

Wiebke Kanther visits class 11/1 [English version]

On Thursday, February 25, 2014 the handicapped athlete and participant in the 2012 Paralympic Games Wiebke Kanther visited the bilingual business studies and economy class 11/1. After reading short stories about people with physical disabilities in Mrs Pastel's English lessons, the student Theresa Matschos was able to get into contact with Mrs Kanther, a family friend, who spent an English lesson with the group to tell the students about herself and about her life.

In about 90 minutes the partially paralyzed athlete informed the students about her past and her career in sports. As a child, Wiebke Kanther participated in regular sports lessons in primary school instead of attending a special school for handicapped children. She did not only learn how to play table tennis, but even started skateboarding and learned several tricks despite her being partially paralyzed. After taking her A-Levels in Wiesbaden she played wheelchair basketball and some years later decided to play table tennis professionally. In 2012 she participated in the Paralympic Games in London.

She also shared her opinion on how disabled people should be treated by non-handicapped people; she hopes to be treated more like an ordinary person in future and does not want to be stared at because of her handicap.

The students could gain interesting and spectacular insights into the long and exhausting process of preparing and training for the Paralympic Games and also into the daily life of the athletes; Mrs Kanther is not only employed in a tax office full time, but also goes to the gym, trains more than twice a week with non-handicapped athletes and once a month even with athletes like Timo Boll. Due to this preparation, Wiebke Kanther managed to qualify for the Paralympic Games in London and participated as one of the athletes on the national team of Germany.

She is currently ranked 11 in the world and aims even higher; she does not only want to qualify for the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro - she even hopes to be among the five best players in the world rankings until then. To make these dreams come true she will have to win several tournaments; success is important in order to find sponsors who are able to pay the high costs of professional sports for disabled people.

The students of class 11/1 were fascinated by the strong determination of Mrs Kanther and inspired by her motto "Don't dream your life - live your dreams!"

Mrs Pastel and the students of class 11/1 thank Mrs Kanther for the interesting and insightful visit and wish her good luck for her next challenges!