

A Better Chance In Darien

1984 SPRING NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends:

June 22 . . . graduation day will be a time of great celebration for our current ABC seniors. They were the first students in our program and have completed 3 years with distinction. Through diligence and commitment to their educational goals, they have compiled a record of outstanding achievement. College acceptances were well earned and a reflection of their success.

Results: Rosa Garcia and Orglyn Clarke will attend Wesleyan University; Joy (Kathy) Marshall and Youvette (Toni) Frost will be at Northwestern University; and Liz Tejada will begin her studies at Cornell University. In total, the girls applied to 28 colleges and were accepted at 20 of them. They withdrew applications at 5 colleges (because of early decision acceptances), and were rejected at 3. To help them finance the first year of college, these young women were granted almost \$63,000 in aid, of which \$48,500 was in scholarship and the remainder in loans and work study programs.

Many people helped these students in their college decisions. Under the direction of Ken Higgs, guidance counselor at Darien High School and Faye Gage, chairman of the Academic and College Counseling Committee, five college advisors took the girls to visit colleges and helped them complete the many phases of the application process. Sue Gerry, Marta Elder, Jeanne Eckridge,

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**YOU CAN BE AS PROUD
AS A PEACOCK OF**

OUR 5 SENIORS!



L to R top: Liz Tejada, Rosa Garcia, Kathy Marshall
Orglyn Clarke and Toni Frost

Karen Nangle, and Margie Ambrose were the advisors whose help and support were very evident. Special thanks go to Henry Coleman, the President of ABC in New Canaan, and a College Counselor, who offered advice and guidance throughout the process. Perhaps most important of all is the work done in the last three years by Leonard Krill, the resident tutor.

A TRIBUTE OF THANKS TO LEONARD KRILL: New tutors can be found, but the likes of Leonard will not come again. His intelligence, sensitivity and energy are rare; his literary insights and extra hours of effort, guidance, and affection have fostered the academic growth of our girls. He reads the rough drafts, guides the study halls, arranges the tutors, advises the directors, counsels the confused, makes the Caldor trips, and keeps the household abreast of the cutting edge in artistic development. Last year, he was elected Distinguished Teacher of the Year by the high school student body, an honor that bespeaks his popularity and dedication there as well. He is also a gifted musician and gave a public lecture/performance of Minimalist Music last spring. The ABC House will miss Leonard's presence, but the Board can look forward to his continuing experience and expertise.

CONGRATULATIONS Liz Tejada and Kathy Marshall who were recently inducted into the Darien High School Chapter of the National Honor Society. They were elected by the faculty because of their consistently high grade point average and the qualities of leadership, character, and service that they displayed.

Student Selection Committee: The Committee carefully examined many applications to fill our vacancies. In order to maintain our high standards of academic and personal qualifications, we were unable to balance the classes as hoped. However, we have five superb candidates, giving us a house of two juniors and four sophomores. All five candidates came to Darien May 16th-19th, and stayed at the ABC house. The "orientation" included visiting classes at the high school for two days, extra curricular programs and a few social events. Having this chance to meet one another and to talk freely with the current ABC students should be an extremely helpful step in easing their adjustments next fall. Fortunately, we have Zoe Davis returning as a junior and she will be an excellent source of counsel as well as an able and seasoned leader.

Host families: An integral part of the ABC program is the part played by our host families. The girls visit them each Sunday and one full weekend each month. This provides a change and gives them a private family experience. Such strong mutual bonds have developed that these same families have carried over from year to year. We gratefully acknowledge M/M Henry Ernsthil, M/M Bernard Gilmore, M/M Paul Mayers, M/M William Silva, M/M William Sprague, and M/M George Wales. For the coming school year we will need five new host families for our new students. If you are interested, please contact Sally Sprague at 655-0228 after 6:00 p.m.

House Happenings: This has been a busy spring in many areas. Socially, the scene has been happily active and the weekends have been humming! In early April the ABC Board voted funds for rental of a van to enable the resident directors, Jean and Del Shortliffe, to take the girls for a weekend trip to Washington, D.C. In addition to museums and major points of interest, they were also treated to the spontaneous jubilation of fans parading and celebrating Georgetown's basketball team winning the National Collegiate Championship. It was a wonderful trip! Since spring vacation, there have been parties at ABC

houses in Gilford, Andover, and Winchester. They also spent a weekend in Boston. The car wash was held May 5th and netted \$460.00. This money goes into the house fund for general household and social needs for next fall.

On June 17th the ABC board is having a party at the home of our President, Mike Armstrong, to honor the ABC students, host families, counselors, and advisors. It will be an occasion of joy as we pay tribute to these wonderful people and sentiment as we bid farewell to our seniors.

SENIOR COMMENTS: What has the ABC experience meant to you?

Orgyn Clarke: The past three years have been a unique experience for me because of the ways in which they have caused me to change and grow. I have been made aware of the great difference culture can make between two people. On many occasions I've had to defend my cultural background, and be spokesperson for my race. I have learned to get along with people of different socio-economic backgrounds, and by being able to attend D.H.S., was given the opportunity to make a better life for myself.

Rosa Garcia: When I first came to ABC in the fall of 1981 I never thought I would be able to hold out until Christmas vacation. Surprisingly enough, I have stayed with the program for all three years. Overall, my life as an ABC student has been a very learning one and the program was well worth it!

Toni Frost: In the beginning I was apt to criticize Darien, but I have grown to look at it objectively. By getting to know and care for some considerate and good-hearted human beings in this community, I have been able to take a positive attitude towards many things from which I have benefitted. Although my good moments and rewards have been many and appreciated greatly, it has not always been easy and pleasurable living in Darien as the first group of minorities.

Kathy Marshall: The ABC experience has not only given me academic strength but has helped me mature as well. I have met a lot of special people and have been exposed to a life extremely different from what I am accustomed. True, one can obtain quality education without leaving home, but the mere experience that one is exposed to by doing so is what really makes this program worth it.

Elizabeth Tejada: My experience as a Darien ABC student has been worthwhile. At first the adjustments were hard but they soon became routine. The results of these adjustments are reflected in my personal and academic achievements along the way. The experience of these past three years has helped me become independent and has given me the confidence to deal with any problems I should encounter. I owe a lot to ABC!

ABC in Darien has proven itself to be a most successful and rewarding venture. The program works well and these girls are proof of that. As we see our base of support continue to expand, it is evident people want to share in this worthwhile cause. We thank all our contributors for helping to make it work.

We all look forward to the coming school year with enthusiasm. In the meantime, enjoy a summer full of pleasure!

Janet Fiske, Editor