



# THE JOURNEY OF KAREN BOWMAN C.

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange  
High School Alumna, 1989-1990  
German Language Teacher, Salem, New Hampshire

Karen's immersive experience learning the German language and culture shaped her teaching philosophy.

Karen grew up in rural Maine. Her high school Spanish teacher inspired Karen to look for exchanges. Because CBYX is fully funded, Karen applied.

Karen was in Germany on the CBYX program when the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989, which made her appreciate the political freedoms the United States offers.

Through CBYX, Karen learned independence and new ways of approaching problems, including her immediate need of finding money to go to college.

Karen went to college and became certified to teach both German and Spanish. Since 2000, she has built up the German program at her current high school. Her CBYX experience directly impacted how she teaches language today.

Karen takes her students on trips to Germany for real-world practice. She believes that personal exposure to new languages and cultures expands people's minds and makes them more open to other perspectives. To mitigate rising costs for her students' families, she launched her own LLC to coordinate student trips at a reduced price.

In 2020, Karen was awarded District Teacher of the Year and Best Language Teacher in the State.

CBYX builds resumes. It makes you more likely to get other scholarships. I got two scholarships while I was in college, so my tuition was covered.

I didn't learn German the textbook way. I learned it by having to use it. It's such a powerful message to these kids. Just that they have the confidence to try.

Exposure is the antidote to closemindedness.