

ABC alumni celebrate dreams achieved



Alumni of A Better Chance of Andover celebrated the 50th anniversary and shared how the program changed their lives.

ABC alumni trickled in Friday afternoon, stopping by the familiar white colonial at 134 Main Street, the dorm where they once studied, laughed, and struggled while taking the first courageous steps toward achieving their academic dreams. Today, professionals in fields of medicine, religion, education, business, and social service, they were traveling from as far away as Nigeria to attend A Better Chance of Andover's 50th anniversary alumni weekend, held October 6-8th.

By Saturday, more than 55 of the 140 graduates of ABC of Andover had arrived, some for the first time since their graduation. Harry Scott, '70, now is a musical director of two churches in Yazoo City, Mississippi. "I really enjoyed seeing my host family again," Scott said, about the emotional reunion he had with host parent and founding ABC of Andover board member Norm Viehmann and daughter Beth. He said they had not seen each other since he left

for Tufts University 47 years ago. "I also especially enjoyed seeing my old roommate, Tony King, '71, who became a renowned heart surgeon."

During an alumni celebration luncheon, held at Abbot Hall on the Phillips Academy campus, alumni and their families continued to reconnect and learn about the current ABC program. After lunch, they gathered for a private

forum in which they shared their ABC and post-graduation experiences and perspectives. Gloria Rosario, '99, one of the participants and now a principal of West Brooklyn Community High School, an alternative high school in Borough Park, while she had a mostly good ABC experience (particularly with her host parents, Pam and Rob Wilkie "who were and still are pivotal relationship in my life"), she has also spent a lot of time "unpacking some of the difficult experiences of being a black girl in a white world." Rosario summarized a key takeaway from the forum: While many alumni experiences differed, often by decade, RD, and gender, "all the alumni seemed to all be saying the same thing in different ways: Missing from their ABC experience was space within the program for talking about the 'elephant in the room': the fact of brown girls (or boys) living in a white community." Rosario hopes to put recent learnings from the forum into practice with a renewed engagement in ABC....(continued on page 5)



(From left) LaKisha Williams, '92; Tawana Lindsay-Nedderman, '94; Keisha Nikelle King, '96; Taide Broadbelt, '94; and Natasha Mack, '95, take a moment to recall their successes and struggles at ABC of Andover.

President's view: 50th celebration caps a season of reunions



Susan Connolly

Photo By: Robert Huntley

We knew it was going to be a big year, but WOW!

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of A Better Chance of Andover escalated over the year with several notable events, including: Speaking from the Pulpits, the Founders Reception, Dr. Mae Jemison, and our history exhibit. This anniversary year culminated in a remarkable alumni reunion weekend and gala. Thank you to everyone who joined in our celebrations!

During Friday night's Open House, alumni shrieked with joy at seeing each other and the dorm, possibly for the first time since they graduated decades ago. "I sat in the hallway under the payphone talking to my mother every night!" "That's the mailbox where my care packages arrived!" some excitedly exclaimed. Their photo albums illustrated the insider stories (can't get in trouble now!) Former resident directors and tutors relayed stories about early dorm fire safety (thick ropes tied to the steam radiators) and rigorous nightly study hours, which unlike the fire ropes, remain a mainstay of the schedule to this day....(continued page 4)

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Thank you to the Town of Andover for your vote at
Town Meeting 1967. Your 50 years of unwavering
support has enabled us to open doors of educational
opportunity for motivated young students of color.

Amy and Carter Holland, along with sons Sam, Davis and
daughter Madie, welcomed freshman Megan Casey to
their family. The Hollands are eager to introduce Megan to
the town of Andover and include her in their fall
family outings.

The Vallejo family, originally from Chicago, are thrilled to
host Abigail Shugert, also a freshman. Parents Delia and
Jason, together with their sons Nico and Joaquin, are
first-time hosts. They hope that Abby will enjoy rooting
for all the Chicago sports teams along with them.

Three from PA on Board

The 20-member Board of Directors now includes three
new members from Phillips Academy:

- **Dianne Domenech-Burgos** is director of the (MS)2
Program and a math instructor. She will offer guidance
to the Academic Committee on activities that will ramp
up ABC students for the academic challenges they will
face at AHS.

- **LaShonda Long** is an instructor in English. The
self-described "California transplant" and across-the-
street neighbor hopes to share her life and travel
experiences with the scholars and help identify grant
opportunities for the ABC program.

- **Anny Candelario Escobar** also is a math instructor and
dean to the (MS)2 Program. An ABC student at Tabor
Academy, she graduated from Wellesley College and
then returned to teach at Tabor Academy for 17 years.
"As a new board member," she said, "I hope to
positively contribute to the experiences of ABC of
Andover students through intentional programming that
creates access to social and cultural capital."

The membership of all three women on the Board of
Directors further reinforces the positive relationship ABC
of Andover shares with Phillips Academy.

A special thanks to **Lynn Hook** for her contributions
on the Board of Directors and, with her husband, as a
host family.

Summertime learning

During the summer, the ABC students continued to develop
their leadership abilities through experiences that ranged
from academic courses to on-job training.

This fall's seniors, Elise Cabrera and Jenni Nguyen, helped to
guide other youths. Jenni led workshops at the Summer
Leadership Program in Boston and also counseled aspiring
future leaders. Elise worked at the Chinese American
Planning Council in New York City in addition to being a
mentor's assistant.

Olamide Olayinka, a junior, attended Brown University's
Summer High School program, focusing on psychology and
medicine, while Skye Padovani, also a junior, provided
orientation to incoming 9th graders at the A Better Chance
headquarters.

Sophomores Lea Garcia and Dia Keita both attended Prince-
ton's At the Well leadership program for promising students.

ABC of Andover helped them to locate and gain admission to
these enriching experiences. Several also held summer jobs.



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Andover High School coaches Dick Bourdelais, Chris Doherty, Biff Moriarty and Don Pattullo reunite with ABC alumni and former teammates Van DeBose, '70 (third from left), and, Ellis Rowe, '70 (far right).

Alumni from 6 decades attended the 50th celebration

CLASS OF:

1969	Mark Ayers Clayton White	1995	Rolanda Green Natasha Mack
1970	Van DeBose Ellis Rowe Harry Scott	1996	Keisha Nikelle Smalley King Caridad Tapia
1971	Eugenio Concepcion Jr. Anthony King	1997	Nolia Hill
1972	Laurin Banner	1998	Kirza Sanchez
1978	Tony E. Pace	1999	Kris Alan Lord Gloria Rosario
1979	Wildolfo Arvelo Dora Anita Palmer Holmes	2000	Elizabeth Roldan Shakiya Snipes
1981	Marisol Rivera Parr	2001	Tyina Cuevas
1982	Joseph Zulu Smith, Jr.	2004	Sheila Wright
1984	Wai Gee Chu Sherry Tiffany Cunningham Ian Dowe Melvin Thomas	2006	Brianna Glenn
1985	William Rolon Jr.	2007	Lydia Bailey
1989	Jennifer Lee Motley	2008	Jessica Spates
1990	Chandra J. Brown Shaunte R. Martin Simone R. McBean Yatrakis	2009	Alexis Singh
1992	India Faison Lawrence LaKisha Williams	2010	Justene Salomon
1994	Taide Argelia Byers Broadbelt Tawana Lindsay	2011	Henrica Bresil
		2012	Monique Lopez Espinoza
		2013	Felicitas Reyes
		2014	Abigail Doyinsade Awodele
		2015	Fatouma Koné
		2017	A'mari Bing-Way Déanna Clarke-Campbell Nilda Vega

More news and photos at
AndoverABC.org



President's view (continued from page 1)

In Saturday's workshop, alumni shared their experiences and responded to such questions as: What was good about your ABC experience? What program resources were most useful? What did you wish you were informed about when you graduated? How is the program best able to equip scholars with skills and resources? Are you aware of young people who would benefit from this kind of opportunity? Additionally, alumni interactively brainstormed ways to stay involved with the current program, support the scholars, and shape the future alumni engagement model. Alumni careers, including early childhood and higher education, medicine, law and advocacy, social work, journalism, finance, construction, design and the arts, and parenting, informed their lively discussions. Common themes surfaced, including their roles in helping people find their voice or acting as a voice for others. These alumni, like many we have encountered, shared that access to education and professional opportunity through their involvement with ABC was life-changing; their former experience at ABC of Andover helped shape their current successful lives. Each has become a force multiplier in their family and community, significantly impacting the lives of others.

Scanning the gala ballroom on Saturday night, I was moved by seeing so many reunions. Scholars, housemates, host families, residence staff, coaches, board members, friends, and family represented the intricate connectedness of the 375 guests. Joy and celebration infused the entire ballroom, and Laurin Banner's and Felicia Reyes's remarks were just two of so many stories of struggle, identity formation, and accomplishment. Additionally, the financial support from committed volunteers, alumni, and friends exceeded all expectations.

This is an incredible point in time, and time of year, to be involved with A Better Chance of Andover. The anniversary outreach continues to stimulate interesting discussions of societal change over the years, but it also reminds us of why A Better Chance of Andover remains a steadfastly relevant program today. It is humbling and astonishing to meet many of the citizens who have worked tirelessly and given generously of their time and money to keep the program vibrant for



Allan Joyall (left), long-time ABC volunteer, poses with Keith Wallace, Gloria Rosario-Wallace, '99, and their daughter, Amari, at the 50th gala.

50 years, not to mention the brave students and their families who chose A Better Chance of Andover for their high school years. The program creates access to academic and enrichment opportunities for young women, yet the rest is up to the motivated students who apply and commit to the program, each destined to her own greatness.

A Better Chance of Andover was founded in 1967 to address the external institutional and societal barriers around education, a fundamental civil rights issue then and now. Our volunteers strive to foster independence, instill habits of self-discipline, and coach problem-solving and perseverance in our students. In collaboration with our alumni, the ABC of Andover program also strives to provide the emotional, financial, social, and academic resources that build a deep sense of worthiness and self-sufficiency in our scholars, a feeling that they can and will succeed anywhere. Alumni have, and scholars will!

Suzanne E. Connolly



ABC alumni celebrate dreams achieved...continued from page one

Saturday night, the ballroom at Andover Country Club overflowed with 50 years of ABC alumni, host families, past and present board members and staff, AHS faculty and longtime ABC supporters, including several founders. The air crackled with infectious camaraderie and the renewed affection of friendships forged through shared adversity and triumph.

Looking back on the celebration, one of the evening's speakers, Simone McBean Yatrakis, '90, now a member of the ABC National Board of Directors, described the packed ballroom as a metaphor for the whole program: "I was so touched by everyone coming together from every decade. The room is filled with these people who come together; they don't know each other, but they have a common belief and goal... so many pieces fitting together so perfectly to make the ABC house exist... to change people's lives."

"I can't tell you how many times my eyes welled up," declared Melanie Bilazarian, a long-time ABC supporter. "Seeing these grown and beautiful young ladies, like Henrica Bresil, '11 and Abigail [Doyinsade] Awodele, '14, was so special to us."

Current scholar Skye Padovani, '19, described her message from the evening: "I definitely had a better sense of what this program means, especially after hearing alumna Felicia Reyes ['13] share her story." In her speech, Reyes explained how ABC "saved her life," by supporting her through the transition from a life informed by foster care and failing schools to a degree, with honors, from the University of Southern California.

Padovani also mused on the differences and similarities of experiences of alumni of different decades. "The early students faced such overt racism," she noted. "Today it's more passive aggressive, or micro-aggressive." On a more practical note about ABC today, "Alumni were telling me that the kitchen is where the living room used to be!"

During the fund-a-need portion of the evening, alumni like Will Arvelo, '71 and Wai Chu '84, showed their generosity. The evening raised over \$80,000 for ABC programming.

When the current scholars stood up at a center table to be introduced, the room broke out in thundering applause; an inter-generational gesture of appreciation, support and respect.



Simone McBean Yatrakis, AHS '90 and A Better Chance National board member, along with Richard Martin, Community Schools Program manager, presented a 50th anniversary award at the gala.

On Sunday, alumni met at the ABC house again – to relax and relive the weekend, exchange contact information, and say another goodbye to the dorm on Main Street. They exited, renewed by happy memories, rekindled friendships and a sparked commitment to engaging with the program.

The weekend reminded ABC supporters that the success of this program cannot be measured solely in college acceptances, but rather by the complex trajectory of each ABC scholar's post-high-school journey, and professional and personal paths. These paths more often than not have led alumni to leadership roles in fields with the undergirding mission to lift up, to heal, to educate or to fight for equity for the most vulnerable in our society.

As Scott recalled looking around the Gala: "I thought I was in the presence of a lot of brave and brilliant people."

By Lynn Eikenberry

Wins Rotary award

The local Rotary Club honored Mary Pritchard, previous president of ABC of Andover, with one of its 2017 Citizens Who Care awards.

The award, one of eight presented this fall to local volunteers, cites Pritchard for her assistance to others as an ABC officer and board member, Courageous Conversations organizer and Boston Oxfam American member.

Thanks

A special thanks to the following ABC supporters whose contributions help to maintain our program:

- Alfred & Mary Cavallaro for crushed stone to landscape the new front porch
- Cristen Farrell for beautiful photography of the annual Scholars' Dinner
- Matt Strong of Forever Green Lawn & Landscape for lawn mowing

They are among the many volunteers who keep ABC of Andover strong.

Volunteers needed

Do you have time for a volunteer project? If you are willing to help with one of these ABC tasks, please e-mail us at volunteer@AndoverABC.org

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- Assist with a mailing
- Cook Saturday breakfast for 8 students



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Two students join our program

ABC of Andover welcomed two new 9th-grade scholars this fall, **Megan Casey** and **Abigail Shugert**.

Megan hails from Brooklyn, NY, and has two siblings. When you first meet **Megan Casey**, her shy smile will immediately greet you, and her poise and petite stature will endear her to you.

A receptive student, Megan's former principal describes her as a positive role model, one who is always ready to volunteer and give of herself to others. Her mom views her as collaborative and hardworking. Megan's positive attitude will help her excel as she encounters all that ABC and Andover High School have to offer.

Megan maintains an array of interests, including a passion for art, cooking and science, especially animals. In fact, she aspires to become a veterinarian and perhaps travel to Africa someday. Megan also played both soccer and lacrosse and dabbled in theater, auditioning and acting in a Shakespearean play at Lenox Academy at her former school.

Home for **Abigail Shugert**, her parents and four siblings is Los Angeles. A graduate of the Endeavor College Prep Charter School,

she earned science and reading awards as well as a Most Valuable Teammate award. Her former school also honored her with a P.R.I.D.E. award, for her outstanding preparation, respect, integrity, determination and enthusiasm.

In her ABC application, Abigail's teachers described her as a determined and avid learner, one who experienced great satisfaction tutoring her siblings and fellow classmates when needed. Her time management, listening and notetaking skills are also attributes and will serve her well as an ABC scholar in a rigorous academic environment.

For sport, Abigail enjoys swimming, a skill she hopes to hone while in high school, and, she values education, as evidenced by her taking community college classes while at her former school.

Boarding school is not new to the Shugert or Casey families. Megan's brother, a former ABC student, serves as a role model for her, and Abigail's sister attended boarding school. Both siblings no doubt will help the young ladies understand education is the key to future success.



Abigail Shugert



Megan Casey

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What We Do



ANDOVER
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Opening the door to greater educational opportunities since 1967

Our mission is to increase substantially the number of well-educated young people of color who are capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society.

A Better Chance of Andover closes the education gap facing motivated female students in underperforming school systems by bringing them here to get an excellent preparation for college at Andover High School. Thanks to the generosity of people like you, we provide our students with a house on Main Street and a complete network of support and love.

Our 140 graduates have been accepted by highly selective colleges and universities.