

Liebe Waldseer!

Willkommen in Waldsee – Welcome to *Waldsee*! We're looking forward to seeing you! I'm writing to tell you a few things about our *Waldsee* community this summer.

Registration hours on opening Monday are between 2:00 pm and 4:30 pm. Please try to come during this period as the staff needs time before you arrive to prepare and time after you arrive to get to know you and help you settle in before the evening meal.

Just like any trip abroad, arriving at *Waldsee* means going through *Zoll* (customs) and the traditional customs inspection. The Concordia Language Villages office is sending you a passport. Please have it ready when you arrive. It will be stamped and your luggage checked for *Schmuggelwaren* (contraband), which is outlined in the [Parent's Handbook](#). I also ask that you not bring food items, such as candy, cookies, chips, etc. because keeping these items in the cabins can become a health risk and attract little woodland creatures into our living areas. Since we are an immersion program, cell phones are another item that will not be allowed to be used during your stay at *Waldsee*. Any medications (including non-prescription drugs such as aspirin) will be kept and distributed by our health-care provider. Don't worry! Everything that is not a food item will be returned when you leave. Unfortunately, we do not have the ability to store contraband food items – these items will be donated to the local food shelf. We just want to offer a real living and learning experience with the German language and German-speaking cultures--it's all part of the *Waldsee* game.

Your journey then begins when you choose a German name, get a *Namensschild*, or name tag, and exchange your American dollars for *Euro*, which you will deposit in your *Waldsee* bank account. We have two village stores ([Café Einbeck](#) and [KaDeWa](#)) where you can buy European candy, snacks and souvenirs.

You'll then be able to settle into your new home in a [Haus](#) (cabin) named after a German, Austrian or Swiss city. Your [Betreuer](#) (counselors) are from German-speaking countries or Americans who have studied German extensively or lived in German-speaking countries. They'll be on hand to help you settle in and answer any questions you may have about the German language or life at *Waldsee*. Cabin assignments are made carefully in advance according to several factors, so please respect this decision.

Also, as you pack remember to bring your camera (since many cameras look alike, it would be a good idea to label it with your name), your musical instrument if you play one, clothes for all types of weather, including cold and wet weather, and a native costume (like a [Dirndl](#) or [Lederhosen](#)), should you have one. We never really need real "dress up" clothing, although we might have a German restaurant and dance night, at which the clothes you were playing *Handball* in all week might not be appropriate. The mosquitoes in Minnesota love to learn German at *Waldsee* too, so mosquito spray and flashlights are particularly useful *am Abend* (in the evening). The most important things to bring, however, are enthusiasm and an open attitude to new experiences. You'll

have a chance to wash your clothes at a laundromat in Bemidji during our interim weekend between the first and last two weeks.

We're also going to learn a lot of German, and we're going to have fun doing it! The counselors are both caring and a little wacky--many come back year after year from both Europe and all across America because of the great time we have. If you're returning, we have some of the best aspects of past *Waldsee* summers ready for you, plus some great new things to offer! And if you're coming for the first time, don't worry--we'll do everything we can to make you feel comfortable, make friends, have fun and learn a lot in *unsere Gemeinschaft* --our *Waldsee* community.

We're excited that you have chosen to join us for our [four-week middle school program](#)! There will be enough variety during the four weeks to keep things interesting, and I know you will meet many *Freunde* – friends -- along the way! Since our four-week program will coincide with two of our [two-week](#) sessions, there will be a short “interim” break during the weekend between these two sessions. You will have a chance to go into town, wash your clothes, get any other necessary items you may need for the next four weeks, and then join us back at *Waldsee*. *Waldsee Betreuer* will join you in town, so everyone feels comfortable and safe!

For each of the two-week sessions you can choose a variety of experiences. In addition to participating in our regular two-week program, you may want to opt for one of our special ["adventure"](#) programs that will be going on at the same time. You might want to participate in the “normal” two-week program during the first two weeks, and then perhaps you might want to choose an adventure program for the second two weeks. You can decide when you are with us at *Waldsee*, but it might help to think about it a bit beforehand as well.

Also, July 8 is [International Day](#) at *Waldsee* -- all the other Language Villages come to our site for a celebration of language and community. Parents and the public are welcome. The Language Village office will be sending you more information.

Because *Waldsee* is an immersion program that simulates a visit to another country, parents are discouraged from making non-emergency calls to you. However, your parents should feel free to call me with any questions or concerns. Remind your friends and family to write to you while you're away at camp! We will distribute mail once a day Mondays through Saturday. The address you can share with them is listed below. Your family may also use our free one-way e-mail service by using [this link](#). We will print e-mails and deliver them during mail call.

At 10:00 am on the last Saturday of your session we put on a closing program for your parents and the public. After that it will be time to say *Auf Wiedersehen in Waldsee* and you can be on your way by about 11:15. Please remind your family not to arrive before 9:30 am because you will be busy packing and preparing for the program.

Please let us know if you or your parents have any questions before you leave. The [handbook](#) can answer many questions -- or you can call the Language Villages office in Moorhead, Minnesota.

If this is your first time at *Waldsee*, I look forward to meeting you. If you are returning, I look forward to seeing you again and to have another unforgettable *Waldsee* experience!

We've put together a [Waldsee website](#) that has a lot of additional information, photos, videos from past years, and much more. If you want to learn more about the different programs we offer, click on "[Programme/Curriculum](#)" tab. If you would like to read about what life is like in *Waldsee*, click on the "[Village Life](#)" tab. This website will be updated throughout the summer, so let your friends and family know the address before you leave. They can also view pictures from *Waldsee* on our [Flickr site](http://www.flickr.com/waldsee) (<http://www.flickr.com/waldsee>).

Make sure your family and friends all have your address so you can receive mail while you are at *Waldsee*! [Here](#) are some great letter-writing tips you can pass along to your friends and family. Your address at *Waldsee* is:

Your Name (& Cabin Name, if known)
Waldsee – Session GB ##
9550 Ruppstrasse NE
Bemidji, MN 56601

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

“Berndt”
Jon Berndt Olsen
Dean of *Waldsee*