

# UMHB student adds German flavor to Texas Christmas

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University of  
Mary Hardin-  
Baylor  
international  
student Kim  
Jobke stands  
between her  
American  
mother and  
sister  
decorating  
their  
Christmas  
tree while her  
host father  
looks on.

## UMHB student adds German flavor to Texas Christmas

**By Jennifer Sicking**

*University of Mary Hardin-Baylor*

TEMPLE—Kim Jobke knows about celebrating Christmas with her American host family. She should. The German native, an international student at the [University of Mary Hardin-Baylor](#), has celebrated with them for five years.

In Berlin, where her parents live, they open presents on Christmas Eve.

“We open at 7 a.m.” Christmas Day, said Britney Chisholm, her American “sister.”

“Because Britney decides to open gifts at 5:30 a.m.,” Jobke responded with a laugh.

It is the laughter and easy banter of close family members, which they have become since Jobke arrived in 2001. She stayed beyond her one-year student exchange term at Temple High School and now attends the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton studying business administration.

Jobke came to the United States to learn the language, especially the slang, which differs from the formal English taught in Germany.

“She goes home and talks to people saying ‘y’all’ and stuff,” Britney said, teasing her.

The desire to complete her education in the United States—and continue living with the Chisholms—contributed to Jobke’s decision to stay in America.

“The big part is the family,” she said. “If I hadn’t liked the family, I wouldn’t have stayed. Also, school is easier here than in Germany.”

Although she ran into roadblocks when she returned for her second year in Texas, she eventually took and easily passed the test for her General Equivalency Diploma. She then began to study at Temple College.

“I planned to go back after TC to get a better job, but that didn’t work out,” she said.

She also received encouragement from her family in Germany to stay in Texas. She has two cousins living and working in the United States because of difficult economic conditions in Germany, she said.

Her host family wasn’t ready to part with her either.

“I think that it was kind of an open invitation, if that was what she wanted to do,” Dana Chisholm, her host father, said.

“We didn’t want to lose her,” said her host mother, Linda Chisholm. “She grew on us.”

For the two girls, both only children, each found a sibling.

“People ask us, and I say she’s my sister. People get confused about the exchange program,” Britney said. “I was used to it with other exchange students. At first we clashed a little bit because I wanted to do all the things she did.”

Britney was a freshman in high school when Jobke was a senior. Now their relationship is one of typical siblings—occasional fighting with lots of love in between.

Jobke was the fifth exchange student the Chisholms hosted in their home. They had hosted brothers from Brazil and others from Germany.

“I think over the years they have been good role models for Britney, because she’s an only child,” Mr. Chisholm said.

Britney agreed that the exchange students had broadened her horizons.

“They passed on a lot of experience and knowledge to me,” she said.

During the summer months, Jobke leaves her American family to spend time with her family and friends in Germany. She said it takes a few months for her parents to adjust when she returns to the United States.

“I guess the holidays are the worst for them,” she said.

Yet her mother in Germany contributes to the American Christmas for her daughter. She bakes and sends a special square-shape, traditional cookies to the Chisholms each year.

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