

*Hello everyone and welcome back,
The third time's the charm.*

*Before I am going to start I want to dedicate this blog entry to two people; the first one being
- Mrs. Rohde*

without her extraordinary character and termination to go above and beyond for her students, I would not be where I am today. Therefore, I can not tell my story without mentioning the impact and significance Mrs. Rohde played in it through her never-ending support and help.

Thank you.

Secondly and lastly, I am writing this entry to my six months younger self, assuring her that things will be alright. That the fog is only temporary and just one of the many companions in life, but like every other weather phenomenon, every fog will lift eventually, unveiling the possibility of sunshine.

Additionally, I want to tell her that she will have learned more about herself than she ever imagined this journey to teach her. And yes, Anna, in the end, you will be going to your first real prom and even experience the beauty of finishing the school year together with your friends.

Now on to the blog entry,

When the devastating news of me needing to return to Germany was delivered to me that random Tuesday at the end of November, it felt like the air was sucked out of my lungs and body, leaving me with both a paralyzed but yet so very present shell of my body.

While I can not remember a lot from this day, my mind does.

My mind very vividly recalls all the emotions I felt.

It recalls all the hundred back then unanswered questions.

It recalls the exact feeling of seemingly a thousand emotions piercing through my body.

Therefore, even now almost six months later, that random Tuesday at the end of November is not forgotten. This young woman and all of her worries and fears are not forgotten as I carried her with me on every past random Tuesday and will carry her with me for every random Tuesday to come. However, she won't be a reminder of 'failure' or 'agony', she will count as a reminder of how far this young woman writing this blog entry today has come.

Disregarding all the emotions and unclarity I endured in November, I was still certain of one thing: I want to come back to the US. I want to use my time, instead of letting it go to waste by sitting in lectures and classes, I would be attending anyway next year. Moreover, the fear and wish to not 'waste' time was a key motivator for me to keep trying and get behind following and realizing my dreams. Therefore, while November and early December were months of needed recovery and taking care of myself, I started the new year with a goal and plan. Meaning that January was the month of '**searching**': for options, schools, visas, and most importantly host families. Like in every 'search' I and my family received a lot of setbacks and rejections. Ending January with waiting for a yes, February rolled around and started with the long-awaited 'yes, that might work out'. Of four schools in different states, one was the most promising - the Alexandria Monroe High School in Indiana, our partner

school since 2003, and the school I had the pleasure of visiting in 2019 with GAPP. To conclude, February was the month of **,finding'**. Thus, March was already the month of **,realizing'** my plan until mid-March I could finally take off to the land of thousand opportunities and chances.

Truthfully, I did want to write this blog entry sooner. However, one of the lessons my stay in St. Paul has taught me is to enjoy every second. Enjoy every moment, without distractions, and take it in: Life in the present. Therefore, you guessed it, April marked the beginning of another journey and was all about **,living'** in the present and appreciating every second of the ups and downs it holds.

Now there you have it, a quick summary of my last past months and how I got back to the US. Looking back I am proud of what we have accomplished.

I am proud of how this back then very 'scary' and 'foggy' future of mine has turned into this now full of sunshine suffused present.

no literally.

As for the last few days, you can even take this metaphor literally as temperatures have been at an all-time high of 30 degrees celsius. Can you guess where I am now?

No, I am not in one of the sunny states of the United States like Florida or California nor am I getting sunburned in Mallorca with some of my fellow Germans. As of March, I have returned to my second safe place the US, where I have been staying with an amazing host family back in small-town Alexandria and so far it has been nothing but amazing.

I live in a big family of six people and not to forget two Pitbulls, going by the iconic names 'Bonny' and 'Clyde'. Living with my big family never fails to surprise me, like my loving host mom always says: 'you never know what will happen when living with us'. Oh boy, she is right about that in the best way possible. Whether it is spontaneously ending dinner to get some ice cream to celebrate my (host) sister's win at her meet, waiting five hours at the hairdresser instead of the expected two, or surprising dance-offs in the living room.. this stay so far has been very far from 'boring' due to five reasons or shall I say, people.

Starting with the youngest, my little (host) brother Hunter (10 years old), my not so little (host) sister Summer (13 years old), my (host) parents Steve and Rainy, and last but not least my sister Wynter (17 years old). Not only have I been sharing a room with her, but we also share the same humor, music taste as well as love for true crime podcasts.

Knowing how hard it is to find a good match when it comes to host families, I really got lucky three times in a row making me feel at home yet again in a different part of the world.

Recalling my time here so far inevitably forces a big smile to appear on my face. Let me quickly skip through my favorite moments of the last few months.

Since my first day at Alex High School, I have been welcomed by not only Mario, the German teacher, whose help and support I also have to credit in this blog, but also by many students and friends of Wynter. Making me immediately feel like part of the school and community. Therefore, going to school, and hanging out in the library with some of my now already very close friends and our awesome librarian Mrs. Rambo marks for sure some of my favorite moments of the last month. Additionally, some of the best times I have had so far were always when going on a so-called "little adventure" with either Wynter or my friends Neida, Bri, Jasmin, Maddi, and Sydney. Together as a group or individually we searched through multiple thrift stores, went on college visits, prom dress shopping, on a dance marathon, mini-golfing, Easter egg hunting, and theater visits all while taste testing the fast food places I haven't been to yet.

This little recital of not even half of our little adventurous gives you a picture of the beautifully chaotic and fun days I had so far. Having reached page three on google docs makes me come to an end with this blog entry. In the next one, I will be telling you all about my first prom, my time in Kings Island (Ohio), Brownsberg as well as the last weeks of school.

Until then, wishing you all of the best.

Anna



My host sister Wynter and I on our way to school.



Since my arrival I have been co-teaching the seventh grade in German with Mr. Borzabadi (Mario). This is only a little insight in how energetic they are.



Wynter has passed the praxis part of her CNA test, yay. Congratulations!



Going to the Muncie fare



Prom dress shopping at David's Bridal



My friends Jasmin, Sydney and I after having spent hours dancing during the dance Marathon.