

From The Junior Year In Munich Class Of 1968-69

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April 13, 2005

Dear fellow Junior Year in Munich Alum:

"This was the best year of my life."

If this is your feeling when you think back on your Junior Year in Munich, you're certainly not alone! We are two alumni from the class of '68-'69. After some of us went to Munich in 2003 for JYM's 50th Anniversary reunion and had a great time, there was a lot of interest to have a reunion of our class stateside. A group of us got together for Oktoberfest in Cincinnati last fall – many of us hadn't seen each other for 35 years, but we had no problem reconnecting. In the Garten of the Hofbräuhaus nearby, we looked at old photos, and naturally we reminisced about that special year in our lives. Our experience of JYM is linked inseparably with our memories of Frau Doktor Riegler, who joined JYM as an instructor in 1955 and was JYM's Resident Director from 1961 to 1994. We heard about the honorary degree she received at the reunion, and the shock of hearing her acceptance speech given in English!

That's when the idea came up of a scholarship fund in her name. What better way to honor the person who more than anyone embodies JYM to us? Alumnus Jerry Stonewater wrote to "FDR" to tell her of our plan and ask her blessing. Here's part of his letter:

"While there are many study abroad programs, there is none that is as well respected as JYM. There is no question in our minds that its success is greatly due to your leadership, your commitment, and your dedication to helping us all become citizens of the world. You held the program, faculty and students to high intellectual standards and created an environment of challenge and support from which we all benefited. One cannot encounter a JYM student who doesn't reflect on the life-altering impact their German experience had upon them. For this we thank you."

Dr. Riegler responded in part [where's that German dictionary?], *"Was JYM war und ist, ist es nur durch seine Studenten....Habe ich tatsächlich verdient dafür gelobt und geehrt zu werden, daß ich so privilegiert war, Jahrzehnte meines Lebens als Beruf das tun zu dürfen, was mir die größte Freude bereitet hat?...Ich freue mich über Euren Plan. Für mich setzt er ein jahrzehntelanges Glücksgefühls fort, das ich empfinden durfte, weil ich fast 3000 JYM Studenten für einen kurzen Abschnitt ihres jungen Lebens begleiten durfte."*



So, we're setting up the "Dr. Marianne Riegler Scholarship Fund" as an endowed fund, with the proceeds to help needy and deserving students to experience what we had the tremendous privilege to experience. I hope you're as excited about this idea as we are! This is a great opportunity for us to give something back in gratitude for our own JYM year, to honor a woman who dedicated herself to us for over three decades, and at the same time to help a younger student experience the "best year" of his or her life.

JYM Director Mark Ferguson has been a great help and is enclosing an accompanying description of the fund, which will be held by Wayne State University and will be entirely dedicated to the JYM students. As with other charitable activities, your gift or pledge is tax-deductible, you can give stock or other assets, etc. Our goal, which is the minimum needed to start an endowment fund, is \$25,000. If you prefer, you can spread your gift out over up to four years. The important thing, of course, is that you express your thanks with heartfelt generosity.

Please respond soon with your gift or pledge. We hope, and expect, you'll be generous. And we also hope perhaps we'll meet, or meet again someday, with a hearty and joyful "Grüss Gott!"

Sincerely,
George Riley



Don Verity

