



TWIN CITIES
**German
Immersion**
SCHOOL

ALUMNI FEATURE

TIA RUH CLASS OF 2014

Tell us more about your TCGIS experience. What did you appreciate about TCGIS?

It was a very singular experience for the students who grew up alongside TCGIS- I mean literally grew up while witnessing the school grow with them, pioneering a new grade level each year. The grade ahead of my class was the first graduating class in TCGIS history, and our grade was the first to run the entire K-8 circuit. A graduating class of 11 students creates a really special class atmosphere, especially considering how many have known each other since their first day of school. We were also bonded by virtue of being the Testkaninchen for TCGIS's budgeting school curriculum and pedagogical philosophy, and our experiences and feedback directly influencing that formation and traditions. It's incredible that the school has grown so much and that so many students are now able to learn German, it really is impressive. But a lot of my most treasured memories centered around school-wide projects and events we did as a school community, like die Kulturwoche, die Deutsche Übernachtung, der Gemeinschaftsgarten... and those kinds of things would be almost impossible to replicate on the much larger scale of the TCGIS student body today.

You recently accepted a position teaching German in Billings, Montana - congratulations! Can you tell us more about this position and any upcoming trips to Germany?

Although I did NOT plan to start teaching so soon, I was inspired to work with the Billings school district's incredible German teachers, who are nationally recognized leaders of the teaching community when it comes to creative and contemporary German pedagogy. But with my newly reliable salary, I plan to travel to Germany in my summers off and become a volunteer farmhand through the WWOOF organization.



How do you feel your time at TCGIS helped prepare you to get to where you are today?

Growing up with German and within the TCGIS environment is an experience unparalleled in value for students who truly seek to become bilingual. Even when circumstances forced our family to take a leave from my TCGIS education, the foundational language skills I had learned from kindergarten through fourth grade proved to be retained well enough that I could jump right back into learning even after 3 years with minimal German exposure. There was no German program at my high school, but the positive attitude surrounding language learning fostered by TCGIS drove me to try learning Spanish, which I took for 4 years. It wasn't until my junior year of college that I found myself missing German so much that I changed my major to German Studies- and even with a 6 year hiatus from regular practice, I was able to communicate at a college level and test out of years of language credits, which even helped me graduate early. I attribute that language fluency and passion to my early start at TCGIS, and the way in which I learned German there.