



The major program sponsored by the New Ulm Sister Cities Commission is the “Hans Joohs Cultural Exchange Program” with Ulm and Neu-Ulm, Germany. The program is named after Hans Joohs, an official from Ulm who was instrumental in fostering the Sister Cities relationship.

The program assists young adults following a career track to combine education, practical work experience and language skills in a foreign country work setting. Exchange workers enrich the employer’s workplace by bringing cultural diversity into the office, factory or shop. Participants also live with local families during their stay, learning about life in their host community on a firsthand basis.

Application for the Exchange Program

The New Ulm Sister Cities Commission accepts applications for the Hans Joohs Cultural Exchange Program on a continual basis.

Individuals interested in applying for this program should contact the New Ulm Sister Cities Commission through the City Manager’s Office in New Ulm at 507-359-8233.

**Successful candidates for program consideration will have strong German language skills.*



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<https://www.newulmmn.gov/301/Sister-Cities-Commission>

City of New Ulm

Neu Ulm, Germany



Ulm, Germany



New Ulm, MN

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GENEROSITY



Purpose and Mission

*The purpose of the New
Ulm Sister Cities*

*Commission shall be to
broaden and strengthen
cultural bonds with Ulm,*

*Germany, Neu-Ulm, Germany and such other
cities as may be designated sister cities of New
Ulm, Minnesota.*

A Tale of Two Cities

This is the story of how one small town nestled in mid-western America and two German cities “got the jump” on the official Sister Cities International program created by Dwight D. Eisenhower during 1956.

Since many of its early settlers were from the Ulm area along the Danube River in southern Germany, New Ulm was accepted as this town’s name in 1854. While unique hardships and unusual events pepper the founding histories of nearly all American settlements, New Ulm can lay claim to events both startling and enduring during the course of its existence.

Surviving the 1862 Sioux Indian uprising is an amazing story in itself, but the events which led to the establishment of strong “Sister City” ties with Ulm and Neu-Ulm, Germany are even more astonishing.



Dr. Louis A. Fritsche
Photo Courtesy of Brown County
Historical Society

Following WWI, starvation was commonplace throughout Central Europe. Concerned for the welfare of his citizens, Neu-Ulm’s Burgermeister Nuffer established contact with New Ulm Mayor L.A. Fritsche regarding their plight. Mayor Fritsche replied to this call for help by organizing relief efforts with the assistance of prominent citizens. Boxcars of locally milled flour along with other desperately needed food and clothing items were sent to the citizens of Ulm and Neu-Ulm, Germany. This humanitarian gesture set the stage for an even greater future effort.

Mayor Fritsche’s family traveled to Europe during 1929, and one of their visits was to Neu-Ulm where they were treated as royalty, including a ceremonial signing of the “*Goldenes Buch*” (Golden Book) in the Neu-Ulm Rathaus (City Hall). Years later, the world was again engulfed in a World War. The cities of Ulm and Neu-Ulm suffered severe damage as a result of Allied air raids on Christmas Eve 1944. Months later, some young boys found pages from the Golden Book in the rubble where the Rathaus stood. A Fritsche signature, as well as the story of their role in the previous humanitarian effort, were found intact among the pages.

Another plea for help was sent from Germany to America.

Despite war time shortages and rationing, New Ulm’s citizens funded U.S. “care packages” to send to Ulm and Neu-Ulm. Donations of clothing and other living necessities followed. This outpouring of good will from Americans to Germans, from community to community, is certainly not unique in the annals of history, but the inspiring story surrounding it is!

During 1952, the American Department of State invited German leaders to visit the U.S. as an integral part of the postwar “healing effort”. U.S. officials expressed surprise at the request of eight German dignitaries to visit New Ulm, Minnesota. The Department gladly complied with the request, and was subsequently impressed by the close ties already established. These close ties have continued throughout the subsequent decades.



Hans Joohs

Mayor Ted Fritsche

Hans Joohs, a Neu-Ulm, Germany native and an alumnus of Syracuse University in New York, solved the occasional correspondence language barrier and also facilitated numerous exchanges.

Dr. Theodore R. “Ted” Fritsche, son of Louis A. Fritsche strengthened relationships with Ulm/Neu-Ulm with aid packages following WWII.

