Living in Color

All seven ABC students joined forces this fall to bring a ground-breaking new organization to Andover High School: the Living in Color club. Their reason: “Because living life is living in color,” explains an enthusiastic Amani Bing-Way. Their goal is to provide an opportunity for open discussion about racial awareness, to encourage informed dialogue about racism, classism and all other forms of bias, and to break down the barriers of supposed “color blindness.”

In addition to the Living in Color club, each of our students is actively honing her talents and skills through a wide range of AHS and community opportunities. Amani is now the child-care coordinator for the Gracepoint Community Church. Delaina Clarke-Campbell, also a junior, earned the role of Abuela Claudia in the high school’s fall musical production, “In the Heights.” She’s also active in Show Choir, Medical Club and Model U.N.

Junior Nilda Vega is in her third year as a member of the highly selective Schola Choir, the most advanced group of the Treble Chorus of New England. Elise Cabrera, a sophomore, joins housemates Delaina and Jenni Nguyen in Show Choir. Elise is also pursuing volunteer opportunities with the Special Needs club. Jenni, also a sophomore, is the third of our students in the highly talented Show Choir. She is also a member of the AHS Gay Straight Alliance.

Ninth-grader Skye Padovani is participating in Andover Vocal Music’s Cabaret and also following her artistic passion by joining the photography club. She hopes to volunteer at Homefront Farm, a local organization for people with disabilities.

Olamide Olayinka, a native of Nigeria, now calls the Bronx home. At AHS, she has joined the Nothin’ But Treble women’s show choir. She also landed a part in the Show Choir’s fall musical, “In the Heights.” At this point, Olamide considers herself a math person and is taking honors algebra. While her mother would like her to go into medicine, she is considering becoming a psychologist or social worker. She adds that she really is enjoying the sisterhood of the ABC House.

ABC’s newest students

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Typical of a 14-year-old, she is considering many future goals, from owning a small tattoo business to becoming an author. She publishes original poetry and fan fiction on wattpad.com, a literary website, where one of her fan fiction stories has 17,700 reads.

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President’s view

During a recent fall holiday, the students and several board members toured local college campuses, including my alma mater, Wellesley College. On the walk through beautiful surroundings, the curious questions from each student reminded me of how unique each is in her potential field of study and interest. The juniors were narrowing down what they seek in a college experience. The freshmen wondered why they were there, since they are still figuring out Andover in a college experience. The freshmen were thoughtfully selected from thousands of other candidates to be part of the Andover program and will join over 14,000 alumni nationally when they graduate.

We volunteers come to ABC through an ever-expanding network of friends and family. Through our work together, we build friendships and are co-laborers in this effort of love. We commit our volunteer and financial resources, and the program couldn’t survive without both. Our Board of Directors kicked off the year with a renewal workshop to rekindle their commitment, examine business processes and revisit strategic goals for a sustainable future.

The group remarked on how well the community continues to provide support as tutors, healthcare providers, property managers, and in so many other roles.

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There have been several moments when I truly felt blessed from having a host daughter, but Bergey, we did our best to guide Justene on what she wanted, she pursues it until she finds out what she wants. I think ABC’s got it right,” says Julie Childs, president of Andover ABC. “We start very early; we ideally begin with the motivated students who apply early and commit to the program, each destined for the right balance of academic interest, right academics, enrichment, and operating their facility in line with available resources.

Planning has begun to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our program. A remarkable number of people have shared the passion and education gap facing smart, motivated students from underperforming schools in America. A Better Chance of Andover helps pave the way for the right balance of academic interest, right academics, enrichment, and operating their facility in line with available resources.

The anniversary outreach brings up interesting discussions of societal change over the years but reminds us of why A Better Chance remains steadfastly relevant today. The program creates access to academic and enrichment opportunities — the rest is up to the motivated students who apply and commit to the program, each destined to her own greatness.

It was finally time to focus on graduation. “I think ABC’s got it right,” says Julie Childs when discussing the program’s strategy for developing the most promising and authentic of the applicants and then supporting the scholars through what can be a very intense process. “We start very early; we ideally begin with our freshmen. Our students need to be taking the most challenging courses that they can manage and participating in extra-curricular activities, internships and jobs to get a flavor of the world.”

ABC also plans to harness the deep knowledge of board member Linda Griffin, Phillips Academy’s assistant head for equity and inclusion, to seek out resources for learning about diversity in admissions.

Says Nosiff: “We need to find the colleges that really prioritize diversity — and are willing to pay up for it.”

On May 1, Fatouma sent a deposit to a small liberal arts college in upstate New York that she felt comfortable, if not elated, to attend. (Its financial aid offer felt short of her need.) A week later, she was riding home after basketball-related knee surgery with ABC host mom Gaby Nosiff, who has yelled phone life with “Lancaster PA.”

Nosiff recalls shaking Fatouma out of her post-op sleep. The Franklin & Marshall admissions officer on the line extended an offer. After a few nerve-wracking days, Fatouma got the news that she would also get a full-ride financial aid package.

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Resident Assistants
President Emeritus
Diane Costagliola
Donna Crowther
Kelsey Crowther
Kate Margolese
Scholars’ Hosts
Carlos Cedeño
Cynthia Marsh
Karen Spinale
Vice President
Lisa Maué
Secretary
President
Co-Treasurers
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With a deposit in hand, Fatouma could finally get back to her schoolwork. “On May 1, I finished my AP Calculus and a French project. I’m excited to get some rest before going back to school,” she said.

Fatouma is high on a steep learning curve. She has already completed several weeks of classes, including her first genetics exam and labs, and a finance exam. She is also participating in a peer mentoring program, where she is paired with an upperclassman who helps her navigate the college experience. “I feel supported by my mentor, who is very understanding and patient,” she says.

Fatouma is excited about the new opportunities that college will bring her. “I’m looking forward to meeting new people, being on my own, and exploring my interests,” she says. “I’m also grateful for the support of my host family and the ABC Program.”

Fatouma’s story is just one of many that illustrate the impact of the ABC Program. Since its inception in 1999, ABC has helped over 150 students like Fatouma achieve their academic goals and beyond. The program creates access to academic, enrichment, and Operating opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. It is a testament to the power of education and mentorship in shaping the lives of young people.

The ABC Program is committed to supporting its students every step of the way. From selecting the right college to navigating the college experience, ABC provides a comprehensive support system. “We start very early; we ideally begin working with students when they are considering college,” says President Nancy Vogler. “We help them with the整个 college process, from selecting the right college to applying and attending.”

Thank you, volunteers
The following donated significant time to ABC:
Dr. Mike Vogler, healthcare
Dr. Anthony Broccoli, health care
Todd Berberian and Dr. Charlene Clynn of Andover Eye Care
Lizanne Ciafardini, tutor
Lauren Brown, tutor
Bruce Letwin, tutor
Reed Valaile, tutor/ handym an
Michael Pierce, CPA

NewsletteTeam: Lynn Eisenberry, writer
DS Design Studio, design
Kirkwood Direct, printing

Visit us on Facebook
Alumna earns MD
“I’ve learned over the years if you accept that nothing comes easy, then life is happier,” says Dr. Vanessa Monroy Cahas, AHS’04.

This wisdom—to-live-by has served the ABC alumna well. Cahas currently is doing her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at the Detroit Medical Center after earning an MD from the University of Rochester School of Medicine in May. She is a 2008 graduate of Colgate University.

Cahas has another milestone under her belt as well: her first marathon, which she completed in March. In October she completed a half-marathon—after pulling an all-night shift, no less. She plans to run a full marathon again in March with goals of fundraising for charity and trying for a new personal record.

“I got into running during my years before med school,” she recalls. “It’s my means of finding relief and re-centering.”

Arrivals and departures
ABC of Andover welcomes Carlos Cedeño, Julie Ireland Childs, Lori Barsalou and Lisa Maué to its Board of Directors.

Cedeño, of North Andover, has a long association with ABC. A graduate of ABC’s Longmeadow Mass., program, he worked in our national program for several years. He and his wife, Ruth, also are resident directors of the Winchester program. Today he is the director of the Andover program and keeps it vibrant today.

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“Says Nosiff. “We need to find the colleges that really prioritize diversity – and are willing to pay up for it.”

“A huge thank you to recently retired board members:
Arlene Hawkins, treasurer for four years; Sophia Dreyfus, treasurer; Dot McGinley and Toby Coltin O’leary.

Alumni view
(continued from pg. 1)
(continued from page 1)

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 smart, 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 them 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. Many have gone on to get graduate degrees and become leaders in their professions and communities.

Giving back in the ABC family
Jan Dowe, an ABC graduate in the 1990’s, and his wife, Allison Reilly (right), were ABC hosts to Justene Salomon, Sacred Heart ’15.

High School, dropping her off for the first time her freshman year, and seeing her receive a degree from Sacred Heart. And that perseverance is continuing with Justene, she is “giving it back” working at the Department of Social Services in her hometown.

Jan Dowe, AHS ’84, was on the ABC Board of Directors in 2006-09. Later, he and wife Allison Reilly were ABC host parents. Here they look back:

Today, the college process is a complex myriad of determining what you want, fine tuning schools based on your criteria, filling out the Common App, wading through the process of financial aid, and ultimately making the right choice. I don’t think the student at Andover High School today. Forget about the academic pressure – to be considered at a competitive school, you have to not only take challenging classes, but you need to balance that with a combination of community service, clubs, athletics, employment and leadership positions.

A Better Chance of Andover helps pave the way for its scholars’ college success. When I was in the program, it was the support of many that helped me get to where I am today. Without the encouragement of my host parents, Mark & Marca Jaffe, I would not have pushed myself academically, and without the fortitude of Dick Collins, I would have never participated in sports (which ultimately led to an academic/ athletic scholarship at Holy Cross).

So when our host daughter, Justene Salomon, needed guidance on her college process, Allison and I began the journey of navigating through College 101. Today, for the ABC student, there is no early decision process. Choosing a college calls for the right balance of academic interest, right type of college and receiving the right financial aid package. With the help of her fantastic guidance counselor at her school, Kirsten Berger, we did our best to guide Justene on what would be “the right” choice.

In the end, justene chose Sacred Heart University in 2010. She worked hard to get in. One thing we have learned about Justene is that when she really wants something, she pursues it until she gets it. Even though a New York state school would have been a financial commitment, she wanted Sacred Heart, and she made it work. Her perseverance is something that we whole family admires and aspires to be like.

There have been several moments when I truly felt blessed from having a host daughter, but there are three that have stood out the most: seeing her graduate from my alma mater, Andover
Living in Color

All seven ABC students joined forces this fall to bring a ground-breaking new organization to Andover High School: the Living in Color club.

Their reason: “Because living life is living in color,” explains an enthusiastic Amari Bing-Way. Their goal is to provide an opportunity for open discussion about cultural awareness, to encourage informed dialogue about racism, classism, and all other forms of bias, and to break down the barriers of supposed “color blindness.”

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Ninth-grader Skye Padovan is participating in Andover Vocal Music’s Cabaret and also following her artistic passion by joining the photography club. She hopes to volunteer at Ironstone Farm, a local organization for people with disabilities.

Olamide Olayinka, also in the ninth grade, performed with Delaina in the Andover High School fall musical “In the Heights.” She is the fourth of our students in the Show Choir. Last year Show Choir traveled to Branson, Missouri to compete in Fame Branson. We wish them well on their chorale pursuits this year.

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ABC’s newest students

It was mid-May, 2014. In the homes of most AHS seniors, checks had been mailed to secure spots at college, and graduation celebrations were being planned. At the ABC house, however, only one of the program’s three seniors knew which college she would attend in the fall. The two other seniors were still in admissions limbo that has become all too common for highly qualified students of color seeking financial aid.

“The wait-list season is volatile for us,” states Gaby Nossiff, college mentor and ABC board member. “The colleges recognize that our girls are extremely qualified, but admission decisions can be complicated by financial need. Often, the schools need extra time for their decisions.”

One of the important roles served by ABC’s volunteers is to guide and steady the program’s seniors through this crucial but stressful stage of applying to colleges.

Back in September 2014, the three seniors were gearing up for their final year: honing college short lists, visiting campuses, attending multicultural recruiting weekends, seeking assistance from ABC and AHS counselors.

One of the most challenging and powerful tasks is the personal essay. “These girls have such a story, but sometimes we can’t comfortably verbalize it,” Julie Ireland Childs, professional college coach and ABC board member, explains. She notes that writing the essay requires a deep trust and a lot of courage. But, she adds, telling one’s story often becomes an essential part of not only the college process but also of the maturation and change in perspective while living four years in Andover, a culture different from the one from which the scholars came.

By January, all three seniors had hit the send button on a minimum of 10 school applications. They also spent considerable extra time tackling the complicated FAFSA (federal financial aid) forms, along with submitting any other necessary supplements and documents.

Then came the Big Wait while their peers at AHS began to receive envelopes, thick and thin.

Senior Ariel Leachman was first at ABC to receive word. She was admitted to both New York University and Boston University, early action. However, an offer from the Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Scholars Program at Barnard College excised her the most: a full-ride financial package; Ariel was done.

Fatoumata Koné received good news from a smattering of colleges but, unlike Ariel, she would need to wait on financial award letters, which often trail admission offers up to 10 days. She had been wait-listed at Franklin & Marshall College, a top choice. Xonatia Lee was also in limbo, waiting to hear from schools and wait-listed at a number of her top choices, including Barnard College.

During a recent fall holiday, the students and several board members then toured local college campuses, including my alma mater, Wellesley College. On the way through beautiful surroundings, the curious questions from each student reminded me of how unique each is in her potential field of study and interest. The juniors were narrowing down what they seek in a college experience. The freshmen wondered why they were there, since they are still figuring out Andover High School.

What is absolutely clear is that these young women share a common goal and clearly have their eyes set on the prize of a college education.

Over my last five years volunteering with ABC of Andover, I’ve looked forward this time of year to seeing our returning students, orienting our new students, and hearing about our alumni. Our three recent graduates are settling in well at Barnard College and Franklin & Marshall College. Our new freshmen were thoughtfully selected from thousands of other candidates to be part of the Andover program and will join over 14,000 alumni nationally when they graduate.

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