of the region. This consideration has always governed decisions related to relocation.

In 1975 adults were, for the first time, admitted to the school as students, largely in conversation classes. The classes are still popular today.

When the Heritage Language Program was implemented, school boards were able to offer non-official languages as part of their continuing education programs. At the same time, the federal government made funds available to permit ethnic communities to maintain the program. This funding ceased in 1990 as part of budget cuts by all levels of government.

1994: 326 students

first chair: Annegrete Koch

1975: first adult conversation class

1983: incorporation of the school

#### Incorporation of the School

As enrollment increased and the administration became more complex, changes became necessary. While in the early years the school was largely run by an administrator, a principal, and a treasurer there was no formal administrative body. Decisions were generally made on an ad hoc basis, sometimes after consultation with the Business Association. The time had now come for the school to be independent and to move up to the level of other organizations in the German community. If this were not done, it was felt, its growth would be stunted. The ARGE, therefore, under its chairman Dieter Kiesewalter and vice-chairman Günther Bauer, launched a process by which it would cease to be the sponsoring body for the school.

This was, in the opinion of many, an important formative step in the development of the school, and it would give it greater standing in the community and among its peers. The reasons were, of course, also of an administrative and financial nature. The ever-increasing difficulties and the uncertainties connected with the operation of the school, registration, for example, could not be handled by a group of private individuals, however dedicated they might be. A corporate structure, particularly in the areas of funding and finances, with representation from all sections of the clientele, became very necessary.

The school had, up to that point, received little or no financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany or the Secretary of State. Successful efforts would now be made to obtain more of this kind of assistance. The Canadian Association of German Language Schools had always been ready with active support in teacher training and other areas of importance to the school, and it continued this help after the incorporation.

The incorporation was brought to a successful conclusion in February 1983 and a reception was held at that time, to celebrate and announce it to the world. Annegrete Koch, a former principal of the school, became chairperson of the founding Board of Directors.

A constitution was written by Reinhold Pauk and such other corporate instruments as statements of duties for the Principal and the Teachers' Representative were formulated. The school's business would henceforth be conducted in a more regular and formal manner. The board of Directors held regular monthly meetings from now on and a body of documentation began to be built up.

The immediate consequence of these changes was that Rolf Ratzel and Hans Wyslouzil, who had served the school honourably and with dedication from its beginnings now retired, feeling that the demands of the new structure would exceed their available time. Helmut Ernst Schreiber, who had already been involved with the school for some time, became Secretary-Treasurer. He was to serve faithfully and in varying capacities for many years to come. He was followed by Roy Engfield, who took over as Secretary, while the office of Treasurer was separated and went through many different hands. The school's administration, in addition to its educational direction, now became part of the principal's duties. At the time Hannelore Moeller, soon to be followed by Elke Barthel. Annegrete Koch remained as Chairperson on the Board of Directors until 1984. She was succeeded by Kurt Anders, a well-known local attorney who, together with Heidemarie Kelly, had taken care of the legal work of the incorporation and who remained as the school's Chairperson until the spring of 1994. A considerate and sensitive administrator, Kurt Anders enabled the school to grow and develop. Since then, there have been many members of the Board and people holding offices in the school, too numerous to mention here, but all of them hard-working and concerned for the welfare of the school. They are all remembered with deep gratitude.

#### Finally under one roof

When the French Catholic School Board implemented a community model of program delivery, the GLS was finally able to combine elementary and secondary classes under the same roof

Since 2017 classes have been taking place at École élémentaire catholique Sainte-Geneviève on Arch Street



#### School during the Pandemic

While the 2019/2020 school year had started like any other school year, it did not end like any other. On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the same day the first case was confirmed in Ottawa. Children did not return to their regular schools after March break and the German language classes couldn't take place in person anymore either. The school was closed. Teachers reached out to students and their families, providing information and links for online resources. The GLS Ottawa realized quickly that schools would not open any time soon and that classes would have to be taught differently. In order to figure out the best method, parents were asked to provide input on how to best move forward and manage challenges some families might face.

For the remainder of the school year, teachers sent weekly e-mails to their students with assignments. It was obvious that in-person learning would not return for the 2020/2021 school year either. Arrangements were made to provide online teaching. Classes took place on Saturdays and some classes had extra online time throughout the week. Teachers had to modify their lesson plans and deal with the challenges of teaching a language to children online. Even cultural events like Fasching, Weihnachten and Kinderkino were held online. Teachers, students and families can only be thanked for their continued commitment and support of the school.

Classes got together in person for the last day of school, and a Sommerfest was held at Petrie Island in June 2022.

## Not just Language Learning

#### Kinderkino

About 10 years ago the idea was raised to show German movies to students and their families. Kinderkino guickly evolved into a popular event at the GLS Ottawa with four to five movies shown every year. Even throughout the pandemic, Kinderkino brought students and their families. The plan is to continue organizing student exchanges together - online.

#### Sommerprogramm

The school's Sommerprogramm has been around for over **Deutsches Sprachdiplom** 30 years. It is usually four weeks long and takes place at the school. The program provides a great opportunity to advance German language skills in a more playful atmosphere, compared to regular Saturday school. It started out as a half-day program but has become full day in recent years. During the pandemic the Sommerprogramm did not Students can earn the DSD I and/or DSD II German Language take part every year. In 2020 it was held online.

#### Schüleraustausch

The GLS Ottawa has organized three student exchanges: in 2016 to Berlin and the two following years to Wiesbaden. The student exchange to Wiesbaden was in partnership with the Elly-Heuss-Gymnasium. Students stayed with a



quest family and participated fully in the classroom and the regular school schedule. In addition, a GLS Ottawa teacher accompanied the group to Germany, organized activities and a cultural program in and around Wiesbaden. In exchange, we hosted the German students from Wiesbaden in Ottawa.

between GLS Ottawa students and students from Germany to further cultural understanding and advance language skills

We offer preparatory courses for the German Language Diplomas DSD I and DSD II for high school students and young adults.

Diplomas as proof of their proficiency in German. More precisely, the DSD I Diploma serves as proof of the German language skills required to enroll in college-level courses in Germany. Students must be between 15 and 17 years old when they write the exam.



The DSD II serves as proof of the German language skills required to study at a German university. Students must be between 17 and 21 years of age at the time of the exam.

Each year between three and seven GLS Ottawa students take the exam.

#### Schülerzeitung

A school newspaper – Schülerzeitung is prepared at the end of each school year. All classes contribute to the paper. Reaching back to the 2005/2006 school year, the annual school newspapers have been uploaded to the GLS Ottawa website.



#### Unsere Welt am Samstag 2020-2021



#### Kaffeetisch

There is nothing like being greeted by the friendly volunteers behind the Kaffeetisch on a Saturday morning. The Kaffeetisch has been a staple at the school on Saturday



mornings for many, many years. Coffee, juice, cake, cookies, snacks and of course the all-time favourite: pretzels.

The Kaffeetisch also offers small lunches on the Saturdays when the school holds special events such as Kinderkino, or when cultural celebrations take place. There is always a long lineup for the delicious wiener sausages on a bun.

The funds raised at the Kaffeetisch allow the school to support cultural celebrations and other events.

#### Fasching



One of the cultural celebrations that takes place at the GLS Ottawa every year just before March break is Fasching, or Karneval. For this celebration of carnival, the children get to dress up as their favourite character, animal, etc. Each class prepares a short skit for the audience and at the end teacher and board members throw Kamelle – various kinds of candy – which the children get to catch.

#### Oktoberfest

In the years from 2013 to 2016 the GLS Ottawa held four successful Oktoberfest celebrations. The events took place in the basement of the Ukrainian Church and featured the Ottawa Rube Band, the Quodlibet Choir and various other musicians. In addition to the live performances, a



DJ entertained the guests with German pop songs. Most people came dressed in a traditional Bavarian outfit of Lederhosen or Dirndl.

The Oktoberfest celebrations were usually attended by 250 to 300 people, and everyone always enjoyed the German buffet and German beer.

The GLS Ottawa is hopeful to eventually organize Oktoberfest celebrations in Ottawa again.

#### **Nikolaus**



Traditionally children clean their boots on the eve of December 5. At night St. Nikolaus comes and fills them with treats.

At the GLS Ottawa St. Nikolaus visits every classroom on or around December 6.

#### Weihnachtsfeier



The last school Saturday before Christmas break is reserved for the annual Weihnachtsfeier. Just like for other cultural celebrations throughout the school year, families get together in the school's gym. The Weihnachtsmann (Santa Claus) makes an appearance and classes present songs, poems or short plays to the audience.

#### Sommerfest



The last Saturday of the school year is celebrated with Sommerfest at the GLS Ottawa. Report cards are presented to the students, and everyone gets together for a barbeque and cake.

#### Bibliothek

The school's library was started close to thirty years ago. In recent years it was completely digitized. Students and their families can search the online catalogue which lists the over 2,000 books that can be borrowed. The library is set up in the school's hallway every Saturday throughout the school year. The face of our friendly and knowledgeable librarian Monika Küng is well known to the students and their families.





Ich lerne Deutsch, weil es in Deutschland Spagettieis gibt und ich Deutsch sprechen muss, um es zu bestellen.

Ich lerne Deutsch, weil es meine Muttersprache ist und ich will sie in meiner Familie behalten.





## Videos over the Years



10 Jahre GLS Ottawa - 10 Years of GLS Ottawa

Jubiläumsvideo - Anniversary video (Film von/by Roland Pirker)



World Cup 2015 in Ottawa

ARD Sportschau



2018 GLS Ottawa image film



50 Jahre GLS Ottawa



www.glsottawa.ca

## Our partners













