

The Scholar

Summer 1999

A Better Chance in Darien Newsletter

Volume 4

Nº 2

Jackie Scott, Co-President
Avery Flowers, Co-President
Tamsin Sickinger, Vice President
Suzanne Albani, Corp. Sec'y
Susie McKittrick, Recording Sec'y
Jane Moloney, Treasurer
Claire Locher, Asst. Treasurer
June Cobb, Comptroller

Dianne & Bob Johnson,

Resident Directors

Marilynn Aymar
Barbara Bristle
Dave Bristle
Joan Burchenal
Charlie Eaton
Judy Eaton
Annie Feuerman
Sandy Filmer
Maureen Finnegan
Marilyn Frank
Cherie Greene
B.A. Hand

Dick Hand
Marcia Kasony
Nora Kennedy
Debi Lee
Cathy Mahoney
Dana Matheis
Sandra McDonnell
Bill Merritt
Diane Nava
Debbie Parnon
Spike Reed
Donna Rosevear
Tony Shaw
Kathy Shea
Jean Shortliffe
Janet Soskin

Host Families

Pam & Robert Lindberg
Wendy & Roger Megroz
Christine Sauter
Ginny & Richard White
Sarah & José Zepeda
Susan & Suresh Bhirud
Judy & Richard Groppa
Diana & Stacey Lippmann
Karen & Tim MacDonald
Cathy & Craig Russell

Students

Erica Pardo '99
Kate Ofikuru 2001
Linnet Martin 2001
Octavia Donnelly 2002
Malika Willis 2002

It Was A Very Good Year!

Stepping out one starry night in October Erica attended the premier of *Beloved* and had the thrill of meeting Oprah Winfrey and Toni Morrison. The lights of Broadway shined on Malika who attended *Ragtime* with the Concert Choir. Of course, first and foremost was academic achievement and each student helped to make the house proud. Athletic teamwork was enthusiastically exhibited, with Erica and Malika running cross country in the fall, Erica took on management of the track team in the spring—Octavia, Malika and Linet joined her, Linet qualified for State competition and Malika made the news, with her victories in shot put! Kate enjoyed playing volleyball and softball and Octavia went out for basketball. There were diversity conferences and parties that brought food for thought and a bit of enlightenment to everyone who attended; during spring break Kate participated in the Hugh O'Brien Student Leadership Conference. The girls continue to make an effort to get to know the students participating in the other Connecticut ABC programs—everyone had a terrific time at a winter dance in Wilton and a spring dance in Guilford, attended by students in the eight Connecticut programs—sorry, the paparazzi was banned!!



Say It Ain't So Joe!

Oh, I mean "Oh boy, summer vacation's almost over and we can start doing homework again!! Erica will be doing hers at Manhattan College. Kendra Barber, Chadae Chang and Jennifer Stenson will be doing theirs for the first time in Darien this fall, making 11 Brookside a full house with seven girls. The new resident directors, Steve Bodach and his wife Karyn Montague, will be greeting the girls with their baby boy, Duncan, on the weekend of August 28. Linet will return to the house after spending her summer taking care of the Scott's four children. Malika will have tales to share from her experiences interning at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. Kate has had quite a few adventures and learning experiences, having attended several conferences and camps. Octavia is sure to come back from the wilds of Cleveland with all sorts of stories! Stay tuned!

Working 8 To 10

The girls have figured it out. Everything costs money! Last fall they put their heads together and came up with some creative solutions to help pay for SAT and college applications, trips to visit colleges and various other enrichment activities. The car wash in October was fun and lucrative. The bake sale at the Congregational Church on Mother's Day was a scrumptious success and lots of fun in the production. Bringing her midwest political savvy to the front, Octavia served as co-president of the freshmen class. In the spirit of the lyrics in "The Circle of Life", "Never take more than you give," Erica volunteered at the United Way, while Linet, Kate, Malika and Octavia volunteered at the YMCA. And to add to a year well-done Erica left town with four scholarship awards for all her efforts—from the DCA, the Rotary Club, H & L Chevrolet and DHS.



Angels in the Outfield

While some of us have been off wind surfing, sailing or golfing, Donna Rosevear has been tirelessly transforming the house, painting, cleaning, moving furniture, overseeing the laying of new carpet, plumbing & the installation of new lighting. As she was performing those miracles with the help of Marilyn Aymar and Patty Schoknecht, Diane Nava, the new and improved white tornado, blew through the kitchen leaving no corner unturned! A definite photo op in Interiors! Thank you so much!

Women of Distinction

Many of you will never get to really know these amazing young women so we'd like to give you a little glimpse into who they are. Our graduate, Erica, has the wonderful gift of bringing calm to the middle of a storm. She's incredibly kind, always appreciative and never asks for anything in return. Kate, our volleyball and softball enthusiast, loves being part of a team, consistently playing with tremendous heart. Linet makes her mark quietly, but hardly goes unnoticed, treating everyone she meets to her dry wit. Competing at the state level in track, she is a very positive influence in the house and has a wonderful way with young children. Octavia, hailing all the way from Cleveland, shows great emotional courage pursuing her education so far from home. She has also put herself on the line joining the soccer, basketball and track teams, despite no prior experience and an aversion to running! We have had the joy of watching Malika blossom into a true competitor, both academically and athletically. After her first cross country race in the fall, she proudly stated, "I came in 58th but I finished!" Today, she has qualified for State competition in shot put. Stay tuned!

BOB & DIANNE

and then there were three

WE SAID

Four years and several weeks ago Bob and Dianne Johnson donned their hats as resident directors of the Darien ABC program. The hats they actually wore were many, from carpentry to counseling. Before the girls entered the house in the fall of 1995 Bob had crafted a built-in wall cabinet system to house shoes, coats, books. The couple painted and wall papered, working hard to bring a bright and inspiring atmosphere to the house, prior to meeting the girls. Throughout their tenure, the couple graced the house with wisdom, fairness, great spirit and tireless energy. The relationships they nurtured with each girl, with members of the Board, with the host families and with various members of the staff at DHS helped bring new integrity to the program. They initiated



"Welcome to the green Earth," the people sang. . . . And as they held you close they whispered into your open, curving ear, "We are so glad you've come!"

On The Day You Were Born by Debra Frasier

countless projects and jumped in, with great enthusiasm, to help with any project or to solve any problem that was brought to their attention. They are role models who brought discipline, structure and love to the house which resulted in each of our scholars growing in pride and self esteem.

THEY SAID

Reflecting on the past four years, neither Bob nor Dianne would have traded this experience for anything in the world, learning as much from the girls as the girls learnt from them. Being relatively newly weds, with no children, they were each treated to a preview as to how the other would perform as a parent and they were both impressed! It meant so much to them, to be able to watch Erica mature and blossom from her orientation as a freshman in the program to her graduation. They got to know the resident directors from the other program directors. One of the most rewarding aspects of the job was being visited by graduates of the program and knowing that Jackie, Danique, Migdalia, Barbara and Erica will be in their lives for the duration. It was quite fitting that right before leaving Darien, Dianne gave birth to beautiful Caroline. Thanks, you guys for helping ABC Darien reach new heights. We'll all miss you!

Letter *from our* Presidents

*I*t is with great pride and gratitude that we write of our rewarding first year as co-presidents. We are grateful to so many people who have helped in endless ways to support us and the program with their time, money, hard work, advice and love.



We are enormously proud of our five scholars who have so beautifully matured academically and emotionally, and who make us feel that the ABC Program really does make a difference.

ABC is an academic scholarship program requiring the scholars to maintain a minimum 3.0 grade average. We are so proud of our scholars for their academic achievements and for stretching themselves personally by trying new things and competing in new venues. We trust that the lessons learned from hard work, dedication, sacrifice and teamwork serve not only to prepare them for entrance into college but for leadership in society.

Girls, we applaud you for a year very well done! Erica, we'll miss you and we love you! And to you, our supporters, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being there. Without your generosity, this program could not exist. Please know that your contributions make a real difference in the lives of these young women. We can't wait to introduce to you our three wonderful freshmen and our new resident directors, Karyn and Steve Bodach, who come with enormous enthusiasm and passion for the ABC mission.

Hope your summer has been safe and happy.

Jackie Scott & Avery Flowers

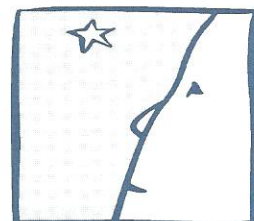
Managing Editors: Judy Eaton, Sandra McDonnell

Art Direction & Design: Sandra McDonnell, **SJM**Design

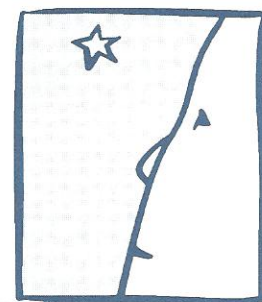
A Better Chance
FOR THE KIDS. FOR YOU. FOR ALL OF US

Post Office Box 3204 Darien, Connecticut 06820

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



She came Erica Pardo she saw, she conquered



I am now about to enter a new room, leaving my old one behind but never closing the doors on the memories that were created in it. I will not close the door on those memories because everything I have learned will help me find my way through the rest of the stages of my life. The ABC room has been my room for four years. During these four years I have been fortunate enough to have become acquainted with wonderful people and to have made great friends. Besides meeting people, I've learned to be disciplined in my studies and to deal with responsibilities in the house. I realize that it is amazing to have a group of thirty-five or so people who all care about you and help make your time in the ABC program the best possible. Before I leave this stage in my life, I would like to say "thank you" to everyone who helped me get through these years—the Whites gave me a home away from home, Bob and Dianne were always there for me. Thanks Mrs. Thorne, Mrs. Parnon, Mrs. Flowers, Mrs. Scott, the McKittricks ... Thank you, for in this room I have met many different faces, have dealt with situations, good and bad, and I am now ready to move on, say good-bye and always look back and remember ... In this room, I leave friends behind and hopefully in the next stage I'll be lucky enough to find individuals who are just as nice as my friends in ABC. Thank you for helping me make my entrance into a new room, "The College Room", much easier. God Bless!



THE ENTRANCE OF A ROOM

Life's stages is like when I enter a room full of people's faces I have never seen. Each new face represents a new situation that I have never have had to deal with before. Like any other person, I try to find a place where I can fit in, a place where I can feel comfortable.

I try to find a spot.

Along the way I meet ... I feel ...

different faces.

different people.

different situations.

I learn from them, and I learn how to deal and associate with them.

While I am looking, meeting and feeling, memories are created.

The memory begins with a hello and ends with a goodbye.

Personally, through my eyes, that is the way life should be perceived.

It is like moving around in a room ...

feeling different faces

feeling different people.

Sometimes I enter a good room, and sometimes a bad room.

When I enter a bad one I just close that door,

forget about it and enter the next one.

The important thing is to continue that movement.

To continue going into and out of rooms,

finding a spot

finding yourself.

Continue ...

Feeling different faces,

feeling different people.

Continue to LIVE!

An Endsummer Night's Dream

The Lion King

Extraordinary! Line up at 4:00 for same night tickets, one per person for excellent seats. Have dinner delivered to you on line! Otherwise order tickets for next year. New Amsterdam, 214 West 42nd Street

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues

You'll want to see it at least twice! Lincoln Center, Vivian Beaumont Theater, Broadway & 64th Street Through August 29 when it goes to Broadway's Ambassador Theater 219 West 49th Street

Café Wha

Brazil Night every Monday with Rio jazz, Sao Paulo rock and Bahian drumming West Third and Macdougall Streets, NYC

Always Patsy Cline

BYOB and picnic before the play Downtown Cabaret Theater, 263 Golden Hill St., Bridgeport; 203.576.1636 through Oct. 31

Blue Fish at Bridgeport

Baseball, hot dogs! Roger Clemens move over! Ballpark at Harbor Yard, 500 Main Street; 203.345.4800 Mon. thru Sat. 7; Sun, 1, through Sept. 12

Music Under the Stars

Picnic on the lawn and concert Leavitt Pavillion behind library in Westport Weekend evenings through Sept. 12

Giving THANKS

Bob & Dianne Johnson for their amazing inspiration and guidance during their four years

Barbara Thorne for her counseling and active interest in the welfare of each of our scholars

Congregational Church for shelter, emotional support and encouragement

Edward S. Moore Foundation for their amazingly generous donation

Renée Graham for choosing ABC as the beneficiary of her wellness fundraiser

Wishing & hoping!

Chests of drawers in good condition

Sofabed in good condition

Dining room chairs

Upholstered chairs

Vacuum cleaner with serious suction

PC with pentium processor and printer

Gas grille

There's a party goin' on tonight



Erica Pardo, '99, Jackie Ferrer, '97, Bruce Hall, Evan Hall, Migdalia Caraballo, '98, Danique Clarke, '97, Octavia, Malika, Kate, Erica and Linet

PLEDGE

Contributions should be sent to:

A Better Chance of Darien, Inc.
P.O. Box 3204
Darien, CT 06820

I am pleased to support ABC in Darien.

Please make check payable to "A Better Chance." Thank you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

★ \$50

★ \$100

★ Other _____

★ Enclosed is a matching Gift Form from my employer

FOR THE KIDS
FOR YOU
FOR ALL OF US

