THE HISTORY OF CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES

In 1960, Gerhard Haukebo, Ph.D., a Concordia College faculty member, suggested the college initiate an experimental program using immersion techniques to teach language. The intent of the program was to teach young people about other languages and cultures, while giving Concordia students the opportunity to gain practical teaching experience.

Concordia sponsored the project in 1961. The college rented Luther Crest Bible Camp, north of Alexandria, Minnesota, for the first two-week German session. “Camp Waldsee,” which was limited to 72 9- to 12-year-olds, was a resounding success.


Construction of the permanent sites on Turtle River Lake began in 1969 starting with Skogfjorden, the Norwegian Language Village. Waldsee, the German Language Village, began to take shape in 1978, and construction of Lac du Bois, the French Language Village, began in 1988. Salolampi, the Finnish Language Village, began in 1993. In 1999, construction of the fifth permanent site, El Lago del Bosque, the Spanish Language Village, was begun. It opened for programming in the summer of 2000.

Over the years, the Concordia Language Villages have been visited by numerous dignitaries and supporters, including Spanish Consul General Rodrigo Aguirre de Cárcer, His Majesty King Olav V of Norway (1983), Germany’s Ambassadors Peter

His Majesty King Harald V of Norway has granted royal patronage for Skogfjorden, the Norwegian Language Village. Patronage is significant in that it is an affirmation from the Royal Family of Norway of the quality educational programming of Concordia Language Villages.

The president of the Federal Republic of Germany has granted personal patronage to Waldsee, the German Language Village. This patronage is symbolic of the strong bonds between the people of Germany and Concordia Language Villages.

We have received notable grants over the past 40 years from:

- Albert W. Cherne Foundation, Minneapolis
- Blandin Foundation, Grand Rapids, Minn.
- Bush Foundation, St. Paul, Minn.
- Chong-Moon Lee Foundation
- Coca-Cola Foundation, Atlanta, Ga.
- Culpeper Foundation, Stamford, Ct.
- Deluxe Corporation Foundation, St. Paul, Minn.
- Federal Republic of Germany
- 1st National Bank Bemidji Foundation, Atlanta, Ga.
- G.E. Capital Services, Atlanta, Ga.
- George W. Neilson Foundation, Bemidji, Minn.
- Hartz Foundation, Thief River Falls, Minn.
- Honeywell Foundation, Minneapolis
- IBM; Bemidji State Bank, Atlanta, Ga.
- Investors Diversified Service (IDS), Minneapolis
- Korean Language Society
- Korea Research Foundation
- Kresge Foundation, Troy, Mich.
- Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis
- Max Kade Foundation, New York
- Minnesota Humanities Commission, St. Paul, Minn.
- National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C.
- Overseas Korean Foundation
- Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stuttgart, Germany
- Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust, Muscatine, Iowa
- RMT Foundation, Eden Prairie, Minn.
- Smith Foundation

Concordia Language Villages has been the subject of extensive press coverage. The program has been featured on the NBC Today Show; in Time magazine; in Better Homes and Gardens; The New York Times; Chicago Tribune; Minneapolis Star Tribune; St. Paul Pioneer Press; on Sunday Morning with Charles Kuralt; on KSTP-TV's Explore Minnesota program; on Swedish television; on Korean TV; in Christian Science Monitor; on Public Television; on Norwegian radio NRK; on Channel One (a national educational station) and on the German station ZDF.