

**A BETTER CHANCE IN DARIEN, inc.**  
**P.O. BOX 3204 • DARIEN, CONNECTICUT 06820**

FALL NEWSLETTER 1985

Dear Friends,

ABC in Darien is now into its fifth year and it is with a sense of mileage behind us, that we begin the 85/86 academic year with a confidence that is tempered by realistic expectations.

Gary and Sharon White join our program here as the new Resident Directors. They come with a wealth of positive experience and we welcome them most warmly. Details of their backgrounds and motivations for taking this job appear on Page 2.

Rosemary Peppet is the new President of the Board of ABC, and Effie Mahoney the new cook at 11 Brookside Road.

Each year several new members are elected to the Board. This year we welcome Margie Ambrose, Marta Elders, Robert Flynn, Willie Gustavson, Melissa Jones, Jane Page, Sheila Sherwood, Simon Tiller, Judy Wales and Jane Wollmar.

Fresh energy and enthusiasm are vital elements in any organization and ABC in Darien is no exception. In joining the program all these people will be adding their own touches and talents, and we look forward to another productive and busy year.

Pictured below, ABC Resident Directors, Gary and Sharon White, talking with ABC President, Rosemary Peppet and Ex-Officio, Mike Armstrong.



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS**

Rosemary Peppet  
 Rosemary Mace  
 Nancy Tapley  
 Robert Flynn  
 Suzanne Albani  
 Willie Gustavson  
 Dorothea Sarr

**DIRECTORS**

Margie Ambrose  
 Anne Armstrong  
 C. Michael Armstrong  
 Marilyn Aymar  
 Joan Burchenal  
 Dayton Clewell  
 Penny Devereux  
 Marta Elders  
 Henry Ernstthal  
 Donald Evers  
 Sandy Filmer  
 Faye Gage  
 Sue Geery  
 Tana Gilmore  
 Truda Jewett  
 Melissa Jones  
 Leonard Krill  
 Barbara Magrath  
 Kerry Mayers  
 Connie McCreery  
 Jane Page  
 Walter Pitman  
 Sheila Sherwood  
 William Silvia  
 Sam Stevenson  
 Simon Tiller  
 Leila Toleda  
 Judy Wales  
 Jane Wollmar

**RESIDENT DIRECTORS**

Gary and Sharon White

**RESIDENT TUTOR**

Eliza McFeely



## ABC POLICY

ABC National has a set of guidelines which each ABC program is encouraged to follow. Contained in these guidelines are certain clearly stated commitments which are required of the students chosen to join the program. These commitments, covering areas of academic diligence to positive social behavior, are both reasonable and necessary for the health of the whole program.

Occasionally an ABC student will have difficulty adjusting to the rigid standards of this highly competitive academic program. We regret that after two semesters on probation Zoe Davis was unable to come to terms with the various disciplines of the program. After careful and thorough deliberation, it was deemed to be in Zoe's best interest, as well as that of the entire Darien ABC program, to return her to her family. She is at present attending a public high school in Cleveland and planning to apply for admission to Ohio State University.

Rosemary Peppet, President.



### RESIDENT DIRECTORS



New Resident Directors, Gary and Sharon White, have taken on a job that is close to their hearts. They are very interested in the ABC program and, while realizing that initial adjustments have to be made on all sides, they are positive in their outlook for the year ahead.

Like the Shortliffes before them, they are young and both have important careers of their own. Gary is a lawyer and Sharon, an educational specialist. They are expecting their first child in December.

Gary was born and educated in Pittsburg, Pa. At the age of 16 he moved with his family to Stamford, Ct. - his father having been made pastor of a church there. Gary attended Stamford High School, and after graduating from there, went to Holy Cross college in Worcester, Mass. where he obtained an honors degree in philosophy. Then, deciding on a law career, he went on to Harvard Law School. He is now a criminal lawyer, practising in Norwalk.

Sharon was born in South Carolina and, up until the age of 11 attended a segregated school there. She too, moved with her family to Stamford. After graduating from high school, she attended U-Conn, in Storrs, where she majored in English Education. She went to work as Assistant Director of Admissions at Hampshire College, Amherst, Mass., and during this time, studied for her M.A. in Higher Education & Student Personnel Administration & Counseling. For the next three years she was Academic Counselor/Coordinator of Minority Affairs, at Emerson College in Boston. There, she coordinated a workshop entitled "The Minority Student in the Predominantly White Institution: Strategies for Future Survival." She is presently enrolled at Columbia University where she is a Doctoral Student in Higher Education. Sharon's current position, one she has held since 1980, is Coordinator of Center for Academic Programs, U-Conn. - Stamford Regional Campus. In 1982 she was a recipient of a Connecticut Humanities Council grant.



Both Gary and Sharon have experienced life as minorities in a primarily white school and Gary understands too, what life is like for teenagers in a big city. Since 1983, Sharon has been a consultant to the after-school Pre-College Readiness and Enrichment Program (PREP) at Stamford High School and U-Conn. Stamford, and is therefore closely in touch with the academic levels the ABC students must attain.

In joining our ABC program here, they feel they can share their own experiences and talents with the girls. They know what these young women have to face, and they want very much for the girls to profit from their influence, expertise and contacts. However, they do realize this takes time, that the girls need to accept equally the White's role of authority, with that of role-model, before progress in this direction is made.



### STUDENT NEWS

The girls, when asked what they looked forward to most on their return from their summer away, agreed that it was to see each other again. Mentioned too, was Darien's clean air and serenity as well as seeing friends and host families. The girls also felt better, more confident coming back here with a year under their belts. They know what to expect and what is expected of them.

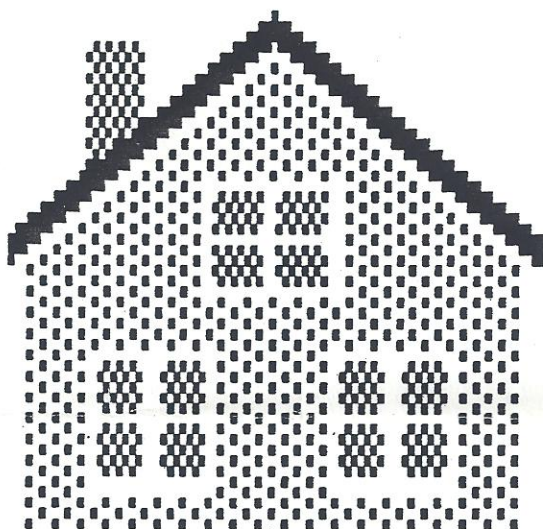
During the summer, some of the girls had jobs while others took courses or were in programs. Marcie worked as a receptionist at her local Board of Ed. office, then modelled for the Ford Modelling Agency. Shelley worked at the Native American Educational Program in N.Y.C. She spent time in Shenacock in South Hampton and found herself enjoying the many museums in the New York area. Denise babysat for her aunt and also took a typing course at Lehman High School. Jackie and Khisha did the Outward Bound program up in the Adirondacks. Khisha had a most unfortunate start - on her first day she had an accident from which she spent most of her summer recovering. However, it is much to her credit that she went back to complete the course once she was well again. They found the backpacking, mountain and rock climbing fun and exciting and Jackie received a special award for her co-operation in the course.

The girls are back in the swing of academic life at Darien High School, working hard at their courses and taking part to some extent in extra-curricular activities there. Denise, Jackie, Khisha and Shelley are all involved with the International Club. Marcie is co-president of Amica and both she and Denise are participating in the Concert Choir. Khisha, Jackie and Denise are interested and enthusiastic about the A.F.S. Summer program, and have attended the first meeting for applicants.

After-school jobs are now part of the girls' daily agenda. Marcie does part time secretarial work for a legal practice in town; Jackie helps her host-mother with house-cleaning; Denise is employed as a teacher assistant at a local nursery school; Shelley and Khisha work at the Leukemia Society of Darien. They all like the extra money, enjoy the responsibility and as Khisha says "... it keeps me away from all the food at home!"

Socially, the girls have had a relatively quiet time thus far. They did, however, attend the Ebony Fashion Fair in Stamford recently, and went on afterwards to the RazzMaTazz Disco. This was a fun outing for them and they loved it. In September they held another Car-Wash, which helped augment their activity fund for this year. Their DHS friends again lent willing hands to this project, and a good, if wet time was had by all. Topsfield and New Canaan ABC's have parties planned, and the girls are looking forward to going to these.

\*\*\*



#### HOUSE HAPPENINGS

The ABC house is currently undergoing a total vinyl-siding face lift.

Barb Magrath is to be thanked for her constant attention to maintenance of the house. Her job involves everything from seeing to the fixing or replacing of broken appliances, to physically painting and wallpapering, as well as being there to supervise any work done at the house. She also spent a great deal of time getting quotes on options for the house exterior.

Thanks Barb, you're doing a terrific job!

\*\*\*

News of ABC Alumni will be featured in our Winter Newsletter, along with a Host Family update. So, 'til then, Happy Holidays!

Sandy Filmer, Editor



## How YOU Can Help . . .

- I'd like to work on a fundraising event      Name .....
- I could serve as a host family
- I could help transport occasionally      Address .....
- I could bake, sew, garden, paint, etc.
- I could introduce a new friend to ABC      ..... Phone .....

Please clip and send to : ABC in Darien, Box 3204, Darien CT 06820