Array of activities helps students grow

Two Andover couples and their children have volunteered to host ABC scholars. Catherine Giles Slicher and Scott Slicher have welcomed into their home Felix Reyes (left), Nany Bergeron and Philip Green have become hosts of Freshman Laura Molina.

Catherine Giles Slicher, an educational psychologist and aerobics instructor, said she and her husband, a biotech company manager, welcomed the ride because “it seemed like a good opportunity.” She has a list of interesting destinations on hand for Felix and her two children, Sosha, 9, and Wiliam, 7, to experience while they are visiting New England.

Nancy Bergeron, her husband and their children, Haiden, 16, and Sairah, 9, refer to ABC as an after-school program in their family life because, as Nancy put it, “We felt we wanted to do something that involved all of us.”

At the heart of families is enthusiasm and excitement about the host family program may be sent to the Andover A Better Chance address below.

Andover A Better Chance thanks supporters.

Andover is deeply grateful to the individuals and institutions that enable our program to exist today, especially Fairness Capital Partners and Foundation M, donors of our two largest grants. During the current economic crises, contributors will be pleased to learn that our organization is one of the most efficient in the nation. We are financially self-sufficient, and all of our income supports the principal programs of providing lodging, tutoring and enriching experiences for our scholars.

Contributions, which are tax-exempt, can be sent to us at FO Box 212, Andover, MA 01810. Donations of stock or gifts given in someone’s memory also are welcomed.

Fall 2009

President's message: Opportunity in Andover

It’s easy to take Andover’s many benefits for granted — the excellent schools, a community tradition of helping others, easy access to interesting activities… but not always without discomfort, as you will see from time to time.

But each fall brings a reminder that we are especially good here: that reminder is the return of A Better Chance scholars to the community. These students come from urban communities that have very little in common with Andover. Our obligation to help them provides the bare classroom necessities, extracurricular activities are only a wish. Their communities, where survival is the common denominator, set low expectations and goals for their students. Andover A Better Chance was founded in 1967 to give outstanding students in those neighborhoods a more likely way to go to college. We firmly believe that they will develop capabilities in Andover that will help them become leaders in their communities and beyond. And that concept works... but not always without discomfort; you will see the article above. (continued)

Andover and its high school can be overwhelming to a student of color reared in a poor city neighborhood. For many Andover High School students, these pursuits are a fact of life. For A Better Chance scholars, arriving from urban areas and often isolated in any extracurricular activities, the challenge of “jumping in” — whether it’s into a school club, sports team or music lesson — is formidable but also rewarding.

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Two Andover couples and their children have volunteered to host the two ABC scholars. Catherine Giles Stecher and Scott Stecher have welcomed into their home Felicia Reyes and Daree Colon. The Stein family provides the bare classroom necessities, so extracurricular activities are only a wish. Their communities, where survival is the common denominator, set low expectations and goals for the students. But such fallen dreams are not always without discomfort, as you will see from the students they have welcomed into their homes, the story they have to tell.

For that reason, our program committee – to provide our students with more engaging activities outside class to augment the fine education they get at Andover High School. These outside activities help develop the “whole” person and reveal the many opportunities that the future holds. Yet to come are “The Nutcracker” at Phillips Academy, “Definites” along with a few “dreams” – has already been met with enthusiasm.

The second aspect of enrichment comes via monthly visits to the homes of Andover and its high school can be overwhelming to a student of color reared in a poor city neighborhood, handling a busy schedule outside school, they begin to see the payoff. They have a list of interesting destinations on hand for Felicia and Laura, while Nancy Bergeron and Phillip Green have become hosts for the two Andover ABC scholars. Catherine Giles Stecher, an educational psychologist and aerobics-dance instructor, said she and her husband, a biotech company manager, welcomed the role because “it seemed to be a way of giving something back to the community.”

Many other opportunities are available, but they would not exist without support from community residents and organizations, such as the Andover North Andover YMCA. The Alliance and a girls’ leadership group, to name a few. After-school health program. She is applying to be a Junior Volunteer at Lawrence General Hospital. Daree Colon, a junior aiming for pre-med, will work with the children in preparation, tutoring, babysitting, chores and mandatory participation in ABC activities makes life both demanding and fun. It is the experience of a typical AHS student and is similar to one offered at a residential prep school.

The new scholars cannot always articulate the needs and demands of their environment. They are financial aid, and all of our income supports our program of providing lodging, tutoring and enriching experiences for our scholars.

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Some summer lessons

Saying it to Felicia Rose and Laura Molina, students who became A Better Chance scholars and 9th-graders at Andover High School this fall.

Felicia comes from across the country in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin, while Laura lives in nearby Bay Port. "It’s a big change but I’m getting along with everyone and I like my classes and teachers."

She especially enjoys World Civilization class and Project Challenge, a team-building exercise in gym. Trained in ballet, she is excited that Andover ABC has matched her up with a local dance program after school. Meanwhile, she has been pulling weight in a sport that’s new to her—cray. Laura, a KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) middle-school graduate, is enjoying her new school, too. "World Civ" is also one of her favorites, and she has joined the Freshman Board of Directors and Gray-Strathy Alliance.

Although both 9th-graders are a bit young to plan for careers, Laura wants to learn more about being a doctor, lawyer or bi-lingual translator (English, Spanish and sign language). "My father taught me that they always will be in demand."

The three ABC scholars who graduated in the spring from Andover High School are now hitting the books at college and braving the sometimes scary days and nights, surviving on her own.

"I loved the program, especially the time spent with the group," she recalled. "But it also was extremely arduous at times—trying to get to [campus] by nightlights, carry a 70-pound pack, not sleep...We handled a lot of hard stuff." But the two days and nights alone weren’t very funny, especially when a member of the group had to wake her up at dawn to start the hike the next in remote parkland that borders Delaware River the first week and 27-miles like the most in ten years that broken down the most, she added.

Traveling to high school from the West Coast was a big step for Felicia, but the new 9th-grader says Andover High and ABC make it worthwhile. It’s a big change but I’m getting along with everyone and I like my classes and teachers."

Graduates enter Villanova, Ithaca College

The three ABC scholars who graduated in the spring from Andover High School are now hitting the books at college and braving the sometimes scary days and nights, surviving on her own.

"I learned to be more comfortable when performing on stage," she explained.

What’s new, she took lessons on the trumpet, African drums and — a new experience — the piano. She also sampled life in a college dorm.

"Overall I really enjoyed meeting and becoming friends with other people with musical interests," she noted.

Volleyball camp sponsored by the New York THCA enabled Shreyas to learn the game. She also visited her host family, Beth Crouch, Slove Jungmann and their children during her stay. She won a camp scholarship that paid the expenses while ABC covered the rest.

During the week at the Lakehead camp in Port Arthur, ON, "Shreyas took part in other activities. It was lots of fun," she reported.
New scholars settle in
Say hi to Felicia Reyes and Laura Molina, students who became A Better Chance scholars and 9–10th graders at Andover High School this fall.

Felicia comes from across the country in Anaheim, California. Laura becomes the second scholar in the program from Philadelphia.

Traveling to high school from the West Coast was a big step for Felicia, but the new 9-10th grade says Andover High and ABC make it worthwhile. “It’s a big change but I’m getting along with everyone and I like my classes and teachers.

Felicia, an incoming senior, experience the thrill of a long journey during her first year at Andover High School. She especially enjoys World Civilization class and Project Challenge class, which builds her confidence.

Laura is a KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) middle-school graduate, enjoying her new school, too. “World Civ” is also one of her favorites, and she has joined the Freshman Board of Directors and Gay-Straight Alliance.

The new scholars set off to a good start at Villanova University and Ithaca College.

Graduates enter Villanova, Ithaca College
The three ABC scholars who graduated in the spring from Andover High School are now hitting the books at college and trying out new experiences.

Tallulah Jackson is off to a good start at Villanova University. “I LOVE Villanova,” she writes. She also plans to return to Andover during the summer to visit her host family, Beth Clough, Steve Jungmann and sons Noah, 3½, and Jake, 1½, who were immediate hits with the girls.

They succeed Sally and Brian O’Rourke. Andover A Better Chance thanks them for all they contributed during their two years as RDS. Sally is still in regular contact with the scholars as an Andover High School counselor.

Resident assistant Paige Bonito has joined the staff of live-in tutor/teacher. Returning as the other RAs are Amber Edwards and Joanna McAvity.

The new resident directors bring valuable experiences to their new roles. Laura grew up in Groton, Massachusetts, graduated from Emerson College and recently worked at two schools for teenagers with special needs. Jean, a native of Los Angeles who graduated from Sound Master Audio/Video Institute and attended UC Irvine, has wide experience in film/move production, sales and management.

The brand of college professors, she enjoys tutoring the scholars. Andrea and Jon met while they worked in the entertainment industry in LA.

The two hoped to find a resident-supervisor position linked to education because Andover plans to begin work for a master’s in special education in the spring. When they learned about the ABC job, Laura said, “This is it!”

“Surprising eight–teen–age girls is a ton of responsibility,” she added, but like all RAs, her challenge.

After getting acquainted for a couple of months, the RDS are settling in with the ABC scholars. “There’s never a dull moment. They are eight distinct personalities,” Jon said. “Even better, all they have taken to our boys.”

Residents director: “This is it!”
Five new faces await the scholars when they arrive at the ABC.
Some summer lessons settle

New scholars settle in

Say it to Felicia Ross and Laura Molina, students who became A Better Chance scholars and 9th-graders at Andover High School this fall.

Felicia comes from across the country in Anaheim, California. Laura becomes the second scholar in the program in Philadelphia.

Traveling to high school from the West Coast was a big step for Felicia, but the new 9th-grader says Andover High and ABC make it worthwhile. “It’s a big change but I’m getting along with everyone and I like my classes and teachers.

She especially enjoys World Civilization class and Project Challenge, a team-building exercise in gym. Trained in ballet, she is excited that Andover ABC has matched her up with a local dance program after school. Meanwhile, she has been pulling her weight in a sport that’s new to her: crew.

Laura, a KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) middle-school graduate, is enjoying her new school, too. “World Civ” is also one of her favorites, and she has joined the Freshman Board of Directors and City-Sprint Alliance.

Although both 9th-graders are a bit young to plan for careers, Laura wants to learn more about being a doctor, lawyer or bi-lingual translator (English, Spanish and sign language). “My father taught me that they always will be needed,” she added.

Laura is fluent in Spanish and both girls have joined Amigos Unidos at the high school. In fact, one of their goals is to visit Puerto Rico one day.

The three ABC scholars who graduated in the spring are hitting the books at college and heading for Villanova University. “I LOVE Villanova,” she writes. She also enjoys World Civilization class and Project Challenge, a team-building exercise in gym. Trained in ballet, she is excited that Andover ABC has matched her up with a local dance program after school. Meanwhile, she has been pulling her weight in a sport that’s new to her: crew.

Felicia Ross, an incoming student experienced Life at a camp during summer in the UK. During her time there, she learned new skills, made new friends and had a great time. “I learned to be more comfortable when performing on stage,” she explained.

What’s more, she took lessons on the trumpet, African drums and — a new experience — the piano. She also sampled life in a college dorm.

Overall “I really enjoyed meeting and getting to know new people with different cultures,” she noted.

Turtle Bay is off to a good start at Villanova University. “I LOVE Villanova,” she writes. She also enjoys World Civilization class and Project Challenge, a team-building exercise in gym. Trained in ballet, she is excited that Andover ABC has matched her up with a local dance program after school. Meanwhile, she has been pulling her weight in a sport that’s new to her: crew.

Alexis Singh and Ashley Baker ended up accepting offers to attend Ithaca College and are roommate.
President’s message: (Continued from page 1)

Two Andover couples and their children have volunteered to host the two ABC scholars. Catherine Giles St. Clair and Scott St. Clair have welcomed into their home Felix Reyes and Nancy Bergin and Philip Green have become hosts of Khaneisha White and Shanygne Akins. They have a lot of interesting destinations on their schedule. Felix, who is 11, and Khaneisha, who is 15, are excited to enjoy the life of a student in Massachusetts.

Catherine Giles St. Clair, an educational psychologist and aerobic-dance instructor, said she and her husband, a biotech company manager, welcomed the role because “it seemed to be an opportunity to give back to the community.”

Nancy Bergin, her husband and their children, Hadley, 16, and Shanygne, 10, offered to welcome an Andover A Better Chance scholar in their family life because, as Nancy put it, “We felt we wanted to do something that involved all of us.”

Nancy and her husband hosted their scholar, Felix Reyes, as he attended the Paige Conservatory of Dance. He passed his first ballet level and plans to focus this winter on her true passion for martial arts, having co-founded the Martial Arts Club at AHS and is also in the Asian American Club.

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Fall 2009

(continued in side)

Andover worker with former ABC scholar Felicia Reyes and Scott Stecher have welcomed into their home Felix Reyes and Nancy Bergin and Philip Green have become hosts of Khaneisha White and Shanygne Akins. They have a lot of interesting destinations on their schedule. Felix, who is 11, and Khaneisha, who is 15, are excited to enjoy the life of a student in Massachusetts.

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