

Dear Students, dear Parents and Friends of the GISW,
Dear Teachers and Staff,

A heartfelt welcome to all of you to Bingo Night, our first event in celebration of the 60th anniversary of our school!

60 years – on the 11th of September 1961 some courageous men and women rented a few rooms at McArthur Boulevard in Washington DC and founded the “German School Washington”. On the first day of school on September 18th 1961, 33 children attended and Wilhelm Greve, the German Ambassador to Washington DC at the time, spoke the following words during the opening ceremony of the new school:

„The establishment of this school in such a short time would not have been possible without the friendly and efficient help of the American authorities, particularly the Department of State and the administration of the District of Columbia. The school, as all our German Schools Abroad, is open to children of all nationalities. A school is one of the best places for young people to meet and make friends. They will never forget this experience throughout their lives, and I sincerely believe this new German School in Washington – which is the first one in the United States – will also serve the goal of better mutual understanding. “

How far-sighted and how fitting – the words of the German Ambassador ring true even today. Our school has been tasked with the advancement and fostering of the German-American friendship, then and now. We should all support our school in its important role of being a liaison between the language and culture of both countries.

„To meet and make friends“ – the FRIENDS whose support I consider an important benefit to our school, did well in choosing this *Bingo Night* as the opening act in a series of events which will celebrate our anniversary.

You may wonder what „Bingo“ is all about. Bingo is a kind of lottery game, more than 100 years old, invented by Edwin Lowe at a Georgia carnival. At the time, Mr. Lowe was watching some Spaniards play a game in which numbers got covered with beans and the winner of a certain number combination would call out „Beano“! When a woman who played in New York at one time misspoke and called out „Bingo“ instead, the game came to its famous name.

As a matter of fact, it is well-known in many countries across the world by many different names: in Scandinavia, in Turkey on New Year's Eve, in Mexico, in Great Britain, in the United States – it is the most popular game in which being „lucky“ pays off. But Bingo does not only require a stroke of luck. The game has shown to promote mental skills, focus, reaction time but above all, Bingo helps promote a sense of community.

Which makes it even more understandable why our FRIENDS have picked this specific game for a fun night for all of us. What's more, they are never short on great ideas of what to do with the proceeds from their events to help the school and all of us. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Mr. Heinen and his team for this wonderful idea, for the chance to enjoy some light-hearted fun and for going the extra mile for our school community.

And now – without further delay – have fun at Bingo and good luck!

- Ms. Annegret Jung-Wanders, Head of School