



A BETTER CHANCE IN DARIEN, inc.

P.O. BOX 3204 • DARIEN, CONNECTICUT 06820

NEWSLETTER

SPRING '88

A "day in the life" at the ABC house...

Dear Friends of ABC,

It's 10:30 PM. Tina and I have just returned home from a choral rehearsal. Sohui is in the next room studying for a Western Civ test. Edwina, Okwui, Alexa, and Cielo are in the kitchen doing marathon baking. (They are sponsoring a bake sale at school tomorrow.)

Julie has already called it quits for the night. How she sleeps, I don't know. Between the banging pots, loud conversation, and music, it's a wonder the house itself isn't moving...

If any generalizations can be made about life with six teenagers, one thing is certain: It is active! And for Tina and me, at least, it is never dull. The current mania is softball practice. With drills called "suicides," it sounds like basic training. Our three participants will surely be in good shape. That is, they will be if they survive the jammed fingers, black eyes, sore muscles, and sprained ankles.

We continue to look forward to spring events. We'll have our car wash on April 30, a party for other ABC houses and friends in May, a hoped-for trip to New York City to see "Cats," and softball games...

It's now 11:00 PM. The baking sounds to be about completed. I'll soon venture into the kitchen to inspect the damage. I hear someone working on the computer now. A vacuum cleaner starts humming in the dining room. The cat promptly darts from there to our bedroom--safe again.

A year and a half of living here will have elapsed by the time we leave the ABC house this summer. What will we remember? The not-so-surprising "surprise" birthday parties, grilling hamburgers in the back yard, skiing (sort-of) in Vermont, and sharing Christmas. We've enjoyed becoming close to these young people as well to the many supporters and co-workers of ABC. We look forward to continued contact in the future and wish the new resident directors well.

It's 11:30 PM. All is quiet--relatively speaking. We've promised rides to school at 7:00 AM tomorrow to help transport the baked goods. For that reason, I'll close.

David Rhyne
ABC Resident Director

Darien's ABC

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Rosa Garcia



Orgyln Clark

Their alma maters will be Northwestern, NYU, Cornell, and Wesleyan. Their plans include law school, a PhD program, retailing, and hospital administration, among others.

This is a small cross section of the Class of '88 college graduates. Their outlook is as varied as the women themselves, but they have one special thing in common: They were all part of Darien's first group of ABC students and they're getting ready to graduate from college.

Since "A Better Chance" is what the program is all about, we decided to catch up with our "charter" group and see what they're up to. Of that original six, only one, LaRose Parris, took a year off to teach English in Taiwan. As far as we know, she is now back at NYU completing her studies.

Here's what's been happening with the five who will pick up that sheepskin this spring.

Very individual pursuits

As is the case for many--if not most--college students today, a chosen major may or may not have a direct bearing on plans post graduation.

Toni Frost, Northwestern, chose a double major--communication studies and math--and plans to go to law school after taking a year off. Liz Tejada, who majored in government at Cornell, keeps returning to a strong interest in retailing, but says she still has to give it some thought before she makes a final decision at the end of summer.

Rosa Garcia will parlay a double major in history and Latin American studies at Wesleyan into a PhD program

in history at UCLA. She has particularly enjoyed taking interdisciplinary courses within the Latin American studies program.

Joy Kathy-Ann Marshall has majored in human development and social policy at Northwestern, and taken a minor in health and human services. A four-month internship in the department of public affairs and community relations at the prestigious Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago last year enhanced her already growing interest in hospital administration work. Ms. Marshall was recently elected to "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges."

Orgyln Clark, a double major in psychology and sociology at Wesleyan, has strong feelings about starting her own business and following a tradition started by her mother. She doesn't rule out the possibility of graduate school one day, however. Ms. Clark knows she needs some working experience. She has done a lot of modeling and is currently considering a position in the editorial department of a major fashion magazine in New York City to add broader skills.

Enjoying the extracurriculars

All of these young women demonstrated leadership on their campuses in various ways. Holding office was common as was participation in ethnic social and cultural artistic groups on campus.

Liz Tejada held the most unusual position in the group, however. She has been one of six managers of the Cornell football team, a challenge she decided to try in her freshman year.

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Liz Tejada

"It's a year-round job that involves varied responsibilities, such as making team hotel reservations, helping in the recruiting program, and putting equipment out on the field for practices," Ms. Tejada says. "I've had to put a lot of time and energy into this, but it's been worth it."

Summers have meant special opportunities for Toni Frost, with last summer as the highlight. "I worked in Congressman Louis Stokes' office in Washington," she says. "He was a wonderful role model for me. He didn't have special advantages like I had growing up and he has achieved so much."

Junior year took Orgyln Clark in two quite different directions, both of which she says helped her to grow. "I went to Howard University for a semester in junior year to see what it would be like to be surrounded by black students and to live in a major city environment," she says. "I learned a lot about my limits and my abilities there." Ms. Clark then went to Rome, Italy, on a student exchange program for second semester junior year and loved the experience abroad.

Rosa Garcia spent a semester junior year in Spain. Her summers included working in Los Angeles for an assemblywoman in her home district where she had a first-hand education in local political activism.

Joy Marshall, who has worked in New York City over the summers, received a special grant last summer that kept her in Chicago. She was accepted into a Summer Research Opportunities Program that allowed her to work with a professor of her choice. Her project



Joy Kathy-Ann Marshall



Jonevette ("Toni") Frost

was on the impact of the AIDS virus on black children.

How they feel about ABC

Darien's first ABC students were all quite thoughtful on what participation in the program has meant in their lives. It was not easy "breaking ground" here. They questioned at the time whether the price of leaving home and participating in ABC was too high for young teenage girls. But they all say today how well prepared they were for college life.

"ABC helped me to become more receptive, more open to people from different backgrounds," Ms. Clark says. "I learned to push myself, to take advantage of all opportunities that come my way. I'd tell the current ABC girls not to shrink from the challenge, even if they're not sure they can make it. Take that honors course. Everyone faces life's changes with some fear, but you can overcome the fear for opportunities that let you reach your potential."

They have come a long way, baby. ■

Keeping food on the table

We've got a tough assignment for you: What would you prepare for daily dinner, day after day, to please the palates of six teenage girls, two resident directors, and a resident tutor? Oh, the budget is limited...

Give up? With the current ABC house residents, the list of favorite foods starts with lots of veggies--peas, corn, noodles, salad--and goes on to include chicken and pork. Bagels are in, beef is out.

The expert on this subject is Effie Mahoney, a patient, creative, cook who can move around the kitchen like a whirling dervish. Word has it that you can find her checking on a pork roast in the oven, putting some sauce on barbecuing chicken, and preparing lasagna, all at the same time. Ms. Mahoney has been with the Darien ABC program for three years.

Before that, Ms. Mahoney cooked for a New Canaan family with 10 children for 25 years. "I generally find girls

fussier eaters than boys," she says.

The budget is about \$150 per week for food at ABC. Several bulk food programs and buying on sale help. The girls all eat breakfast in the house and most pack a brown-bag lunch.

Here's one of their favorites for a light dinner or a hearty lunch:

EFFIE'S POCKET SANDWICHES

Pockets--Pillsbury pop-open pocket dough squares.

Filling--Chopped ham, cooked mushroom pieces, and cheddar cheese, or small cooked chicken pieces mixed with cream of mushroom soup to moisten.

Place a dough square on a flat surface. Put a couple of generous tablespoons of the filling of your choice in the center. Place another dough square on top and seal the edges with a fork moistened with water.

Gently put the pockets on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 for about 20 minutes. Serve with salad. ■

How you can help ABC

The ABC program depends on the participation of many people in the Darien community. What can you do to help? It may be something quite small or quite special. If any of these ideas strike home, please call Rosemary Mace, 655-7555, for information:

1. Volunteer as a "host" or "back-up" family and include an ABC student in your family's activities some Sunday afternoons.
2. Volunteer to drive the ABC girls one afternoon a month from after-school activities at DHS to the ABC house, or take an ABC student to the dentist or to do personal errands.
3. Volunteer to share your special skill with one or more ABC student. Would you like to give tennis or paddle lessons, teach the guitar, or provide a professional service (like medical or dental care)? These "extras" are most appreciated.
4. Help with fix-up projects during the summer at the ABC house. We always need help for painting, wallpapering, grounds upkeep, etc.
5. Make a financial contribution to ABC. ■

A big THANK YOU to all who give so generously to ABC!! You make it happen ... You make it WORK.