

Trip to inauguration energizes students

A highlight – perhaps *the* highlight – so far this year for Andover A Better Chance was the students' trip to Washington for the presidential inauguration of Barack Obama, as well as tours of the Capitol Building and Trinity College.

The four-day educational excursion was prompted by the students' excitement about the election of the first African-American as president. The trip was funded by a grant from Andover ABC board member Rebecca Connolly and her husband, Mark.

ABC Board members Mary Pritchard and Mary Beth Nason transported five of the students to Washington in a van with "Andover ABC to DC" on a side window and crepe-paper bunting inside. The other four students were offered seats on an over-night train trip funded by an organization from Cape Cod.

Housed at a bargain rate by Mary Beth Nason's alma mater, Trinity (D.C.) College, the nine ABC scholars explored the campus and later went on a tour of the Capitol.



Students light a candle symbolizing that change is each person's responsibility.

For Mary Pritchard, the long hike to the National Mall was well worth the effort: "It was like reaching the Promised Land. It had taken us 2.5 hours to go about 4.5 miles because of the crowds. I give the girls a lot of credit because they walked to the Mall in the dark and the cold without getting anything to eat for those 2.5 hours."

One highlight of the inauguration experience occurred when the ABC students paused in the evening to light a candle and recite a statement that inspired many people – Democrats and Republicans – during the presidential campaign: "We are the people we've been waiting for. We are the change we seek."

The accompanying article by sophomore Henrica Bresil describes what the momentous event meant to the ABC students.



Historic event stirs students' pride

The nine of us in the Andover A Better Chance (ABC) program felt a sense of pride and unity that we will never forget when we witnessed the inauguration of the first African-American president, Barack Obama.

On Sunday, January 18, five of us sandwiched ourselves into a minivan while four others boarded a train to fulfill a common mission: to travel to Washington so we could experience the event in person.

Hosted at Trinity College, we toured the city, explored vendor booths and prepared in great excitement for the historic day we'd all been waiting for since that election night in November.

Our adventure began at 6 o'clock Tuesday morning when the nine of us, accompanied by chaperones Mary Pritchard and Mary Beth Nason, left the campus to begin our walk to the nation's Capitol Building.

As we moved excitedly through the seemingly sleeping city, the sun rose and shattered the deceptive picture as supporters converging from the most obscure corners of the town and beyond began to trickle onto the sidewalks. While some travelers were packed into buses and cars, the majority were on foot, bundled in hats, coats, gloves and scarves, swarming the sidewalks and taking to the streets in utter excitement.

(continued inside)

President's message: Born to lead

All of us at Andover A Better Chance are grateful to everyone who made it possible to send our nine scholars to Washington in January to experience the inauguration of Barak Obama.

Few events could better reinforce a basic operating principle of our program: that promising students of color whose local high schools under-perform are more likely to achieve their full leadership potential if they get a better education.

Henrica Bresil's report in this issue describes the thrill that she and her ABC colleagues felt to be part of a huge crowd on the National Mall celebrating the fact that an African-American could rise to the top leadership post in the world.

The comment by junior Ashleigh Baker on election night seemed to resound on Inauguration Day: "I feel like I don't have to prove myself anymore just because of my race."

Whether we are Democrats or Republicans, those of us who direct the Andover ABC program were proud that our students could witness firsthand an event that validates our efforts.

Since the program was founded in 1967, we have seen an exciting parade of talented teen-agers of color eagerly

accept the chance to transfer to Andover High School from schools where low expectations were the norm. With ample resources and strong ties to top-tier colleges, AHS has helped prepare these deserving students for influential careers ahead.

Kristina Lord is one of those students who came to Andover under the auspices of A Better Chance. This issue traces her successes in the field of technology.



Many of the people and organizations that make this program succeed are listed in our Honor Roll of 2008 supporters. It includes funders of the ABC students' trip to the inauguration and a long list of other supporters who enable our program to flourish. And let's not forget Andover High's teachers and staff, community groups and our many volunteers, all of whom elevate the quality of the ABC experience.

These are trying economic times, to be sure, but that's why I thank our supporters for these signs of confidence in the ability of Andover A Better Chance to change lives, one person at a time.

Amy D. Joyall

Historic event stirs students' pride (continued from front page)



Students pose with National Guardsmen assigned to the inauguration.

of Obama supporters joined others in the streets as we headed for the 3rd Street Tunnel.

Khaneisha White recalls that point as one of her favorite memories. "We kept yelling 'OBAMA!' and people cheered in response. It was AMAZING! It was one of the greatest adrenaline rushes I've ever felt."

I believe her feelings generally applied to anyone who was there at the time. To finally arrive at the Mall and

We were greeted repeatedly by members of the National Guard and police force lining the streets to the Capitol just as eagerly as we were greeted by ordinary supporters like us.

When the sidewalks became too full, the mass

listen to President Obama give his inaugural speech was nothing short of incredible, as was the entire Inaugural Parade.

Knowing that we had the opportunity to connect with millions of others through a common sense of pride and unity was overpowering. I know it is a memory that will never fade.

By Henrica Bresil





2008 Honor Roll

Note: This report gratefully acknowledges gifts dated Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2008. If your donation is reported incorrectly, we apologize and ask that you notify Dan Hall at danwhall@verizon.net or the return address on this newsletter.

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In addition to backers of A Better Chance that are acknowledged in the 2008 Honor Roll, several supporters contributed this year to our program. Foundation M and TD Banknorth recently approved financial grants. The Savings Bank completed a series of eight financial seminars for our nine students. Andover Pediatrics has provided emergency treatment for several of the students. And Kirkwood Printing has donated its services for a fund-raising project. Thanks for your generous support!

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Benefit concert – May 1

CBS Records star Will Dailey is returning to his hometown to give a benefit concert for Andover A Better Chance.

The award-winning artist and his band will perform on Friday, May 1, 7-9pm, at Andover's Old Town Hall, 20 Main St.

A graduate of Andover High School, he is winner of the 2006 Boston Music Award for Best Male Singer/Songwriter and has performed in CSI: New York.

Admission is \$40. A limited number of tickets are discounted to \$25 for high school students. For tickets, contact Mary Beth Nason at 978-474-0953 or mbnason@verizon.net.

Don't miss the chance to experience live music from an up-and-coming star!

New B&B coordinator

Thanks to Ann Wiehe for 15 years of coordinating a bed-and-breakfast service that is the most reliable fundraiser for Andover A Better Chance.

The program works with local residents who rent out lodging space in their homes on Phillips Academy's Parents Weekends and donate the receipts.

Ann and her late husband, Roger, have supported Andover ABC since its founding in 1967. Sarah Hawn has assisted her with the B&B program.

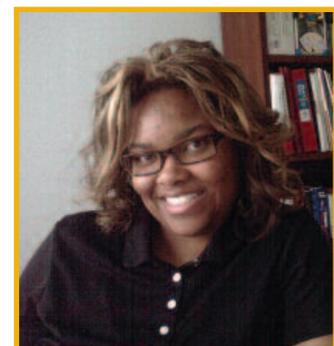
This year she is handing over the program to Gloria Wager, a member of the Andover ABC Board of Directors. If you are interested in being a B&B host, get in touch with Gloria at gwager@comcast.net.

ABC alumna on technology's edge

Since Kristina Lord (ABC '99) graduated from Andover High School, she has earned a BS and MS degree, held positions in five organizations and begun work on her doctoral degree.

Motivation is part of her nature, to be sure, but she also credits Andover A Better Chance for helping her channel that drive.

"I became very good at networking," she recalls of her years in Andover. "Working with [ABC] board members, people at school and in the community and host parents helped me understand how important networking is."



Currently doing doctoral work at Iowa State University, she is on the leading edge of technology, engineering a better thin-film lithium battery as her degree project.

Dr. Joel Parks and his wife, Erlinda, who were "host parents" to Kristina in Andover, couldn't be prouder. "It has always been a secret hope that some of my children would find science and technology meaningful enough to pursue as a life's work," says Joel, a physicist. "Thank goodness for Kristina and our son, Matthew!"

In addition to gaining people skills, Kristina grew in other ways during her school years in Andover.

"The ABC experience helped me develop into a mature and independent person," she says. The change wasn't as evident to her as it was to her mother when Kristina returned home to Brooklyn during vacations.

"I learned how to help others in ABC and learned how to focus. In New York, I wasn't doing that," she recalls.

Her motivation, good grades and clear goals enabled her to win admission to prestigious Smith College, where she majored in chemistry. After graduation, she entered Norfolk State University to pursue a master's degree in materials science.

Secure in the master's program, she put her networking skills to work for others, helping one colleague get a job offer from IBM and another to get into college.

While at Norfolk State, she also lined up an internship for herself at the U.S. Dept. of Energy. After receiving the second degree, she went to work for IBM as a project manager and engineer in Manufacturing. Her pursuit of new experiences in science later led her to stints at the University of Washington, Intel Corp. and Lawrence Livermore National Labs.

But she caught the academic bug again and entered Iowa State University in August to pursue her doctorate. While she works, she weighs future career possibilities. Re-enter industry? Start a business with a colleague?

Kristina has shorter-term plans, too. As the only person of color in the graduate program of Iowa State's Department of Materials Science and Engineering, she feels compelled to organize an on-campus conference for faculty, students and others to discuss how diversity benefits all factions of the university.

With fund-raising for the event under way, she says, "It looks like we can do something really big."

Major colleges on seniors' 'short lists'

Seniors Ashleigh Baker, Turalloy Jackson and Alexis Singh will choose from an impressive group of colleges when they make their final decisions in the next few weeks.

Institutions that have offered admission to one of more of the seniors include Boston University, Ithaca College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Penn State University, Seton Hall University, SUNY Albany, SUNY

Binghamton, SUNY Stony Brook, University of Delaware, University of Hartford and Villanova University.

While the students awaited responses to their applications to several other schools, they also were pursuing the financial-aid packages they will need to cover the cost of future education.

Female staff jobs available

Three women currently are living in the A Better Chance house on Main Street while serving as resident assistants to the program.

In exchange for free room and board, they assist Resident Directors Sally and Brian O'Rourke and share the tasks of supervising and tutoring the students on evenings and weekends while Andover High School is in session.

If you are interested in applying for this job for the 2009-2010 school year, contact Mary Nason at mbnason@verizon.net for more information.

What is Andover ABC?

Since the 1967 founding of Andover A Better Chance, our mission has rested on a single goal: to substantially increase the number of well-educated minority youth capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society.



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