

DAAD Alumni Association USA - 2021 events.

Welcome Letter by DAAD-AA President | Dr. Helena Kane Finn

by Dr. Helena Kane Finn | DAAD-AA | President

Welcome DAAD-AA Alumni,

We wish you a very Happy New Year 2022!

The Omicron virus appears to be receding, making it very likely that we'll be able to resume many of our in person activities. Despite the challenges created by Covid, DAAD/AA has been very successful in promoting the programs and events that are described in this Newsletter. We are deeply appreciative of the support we have received from our Alumni and friends of the DAAD. Their generosity enables us to provide academic opportunities for a future generation of students and to organize events that enable the DAAD Alumni to meet and network with one another.

Current events in Europe have made it evident that the German-American partnership is more important than ever before. Through our exchange programs, we are strengthening the ties of friendship and enhancing cooperation between our two countries. Academic exchange is an investment in the future. I would particularly highlight the need to send highly qualified US students to study the German language and to pursue other fields of scholarship in Germany. Bi-lateral exchange can be a life-altering experience and the basis for the "mutual understanding" so essential in difficult times.

We hope that you will continue to be engaged with the DAAD Alumni Association. We have board members across the United States and a number of geographical hubs. Whenever possible, please do attend our events virtually or in person.

With all best wishes for every success in your endeavors over the coming year,

Dr. Helena Kane Finn

DAAD-Alumni Association USA | The Mission to Join

by Ingeborg Rocker, Ph.D. | DAAD-AA | Chair Media Committee

Dear Fellow DAAD Alumni,

Welcome to the 2022 edition of our newsletter and an exciting year ahead of us!

The DAAD Alumni Association USA started with great energy and an exciting event program supporting our mission, the bilateral cultural exchange between the United States and Germany. Our work unfolds in close collaboration with the DAAD. Throughout the year we organize lively webinars and events that bring business leaders, politicians and academics together to discuss contemporary political, cultural, environmental and economic topics.

In five local DAAD-Alumni Association Hubs our organization meets with local alumni, communities, universities and German organizations. For 2022 our goal is to build a vital DAAD-Alumni Association network throughout the USA.

Please find membership tiers on our website: <https://www.daad.org/en/alumni-services/alumni-usa/>

You find us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12167539/): <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12167539/>

Sustaining member benefits include invitations to DAAD and DAAD-Alumni Association webinars and events, or the opportunity to organize and fund academic conferences.

Mark your calendar for the 2022 Sound Understanding Concert!

showcasing some of Germany's most talented musicians, US DAAD fellowship recipients.

This year's DAAD music grantees are so delighted to perform a live concert for you again at

April 21, 2022, 7 pm Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, NYC

Do you want to place an ad in the concert program for your business, or make a donation?

fill out the form under the section "Other Ways to Support this Event" and send it to

Amra Dumisic at the DAAD NY office: dumisic@daad.de

Any [donation](#) above \$100 will get listed in the program if received before our March 20 printing deadline.

More information on the concert or ads please see here:

<https://www.daad.org/en/find-funding/award-recipients/sound-understanding/>

Thank you!

DAAD Alumni Association USA Excellence Award 2021

by Sigrid Berka

Christine Hunefeld, Professor of History at the University of San Diego, CA, was the winner of the 2021 *DAAD AA Excellence in International Education* award!!

She received her PhD in Ethnology, Alt-Amerikanistik, Social, Economic and Constitutional History at Bonn University in 1982. Herself already honored with major German awards such as the DAAD and Humboldt research awards, she gave back much to the younger generation through her direct personal involvement, for example by establishing a "salon" style forum in her home for German scholars who were recipients of German fellowships (including DAAD, DFG, and Humboldt "Stipendiaten").



Professor Hunefeld has been active in fostering the relationships between the Americas and Germany all of her life and taught and held numerous workshops at the universities of Hannover, Bielefeld, Bonn, and Cologne. The committee was fascinated by the global scale of her life and work such as when translating a dialogue between German Philosophy and Liberation Theology: a conversation between Gustavo Gutiérrez, one of the founders of liberation theology, and the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1990) at the Goethe Institut Lima - reported on in various news venues.

Her curiosity, openness to the world, hospitality, her genuine engagement in international exchange has led to establishing a vast network of high caliber connections worldwide. Congratulations, Christine! *Image: Dr. Christine Hunefeld*

DAAD - AA Rise Scholarships | Supporting Next generation Cultural Exchange | Focus Sustainability

by Mark Rectanus and Ingeborg Rocker

The DAAD-Alumni Association USA is a proud sponsor of several scholarship programs that foster the exchange between the USA and Germany. RISE Scholarships are 'Research Internships in Science and Engineering' offered to undergraduate students from North America to complete a summer internship with top German research teams. Students are matched with a host university or institute according to their area of interest in sustainability.

In 2021, the DAAD AA awarded six scholarships to outstanding students who conducted research in Germany as part of the DAAD RISE Program. We are delighted to share some excerpts from their reports. The students are enthusiastic regarding their experiences living and working in Germany – both of which will continue to impact their professional and personal lives for many years to come.

The experience these young researchers gather are both professionally and personally lasting inspirations and speak for themselves:



For Ethan Rotnem, who worked on the project "Transformation paths to sustainable mobility" at the RWTH Aachen the *"program was a godsend[...] Both professionally and personally, this program has enriched my life and allowed me to grow. I never expected to achieve this much here, but I did, and it has shown me that even the most difficult challenges can be overcome with enough effort and hard work."* During his time in Germany he developed *"a deep and great love for this country, and I cannot wait to return in the future. I am beyond grateful for the experience I've had and would not trade it for the world."*

Image: Ethan Rotnem, RWTH Aachen



Jordan Morrison, worked on "Adoption strategies of beech forests to changing environments" at the Universität Konstanz, and she reported excited that: *"this work felt really rewarding because the results of our biochemical analysis will be combined with the other labs' analyses to guide future decisions in German forestry."* Equally important are to her the *"lasting personal and professional relationships with faculty and students at the University of Konstanz"* she was able to build. The summer she spent in Germany was marked by *"invaluable personal and academic growth"*, and she *"will be forever grateful to Dr. Simon, PhD candidate Tallulah Gundelach, DAAD RISE, and the DAAD Alumni Association for granting [...her] this opportunity."*

Image: Jordan Morrison, Universität Konstanz



Nathan Ashley, who studied the "Ecological impacts, phenotypic plasticity & genetic adaptation of an invasive *Opuntia ficus-indica*" at the Universität Greifswald, says: *"I was able to work with numerous people at the university, all from different backgrounds, disciplines, and countries, learn about the culture in Germany and other parts of the world, and gain a lot of experience in my scientific field."* He ends with: *"You want to learn new things for your career, you should apply for a DAAD [RISE] internship!"*

Image: Nathan Ashley, Universität Greifswald

The DAAD AA RISE Scholarships are made possible through your generous financial support. Please consider a [donation](#) that will support student scholarships in 2022!

For more information to apply for Rise Scholarships please see:
<https://www.daad.de/rise/en/rise-germany/>

For more information to find Internships in Germany please see:
<https://www.daad.de/rise/en/rise-germany/find-an-internship/>

Events 2021 | A Retrospective

by Mechthild Schmidt Feist & Ingeborg Rocker

2020 and 2021 were both years like no others - in the grip of the COVID Pandemic - the DAAD Alumni Association, adjusted to the challenging health conditions and our events turned virtual. As much as we missed the personal exchange, meeting virtually inspired larger audiences, new connections and international events.

The Influence of International Exchange Programs on Diplomacy. A talk by Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering.

by Mechthild Schmidt Feist & Ingeborg Rocker

On January 12, 2021 we started the year with a co-sponsored event with our US counterpart, the Fulbright Association, hosted by Dr. Manfred Philipp. **The Influence of International Exchange Programs on Diplomacy. A talk by Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering.**

Manfred Philipp hosted the event and introduced [Dr. Richard T. Arndt](#), who served for 24 years in South East Asia and Europe for the State Department and the U.S. Information Agency.

Dr. Arndt, a 1949 Fulbright Scholar to France and founding member of the Fulbright Association introduced Ambassador Pickering, who has a four decade long career in [Foreign Service and close ties to International Exchange Programs](#). The [Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship](#) is named in his honor, providing funding for graduate school fellowships to support talented students as they prepare to enter the [U.S. Foreign Service](#).



Image: Ambassador Pickering addressing his large audience

Chapters of the Fulbright Association, the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and the Belle Zeller Scholarship Fund, and by the US Alumni Association of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

The topic drew a large audience of over 230 with a lively Q+A in the chat. Special thanks to our event co-sponsors: The event was cosponsored by the Connecticut and National Capital Area

Germany in the Run-Up to the Elections: How to approach global and domestic challenges? | Conversations with Consul General David Gill

by Mechthild Schmidt Feist & Ingeborg Rocker

On May 18 2021, the DAAD Alumni Association was honored to welcome the German Consul General of Germany in New York. Consul General David Gill addressed a topic crucial to the German-American transatlantic relationship: The German Elections 2021. Facing significant challenges, a global health and climate crisis, the event looked at **Germany in the Run-Up to the Elections: How to approach global and domestic challenges?**



Image: Consul General David Gill during the event: Germany in the Run-Up to the Elections

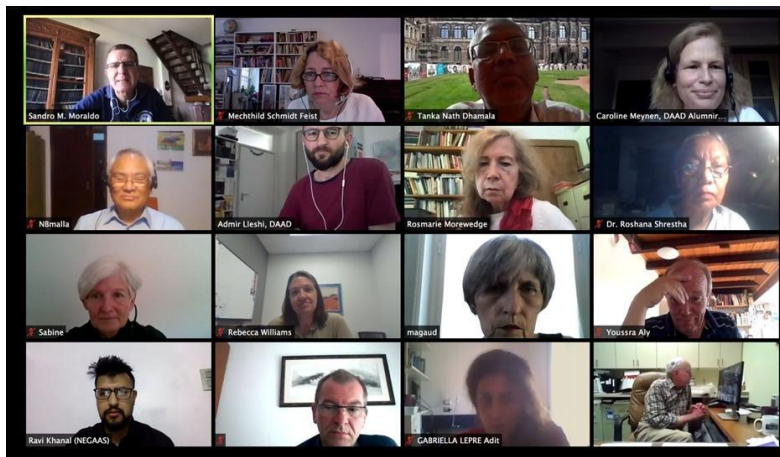
After introductions by Manfred Philipp, DAAD Alumni Association President Helena Kane Finn greeted our guests, the DAAD NY Director Benedikt Brisch and moderator John Torpey, highlighting the unique character of “the upcoming parliamentary elections in Germany, the first in 16 years in which Chancellor Angela Merkel will not be standing for re-election, hint at seismic shifts.” A large audience joined us for a deep discussion with Consul General David Gill on the following issues: : What political future will the German voter possibly embrace?

What is Merkel’s legacy as the longest-serving chancellor in Germany’s postwar period, and what will come after? How will Germany respond to global and domestic challenges, and in particular face the difficult but enduring question about how democracies can address forces that are themselves not committed to democracy?

The event was held in cooperation with the German Consulate General and Fulbright Alumni on Tuesday, May 18, 2021.

DAAD-Alumni Associations | Global Connect

by Mechthild Schmidt Feist & Ingeborg Rocker



In May 2021 the Board of the DAAD Alumni -Association USA held several planning meetings with Professor Sandro Moraldo, President of DAAD Alumni Italy, to prepare a **global DAAD alumni meeting on May 28, 2021.**

The first international Alumni Association meeting was a success and drew participants from Finland, France, Germany (DAAD Alumni Verein and DAAD Bonn), Italy, Nepal, and the USA. We discussed our various organizations’ operational formats and possibilities for future collaborations and exchange.

Several topics of global interest were defined, among them politics, sustainability and migration. Rosmarie

Morewedge (DAAD-AA USA) suggested as a first global collaborative event a discussion after the Bundestags elections in January 2022.

Image: Sandro Moraldo, President of DAAD Alumni Italy and members of DAAD Alumni Associations from Nepal, USA, Finland, France, and Germany.

DAAD 50th Anniversary in New York on September 17th

By: Dr. Helena Kane Finn

The DAAD celebrated its 50th Anniversary in New York on September 17th with a festive event hosted by Benedikt Brisch, Director DAAD North America at the Sound River Studios in Long Island City. DAAD/AA President Dr. Helena Kane Finn moderated a round table discussion entitled *Shaping the Future of Transatlantic Academic Partnership and Exchange*. The distinguished panel included the Honorable David Gill, Consul General of Germany in New York, Dr. Allan Goodman, President of the Institute of International Education IIE, Anthony Koliha, Director of the Office of Global Educational Programs at the U.S. Department of State, and Prof. Dr. Joybrato Mukherjee, President, German Academic Exchange Service DAAD.



Prof. Mukherjee reflected upon the ways in which the DAAD has evolved over the past fifty years, as well as the contributions the higher education community can make in resolving the global challenges of the future. Mr. Koliha spoke about the importance of fostering diversity and reducing poverty and inequality through educational exchanges.

Image: Roundtable Discussion at the 50th Anniversary of the DAAD in NY, September 17, 2021 (L to R): Helena Kane Finn, Ben Britsch, David Gill, Allan Goodman, Anthony Koliha, Joybrato Mukherjee . Photo: M.S. Feist

Dr. Goodman addressed the work being done in the field of academic exchange to rescue victims of persecution and displacement. Consul General David Gill provided an overview of the work now being done to deal with such global issues as climate change and scientific development. The panelists responded to a series of pertinent questions from the audience.



Following the round table, the panelists mingled with the audience over cocktails and a buffet dinner on the terrace overlooking the East River and the magnificent Manhattan Skyline at sundown.

Image: View towards the UN and DAAD New York Headquarter from the Sound River Studios in Long Island City, where the 50th Anniversary celebration of the DAAD on September 17, 2021 was held. Photo: Photo: M.S. Feist

DAAD Alumni HUBs | Regional Connect

The DAAD-AA has several Hubs, which are distributed throughout the USA, and serve as meeting points to connect and collaborate. 4 Hubs exist : a North-West Hub, a Chicago Hub, a West-Coast Hub and a NE | Boston Hub.

Alumni HUBs | Regional Connect | NE - Boston

"Germany | USA – Hub: How to Create an Active Alumni Forum & Community in the Northeast"

by Ingeborg Rocker, Director NE | Boston Hub

December 7, 2021 marked the launch of a cross-institutional initiative led by Ingeborg Rocker, DAAD-AA, in close collaboration with the German Consulate and other regional organizations. The aim is to create an Active Alumni Forum & Community in the Northeast that leverages the existing academic, governmental and industrial networks. Welcome notes by, Ingeborg Rocker, DAAD-AA, Initiator Germany | USA – Hub: Boston Initiative, Nicole Menzenbach, Consul General of Germany to New England, Benedikt Brisch, Director DAAD NY, Director DWIH and Dr. Helena Kane Finn, President DAAD/AA Board USA positioned the project, highlighting its transdisciplinary and cross-institutional character and its importance within the context of the bilateral US American and German cultural and economic exchange.

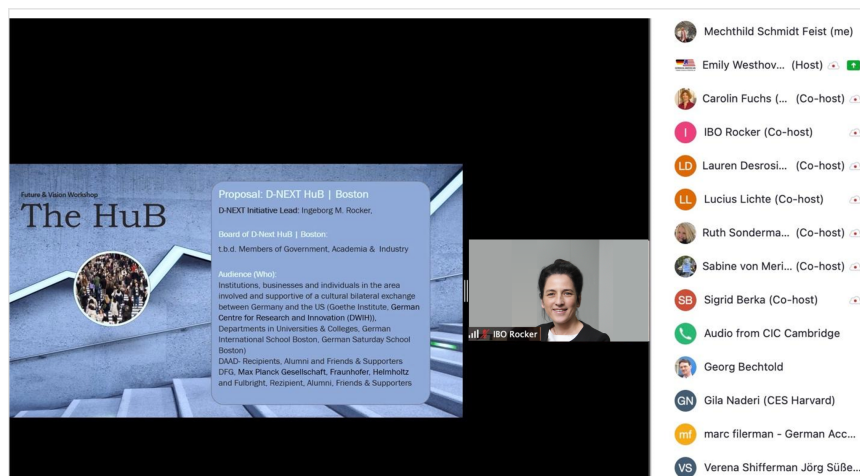


Image: "Germany | USA – Hub: How to Create an Active Alumni Forum & Community in the Northeast," December 7, 2021

Each of the participating organizations presented themselves and existing Alumni network initiatives fostering bilateral cultural exchange. Among the presenting organizations were: DAAD (NY), DAAD Gain, DAAD-AA and the Goethe Institute in Boston.

With representatives of Harvard University, the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies (CES); Brandeis University, Center for German and European Studies; and Northeastern University, the world Language Center, we discussed the status of German and European Language and Cultural Studies at US American Universities and how they could benefit from an active Alumni Forum and community that gathers representatives from the Government, Industry and Academy. In particular links to organizations that could support internships in Germany and the US are of vital importance for these programs.

Subsequent presentations shifted the focus towards the role of alumni networks in the technical and scientific disciplines. In particular the representatives of the University of Rhode Island, Prof. Dr. Sigrid Berka, DAAD-AA and Executive Director of the International Engineering Program (IEP) highlighted the relevance of cross-organizational bilateral alumni networks for connecting engineers to relevant international industry internships.

Professor Dr.-Ing. Georg Bechthold, from the Deutsche Forschungs Gesellschaft (DFG), and Brian Craft from the American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation presented their institutions' impressive activities focused on research and applied sciences. Both organizations have vast existing alumni networks and look back on years of valuable experiences and expertise in managing and maintaining those. We are looking forward to further and deepening the collaboration.

The presentations were rounded up by two organizations that are focusing their efforts on Start Up Incubation and on German American Business relations within the region. Both presenters, Marc Filerman, Managing Partner of the German Accelerator Life Sciences in Cambridge, and Emily Westhoven, Executive Director at German-American Business Council of Boston, have been great supporters of the initiative. Both organizations presented how important alumni networks are for a transition of the young labor force into the job market.

The event concluded with a Future & Vision Workshop during which Ingeborg Rocker presented the D-NEXT HUB Concept - Why now? followed by a Brainstorming of all participants - to be continued in the next meeting.

Special thanks to the German Consulate Boston, Consul General of Germany Nicole Menzenbach, and Lucius Lichte, for their ongoing support and commitment, The German Accelerator Life Sciences' team for hosting us in their spaces, The German-American Business Council of Boston, for supporting the concept and hosting us on Zoom and all participants for their interest and contributions so far. We will continue the collaboration, resuming in early March 2022.

For upcoming information and to join this initiative visit us at: DAAD Alumni USA, [Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12167539/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12167539/)

DAAD-Alumni Association HUBs | Meet Current DAAD Fellows | West Coast

by Anne MacLachlan

Newly arrived DAAD Stipendiaten to Berkeley and Stanford received a warm welcome upon arrival! Hanni Geist, Senior Manager, University Relations, DAAD San Francisco, organized an early evening outdoor social gathering in San Francisco on November 11, 2021, with the support of Anne MacLachlan, UC Berkeley and DAAD AA Board member.

This event provided current DAAD fellows with an opportunity to meet each other, meet the organizers, and give them a flavor of San Francisco.

The first meeting of this kind was held in Fall 2019. There were subsequent meetings in Berkeley for both Stipendiaten and Alumni until Covid-19 put a temporary hold on them. We expect these Alumni

meetings to resume as soon as conditions permit, since they are great opportunities to connect within the DAAD-AA regional hubs DAAD Alumni with current DAAD Fellows, building a strong community, and network, while exchanging useful information.

Alumni throughout the United States are encouraged to participate in such meetings and indicate their interest to Daad-Alumni (join us and indicate your interest as mentor) with Amra Dumisic at the DAAD Office in New York daad.newyork@daad.de and Hanni Geist at the San Francisco office ip.sanfrancisco@daad.de.



Image: Welcome of the Current DAAD Fellows in the DAAD-AA West Coast Hub. Photo: Anne MacLachlan

Nach der Wahl: Das Programm des 20. Bundestages

Representatives of the Bundestag led live Discussion of their Priorities with DAAD Alumni

By Rosmarie Morewedge



Image: Kai Sicks, David Gill, Ben Brisch, Helena , Romarie Morewedge, Heidi Edel and Sandro M. Moraldo introducing the Discussion "Nach der Wahl: Das Programm des 20. Bundestages" Photo: Mechthild Schmidt Feist

In Collaboration with the DAAD Italy (ADIT), the DAAD AA USA organized a Discussion of the German Bundestag Election 2021, the formation of the Coalition, and the Program of the Ampel- Koalition of the Bundestag on January 20th, 2022. Representative MdB's of the SPD, the Bündnis 90/die Grünen, the FDP and the CDU had been invited to share with DAAD Alumni worldwide (110 alumni from 23 different countries participated in the two hour discussion) their priorities for the new government and what it would take to actualize these priorities, their goals and ideals for the new Bundestag.

The political and educational frameworks for the event were set by Generalkonsul David Gill, NYC, Dr. Kai Sicks, Generalsekretär of the DAAD, and Dr. Heidi Wedel, Vorsitzende der Alumni of the DAAD. Dr. Helena Kane Finn, President DAAD AA USA, welcomed all to the meeting.



Image: Three Members of the Government Coalition: Dr. Franziska Brantner of Bündnis 90/die Grünen, Dr. Bärbel Kofler, SPD, Dr. Christoph Hoffmann FDP and Jürgen Hardt of the opposition CDU engaged in a lively Discussion "Nach der Wahl: Das Programm des 20. Bundestages" Photo: M S Feist

Three MdB's, namely Dr. Franziska Brantner of Bündnis 90/die Grünen, Dr. Bärbel Kofler, SPD, Dr. Christoph Hoffmann FDP, were DAAD alumni, whose study abroad and whose development of international expertise had been supported by a grant from the DAAD. Jürgen Hardt of the CDU, the party of opposition, and Speaker of the CDU/CSU Party on Foreign Affairs, possessed special expertise in transatlantic relations, as member of the Committee on Defense, and the Committee on the European Union. Dr. Brantner has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary of State in the Federal Ministry for Economic and Climate Affairs. In the party of Die Grünen she focuses on the protection of the environment and social justice, while attempting to support a transformation of the economy. Dr. Bärbel Kofler is Parliamentary Secretary of State in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, where she works on human rights and collaboration in economic development. Dr. Christoph Hoffmann has dedicated himself to international protection of the environment, economic development, and development politics. He is also the Speaker of the FDP in development politics with a focus on the prevention of conflicts in central Africa. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Rosmarie Morewedge, DAAD AA USA and Dr. Sandro Moraldo, ADIT.

Questions raised and discussed by the speakers from different perspectives and settings were broad and wide ranging, as they gave insight into the thinking and problem solving approaches of the new government. Questions dealt with the advantages of a coalition of three parties in the Bundestag that attempts to collaborate in the governmental process, of the attempt to make the German population and economy fit for the 21st century, of the attempt to make the European Union, an “ever closer union”, of the future economic relationship to China, of the relationship with Russia made more difficult by the German need for adequate energy supplies, of the difficulty of addressing the crisis in the Ukraine, of the defense of human rights and the shared values of democracy vis-à-vis common interests with the USA that played a role in the chaotic departure from Afghanistan, of the impact of higher inflation on the German population that is already feeling income differential and distrust of government, of energy resources for Germany made worse by a future without nuclear energy, and of the economic, technological, ecological and social transformation of Germany within a European framework.

The Zoom setting for this international meeting was facilitated by Prof. Mechthild Schmidt Feist of NYU, to whom special thanks are due. Alumni were gratified that four eminent and distinguished leaders of their parties in the Bundestag graciously dedicated their time and expertise to this international dialogue. Our deepest thanks are due to them for this extraordinary event.

See also the article ‘Deutschland hat gewählt, und nun?’ on the [DAAD Alumni portal](#) by Miriam Hoffmeyer

Dear Reader,

Thank you for following our activities, and we hope you renew your membership again, invite fellow alumni you know to join our network, and, maybe, we will see some of you at our April concert, at Carnegie Hall, New York City on April 21, 2022!

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12167539/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DAADAlumniAssociationUSA>

Wir wünschen der Welt ein friedliches Miteinander!
the Board of the DAAD Alumni Association USA