



Friedenshaus
Ludwigshafen
Since 2016

**We
celebrate
9 years!**

<https://www.friedenshaus.net>
APRIL 2025

FRIEDENSHAUS NEWSLETTER

Building bridges through dialogue and understanding

Iftar is more than just a meal during Ramadan – it is a time for reflection, sharing, and strengthening the community.

For the first time, Friedenshaus hosted an Iftar, bringing together a diverse group to celebrate this important Muslim tradition.

Fifty guests from more than a dozen countries came together to foster mutual understanding and work towards peace.

The evening was not only an opportunity to share a meal, but also to learn from one another and build connections.

Ramadan, a time of fasting and reflection, is also a time for gratitude and community. For those who fast, Iftar marks the end of the day's fast and is a celebration of faith.

The atmosphere was warm, and the shared meal encouraged cultural exchange and understanding.



At Friedenshaus, we believe that strong communities are built on mutual knowledge and respect. The first step towards peace is recognizing our shared humanity, regardless of faith.

The event also opened doors for future opportunities to come together and share traditions, including Christian celebrations, to promote coexistence and dialogue.

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María, the teacher who crossed the Atlantic: From Uruguay to Germany to teach beginners with passion and heart

From Uruguay to Germany with your family, tell us a bit about this move:

Although I am from Uruguay, I had already been living in Buenos Aires, Argentina, since my student days.

We moved to Germany because my husband got a job here. So, for us parents, the decision was not difficult. Our younger son (14 years old) had no objections as long as his cat and two turtles could come along. The older son had just fallen in love but accepted the situation despite the pain. So, on a beautiful July afternoon, we landed in the Palatinate with many suitcases, a cat, and two turtles in a Mennonite community that welcomed us very warmly.

You are retired now and teach German. Did you learn German in school?

Yes, I went to the German School in Montevideo (Uruguay) from kindergarten. It was more of a coincidence that my 4 siblings and I ended up at the German School.

There, I not only learned the German language but also experienced German culture. That has strongly shaped me. The contact with German-speaking children in my class, whose families had immigrated to Uruguay after the First or Second World War, also influenced me as a child. When I first visited Germany, I did not find the country foreign.

So now, I don't just want to teach the language but also bring a little of the German culture closer to my students, so they can better deal with cultural barriers, prejudices, and difficulties.

This is very important if you want to lead a happy life in this country.

How did you come to Friedensshaus?

Since I belong to a Mennonite community, I had heard about this project several times.

I thought of Friedensshaus as a meeting place for people who had to flee from their homeland (and culture), and I felt it would be a place where I could get involved.

I belong to two cultures myself: I have two homelands, two languages, and I feel comfortable and free in both.

I want to encourage people and convey that if you want to stay in this country/culture, you should not only learn the language, but also accept/appreciate and feel comfortable with the culture without losing your own. One must dare to go through this "learning process."

What would you say to the readers to encourage them to volunteer at Friedensshaus?

I would tell them that we are not a language institute, but rather a meeting center where we teach, promote, and support the German language in groups, depending on the existing German knowledge.

We interact with our "students" on an equal footing and foster trust and self-esteem in the learning/teaching process; we take time for individual difficulties and questions that, due to time constraints, are often not addressed in official learning centers.

We are teachers without formal qualifications; we are teachers from the heart and would be happy to have "real" teachers in our team as well.

...we are teachers from the heart...



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Although dialogue can be challenging, it is the first step toward greater understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Every conversation, every smile, and every shared meal reminds us that, despite our differences, we are more deeply connected than we think.

During the evening, Volkan shared the spiritual significance of Ramadan, emphasizing patience, generosity, and faith.

Birgit Foth, the pastor who provides the space for the Friedenshaus, spoke about the importance of working together and creating an atmosphere of respect and understanding.

This evening was a reminder that peace is built not only with words, but through genuine gestures of friendship and a willingness to understand.

As the celebration came to an end, participants left with full hearts (and bellies!) and a sense that unity and respect can flourish when we open our hearts — and our tables — to others.

Every smile, every conversation, and every shared bite became a symbol of the hope and unity we all long for.

“Gathering around the table is one of the most beautiful human gestures – a place to eat, to talk, to learn, and to understand.”

New Volunteers

We warmly welcome **Andrea**, who is teaching once a week in the A1/A2 class.

We also extend a warm welcome to **Natalia** – she is working together with Heidi on the forms.

New Group

Onaiza is teaching a new class that combines the B1 and B2 groups.

Classes take place twice a week.

Have you visited our new website?

You can go to
<https://www.friedenshaus.net>.

There you'll find the weekly schedule as well as information about all Friedenshaus programs. The site is still a work in progress and not fully completed yet – but we're getting there.

Take a look and let us know what you think and if you have any suggestions for how we can improve it.



Who supports this project

The following Mennonite organizations financially support the Friedenshaus Ludwigshafen:

- Mennonite Congregation Ludwigshafen
- **ASM** South-West German Mennonite Congregations Association
- **MH** Mennonite Relief Organization
- **DMMK** German Mennonite Mission Committee
- **DMFK** German Mennonite Peace Committee
- **MCC** Mennonite Central Committee

If you would like to donate, we would be grateful for your support.

You can find all the information here:

<https://www.friedenshaus.net/spenden/>

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