



## A BETTER CHANCE IN DARIEN, inc.

P.O. BOX 3204 • DARIEN, CONNECTICUT 06820

# Spring '86

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#### RESIDENT DIRECTORS

Gary and Sharon White

#### RESIDENT TUTOR

Eliza McFeely

Dear Friends,

As yet another year draws to a close, the real worth of ABC again becomes evident. As we hear back from our alumni in college, from teachers and volunteers, this program in Darien has reason to celebrate. Read on for news of ABC's alumni and Resident Directors, Gary and Sharon White's impressions of their first year.

At 11 Brookside Road, it is almost time to pack bags and go home to enjoy yet another summer. For our current ABC students a year of learning, studying, taking tests and writing papers is now at an end. A year which saw them compete in athletics, take part in theater productions and musical events, a year to which these young people have given of their best, becomes now a record of past achievement and pride. And, like boarding school students all over, they look forward to returning to their families and just doing other things for a while.

Only Denise Richards will not be going home. Earlier this year she was excited to learn that she is to spend the summer in Bogota, Columbia, under the AFS program. We wish her a safe and happy trip.

## two say farewell...



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Khisha Pratt, graduating senior. After due and careful consideration, Khisha has chosen to go to Tufts University in Boston this fall. She plans on becoming a veterinarian and chose Tufts because it offers the courses she needs.



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Eliza McFeely, ABC's Resident Tutor leaves after two years of dedicated service. She writes about her time with ABC on page 4.

At DHS recently a Human Rights Day was held. The ABC students participated in one of the workshops discussing prejudice. From all accounts this day - which covered a broad range of issues - was both successful and enlightening for everybody at the school.

In March the town honored the program by proclaiming a special ABC week. Friends of ABC as well as the ABC family itself were warmed and heartened by this significant endorsement.



STUDY HALL ... Khisha, Shelley, Jackie & Marcelle.

#### RESIDENT DIRECTORS SHARE THOUGHTS

Gary and Sharon White, in their first year of office at the ABC house, have been struck by "the willingness of people who volunteer time and money to the ABC program." They feel that there is "a genuine interest in and a commitment to the social/academic progress of the girls."

The Whites recognize too, the significant contribution the host families make to the program. "They provide a link between the program and the community. They enable the girls to feel part of the town yet also part of a family - opening their homes and lives, and learning about different cultural backgrounds. Their personal involvement is rather special."

"Darien High School seems to be strong academically," says Gary White, "with a great variety of extra-curricular programs ... many of which would be offered at a good college." He finds the ABC students intelligent with a capacity to work hard and he believes that the school is providing them with outstanding preparation for college.



While the White's credit the highschool for its academic preparation, they see a need to expand the girls' experience in other ways. Toward this end, they have initiated a 'guest tradition' at the ABC house which seems to be working well. During the course of the year they have invited some of their friends and acquaintances to the house to talk and meet with the girls. They feel it important for the girls to hear firsthand what it's like to be a teacher or in computers. Included on the White's guest list: an M.D., a TV executive, lawyers, a computer analyst, a stockbroker and a couple of salesmen and college professors. "Most, but not all have been black. Most come from similar backgrounds to the ABC students, and are ordinary down to earth people eager to share their experiences." With a smile, Gary adds, "The girls are usually rather shy to begin with, but as they get used to each individual they become more enthusiastic, more talkative."

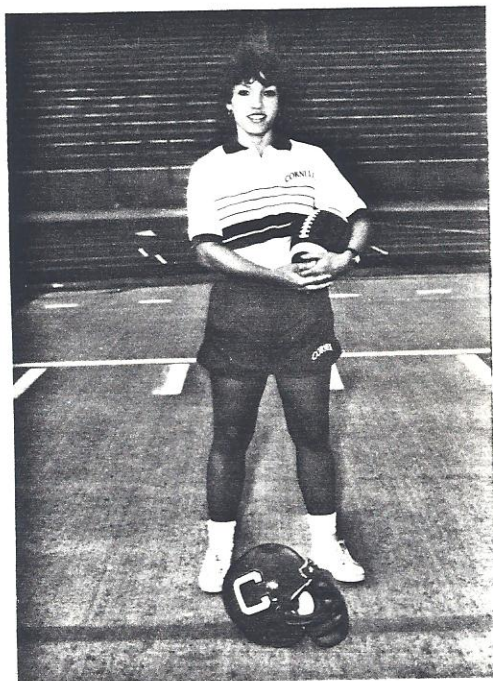
### ALUMNI NEWS

On a recent business trip to Northwestern University Leila Toleda, an ABC board member, arranged to visit with two Darien ABC graduates - Kathy Marshall and Toni Frost (class of '84). Leila said, "It was so great to see them. They are so 'sparkly' and vivacious. I listened to and saw their growth and their maturity. They are no longer girls they are young ladies now with goals, plans and dreams. And they speak positively of their experience at ABC."

In her recruiting travels, Leila has come across other ABC graduates, "including one young man from New Canaan who had attended one of the Darien ABC parties. They all recognize the significance of their ABC experience and feel they are well equipped to meet the challenges that face them." Leila adds, "There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that ABC does make a difference and will have an impact on the future."

Faye Gage, a key member of ABC's academic committee had a call from Rosa Garcia (class of '84). Rosa continues to work hard in the Hispanic Society at Wesleyan and reports enthusiastically that 32 Hispanic students will be starting college there in the fall. This is up some 26 from last year. She has also managed to land herself a plum job this summer working for an Hispanic Congresswoman in California writing legislation. Then she's off to Madrid for her fall semester. Rosa told Faye that Orgyn Clarke, (class of '84) also a student at Wesleyan has plans to spend her fall semester at Howard. Orgyn is hoping to go to Italy for her spring semester next year. She will be in touch with Zoe Davis who has chosen to go to Howard this fall.

Liz Tejada (class of '84) continues to keep in close contact with Pauline and Bill Silvia, her host family when she was in the ABC program here. She sent them this photo of herself (left) all dressed up in her 'manager of Cornell's football team' outfit. She is well and working hard and, like the other alumni, she credits ABC for much of her success in college.



## ELIZA MCFEELY TALKS ABOUT BEING RESIDENT TUTOR

I think my favorite thing about living in the ABC house has been watching people's faces when I tell them about my five girls--all teenagers. As the last of my friends holding out against parenthood, it is funny that I should feel so responsible for these girls: angry and frustrated when they have trouble; anxious as they take tests; proud as a mother when they succeed at something. Somehow it never occurred to me when I came to ABC that I would get so entwined: it is with real ambivalence that I watch Khisha go off to make it on her own at Tufts and that I leave Shelley, Denise, Marcelle and Jackie to tackle their senior year without me. All the girls have grown as students and as people in the two years we've worked together. I think next year will see their labors bear fruit, and I wish I were going to be around to witness the awareness of their intelligence, their beauty--and their power--I feel sure will come to them when they return with the confidence of seniors.

ABC has been a rollercoaster ride. Harder work than it is possible to describe, emotional turmoil at both ends of the spectrum, laughing and fighting, hours of review questions on World War I, free writes and geometry proofs, notecards, I-searches, Huck Finn and always a thesis. I wouldn't have missed it. Khisha, Shelley, Jackie, Denise and Marcelle, Gary, Sharon and Krysten are all a little bit family now, and it is only because I am confident that I can take that with me that it is possible to go.

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### WANTED: # 2 Host Families

#### # 2 Back-up Host Families

Call Tana Gilmore 348-1374.

#### # 1 Resident Tutor (B.A. English Major)

to supervise evening study. All meals,  
private room and bath provided.

Call Jane Wollmar 655-7843.

#### # Some of our ABC students are looking for summer jobs.

Any ideas or suggestions?

Call ABC house 655-6296.

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Our Fall newsletter will bring introductions and pictures of 2 sophomores joining ABC. We'll list new board members and bring you up to date on all happenings at 11 Brookside Road. 'Til then, it's time for fun in the sun, and we wish you all the best.

Sandra Filmer  
Editor