

Arrowhead Park High School Students Receive German Travel Scholarship Awards



Arrowhead Park High School students with their German travel scholarship checks of \$500 each – tucked into yellow envelopes. Next to the students are representatives of the scholarship sponsors. (Photo by Monica Aguinaga)

May 21 will be a very special day for twelve Arrowhead Park High School (APHS) students and their teachers, Tracy Bennett and Jeffrey Johnson. That's when they will travel to Nienburg on the Weser River, Las Cruces's German Sister City. For three full weeks, they will experience family, community and school life, interspersed with excursions to nearby cities such as Hamburg and Bremerhaven as well as to Berlin, Germany's capital.

They will be returning the visit of sixteen German exchange students, their teacher Thomas Volkhausen and their principal Dr. Ralf Weghoeft, who came to Las Cruces and APHS this past fall. The student exchange started in 1986/87 between Albert-Schweitzer-Schule/Nienburg and Mayfield High School (MHS), where it continued for more than twenty years. It then moved on to Centennial High School and is now at APHS. During the current exchange cycle, it does not just take place within the framework of the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) but also under the umbrella of the Las Cruces-Nienburg Sister Cities Affiliation, which arose in 1993 from the student exchange.

In preparation for their stay in Germany, all twelve APHS-GAPP students took Oklahoma State University's German Level 1 Online course. In addition, seven of them completed eighteen German "Konversation" hours with retired MHS German instructor Ingrid Luchini who introduced the GAPP to Las Cruces and sponsored it for the first fifteen years. Just before spring break, these seven students received a \$500 scholarship each towards travel expenses. Three of the students also shared \$250 which Hermann Martens, the first Albert-Schweitzer-Schule GAPP sponsor, had made available to "Konversation" students with the best attendance and diligence.

Four \$500 scholarships from the Las Cruces-Nienburg Sister Cities Affiliation were received by **Katie Heitman, Marina Moore, Diego Robinson, and Charlotte Stalker;**

Two \$500 scholarships from the local "Freunde der deutschen Sprache/Friends of the German Language" went to **Jennifer Bencomo and Brynna Garrison;**

The \$500 "Gavin Luchini Memorial Scholarship" was awarded to **Laylah Russell.**

Las Cruces-Nienburg Sister Cities Affiliation Treasurer Christine Conway (photo, left), Vice Chair Erda Hillmann, and Youth Exchange Organizer Ingrid Luchini (photo, right) presented the checks. The three are also active in "Friends of the German Language".