

Home away from home

MHS student Lacey Jenkins reflects on previous life in Germany



By Riley Trotter,
Design Editor

Most students at Mattoon High School have never lived outside of Mattoon, let alone outside of the country. MHS senior Lacey Jenkins moved to Mattoon in fourth grade after living in Germany during the preceding elementary school years.

As well as living in Germany, Lacey and her family lived in many other places.

"I lived in Holland, Belgium, Paris, pretty much every state in the U.S., and we went to Italy for a while," said Lacey.

"My dad was in the Air Force, so we were always moving around. He was in the military for 25 years, but we lived in Germany for four," said Lacey.

For Lacey and her family, there were both good and bad things about living in Germany.

"The surroundings [were the most memorable]. Everything seemed so historic and beautiful," said Lacey.

For Lacey, the worst part about living in Germany was the communication barrier.

"I couldn't understand anything anyone said," said Lacey.

While the worst part of Germany for Lacey was the language, Nita Jenkins, Lacey's mother, was more worried about the distance from their home.

"[The worst part] was being away from family," said Nita.

For both Jenkins and her family, the time in Germany was quite an adventure.

"My brother and I always had places to go. We loved the food,

and the people who spoke English were so nice," said Lacey.

If the choice to move back to Germany was given to Lacey and her family, they would take it without any thought.

"It was so pretty and relaxing," said Lacey. "I would love to the chance to even just visit because that was my childhood, and I only have good memories."

The memories of the surroundings and appearance of Germany are something that Lacey and her family would love to go back to.

"[I would] because there was so much to see and enjoy over there," said Nita.

If given the chance to tell people anything about living outside of the country, Lacey would tell people to travel the world.

"Living in Germany is so different; people are caring, and the way you see things is different," said Lacey. "I would highly recommend vacationing around the world. You'll accept so many cultures and concepts, and you will have a more open mind to change."

The transition from one country to another can be tough for someone at such a young age, like Lacey was.

"It was very different, but we were on a base, so the housing was the same," said Lacey.

After moving away from Germany, there are many aspects missed by Lacey and her family.

"I miss the food and the atmosphere; everything had so much culture. I remember the best sights and the best meals," said Lacey.

In Lacey's home abroad, many German knickknacks were found around the rooms. This allowed them to embrace the culture of the country they were living in.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
LACEY JENKINS



Mission Trips to Jamaica

Reaghan Elliott,
senior



I have been to Jamaica three times. The attitudes of people there are different than Americans. They have nothing, but they are the happiest people you will ever meet. People who live in chicken coops act like they live in palaces, and they are always smiling no matter what.

Jacob Barnett,
MHS Alum



I've been to Jamaica for about eight days. I think the most memorable part was building two houses for two families down there. It took us a couple days for each house, but the whole community came together to help. It was really touching to see so many people come together to help just one family; it's something we don't see or think of here in America.

languages at home

Molly Nguyen-- MHS sophomore

The Garzas are not the only two at MHS who go home and speak a foreign language. MHS sophomore Molly Nguyen's parents speak their native language, Vietnamese, daily at home.

Molly's mother, Nancy Nguyen, moved to the United States when she was in middle school. Her father, Charly Nguyen, moved to the United States in his 20s. The family knows both English and Vietnamese.

Molly interacts with her family in Vietnamese; however, it's in a different context.

"They talk to me in [Vietnamese,] and I understand it, but I don't usually say it back to them," said Nguyen.

Both Garza and Nguyen say it's not that hard to change from English to Spanish or Vietnamese to English every single day. When you have been doing something every day of your life, you're bound to get used to it.

