



A BETTER CHANCE IN DARIEN, INC.
P.O. BOX 3204
DARIEN, CONNECTICUT 06410

NEWSLETTER

1983 FALL UPDATE

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Dear ABC Friends:

Here we are well underway into fall. This will be a particularly eventful year as we will have five graduating seniors, all of whom are a source of pride to our community. After three years of ABC in Darien, we have our first graduate, LaRose Parris, who is attending NYU. Since we started the program with five sophomores and one junior, we are in the unique position of having five seniors in the house. When filling these openings next year, the Search Committee will seek candidates to balance the grades more evenly for the future.

Summer Highlights

Toni Frost, through AFS, went to Kenya, Africa and lived with a black Arab Muslim family and Rosa Garcia went to Honshu, Japan also living with a family, attending school part-time and tutoring students in English. Orglyn Clarke spent four weeks in Jamaica visiting relatives. Kathy Marshall attended the LEAD program for selected minority students at Northwestern, and Liz Tejada took a chemistry course in summer school.

With five seniors, you can be sure they are preoccupied with the decisions of college selection and responsibility of applications. They were encouraged to visit three schools by October 28th. Each girl will apply to six schools: two safeties, two possibles, and

two reaches. Coping with these demands and tensions as well as the task of maintaining a strong academic record has created a single minded atmosphere within the house during this period. There is also a lot of pressure on the Academic Affairs Committee supervising this process. Henry Coleman, a professional counselor and former Dean at Columbia is advising the committee as to feasible choices.

Many of us have been through this process with one child at a time; multiply that by 5 and you can imagine the support system required of Jean and Del Shortliffe, our new Resident Directors. They are doing a fantastic job of keeping "the panic" under control.



Introducing Zoe Davis

Zoe Davis, a sophomore from Cleveland, Ohio, is our new member to the ABC program. She was chosen because of her outstanding credentials both academically and personally. Her leadership qualities and maturity made us confident she could handle the awkward position of living with five veteran seniors. It is certainly a difficult transition dealing with a totally different environment and she can't help feeling homesick for her family and friends. Gradually, however, she is adjusting and finding activities she enjoys such as being in the cast of Oliver, where she is having fun and meeting people. Also, being very sports minded, she plans to use the YMCA for further recreation. Each week gets easier and we hope she'll soon feel comfortable here.

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In evaluating the total ABC experience, a matter of growing concern to the girls is the social aspect of our program. After three years, they feel their social life has been limited. They would like more opportunities to share social occasions with other minority students in the Stamford-Norwalk area, to have more interplay with kids of their own race.

This kind of companionship is not available in Darien as in our neighboring community schools. Therefore, we should focus on these desires. Recently the girls attended a party at the ABC house in Glastonbury and had a fabulous weekend there. On November 5th, they have been invited to Wellesley where they had such a good time last year and are anxious to return. These contacts are important to them, but they want to make connections closer to home, to meet boys and girls they can invite to parties here. The ABC Board is going to be more cognizant of this issue and through the Urban League and our own resources, create a more realistic and active social environment.

During the summer, Kerry Mayers and her committee did extensive painting and repairing throughout the house. The basement and attic were made more useful, chairs slip-covered, the hall recarpeted and room decor improved. These changes were greeted with enthusiasm by the girls. However, the house still has needs: blankets, two electric typewriters, floor lamps and a bicycle.

The car wash was most successful, but entertainment is expensive and money goes fast, so please think of the ABC house for unused theatre tickets, community concerts or perhaps tickets to local shows. Remember, all gifts are tax deductible. Requested are: magazine subscriptions to Newsweek, Time, Ebony, Saturday Evening Post, also National Geographic would be appreciated -- old and new. Perhaps you have a globe, atlas or some sports equipment they could use. This would be a great way to contribute to making their house a home -- so please think of ABC ... there is a way you can help!

In closing, grateful thanks to all of you who have responded to our fund drive. It is a tangible vote of confidence essential to our operation and we have almost reached our goal. We are particularly gratified to have so many new supporters join our ranks.

Janet Fiske, Editor

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MR. & MRS. WILLIAM MAHONY
20 Hope Drive
Darien, CT. 06820

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