

2007 GLOSSA Scholarship Awards

For more information visit:
<http://www.glossa.pl/polish/english/scholarship.php>

Julia Walendzik (Germany)

Why I would like to get to know Poland better....

I have always been interested in Poland for many reasons. First of all, my great grandfather was Polish which is why my last name is Walendzik. Although my parents do not speak Polish as their mother tongue, they decided to write their thesis in Warsaw and spent two years in total there. The first time was in 1982 when my mother was pregnant with me. I am very interested in the *solidarność* time because my mother was there with me in her womb and told me many things about the demonstrations. I would really like to see the impact on the present time and talk to be people about their experiences.

After a year my parents returned to Germany but spent another year in Warsaw from 1985 to 1986. Then I was already 2 years old and went to the Polish kindergarten. I learned Polish really well and even sometimes corrected my parents when they made mistakes, so they told me. The kindergarten teachers were very proud of me because there was a German girl speaking Polish so well. At home we still spoke German but on the street Polish. I can still remember the good food, like *krakowska* sausage, *krufki* and *bigos*.

When after a year we returned I first spoke Polish to everyone but my parents and brother but soon I found out that everyone was talking German so after a while I did not speak Polish any more. My parents tried to continue talking Polish to me but I always answered in German so they gave up after a while.

For some years I never thought about learning Polish again. But after I returned from an exchange year in South America, it came to my mind again taking a Polish course. I thought that maybe there was some language skill left although I did not remember any words.

When I started the Polish course in university, I realized there was not much left, I only remembered the sounds of some words. Maybe my pronunciation is a bit better than of the average German. I have been learning Polish for a semester now and I'm continuing this semester

with the second part of the course so I have some basis from where I can start to speak Polish more fluently.

Still I feel very connected to Polish culture and people, so I think it is worth learning the language properly although I had to learn it almost from the start again and still have a long way to go. The best way to get into speaking Polish again is to spend more time in Poland, so I would be really happy to take this two-week course and spend time with a Polish family. Polish people, like the Polish friends of my parents, have always seemed very sympathetic to me and have always been very hospitable. I would like to learn to talk to them in their own language. Sometimes there is still some reservation between Polish and German people because of the Second World War and I would like to overcome these in getting into closer contact with the Polish people.

I've gotten to like Polish movies, like those of Roman Polanski, so I would like to understand the original version.

Additionally, now that Poland is a member of the European Union we can get into a closer exchange.

Finally, I would like to work in international relations and foster cultural exchange so it is very important for me to learn many languages and get to know other cultures.