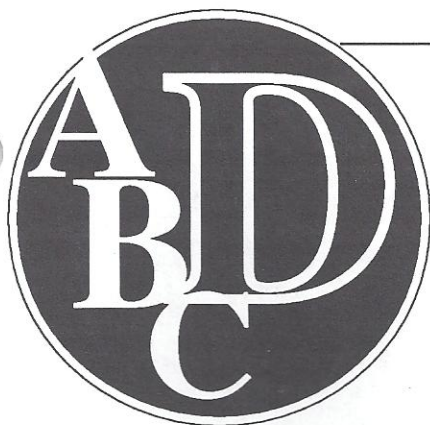


WINTER 1993



NEWS

US POSTAGE PAID
Non-Profit Org.
Permit No. 58
Darien, CT 06820

A BETTER CHANCE IN DARIEN, Inc. P.O. BOX 3204, Darien, Connecticut, 06820

M/M Tom Parnon
203 Old Kings Hwy N.
Darien, CT 06820

Linda Woodrum,
President
Debbie Parnon,
Vice-President
Tom Parnon,
Vice-President
Hal Davis,
Vice-President
Suzanne Albani,
Corporate Sec'y
Cherie Greene,
Recording Sec'y
Sally Schlachtenhaufen,
Treasurer
Jane Moloney,
Asst. Treasurer
June Cobb,
Comptroller
Kathleen and Thad Coulombe,
Resident Directors
Judy Nance
Pat McGarry
Marilynn Aymar
Tim Dutton
David Frank
Jill Kassis
Joan Burchenal
Suzette Davis
Bobbie Earle
Faye Gage
Ed Greene
Linda Russell
Del Shortliffe
Connie Tallman
Jane Wollmar
Emily Bragg
Judy Eaton
Jini Martens
Gay Yelverton
Curtiss Roach
Joan Agresta
Debbie Baeder
Eileen Conte
Chris Filmer
Betsy McGroarty
Chris Place
Lynn Ross
Liaison to Clergy:
Peter Gudaitis
Student Representative:
Sarah Tallman

DEBBIE PARNON ATTENDS ABC CONFERENCE

Debbie Parnon, our Vice President of Internal Affairs, represented ABC in Darien at a two-day "Public School Program" Conference held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in September. The conference was sponsored by ABC National, and 18 of the 24 Public School Programs were in attendance. There were representatives from Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York.

One of the first sessions was titled "Supporting Your ABC Scholars." A panel of professionals with multi-cultural backgrounds presented suggestions for dealing with multi-cultural and adolescent issues — two major concerns every ABC program faces when attempting to assist their students in enjoying a positive ABC experience.

While getting used to a life in a different community, our ABC students often feel lonely, isolated and homesick. They are adjusting to a different lifestyle in the group living situation in the ABC House and are often facing difficult academic challenges at Darien High School. In addition, they are contending with the same tumultuous teenage issues that face our own children. ABC by definition is an academic program, but as pointed out in this conference session, our students' social and personal needs cannot be ignored.

Many suggestions were presented at this session. Among the most interesting were to develop a student support group for students of color and to invite ABC Alumni to speak at the High School's Human Rights Day.

Other topics discussed in other sessions dealt with "nuts and bolts" issues such as "Policy Issues," "Managing a Volunteer Board," and "The Admissions Process."



Debbie Parnon

"The most enjoyable part of the conference," said Debbie, "was talking with the other ABC board representatives. It was comforting to find out that most houses and boards experience similar problems at one time or another and educational to learn the different methods used by those houses and boards to alleviate the problems."

Debbie went on to say that ABC in Darien was often singled out as being one of the best Public School Programs. "Many times," she said, "I was the only person raising her hand in answer to a question regarding what board has this or what board does that. I left the conference with a lot to think about and a great pride in being a part of an eleven year history of dedicated volunteers and successful students."

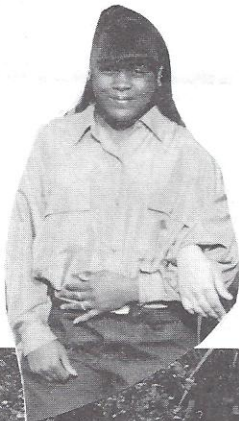
A TOAST TO THE HOST FAMILIES....

The primary purpose of the Host Family program is to provide a home away from home for the ABC student...a change of environment from the pressures of group living in the ABC House.

Host families are members of our community who choose to serve as an extended family for each ABC student while she resides in Darien. Each girl has a host family who she visits on a regular basis, sharing activities, interests and experiences. A back-up Host Family assists each Host Family by sharing one Sunday a month with the student and serving as a Host Family when the regular Host Family is not available. We have now and have had in the past, wonderful families and back-up families who, in the sharing of their homes, provide an important link in the support system.



Renata



HOST FAMILIES

Barbara and David Bristle - Aysha
Penny and Sandy Liu - Solan
Nancy and Bill Leroy - Fatima
Cherie and Ed Greene - Wendy
Susan and Dick Helstein - Renata
Linda and Mike Burton - Phuong

BACK-UP HOST FAMILIES

Sally and John Schlactenhafen - Aysha
Lynn and William Hamlen - Solan
Jill and George Kassis - Fatima
Debbie and Tom Parnon - Wendy
Betsy and Bob McGroarty - Renata
Ginny and Bill Martens - Phuong

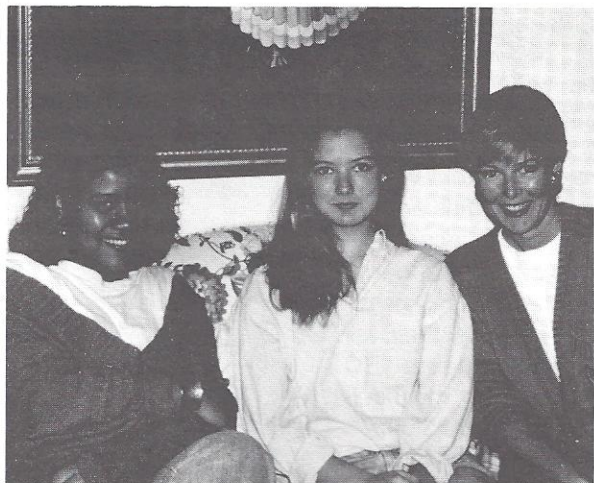
Fatima



**Dick, Elizabeth, and Sue Helstein
Maggie, Tim and Annie**



**Bill, Nancy Leroy
Steve, Dan, Scott
Mary Elizabeth, Andrew**



Wendy, Katy and Cherie Greene



Aysha, Liz and Emily Bristle

THOUGHTS ON BEING A HOST FAMILY....

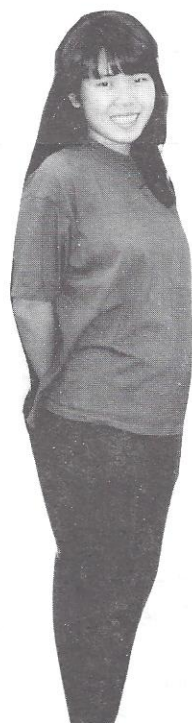
by Penny and

Sandy Liu

We're feeling very old. Both of our ABC daughters are graduating this year, So Lan from high school and her "big sister" Julie Leung from Connecticut College.

Like all parents, we're amazed at how time has flown, we're sad to see them moving away from us, and we're delighted and proud to see them moving into exciting new stages of their lives.

As host parents, we feel especially lucky to have shared a small part of these girls' experiences: new styles of teaching, new ways of responding in class, volleyball practice, "Macbeth" and "Billy Bud," college essays, and those long free-wheeling talks over Sunday spaghetti dinner. Whatever our daughters learned from us, we've probably learned more from them.



So Lan



Penny and Sandy Liu

It is with sadness that we report that Phuong Vu has withdrawn from our ABC program. She has rejoined her family in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and is currently attending her local high school. All of us on the ABC Board wish her well and much success.

Recommended Reading:

Best Intentions, The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry, by Robert Sam Ainson

Wild Swans, by Jung Chang

DID YOU KNOW.....

That more than 90% of all money raised to support ABC programs comes from individuals, not corporations?

That ABC National, located in Boston, DOES NOT provide local programs like ours with funding?

That transportation is provided for the girls by ofvolunteer drivers who take them to doctor appointments, sport practices, after school jobs, etc.? Want to help? Please call Sally Schlactenhaufen, 655-7851.

That ABC's academic standards are quite high? Students must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average after their first year in the program.

That ABC students attend mandatory study hall from 7:00 PM until 10:00 PM Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 PM until 10:00 PM on Sunday?

That Kathleen Coulombe is currently offering her culinary talents to the ABC girls and has taken over the duties of ABC House cook as well as maintaining her responsibilities as a resident director and mother of 16 month old Teddy?

That Wendy is serving on this year's Depot Board?

That Renata worked at the town library during the first semester and enjoys attending DHS basketball games?

That back in the spring of 1979, Person to Person along with the YWCA was instrumental in bringing ABC to the attention of Darien citizens? Anne Kimball, then director of Person to Person, made the investigation with the national office in Boston and asked the late Herb West to be the first president.

That Aysha Ramseur and So Lan Liang, have completed their applications to some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the country?

That Aysha and Fatima Ullah work every day after school in the administrative offices at the High School?



Fatima and Aysha at their after-school job.

ENRICHMENT

Chris Place, our new and very enthusiastic enrichment coordinator, has looked at enrichment in a broad way and established several goals for enriching the ABC students' experiences. Among these are providing exposure to a variety of cultures, role models and resources, providing lessons in sports, music and art along with the necessary equipment, instruments and materials they require, and empowering the ABC girls to function in a multi-cultural world with self-confidence and respect for their own culture as well as other cultures.



Chris would also like to find local hosts or mentors within their own ethnic groups to interact with the students and the ABC Board. "Having a library in the house that addresses their needs is a priority," Chris says, "Helping them develop more effective interpersonal skills is another area I would like to explore."

A major obstacle to fulfilling these goals is a lack of funds. There is currently no specific budget for the enrichment committee, and money is available only on a limited basis.

So far this year some of the girls have taken swimming lessons generously donated by the YMCA and have gone to New York to see the Radio City Music Hall Christmas show.

Chris feels, "We need to work on enhancing our communication with these young women and on identifying their needs effectively. We need to solicit adequate funds for the enrichment activities." She welcomes any ideas and urges any of you to think about sharing a skill or a special talent. Please contact Chris (966-1821) or her committee members Pat McGarry (655-1619) or Debbie Baeder (655-8079) if you have any questions.

THIS OLD HOUSE...

.... continues to be in tip top shape thanks to the seemingly limitless energy provided by Bobbie Earle, chairman of House Maintenance, and her committee members, Eileen Conte and Chris Filmer. They are currently giving the dining room a "facelift" in the form of fresh paint and wallpaper with help from Thad Coloumbe, Resident Director, Linda Woodrum, ABC Board President and other enthusiastic board members.

