

Exhibit recounts Andover's support of ABC

"Andover's action is significant. For it shows what a small town - a part of affluent America - can do privately and publicly to help fight poverty and improve education. Andover deserves to be congratulated and its example emulated."

▪ *Boston Herald, March 25, 1967*

This praise of Andover is just one of the many quotes that ABC uncovered while creating the first-ever public exhibit of the story of the program's founding.

The exhibit will be on display at the Andover Historical Society, 97 Main St., through June. It is part of a series of events celebrating A Better Chance of Andover's 50th anniversary.

Exhibit designers Mary Pritchard and Susan Bruce, along with ABC's president Susan Connolly, spent hundreds of hours conducting research and interviews. The result is a multifaceted picture from a tumultuous time in our country of a brave group of Andover citizens who rose to the challenge and added a new chapter to the story of our town.

The seeds of ABC were planted by President John Kennedy with his Civil Rights Speech of 1963, challenging the pervasive inequity of the long-held separate-but-equal doctrine. Kennedy followed up with personal letters to America's top colleges, asking them to open their doors to students of color.

Sixteen independent prep schools – led by Phillips Academy Andover and Northfield Mount Hermon – established the Independent Schools Talent Search Program to bring in students of color who were economically disadvantaged but academically able. Dartmouth College signed on to collaborate.

Three years in, the program had become so popular that there were many more applicants than independent school slots. Dartmouth College Associate Dean Charles Dey decided to give a nearby public school a shot, and after Hanover High School's ABC program proved successful, the next step was to expand. *(continued on page 6)*



ABC students who greeted exhibit visitors at the Andover Historical Society are (from left) Jenni Nguyen, Elise Cabrera, Nilda Vega, Déanna Clarke-Campbell, Leannette Garcia, Mafoudia Keita and Olamide Olayinka.

Exhibit: "Opening Doors"

WHERE:

Andover Historical Society
97 Main Street

WHEN:

10–4 p.m., Tues. thru Sat.
through June

Seniors win entry to elite colleges

ABC of Andover again will graduate a class of highly impressive senior scholars, all on the way to elite colleges. Two will enter Boston University, and the third, American University.

They also have been offered substantial financial packages comprised of large scholarships, grants, low interest loans and work study.

All three scholars have challenged themselves at Andover High, taking rigorous honors and AP classes while also participating in an array of extracurricular activities. Julie Ireland Childs, a professional college coach and ABC board member, worked with each of the scholars to strategize and strengthen applications and stay on task with deadlines throughout the process. *(continued on page 3)*



Susan Connolly

Photo By: Robert Huntley

President's message: Polishing inborn talent

This is an incredible point in time, and time of year, to be involved with A Better Chance of Andover.

We are immersed in the planning and presentation of a year-long series of events celebrating our 50th year of hosting scholars.

It is humbling and astonishing to look back on the genesis of ABC, the courageous townspeople who had the vision for addressing a fundamental civil rights issue – education – through ABC. Also the thousands of citizens who, since 1967, have worked tirelessly and given generously of their time and money to keep the program going strong. And the brave students and their families who chose ABC for their high school years.

This also is the time of year when we ask our senior scholars to pen their thoughts about their ABC experience (see below). It is a chance for them to reflect for a moment on lessons learned, wisdom gained and choices made – through good times and bad. In turn, those of us at ABC and our supporters can enrich our own awareness based on our scholars' experience.

In their end-of-year remarks, our seniors have emphasized the notion that living in Andover and attending Andover High School has given them two pieces of crucial knowledge. Firstly, assimilation is a two-way street. Both parties that will share space – our students and ABC as well as the town and its high school – must be willing to engage in the process of accommodation and of integration of new knowledge and cultural understandings. Secondly, our students' ability to achieve didn't stem from being chosen as an ABC scholar. Our scholars believe that they have always had within themselves everything they needed to be successful in high school and beyond.

During candidate selection, we look for this natural potential and self-assurance. At first glance, this can sound like an invalidation of ABC – we are, after all, a program founded on providing a path to college that would be very different from the one our scholars would have had at home. We've come to realize that

our seniors' perspective is, in fact, proof that we at ABC have done our job well.

ABC was founded to address the external barriers – institutional, societal, and most importantly, educational – to allowing the innate capabilities and intellect of our students to shine. Our volunteers strive to foster independence, instill habits of self-discipline, and coach problem-solving and perseverance in our students. That our scholars leave here not only heading to four-year colleges but also possessing a deep sense of worthiness and self-sufficiency, a feeling that they can and will succeed anywhere, is both true and a tribute to our program.

Our alumni remind us of the many times where they picked up and kept moving forward, despite life's setbacks. We work in partnership to break down barriers and build up competence in strong young women.

ABC provides an opportunity for young women of color to attend AHS and live in an affluent college-focused town. Our scholars make a choice to come here; and they continue to make choices every single day about what they will do with their time here. We provide additional resources and access to opportunities, while freeing them from concerns such as which way is the safest walk home, which after-school job is scheduled today, or what time will I look after my siblings this afternoon. We provide the gift of time and the possibilities of youth.

ABC creates a multifaceted scaffolding of care, safety and academic support, and encourages unique choices for each individual.

Four years ago, these amazing seniors chose ABC, AHS and the Andover community in which to polish what was already within each of them. They were just waiting for the kind of program that would let them shine, and they found it with us at ABC.

For this, I say thank you for entrusting us.

Seniors review their challenges, growth

In this report, seniors A'mari Bing-Way, Déanna Clarke-Campbell and Nilda Vega sum up their ABC experience and look ahead.

Our decision to become ABC scholars altered our high school experience. The contrast between our hometowns and Andover has challenged our notion of assimilation. Our time here redefined this concept by bringing to light the importance of not only adapting ourselves to fit our surroundings but also of finding ways to change our environment to accommodate our own backgrounds. Assimilation does not mean changing oneself to fit into one's environment, but rather growing from the lessons one learns adapting to it.

The academic demands pushed us to improve our work habits. The support we received from host families, board members, and friends influenced our experience, teaching us that failure does not hinder our success but rather prompts us to push our boundaries and learn from our mistakes. The cultural differences have heightened our awareness of the socio-political climate in Andover and in the larger world. Our developing understanding of diversity has allowed us to learn about others' perspectives, and our raised consciousness has encouraged us to teach others about our own.

From the time of our arrival in Andover to our last few months, the challenge of transitioning from our home to here has fueled our maturity and independence. Our strong desire to expand our knowledge inspired us to take advantage of networking, educational, and traveling opportunities.

One of the most important lessons from our time at ABC is that, with each passing year, being an ABC scholar became less about our formal education and more about the wisdom we gained from real life experience. ABC and AHS provided the setting, but our ability to succeed came from within us. This program did not hand us our achievements, it provided a platform for our intelligence and abilities to blossom; it gave us the opportunity to polish our fundamental selves.

We have no doubt that we will continue on a path towards accomplishing our career and life goals. As our time in the ABC house, at Andover High School, and in the town of Andover comes to an end, the memories with which we leave will influence our lives, long after graduation.

And for that, we say thank you.



The Rev. LaKisha Williams, '92, returned to Andover and spoke from the pulpit at West Parish Church as ABC alumni thanked Andover for supporting the nonprofit program.

Eight ABC alumni fanned out recently to Andover churches and synagogue as ABC of Andover launched a yearlong "thank you" to the community that had welcomed it with a resounding Town Meeting vote.

"Thank you to the town of Andover," said Tony Pace, ABC 1978, "for that vote in 1967 when you said 'yes.' We believe every student deserves this opportunity.... I thank you for that belief... for your continued investment of funds and families."

Pace, today a consultant on higher-education activities, spoke at South Church's Sunday service. With him was Dave Corbett, who with his late wife, Linda, was Pace's ABC host family while he studied at Andover High School.

The visiting ABC alumni are outstanding examples of the successes within reach of young people of color from low-income families with the help of ABC and AHS. Since then, they have risen to leading positions in education, business, medicine and religion.

The Rev. LaKisha Williams, '92, who serves a Baptist church in Harlem, told the congregation at West Parish Church that she sees a broader benefit in Andover's acceptance of the program for students of color.

"It was about doing what was right, fair, just and what would connect us to the humanity in each other," she said. She noted that she and her ABC hosts in the 1990s, Don and Britta McNemar, "continue to love and grow together."

Meanwhile, Dr. Anthony King, '71, spoke eloquently at St. Robert Bellarmine Church about how ABC seemed to him "a gift from a gracious God." Also at the service were Judy and David Dlesk of Andover along with Alexis Singh '09, the former ABC student they hosted.

The same morning, Dr. Wildolfo Arvelo, '79, told parishioners at North Andover Unitarian Universalist Church about his journey via ABC from a Puerto Rican neighborhood in New York to become president of Great Bay Community College in New Hampshire. Mark Ayers, '69, visited the Unitarian Universalist Church in Andover, while Anita Holmes, '79, accompanied at Faith Lutheran Church by new ABC hosts Sharon and Craig Saline, shared deeply personal stories of the influence Andover community members had on her life.

Laurin Banner, '72, who came from Harlem, went on from Andover to earn a bachelor's and two master's degrees and then worked on development projects in 17 underdeveloped countries that benefited an estimated 1.5 million people.

"If not for Andover, I wouldn't have been able to do that," he said at Christ Church. "Had I not come here, I don't know where I would be."

Weeks earlier, Carlos Cedeño, an ABC board member who graduated from ABC program in Longmeadow, Mass., described ABC at Temple Emanuel Andover synagogue.

Seniors win entry to elite colleges (continued from pg. 1)

Déanna Clarke-Campbell committed last fall to Boston University through the early-decision process, with an extremely generous financial offer included.

Déanna has been a theater and Show Choir star at Andover High, holding multiple character leads and leadership positions. She also participated in an international Model UN competition at Harvard and won a scholarship to perform environmental community service work in Beijing last summer.

Déanna toured many colleges before deciding she wanted a city school when she visited BU with an ABC volunteer and decided to apply "early decision."

Nilda Vega received highly robust financial packages from two colleges. After a recent "Admissions Revisit Day" followed by an overnight at Boston University, she has committed to attend BU's School of Engineering.

Nilda has thrived in our community as a member of the

Treble Chorus of New England and an intern for a cutting-edge environmental chemistry laboratory in Wilmington, Mass. The ABC community is thrilled that two of its graduates will be attending college in nearby Boston.

A'mari Bing-Way had several impressive options with fulsome financial packages and ultimately chose American University in Washington, DC, where she plans to study international relations.

A'mari has stood out during her four years in Andover because of her dedication to community service work such as being a highly prized tutor for students at Esperanza Academy in Lawrence and one of the founders of the Andover High School Diversity Club.

As our three seniors prepare to move forward in the next chapter of their education, ABC celebrates their successes in securing these impressive college placements and financial awards.



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Founders celebrated



Raising a toast to ABC's 50th anniversary are (from left) Ellis Rowe, ABC 1970 graduate; Simone McBean Yatrakis, '90 and an ABC National board member; and Susan E. Connolly, ABC president.

It was a reunion fifty years in the making for some of the original founders and supporters of the A Better Chance of Andover at a Founders Reception, held recently at the North Andover Country Club.

The event, part of the nonprofit's 50th Anniversary celebration, honored key visionaries and supporters from ABC's past.

Among the guests were three founders - Meredith Russell, Norm Viehmann and Margot Bixby – and also Elinore Washburn, widow of founder Bill Washburn, and Chris Andrews, son of founder Joyce Andrews. Also attending were 16 of the past 23 presidents of ABC, two ABC alumni, and many past board members and host families.

As Andover activists reconnected, the first two sets of resident directors – Bill and Nancy Deacon for the boys and Dan and Carolyn Moynihan for the girls program – compared notes with current RD Karen Spinale.

In remarks to the group, Charles Dey, the first director of the early ABC program and co-producer of a new documentary on ABC recounted the harrowing story of driving the first four ABC students up north from Birmingham, Ala. On the way, they were denied service at a segregated diner, but later a Holiday Inn clerk risked his job by allowing them to stay overnight.

Past ABC Presidents Joel Parks and George Bixby took on the roles of founders Bob Klie and Bill Washburn with a dramatic reading of their comments recounting incidents that preceded the Town Meeting vote in April 1967 that gave life to ABC in Andover.

Ellis Rowe, a graduate of the Andover High class of 1970, paid tribute to the ABC program that he felt was one of the three pillars of the foundation of his success. The other two were his Dartmouth College family and his family of co-workers at Mars Corp., where he retired as Group President.

Rowe also recalled the state of the country during the time that Andover said "yes" to a program born out of the Civil Rights movement: "If you think things are bad now, you should have seen it in the 1960s", adding that cities were burning then.

The event included entertainment by the a cappella group Peking and the Mystics.

Exhibit recounts Andover's support of ABC

Tom Mikula, a former Phillips Academy teacher who was resident director of Hanover ABC, became head of ABC's national public school expansion. Knowing Andover was the kind of town that had the resources to make ABC a success, he pitched the idea to a group of citizens at the West Parish Church in 1967.

The first Steering Committee for A Better Chance of Andover was born, and members worked tirelessly to convince the town that bringing students of color to Andover was a way for the town to do its part to address inequality.

The idea was not without controversy; behind the scenes, committee members also faced harassment and threats. Nonetheless, at Town Meeting on March 10, 1967, the community voted – in the only secret ballot in town history – by a 4-1 margin in favor of ABC.

The committee then had only a few short months to bring a program into being and, still, they faced challenges. *Andover Townsman* newspaper articles described letters from residents showing "open hostility" to a dorm with "minority" students in their neighborhoods, citing property values. Bob Klie, a committee member and the first ABC president, described this period as a "nasty dance."

Despite this, a house was purchased and renovated, students were chosen, two resident directors signed on and, by September, the first graduating class of 10 young men arrived in Andover to begin the school year.

The exhibit illuminates the magnitude of this experiment. "We do a very dangerous thing," stated Leonard Kent, a founder, at ABC's 30th anniversary. "We pluck a kid from home... [and start] this incredible experience of being dropped down all of a sudden in the predominantly white community of Andover."

News facts: What happened in 1967

- Supreme Court decides Loving vs. Virginia case: prohibiting interracial marriage was unconstitutional
- Thurgood Marshall confirmed as first African American Supreme Court Justice
- Mohammed Ali is stripped of his title for refusing induction into the US Army
- Jeb Bush starts his freshman year at Phillips Academy
- Bill Belichick applies to Phillips Academy for entry in fall 1968
- The first Super Bowl is played
- The Yom Kippur War begins
- 7,000 guardsmen are called out after a night of rioting in Detroit
- Langston Hughes dies

Dartmouth’s Charles Dey noted that these ABC students “perhaps will never again be fully at home, either in Harlem or in Andover.”

Or in the words of Carnell Cooper, 1973 ABC graduate, “It’s like having ten people on a survival trip and everybody must contribute for everyone to survive.”

The first class of young men not only survived, but thrived. Cooper became a surgeon, and today the ABC of Andover program has graduated 137 students, all of whom have gone on to four-year colleges and professional careers as doctors, lawyers, social workers, surgeons, teachers, principals, scientists, writers, marketing executives, presidents of companies, ministers and more.

This year, with three seniors set to graduate and go on to highly selective colleges, the mission of ABC has been once again met.

Our 50th anniversary exhibit contains the accompanying list, which helps to show the status of national news when ABC of Andover was created.

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.

Civil Rights era energized first Resident Directors

It was cancellation of a bus destined for a Civil Rights march in Selma, Alabama, that led Bill and Nancy Deacon to become the first resident directors of ABC of Andover 50 years ago.

The Deacons had planned to be on that bus. “I was very disappointed that the trip was canceled,” Bill Deacon recalled recently during a surprise visit back to the dorm-style residence at 134 Main Street. “We had real concerns about the injustices happening.”

At the time, Deacon was a newly minted chemistry teacher at Andover High School and Nancy was an at-home mom caring for a second-grader and a fourth-grader. Home was a 1750 Georgian colonial in Newbury, Mass., that the couple had been painstakingly restoring for six years while living in a trailer on the property.

By the spring of 1967, the Steering Committee for the newly created A Better Chance had purchased a house in Andover and recruited scholars. The organizers turned to the high school in hopes of finding a teacher willing to live in the house and act as dorm parent.

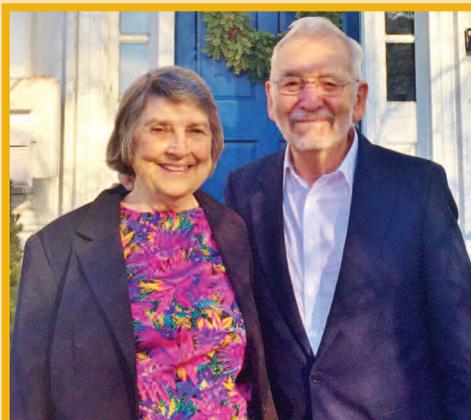
At a faculty meeting, AHS Principal Philip Wormwood explained the ABC program and the resident-director job to the gathered teachers. Deacon recalls it described as “an opportunity for these capable kids from poor school districts to come here and we give them a shot to be successful in college.”

Andover was chosen as the site of the second community school pilot program.

“I was thrilled,” Deacon said. “Although Selma was out of

the picture, this was a way to get involved.”

He and Nancy met with Bob Klie and Bill Washburn, founding members of the Steering Committee, and never looked back. They sold their updated colonial and moved their two young children into an old house on Main Street along with 10 young men of color. They took the gamble that Andover High School could do the same job as independent boarding schools in providing the motivated students with the leg up necessary to be successful in college despite their inadequate training at their previous schools.



Nancy and Bill Deacon

“I knew that colleges were giving kids like the ABC students scholarships, and they were not prepared once they got there,” he said. His experience at ABC reinforced his realization that they needed the type of preparation that ABC and AHS provided in order to succeed in college.

“We had this one kid, Scotty, from Yazoo, Mississippi,” Deacon related. “He was at the top of his class at his old school. He got here and we discovered that he didn’t know how to do long division.” He caught up eventually.

Deacon also remembers some of those initial students returning to the house and telling the students living there what they had seen when they got to college.

Mark Ayers, ’69, who went on to Dartmouth College, was one such student. Deacon recalled, “He sat the kids down and he said, ‘You have got to pay attention to what is going on here. I’m at college and I’m seeing who comes not from an ABC program [but from inner-city high schools] and they are gone quickly – they have flunked out.’”



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2013 grad wins USC award

Felicia Reyes, ABC/AHS '13 and now a senior at the University of Southern California, has been awarded the highest honor from the USC Latino Alumni Association.

She was honored with the Dr. John R. Hubbard Award, which goes annually to a Latino or Latina student for outstanding commitment to community service and academic excellence.

She accepted the award at 43rd annual Scholarship Gala held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills in early March, where she spoke in front of a crowd of 670 attendees.

Reyes came to Andover ABC in 2009 after completing middle school in the underperforming Anaheim, Calif. school system. Four years later, she was accepted at USC with full-ride financial aid.

"Felicia arrived at Andover High School determined to make the most of this opportunity," said Nancy Vogler, her ABC host mom. "Although the transition was difficult at first, Felicia worked hard and remained focused on her goal to attend an excellent college. Over the years, ABC of Andover has opened the door to a quality education for many other students of color. I'm so proud of Felicia and ABC!"



Felicia Reyes

Save the dates!

October 6–8 Alumni Reunion Weekend, to celebrate ABC of Andover's 50th Anniversary.

For Alumni and their guests:

Friday, Oct. 6 – evening Open House at ABC

Saturday, Oct. 7 – Lunch and round-table Discussion

Sunday, Oct. 8 – Alumni and Host family Brunch

For Alumni, guests, friends and family of ABC!

Oct. 7 – evening Gala at Andover Country Club

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