



**ROMEO
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GOOD NEWS ACROSS 'R' DISTRICT

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Language classes open a world of culture



Photos by Ella Salembier '26

What does dancing have to do with teaching world languages? More than one might expect.

Three world language teachers at Romeo High School dedicated class time to having their students learn different styles of dance – salsa, bachata, merengue and Latin ballroom dancing for Spanish classes, and the Viennese waltz for German classes.

Professional ballroom instructor Sherrad Glosson led the dance workshops for students from Andrea Page's German classes and Rosana Hunsberger and Hayley Kelso's Spanish classes. Señora Kelso's international business students also joined in the fun.

All three teachers agree that dance is culturally important. For example, festivals, holidays, family parties and music revolve around dance.

"When I studied abroad, that was one of the first things we did," Señora Hunsberger said. "At the welcome ceremony at the hotel, literally three hours into my study, I was taking a dance lesson."

Frau Page's German students were introduced to the waltz during a school trip to Germany some years ago.

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Inviting Mr. Glosson – who also happens to be Señora Kelso’s dance instructor – offered a way to celebrate different cultures while allowing the students to relax and have fun outside the classroom.

“The kids love it,” Señora Kelso said. “ I love watching them enjoying each other’s company, completely unself-conscious, team building. They’re learning a valuable skill but in a fun way. They’re so supportive of each other. Nobody is critiquing; there’s no judgment.”

World language students also learn about different cultures by taking advantage of school trips abroad. Spanish students typically go to Spain or Costa Rica and German students have visited



Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

This summer and next, Spanish students have the opportunity to visit Costa Rica, and the German III class is planning for their next trip in 2025.

These trips are important for many reasons, Frau Page says. Among the many benefits, students are exposed to cultural and language experiences, while enjoying “the opportunity to get out of the small town of Romeo and expand their horizons in a safe way.”

“These are educational tours,” she emphasized. “It’s not a spring break tour. Students are doing things that are culturally important. They are doing things to engage with the people and practice the language. We want them to see the sights, experience the history and culture, taste the food. Be adventurous.”

The experience also reinforces why they are learning a different language, providing motivation for their continued study.

“Even if it’s shopping in the grocery store, you see a need to use the language,” Señora Kelso said. “It’s different than in the classroom. It’s a self-esteem and confidence booster.”

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“A lot of the students who go on the trip are those III, IV, AP students so they have worked really hard,” Señora Hunsberger pointed out. “They have spent a lot of time learning the language so it’s a reward for them. If they have taken the time to get to that high of a level, they like learning about it. They enjoy learning about the culture.”

Chaperoning a trip has benefits for the teachers, too, as it allows them to see a country and its culture through their students’ eyes.

“It’s really fun to watch,” Señora Kelso said. “I used to teach French. I went to Paris tons of times. But when I go with students, it’s like seeing it again for the first time.”

Another advantage to learning a language is that it gives students an edge for future employment. For example, Frau Page mentioned that during the Academies at Romeo High School annual business partner retreat, there was a lot of discussion about what companies are seeking in future employees. Among these are skills gained in world language classes such as the ability to communicate, give a presentation, and be culturally aware. Learning a language also builds confidence.

“Being in a language class helps you talk with other people and learn the niceties of language, such as greeting people properly,” Frau Page said, adding she has had students thank her for making them do presentations in German.

“If you can do it in German, you can do it in English,” she said.

“When you’re in business, the ability to communicate expands your network, your connections,” Señora Kelso said. “It doesn’t matter what industry you’re in.”

Finally, exposure to other cultures helps students understand, when working with people from around the world, that not everyone approaches problem-solving the same way.

“Understanding cultural nuances means awareness of the bigger world out there,” Frau Page said. That’s what we strive to impress upon the kids. The world is bigger than you. Make sure you go out and explore it, but make sure you do it in the proper manner. Respectfully and successfully.”

Photo: German students are pictured in the Austrian Alps during a trip last summer.

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