

# Overby Odyssey

July 2023

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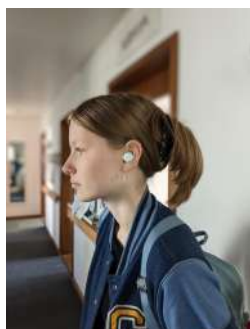


Summer is here,

Wow, we have been here for almost a year. We are so thankful for where God has placed us, but it has also been a trying year with many challenges along the way. During the year we have learned a few things about ourselves and the ministry at BFA and God has grown our family in Him.

The first thing we learned is that the ministry and value of the work at Black Forest Academy is even greater than we realized. Here are two examples of how I saw how valuable Black Forest Academy is: The first is seeing all of the countries that have been impacted by the school. For example, in one of my classes I had seven students. Within that small group of students, their families had lived and served in at least nine different countries on five different continents. The second way was at the twelfth grade graduation. When Heather and I sat through the ceremony we heard story after story about the impact that the school had on each student. We also got to talk to parents and heard how BFA impacted their ministries in the various countries they serve or have served in. BFA is coming up on its 70th anniversary, and so many students have been positively impacted for Christ through the school. I have included in the email a link to a video produced by BFA about one of those families. Their youngest child was also in one of my classes this past year.

The second thing we learned is to see the goodness of God even through the hard times, because it has not been an easy year. Going into the year we subconsciously expected it to be easy. We had already lived in Germany for 10 years. However, God wanted to remind us that we need to depend on Him, not our own knowledge, strength, or experience. God never promised us that it will be easy. There will be seasons of green pastures and still waters. But there will also be valleys of shadows of death. But in all seasons he comforts and carries us, and he promises to never leave us.





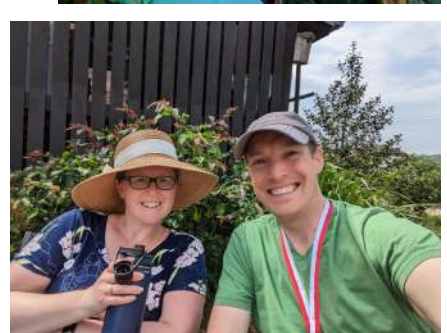
One of those challenges were the towers of grief that each of us experienced. Our family had done two international moves in just over a year. We had said goodbye to our friends and family in Weimar, and then a year later we said goodbye to our friends and family in Oregon. We had to learn new rhythms and systems. Even the local German dialect was new and difficult for us. We had to remind ourselves that it was not bad, just different. We had to learn to embrace the new experiences and ways of doing things. When things did not work the way we had expected, we had to continue to trust the Lord and know that He is still good.



Another challenge as parents was watching our kids struggle to find friends and fit in. But we had a sweet moment of affirmation towards the end of the school year. We were having dinner and we asked each kid if they were content in Kandern. Each one said yes they were. They have made friends and feel as if they belong in our new community. It doesn't mean it is now easy, but we are all feeling more at home here.



Now that it is summer (almost, Stuart still has school until July 26) we are trying to make the most of these days. We started off the summer by picking up our visas which were finally available. This felt like a large sigh of relief. We went on a hike with another family to a nearby village, which was a sweet day of community. Stanley and I went on a father-son bike trip to Weimar. On the trip we got to see friends and spend quality time together. As a family, we are doing a summer New Testament read through which has been fun talking with the kids about the daily readings and what they are seeing in scripture. We are also participating in the BFA library summer reading program and spending intentional time without screens. Heather was also able to go to a foster care luncheon. It served as a thank you to two couples who had been fostering for many years, but also to update the various families on the current state of the foster care system in our region. Turns out, they have more families ready to take in children and very few children needing foster families, which is a really good problem to have. For us, we are ready when God says it is time, and we are thankful for his timing.



Here are a few praise updates on our previous prayer requests.

1. Visas! Yay
2. Stanley's ankle has healed, but he continues to struggle with joint pain.
3. We are still waiting for repairs in our kitchen. It is ugly but functional right now.
4. My parents are coming out in September to watch our kids which is a huge answer to prayer.

Here are some items that you can be praying for.

1. Incoming BFA staff. There are still needs in the elementary school and young adults to help out in the dorms as Resident Assistants. Also for staff still raising support, that God will provide so that they can be here in August.
2. Holly has oral surgery July 12 and then will get braces soon afterwards.
3. Wisdom with housing. Our renters in Oregon are moving out next month, and we are wrestling with whether or not to continue to rent out that house, or to try to sell it and purchase a house in Kandern. There are many tax implications in these options, so we need wisdom in making these decisions. We will have to move out of our current house in Kandern next summer because our landlord is no longer going to be renting out the house we are currently in.
4. BFA dorm project. Two of BFA's current dorms are getting really old and the lease for one of them is coming to an end. Long story short, God has opened up the door to purchase a building in Kandern that was previously a retirement home. This is a huge project, and there is still some red tape, but please pray for God's favor and that BFA will be able to purchase this building and raise the money needed for the purchase and necessary renovations to transform it into a dorm.



Thank you again for your prayers and support. We truly appreciate you and how you are standing in the gap for us.

Serving Him in Kandern, Germany,

Scott for Heather, Stanley, Holly, Stuart, and Samuel

