



# THE JOURNEY OF RYAN C.

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange  
Vocational Alumnus, 2001-2002  
Research Scientist, New York Department of Health

**Ryan's CBYX internship was the stepping stone for him to pivot into the field of biology.**

In the U.S., Ryan's family hosted several exchange students. He joined high school trips to Europe, which fueled his interest in travel. A teacher told him about CBYX.

Ryan had no German language knowledge when he arrived in Germany for his exchange year. His host family helped him practice daily and gain confidence in navigating a new language and culture.

As part of his CBYX vocational program, Ryan worked in a molecular biology lab. He learned the basics of biology research techniques and even helped publish several papers.

After his exchange, Ryan pivoted careers to archeology to continue to learn about other cultures.

Ryan ultimately decided to return to biology and for more than a decade has built his skillsets with hands-on work in several laboratories. Today, he conducts research on molecular genetics and bacterial microbiology.

The vocational program allowed him to determine his own personal and professional priorities.

I know exchange students. Why can't I be one?

A lot of my language from the year, I owe to my host family. They tried to make sure I kept up with the German.

I thought 'If I can learn German and I can work in a lab and I can get by with the language, I can probably do most things if I put my mind to it.' And I went and I completely switched gears. I was an archeologist.

Where I live currently and what I do for my job currently is inextricably linked to the fact that I had that internship.

What I gained from my experience in Germany was worth more than getting right into college. Overcoming a year abroad and how it impacts you is a really useful and important way to grow as a young person.