



German American
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of the Midwest Inc.
Minnesota Chapter

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German American Chamber of Commerce Awards Four Scholarships to Minnesota High School Students

Minneapolis, February 24, 2010. On Friday, February 19, the Minnesota Chapter of the German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) awarded four scholarships valued between \$250 and \$1,000 to four Minnesota high school students who won this year's GACC German Essay Writing Contest. The winners were Corbin Gillen from Maple Grove High School, Jenna Blake from Wayzata High School, Yalonda Nelson from Wadena High School, and the first prize winner Thomas Schultz from Mora High School. The awards were presented during a dinner celebration at the German American Institute (GAI) on historical Summit Avenue in St. Paul.

In a time of heavy cutbacks for German as a foreign language at high schools state wide, the Minnesota Chapter of the GACC encourages students to continue studying German – the award money is tied to spending it for the German learning experience. Asked how this year's winners are planning to invest their award money, Corbin Gillen said: "I will take additional German courses in college with the goal of eventually traveling to Germany when I am fluent". Jenna Blake, Yalonda Nelson, and Thomas Schultz have their minds made up to go to Germany in 2010 as part of their high schools' exchange program. First prize winner Thomas Schultz presented his German essay on '*What is typical German today? Facts versus Stereotypes*', and ends it by explaining "It was one of my best decisions to visit Germany (...) because I learned people are people and we have more in common than we have differences."

Promoting business between U.S. and German companies is the mission of the GACC. The local Minnesota Chapter views fostering the German language skills of young Americans as critical. "As the next generation of business leaders they will have a better understanding of the culture of their future German business partners and be able to communicate more effectively," explains Luebbert Kruizenaga, President of the Minnesota Chapter of the GACC. The German Scholarship Program was established in 1998, and has awarded a total of \$35,000 in scholarships to high school students in Minnesota.