

ABC and Andover High: A partnership for equality

In 1967, Andover High School was on the vanguard of the movement to address educational inequality for students of color when it signed on to be one of the first community schools to welcome A Better Chance scholars.

Today, almost 50 years later, the partnership is going strong, with seven students of color taking full advantage of the opportunities at AHS and bringing to their peers a unique perspective on issues of race, inequality and diversity.

"The benefits of AHS are all of the enrichment options, like Show Choir, the Poetry Club," says Elise Cabrera, '18. Cabrera was one of four scholars who recently traveled to Ohio for a Show Choir competition.

"AHS is really rigorous," adds Déanna Clarke-Campbell, '17. "At my previous school I was getting easy A's. I came here and suddenly I'm working really hard for my grades."

Kim Bergey, guidance counselor and long-time ABC supporter, concurs: "The role of AHS is to give them the big experience; the mission is to provide them with everything they would have missed out on if they might have stayed at [their school system at] home."

Sophomore Jenni Nguyen notes an important AHS piece of the puzzle: "There is a lot of emphasis on going to college!"

The current scholars all agree that they chose AHS over private boarding schools in



ABC and AHS team up, as junior Déanna Clarke-Campbell (center) gets tips on how to win admission to college from Gaby Hager Nossiff (left), chair of ABC's Academics Committee, and Jayne Jones, Déanna's guidance counselor.

the A Better Chance program because of its down-to-earth atmosphere, combined with the family-feel of the ABC house.

Jayne Jones is the AHS guidance counselor and point person for all of the ABC of Andover scholars. She recently joined the faculty and has extensive background in college admissions and in first-generation and disadvantaged students. As the ABC liaison, she works to provide them with what she calls a "wrap-around affect of support."

"Here they are offered much of what our students take for granted," says Jones. "Extra-curricular opportunities, resources and stimulated students in their classes that push and challenge them."

It is a two-way flow of opportunity; ABC scholars all come from very different backgrounds, explains Jones, and (*continued inside*)



President's message: Archives tell a story of success

It seems like just a few days ago that we watched in disbelief as snow fell around the blooming daffodils on an April day. It reminded me of how A Better Chance has helped so many promising students weather difficult times and blossom into leadership positions.

Sitting around the dining room table at the ABC house, the committee was organizing the archives of ABC history in preparation for the program's 50th anniversary celebration in 2017.

As we pore over the articles, documents and photos, we're bolstered by the stories about motivated students and compassionate volunteers. The archives span the decades, chronicling the lives of ABC students who studied at Andover

High School, volunteers who performed myriad jobs, and organizations and individuals who provided financial support.

We discover *Andover Townsman* articles of student achievements and letters of support and occasionally criticism as the program's objectives flexed to a changing world and political landscape. Many articles were penned by the late Linda Corbett, a long-time volunteer, host parent and writer/photographer who captured the moments.

There are common themes through the history: achieving, struggling, changing families, setting academic objectives, breaking sports records. Much like this year's seven young women, students excelled in many directions: as scholars, athletes, musicians, thespians, writers, poets, journalists....(*continued inside*)

they bring diverse viewpoints and experiences to the classroom. Says Clarke-Campbell:

"I come from a really diverse city [Philadelphia]. The first year, it was really hard to make the shift – to come back and forth from home to a predominantly white community."

It is this "culture shock," as Clarke-Campbell calls it, that has inspired the ABC girls, along with fellow student Carter Griffith, to launch the Living in Color Club, with the mission of promoting an open dialogue on race, inclusion and all forms of unconscious bias. Cabrera recalls a recent experience in which she made an all-school announcement about Black History month. Afterwards, a fellow student came up to her and made a joke about it, assuming it was a spoof.

"AHS could do better," notes Clarke-Campbell. "For starters, they could acknowledge that there are students of color at the school. Sometimes they just don't see us."

Jones agrees. "We are always trying to improve, to understand how do we provide our students with an environment that's accepting and welcoming."

For Andover-raised students, the ABC scholars often just blend in.

"I've lived in Andover my whole life and knew nothing about ABC," recalls Sydney Bergan, '20, at the house recently to interview the ABC students for a feature in "The Warrior Weekly," the AHS newspaper (see excerpts below). "Then Skye [Padovani, '19] got up in front of my class and said that her biggest achievement was getting into the ABC program. I was so intrigued."

This under-the-radar meme is a familiar one. ABC and AHS are constantly working in unison to support the complex dynamics of being a student of color at AHS.

"There is a balance I strike," explains Jones, "in allowing ABC scholars to be 'just students,' not 'spokespeople' for their backgrounds."

The ABC scholars take these challenges in stride. It is their gratitude, motivation and desire to become change-makers, with the right opportunities, that makes the AHS and ABC partnership so successful.

High school's newspaper reports on ABC

Editor's note: The following excerpts are from an article about the ABC program that ninth-grader Sydney Bergan of Andover wrote for "The Warrior Weekly," the AHS newspaper.

On Main Street there is a white house with a blue door. From the outside it seems rather insignificant and completely normal, similar to all of the houses that surround it. This is also how the girls who live inside of that house may appear to the students and faculty of Andover High School, just seven other girls among the two thousand. In actuality, these girls are a lot more than they seem. They are a part of the A Better Chance program (ABC Program) and have been selected to attend AHS in order to receive a higher standard of education and have access to more opportunities than would be available in their home towns.

The process of getting into the ABC program is as rigorous as that of getting into private schools and colleges. Applicants must take the SSAT's several times as well as complete an essay. The program will be fifty years old next year....

Laughter fills the large dining room and bounces off its pale green walls as the girls describe what it is like to board with one another all year. "We kind of just coexist in some way, we all coexist together," explains

Andover High School Freshman Skye Padovani, whose family lives in the Bronx.

The girls board in Andover and split their time between living in the house and spending time with their partial host families. They are under the capable watch and support of special education teacher Mrs. Spinale, as well as two residential advisers. They eat family style dinners on Mondays, Tuesdays Thursdays and Sundays, and on the other days each girl eats dinner with her individual host family. Mandatory study times are set from 7-9:45 in the evening, and the girls are not allowed to watch TV during the week.

The table in the ABC house's dining room is covered with various layers of juice boxes and snacks for the four girls going on the show choir trip to Ohio. Clubs and after school activities are another benefit that the girls find at Andover High. "I know in New York I would have never known show choir existed," said Elise Cabrera, a sophomore from Harlem who has discovered a passion for show choir though AHS.

But the transition from their homes to Andover isn't always easy; the students tend to experience a level of culture shock. "I come from Philadelphia which is a really diverse city," junior Déanna Clarke-Campbell

illustrates, "and then when you come to Andover it's not so diverse anymore." Another shocking discovery made by the girls was how early everything closes at night, a hard concept to deal with due to their city backgrounds. Despite this, the girls all agree that homesickness isn't a large problem for them as they get to return home over school breaks.

The opportunity to attend Andover High greatly benefits the girls because of the higher level of education and support. Back home, the girls explain, teachers didn't put in the time to really help them reach their goals of succeeding and getting into college. Sophomore Jenni Nguyen says that one of the greatest benefits [to her] of the high school is a "closer connection to my teachers."

In addition, the girls have given back to the school by forming a new club... to discuss ideas about how diversity is included in different settings. They also volunteer to help in school and town activities and clubs....

Even though living with six other girls of all different ages isn't always easy, the girls definitely have a very unique sisterly bond formed by the everyday struggles of being a high school student. Déanna exclaimed, "We all have a lot of work to do and even with all of that work, it's still like a party."



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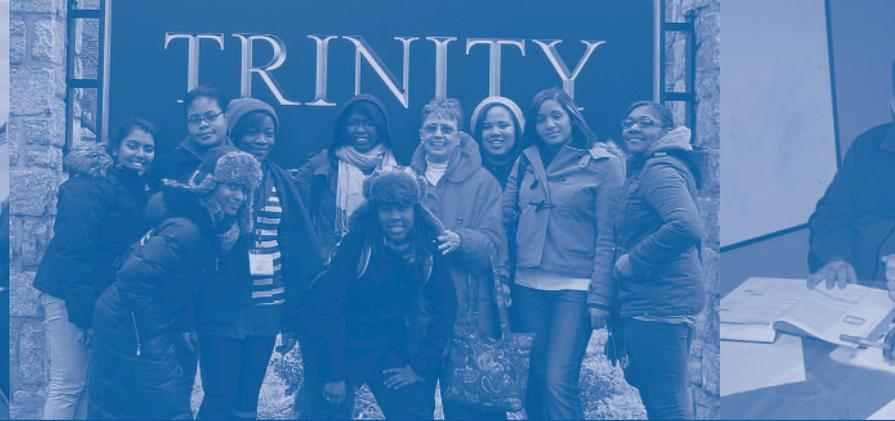
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President's message (continued from page 1)

We've had the pleasure of reconnecting with recent ABC graduates who visited Andover friends, host families and current ABC students. They've shared stories of their new explorations in college, including challenging coursework, life-changing mission trips, and renewed cultural identity and musical heritage.

These graduates found themselves well-prepared to balance the rigors of coursework, part-time jobs, social lives and extra-curricular activities because they honed their discipline and study skills during their years in the ABC of Andover program. When they arrived at ABC and returned each year, they affirmed their mission to get a superior college education. They hit the ground running when they got to college, already knowing why they were there and much of what they hoped to get out of the experience.

While our students and their friends are opening dialogue around issues of equity and inclusion through their new Living in Color Club at Andover High School, our Board of Directors has been exploring equity and inclusion issues through a book club. We have a long list of incredible inclusive resources and, at the suggestion of local leaders in the equity and inclusion field, started with several books: Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* and Debby Irving's *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. We've been attending moderated discussions at local organizations and as guests at Phillips Academy.

Naturally, some people are more conversant with equity and inclusion, but each of us will learn, talk, read and, more importantly, change our actions and awareness the more we learn.

As we look toward 2017, the outline of recognition and celebration events for the 50th anniversary is taking shape. Alumni and volunteers will gather for a Founder's Reception and an anniversary celebration. We'll curate an exhibit with the Andover Historical Society, and co-host a speaker series with Phillips Academy.

Energized like returning spring, this school year has been full of achievement, new lessons learned and continued support for the education of young women who will be tomorrow's leaders in their families, their communities and their world.

Susan E. Connolly

IN MEMORIAM

This special remembrance is for two recently deceased people who stand out in the history of A Better Chance of Andover.

Maratha "Linda" Corbett, with her husband Dave, was ABC host parent for Tony Pace, AHS '78, when they lived in Andover.

Donald Mulvey of North Andover was one of the supporters who helped to guide the ABC program through an early stage of its 49-year existence.



Recent graduate volunteers in Ala.

Deanna Starr, AHS '14, devoted a recent college break to volunteering at a religious center in rural Alabama that serves needy, small-town residents, ranging from youngsters to the elderly.

Sponsored by the Service and Justice Experiences program at Villanova University, where she is a sophomore, Deanna and fellow students helped Sister Rosemary in her center near Selma, Ala. They cleaned the center, organized its food pantry, played bingo with senior citizens, cooked and assisted with the after-school program.

Deanna said in a report about the winter-vacation trip that she was grateful that she was granted the chance to volunteer. "I

learned more in that one week than I can put into one message," she related.

She met some amazing people at the Catholic Center in Mosses, Ala., which has a very low median income and a high school that graduates only around about 25% of its students.

After mornings spent assisting at the center, where they also stayed, the Villanova students toured historic sites in Montgomery, Selma, Birmingham and St. Jude.



Deanna and Nancy Vogler, former ABC president.

Alumna educates others and herself



For Turalloy Jackson, life-changing episodes didn't end when she graduated from Andover High in 2009 and departed from ABC.

"I graduated from Villanova University in 2013 with a degree in Political Science and minor in African Studies. Right before my senior year I had three life-changing experiences: for the first time since my junior year at Andover, I was without a job; I met my wonderful now-fiancé; and I learned about Teach for America.

"All in one year, I learned the value of my inner circle – my friends, family and the Epsilon Phi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. – and why education is so important, and finally, how to think about more than just myself."

The recollection of being jobless led Jackson to start her own GoFundMe web page to raise funds and donations for a homeless shelter in Baltimore. In the first few weeks she raised more than \$1,100. She also volunteers at a local middle school as a choreographer and mentors through the Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"I thank the A Better Chance of Andover program for preparing me for that moment.

When I arrived in Andover I was shocked. The most important lesson I learned during my four years outside of my comfort zone was being comfortable with discomfort so I can forge relationships I did not think were possible.

"I learned through my high school experience how to communicate with people from all walks of life; finding the one thing that connects us and walk boldly in who I was.

"My host family was and still is incredible," she adds. "They [Beth Clough and Steve Jungmann] were trendsetters with whom I felt comfortable, and they all lived in their individuality and created an amazing family.

"I graduated from college with a new sense of who I was and went on to teach in Baltimore as a special educator. I am finishing my third year of teaching and completed my Masters in the Science of Education from Johns Hopkins University in May 2015. Next year I will be completing my certification to become a principal, and I am currently working on a series of children's books.

"There's still more to come from Turalloy Jackson, soon to be Turalloy Brownlee in 2017, and I am blessed and thank God for it."

50th is coming

A Better Chance of Andover is getting ready to observe its 50th anniversary in 2017 by looking back at our successes and ahead at ways we can do more.

Since 1967, our nonprofit program has teamed up with Andover High School to help 137 motivated students of color get past the opportunity gap and into a wide range of top-level colleges and universities.

If you are a former ABC volunteer, ABC graduate or friend of the program and want to share your recollections or ABC memorabilia from those momentous years, please get in touch with us at info@AndoverABC.org or PO Box 212, Andover, MA 01810.

We will enjoy sharing your remembrances with others at 50th anniversary events planned throughout the year and hope to see you there.

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

- Organize historic archives and files
- Assist with a mailing
- Cook Saturday breakfast for 7 students
- Track down contact info for ABC alumni
- Paint a room



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Mrs. Dunning recalls ABC

Dolores Dunning, retired Andover High School art teacher, says she felt a special affinity for ABC students during her 25+ years at AHS, especially their motivation to succeed.

“When I met a group of prospective ABC students (and their parents), I noticed the students were mature, serious-minded young women, eager for a challenge,” she said recently while visiting ABC House.

One of the first things I would mention to them was, “If you were chosen to apply to the ABC program, you have already proven yourself. Your hard work, focus and desire to do well in academics are what brought you to Andover.”

Mrs. Dunning, who is Filipino and Alaska Native, feels it is important for students of color to be greeted by other people of color in new settings, such as AHS. Raised in the Yesler Terrace Projects in Seattle and educated at Brandeis, Boston University and Harvard, she likes to say, “You can take the girl out of the projects, but you can’t take the projects out of the girl.”

She applauds the ABC mission, which is described in “What we do” on the right.

“ABC is an important program because students of color need more opportunities to show the world what they can do well.”



Dolores Dunning (top row, 2nd from right) is shown with ABC students (top, from left) Jenni Nguyen, Nilda Vega, Skye Padovani, and (front) Elise Cabrera and Déanna Clarke-Campbell.

For their part, she adds, “The ABC students bring a diversity of rich cultures, not only from urban areas in America, but also from far-away places like Jamaica and Africa.”

Lastly, Mrs. Dunning reminds the group that their “moms and dads have sacrificed precious years away from their child to give her opportunities for the options in her future,” adding with a twinkle, “not to mention that the students miss out on their families’ home cooking and goodnight kisses.”

She says, “Not only do I miss teaching the teen-angels at the high school, but I learned from them and hopefully they learned from me.”

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facebook.com/ABCandover

What We Do



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 137 graduates have been accepted by highly selective colleges and universities.