

German alumni association celebrates 10th anniversary

A decade ago, enthusiastic Rotary Foundation alumni in Germany formed an association to share their individual experiences abroad and build a network to carry out Service Above Self.

More than 130 German Foundation alumni gathered in Munich, 24-26 October, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the association, called Rotary Foundation Alumni Deutschland (RFAD).

"Mostly Ambassadorial Scholars and Group Study Exchange members but also Rotary Volunteers came to celebrate, get informed about what is taking place, network, reconnect, and take part in planning for the future," says Jürgen Wente, Rotary Foundation alumni coordinator for Zone 14 (west).

The program began on a crisp but sunny afternoon with a walking tour of Munich that focused on architectural landmarks. The festivities continued in the evening with alumni sharing fellowship over a traditional Bavarian meal at a local restaurant.

The following day, alumni and Rotarians gathered in Munich's BMW Pavilion for the main program. Franz Thurner, the celebration's BMW host and a member of the Rotary Club of München-Land welcomed the gathering, followed by video congratulations from Thomas Goppel, Bavarian state minister of Sciences, Research, and the Arts. Past RI Treasurer Hans Müller-Rech also spoke to the group, and Rotary Foundation General Manager John Osterlund and Ray Klingensmith, RI president-nominee and chair of the Rotary Foundation Alumni Advisory Committee, delivered video messages.

Alumni then heard reports on what RFAD has achieved since its founding, including its contribution to seminars

for outgoing and incoming scholars and members' participation in service projects and the first Rotary Alumni Celebration in Los Angeles in June. They also received a video message from Christiane Miethge, the first Ambassadorial Scholar to be funded through a gift from RFAD.

The afternoon session featured group discussions and workshops on efforts to connect with other alumni associations around the world, promoting more alumni activities in Germany, RFAD's role in Rotary's efforts to match the Gates Foundation's challenge grants for polio eradication, and potential improvements to the RFAD Web site.

Afterward, alumni headed to BMW's world headquarters for a special tour of the BMW Museum, followed by a reception and dinner at the Maximilianeum, home of the Bavarian Parliament. Alumni who studied music during their scholarship entertained diners with their talent, and Müller-Rech touted the importance of Rotary's efforts to end polio. German alumni responded by raising more than US\$1,700 for Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge (see page 1).

On the celebration's last day, alumni toured the exhibit "Walt Disney's Wonderful World and Its Roots in European Art" at the Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung in central Munich. They also enjoyed traditional Bavarian food and fellowship at a beer garden and restaurant at the Chinese Tower.

"Participants in the celebration found it altogether informative as well as entertaining and instructive, showing the way that had been (followed) so far and motivating everybody to get active in the future," Wente says.



Keiji Nishikawa (ASCS-06 Japan to Germany)

Alumni gather in Munich to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Rotary Foundation Alumni Deutschland.