

Summer in *Waldsee*: A German Language Immersion Program

During the summer, I participated in a German immersion program for four weeks. My interest in learning German began with the “Geography Fair” in the sixth grade. I was assigned Germany, and I became intrigued by its culture, history, scenery, politics, and language. I decided that, in order to most authentically experience the German culture, I would learn the language. While studying with a German professor from Valdosta State University during the eighth grade, I began to search for an immersion program in which I could advance my German language skills. Eventually, I found a Concordia Language Villages German immersion “village” called *Waldsee*, which is located in Bemidji, Minnesota.

Concordia Language Villages (CLV), a program of Concordia College, is comprised of multiple language villages located in various parts of northern Minnesota, with a total of thirteen language villages, including *Waldsee*, which was the first to be founded in 1961. Many different sessions, including one-week, two-week, four-week, and four-week for credit, are offered. CLV strives to immerse “villagers” into the target language while implementing cultural aspects, such as history, cultural festivities, and consumption of native foods.

To best improve my German proficiency, I chose the four-week session for credit, which was the equivalent of one year of German. Throughout the four weeks, I typically had a total of three hours of class daily, in which I learned grammar, vocabulary, and topics relevant to German culture and society, as well as two additional electives regarding history and current politics of Germany. I participated in a model United Nations summit with other villages discussing the Refugee Crisis. A typical day also included singing and a night program, which was often based on a cultural festival. While there, I spent eleven days speaking only German. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at *Waldsee*, and I hope to continue studying both the German language and the German culture.