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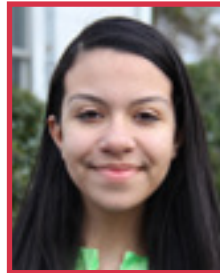
STUDENTS

Angelica Cortez (2013)
Bettina Arkhurst (2014)
Jocelyn Mendez (2014)
Danielle McIntosh (2015)
Merlyn Tejada (2015)
Mahoghany Dolberry (2016)
Niamani Williams-Coles (2016)

ANGIE IS ON HER WAY!

"My best memory will always be the day I got my first college acceptance and how happy Fran and Julie were. I knew they were proud of me and that was all I could ask for!"

These words not only capture the successful culmination of Angie's four years as an ABC scholar but express all that ABC hopes it can be — a place where our girls feel part of a family as they work towards their goal of acceptance to the college of their choosing.



Angie left her home in Harlem at 14 to come to Darien. As one of six girls in the ABC House and the only one at her grade level, Angie demonstrated independence and confidence from the start. Over the past four years she has excelled academically at DHS. Her favorite extra-curricular activity has been as a volunteer at Person-to-Person, where "I loved being able to give back to the community and to help underprivileged families receive necessities."

IT'S THE BUTTERFLIES!

After eight rewarding years, our Resident Directors Fran and Julie, will be leaving the ABC House — for a house of their own. But we all know it's not about the house! As a noted naturalist once said, "It's not the book about butterflies, it's the butterflies".

Many a butterfly, 17 to be exact, have come to live with Fran and Julie as ABC scholars, emerging as competent young women, in large part due to the solid foundation of support Julie and Fran have provided. Through the years they've been guided by this common sense approach: "trust yourselves... trust the girls" and it has clearly worked!

Coming to ABC as young, married high school English teachers with no children, they are candid about their expectations when they started. According to Julie, "Francis thought there would be a lot more 'teachable moments' — teaching life lessons, having book clubs, watching and discussing foreign films, etc. The reality has been more about running to the store at TOPM for milk, trying to keep track of who's going where when, watching Glee and wondering whose sock ended up in our laundry."

When asked how the experience has changed them, Julie replied, "I have wished, my entire life, for more patience. This program has granted me that wish". As for Francis, his reply is characteristically to the point, "more gray hair and loss of high-range frequency hearing". For both of them, they attest to having had "a richer, fuller life, having shared it with so many wonderful people."

And was there a credo that that guided them through challenging times? Julie and Fran responded, "We have two: The first we developed as our mission statement and the second we discovered to be a fail-safe response to any crises:

- 1) Our job is to provide a safe, caring environment that will allow for academic success.
- 2) It's Fran's fault!"

As for Angie's host families, the Brooks and the Cages, "I would not trade them in for the world. They have provided me with a loving home away from home. I am going to miss spending time with them regularly but there is no doubt in my mind that I will be back visiting them soon."

Although Angie is still unsure about what her future career will be, she has determined that in college she will major in Political Science / International Relations with a minor or concentration in Middle Eastern Affairs. At this time, she has not yet decided which college she will attend this fall, but according to Angie, "I do have some pretty amazing choices, including Dickinson and George Washington University"!

And as she leaves Angie offers this advice: "I would like all the younger ABC Scholars to know that they should take advantage of all the opportunities ABC gives them. This truly is the experience of a lifetime, so try to remember all the great things that happen here and all the wonderful people that care so much about you and your future."

Angie, we wish you good luck! You've made many people proud!

With a new young couple stepping up to fill their shoes this fall, they have this to offer: "a long term memory is good, a short term memory is better and a wicked sense of humor is best".

Last question: do they still believe in the mission of ABC and does Darien benefit from having this program operating within its borders? Their response: "As Nelson Mandela once said, 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world'. This is true for our scholars and our community".

Fran and Julie's legacy is simple to remember... just look for the butterflies.



Resident Directors Francis and Julie with their 2 sons

EXCITING NEXT STEPS FOR ABC HOUSE!

For 31 years, through the generosity of The First Congregational Church of Darien, the house at 11 Brookside has served us well. The ABC Board has decided to undertake an exciting renovation of the property to enable us to accommodate two scholars per grade at DHS and to give us more living space. We will keep you posted as plans develop!



Opening the door to greater educational opportunities since 1981.



Post Office Box 3204
Darien, CT 06820

Left to right: Mahoghany Dolberry, Jocelyn Mendez, Niamani Williams-Coles, Danielle McIntosh, Merlyn Tejada, Bettina Arkhurst and Angelica Cortez

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SPEND THE SUMMER ON AN ECO-FRIENDLY VESPA!

Buy a raffle ticket for the chance to win a brand new Vespa S-50, tickets are \$20 each. The winning ticket will be drawn at the Post 53 Memorial Day Food Fair, Monday, May 27, 2013, 1:00pm. More information can be found at www.ABCDarien.org. ▶



NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION



Bettina Arkhurst (left) and Jocelyn Mendez are the latest ABC scholars to be inducted into the National Honor Society.

ABC in Darien juniors Bettina Arkhurst and Jocelyn Mendez were inducted into the National Honor Society this year with 58 of their DHS peers. The NHS recognizes top academic achievement, character, leadership and service. Bettina was “delighted to be counted as a member of such an elite society.” For Jocelyn, “Opening the acceptance letter was one of the best feelings ever. It is great to know that everything I worked for was acknowledged with such an honor.” Congratulations on this exceptional achievement!

ABC IN DARIEN FACTS

MISSION: To provide scholarships to academically talented girls of color from underserved areas allowing them to realize their academic and social potential while living in Darien and attending DHS.

ENROLLMENT: Seven girls currently from Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.

HISTORY: Thirty-one years in Darien; 40 girls have graduated from the program.

WHERE DO THEY GO? Graduates have entered colleges such as Columbia, Cornell and Wesleyan.

STAFF: Two Resident Directors, Program Director and Tutors.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Twenty-three local residents.

HOST FAMILIES: Nine families host the girls one weekend and one Sunday each month.

RESIDENCE: 11 Brookside Road—provided by the First Congregational Church, maintained by ABC in Darien.

THE BUDGET: \$142,000 per year, covering staff, food, utilities, house maintenance, enrichment expenses and supplies.

HOW TO GIVE: If you would like to contribute to ABC in Darien, send donations to P.O. Box 3204, Darien, CT 06820 or donate online at www.abcdarien.org

www.abcdarien.org



◀ Left: Merlyn and host mom Denise Cara
◀ Middle: Bettina running cross country
◀ Right: Danielle and Yvette cross country skiing