

Senior to enter elite college



Jessica Spates, our graduating AHS senior, honor student and standout volleyball player, has won early admission and full scholarship from Wesleyan University, one of the top liberal-arts colleges in the nation.

Jessica's story dramatically demonstrates the opportunities the ABC program, teamed up with Andover High, offers to talented students who previously attended under-performing urban schools. Jessica compiled an overall high school record that won acceptances from all eight colleges on her application list.

The accomplishments of the senior from New York City highlight a year of significant progress by Andover ABC, according to Amy Joyall, president of Andover ABC.

"We have expanded our program's enrichment activities to more fully nurture each ABC student's particular strengths," she reports. Despite sharply rising costs, we were able to achieve our enrichment goals with additional financial support from several generous benefactors.

"The impressive strides of Jessica and her eight ABC colleagues are only one side of the story," she continues. "An important measure of the program's success is the enlightenment that these exuberant students bring to their host families and the Andover community.

"Thanks to you who have shared your time and money to help Andover ABC grow," Amy concludes. "You can see, as Jessica's success exemplifies, that together we are changing lives, one person at a time."

ABC students, host families grow close

Each school year a special group of Andover families helps to make the ABC scholars feel "at home" even while they are away from home. These are ABC's "host families," each of whom volunteers to host a student and welcomes her into their home during the school year for a dinner each week and once-a-month sleepover weekends.

This relationship typically continues until the ABC student graduates from Andover High School – and doesn't stop then. For example, the Dann family – Candy, Ron and daughter Becky – has stayed in touch with their host daughter, Caridad Tapia (Andover '96). They attended her law school graduation last year and her wedding this March. (See photos inside.)

"I think it's wonderful that the [ABC] girls have host families," says Brenda Bryan, who with her husband, Dave, and their four children have hosted senior Jessica Spates for four years. The arrangement keeps the ABC students in touch with family life even though they are far from their own families.

(continued inside)



Thanks, supporters

Andover ABC is grateful to its many supporters for their donations of time and money. Without your generosity, we could not exist because we receive no other funding.

In addition to our host of dedicated individual contributors, our thanks go to the following organizations: the Abbot & Dorothy H. Stevens Foundation, Bilezikian Family Foundation, Fairview Capital Partners, Foundation M, Putnam Foundation, Smith-Purdon Fund and South Church in Andover.

Many ABC supporters were thanked in person at a community appreciation reception in May.

Your support gives deserving young citizens "a better chance" to become tomorrow's leaders.

RDs throw a party

As the holiday vacation approached, one of the ABC students told new Resident Directors Sally and Brian O'Rourke that she dreamed of getting a holiday gift – one with a big bow.

That casual comment gave the O'Rourkes and Resident Assistants Aiko Onishi and Nicole Page the idea of throwing a surprise party for all nine ABC scholars.

With Amy Joyall's help and some surplus funds, the supervisors went gift shopping. On an evening soon afterward, the girls were led into the living room for an unexpected party.

"Nobody wanted to open their present because they didn't want it to end," Sally recalls.

The girl that had wanted a gift with a bow carried hers around the house for the rest of the evening.

ABC activities encourage growth

Andover ABC lined up an enriching variety of activities this year, thanks in part to grants from several sources.

The schedule of events exposed the ABC students to a wide variety of experiences ranging from visits to college campuses that they may eventually attend to top-quality artistic performances.

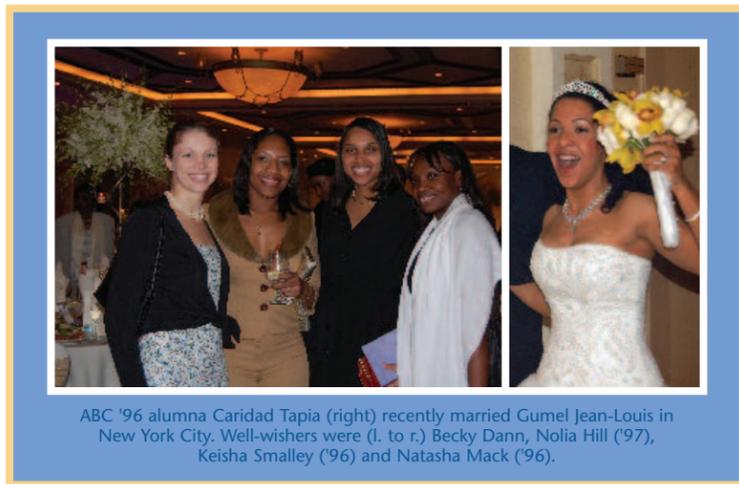
The students began the school year by attending a performance of The Three Musketeers musical at the North Shore Music Theatre. Later in the year, they took in Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Ballet Hispanico and a performance of the play Antigone.

To learn more about the roots of popular entertainment that resonates with today's youth, they went to a presentation of hip-hop music and dance at Northeastern University.

Several ABC students had the rare chance to read their own poetry at a spoken-word event at Boston's new Institute of Contemporary Art and this spring repeated it for Andover residents.

In addition to a wide range of recreational experiences arranged for individual students by their host families, all the girls went on an ecology tour of Plum Island.

During the coming summer, juniors Ashleigh Baker, Turalloy Jackson and Alexis Singh are scheduled to get a close-up view of several college campuses during a weeklong tour sponsored by national A Better Chance. Summer self-development programs also have been arranged for several students.



ABC '96 alumna Caridad Tapia (right) recently married Gumel Jean-Louis in New York City. Well-wishers were (l. to r.) Becky Dann, Nolia Hill ('97), Keisha Smalley ('96) and Natasha Mack ('96).

ABC Board Members

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Resident Directors

- Sally O'Rourke
- Brian O'Rourke

Host Families (continued from front page)

Meanwhile the students and their hosts all enjoy the exposure to diversity.

"Our children now have the benefit of being able to see past what's on the outside of a person." Brenda says. "There's not much opportunity here [in Andover] for us to really get to know kids of other races. So our experience with the ABC girls has been pretty cool."



The Bryans and Jessica are shown with, from left, Kai, Flynn, Bae and Gates.



The ABC students also gain a new perspective. Says sophomore Camilla Ekokobe, "It's a learning experience. Families here do things differently." Her hosts are Emily and Kevin Donovan. Shown flanking Camilla and Emily are Dana (left) and Caera Donovan (right). The visiting students make a contribution, too. As Emily notes about Camilla, "She's a good role model: she's smart and ambitious."

During visits with host families, ABC students enjoy a wide range of new experiences. The Donovans, for example, have taken Camilla on tours of Boston museums and sights. The Bryans have hosted the ABC students for a weekend each spring at their vacation home on Martha's Vineyard.

Erlinda Parks, who chairs Andover ABC's Host Family Committee, sums it up: "Being a host parent not only enriches our lives by bringing a young person from a culturally different background into our community and into our homes, but also by knowing that you are helping them attain 'a better chance' in life through a more diverse education." She and her husband, Joel, host 9th-grader Henrica Bresil.

"Your reward will be to see your ABC student grow through her Andover High School and college years to become a proud, confident, productive adult."

The relationships that develop between the ABC students and their host families usually grow deep and last long. Jessica Spates notes that she keeps in touch with the Bryans by phone, even during vacation when she's home in New York City.

The six other host couples, listed with the students they host, are Judy and David Dlesk (Alexis Singh), Sue and Dan Farrell (Ashleigh Baker), Beth Clough and Steve Jungmann (Turalloy Jackson), Ramona and Don Hatch (Justene Salomon), Joan and Peter Broderick (Khaneisha White) and Jennifer and Dan Pond (Daree Colon).

If you feel that the ABC host program might suit your family or a friend's, please get in touch with Erlinda Parks at erlinda.parks2@verizon.net or 978-475-9427. Some families enjoy it so much that they raise their hand to host a new ABC student when the previous one graduates.



ABC's new 9th-graders



Henrica Bresil came to Andover High School from a KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) middle school in Philadelphia, which prepared her well for studies here, she feels. She is considering a career in medicine and intends to work especially hard on science courses to increase her chances of getting into a top college such as Harvard.



Holder of a martial arts "black belt," **Henrica** has collaborated with two male students to revive the dormant Andover Martial Arts Club. Her athletic ability also won her a place on the varsity girls track team in the shot put. She also practices tae kwon do at a local gym, where she hopes to help youngsters learn the art.



While **Daree Colon** says it felt that it took a while to adjust to life in Andover, she hit her stride quickly at Andover High by becoming an honor-roll student right away. She says she jumped at the opportunity offered by Andover ABC, "knowing I would have a better chance at a good college career" than she would in her hometown of Amityville on Long Island.

On the sports front, she completed a successful season of freshman volleyball, then managed the wrestling team during the winter. Among her other extracurricular activities are GLAM (Girls Leadership Action Motivators) and the Speak Up Club. The club, which includes **Khaneisha White** and sophomore Camilla Ekokobe from ABC, took part in a poetry reading earlier this year at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art.

Khaneisha brings a love of singing and musical theater to Andover ABC. Her extended family came from East Windsor, NJ, to see her perform last fall in Andover High's production of "Titanic." She says it was "very, very much fun - to be part of something with other people who love to do the same thing that I love to do." She already looks forward to next year's school play and also plans to join the local Merrimack Junior Theatre.



In school, she likes studying Spanish and believes it will broaden her career opportunities one day. On the track team, she competes in the javelin event and also has past experience in the 200- and 400-yard dash.



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