

ABC scholars speak out on social issues

ABC of Andover scholars are making a difference by speaking out on issues of social equality. In the last year, they have appeared in several public forums in Andover, carrying a message of sensitivity and inclusion to students and administrators.

In a powerful event last spring at Doherty Middle School, ABC scholars Jenni Nguyen '18, Elise Cabrera '18, and Mafoudia "Dia" Keita '20 shared their experiences of prejudice. They and other members of the Diversity Club at Andover High School explained to DMS students how it feels to be marginalized by hurtful comments and actions and encouraged students to explore their biases.

The audience of about 90 eighth-grade students soaked up the message of the Diversity Club members. "I realized how much racism is still happening today when they told their stories," commented DMS student Elizabeth Anderson.

DMS English teacher Ashley Pappalardo had invited Diversity Club members to speak before her classes began to read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the story of a girl growing up in the racist 1930s. The April event was so successful that Pappalardo wants to repeat the event this academic year.

"I was impressed with the courage and grace that the Diversity Club displayed while discussing such personal topics," Pappalardo said. Club members fielded questions with "poise, patience, and understanding," she added.

Dia shared that she found it "really refreshing that students came in with an open mind about what they could learn from our experiences." She said the event was "a good opportunity to influence young people who shape how society is."

In another event, before the Andover School Committee last February, Jenni and Elise spoke about social tensions at AHS. Andover Public Schools Superintendent Sheldon Berman praised the students for their courage and integrity. He called the open discussion, "a model of what we wish we were doing in society at large."



ABC scholar Dia Keita with DMS English teacher Ashley Pappalardo

The Diversity Club is poised to make a bigger statement. Recently, a record 65 AHS students said they want to join. Club co-presidents Dia and Leannette Garcia '20 have also enlisted fellow scholars Abigail Shugert '21, Kijari Boyd, '22, and Larissa Cardine '22 to become members.

With more students, "we can maximize our impact on the school community and the town," stated Jorge Allen, the club's sponsor and ABC supporter. Allen, an AHS educator, also serves on the APS Cultural Climate Committee to welcome students of different cultures and ethnicities. *By Susan Greco*

President's Message: Making a difference - with impressive results



Gabrielle Hager Nossiff

Fifty years strong, ABC of Andover is poised for continued success in its ever important mission to open doors for academically talented students from underserved and historically underrepresented backgrounds. As the disparity in poverty rates and racial segregation in our nation's schools continues to worsen, our town helps to bridge inequities by embracing this small but powerful program.

Once deemed "Andover's radical educational experiment," ABC of Andover is now the longest running public school program in the nation, with 142 alumni whose life trajectory was dramatically altered from having had the opportunity to attend Andover High School. **Our alumni graduate from 4-year colleges at rates far exceeding national averages** and consistently beat other statistical odds stacked against them. Many alumni hold influential positions in business, medicine, academia, law, international relations and the

clergy. Their echoing accolades for ABC of Andover's role in propelling their success are heartfelt.

As an all-volunteer organization that makes every donation work directly for its scholars, our town's ABC program has sustained a model to be emulated. In every way that community members contribute, whether with time or financial resources, the impact is immediate, direct and meaningful, producing a track record of stunning results.

Every ABC success story involves a courageous and hard working young student who is backed by a generous town and supported by scores of invaluable volunteers and donors. We at ABC embark on our second half century mindful of the challenges ahead, with college admissions increasingly competitive and tuition spiking at unprecedented rates, but with a swell of pride for all we have accomplished, a driving passion for our continued mission, and a steady confidence in our future.



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A Better Chance of Andover receives 4-year \$20,000 Cummings Foundation grant

\$100K for 100
Cummings Foundation

ABC of Andover is one of 100 local nonprofits to receive grants of \$100,000 each through Cummings Foundation's "\$100K for 100" program. During a competitive review process, ABC was chosen from a total of 597 applicants! Many thanks to Cummings Foundation for this grant to support enrichment programs, build alumni programming, and help fund room and board over 5 years.

Welcome our new Resident Assistants

This fall, ABC welcomes Tatiana Tway and Katarina Curtin as our Resident Assistants. Both bring strong skills and board life experience to their residential roles. Tatiana, in her third year at New England Law, hails from Texas. Her Delaware Valley University pre-law background in the sciences will be a great help during student study hours!



Katarina, a former ABC scholar at Brooks School, graduated from Colby College. She currently works as a Technology Specialist at Timberland Regional School District in NH as she works toward her Master's degree in education at Lesley University. Curtin is excited to give back to ABC and encourage the academic and personal goal development of young women. Please welcome Tatiana and Katarina to our residence staff this year.



Thank you, volunteers

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Thank you for the many ways that the Andover community reached out to support our scholars throughout the gas emergency. Special thanks and gratitude to Susan Connolly for managing ABC's response to this crisis.

New Resident Directors have deep ABC experience

There are no two people better acquainted with the A Better Chance program and how to run the dorm than Carlos and Ruth Cedeño! Carlos has lived every aspect of the program from being an ABC scholar himself (at Longmeadow ABC), to working at the national ABC office formerly located in Boston, to being Co-Resident Director of the Winchester ABC program with his wife, Ruth. In addition, Carlos has been a member of ABC of Andover's Board of Directors since 2015. These experiences have provided Carlos and Ruth the ability to provide a smooth transition to new leadership in the dormitory.

The Cedeños have a long history working with youth. In Ecuador, Ruth worked as a high school Assistant Dean and taught science. Carlos worked in a variety of youth counseling and advisory roles since graduating from Tufts University. Subsequent to his work as a Placement Counselor for the Lawrence Family Development Charter School, Carlos has served as Dean of Students for Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School in Lawrence.





Board gains new president, members

ABC of Andover welcomes Joyce Lyles, Dave Meldrum, Monalisa Shroff, Anne Wakelin, and Bonita Zahorik to its 20-member Board of Directors. Also, Gaby Nossiff, an attorney, stepped into her new role as President of ABC. She succeeds Susan Connolly, who remains on the Executive Committee as advisor. Gaby and her husband John hosted ABC alumna Fatouma Koné AHS '15 and has passionately spearheaded the Academic Committee for the past few years. We look forward to a wonderful tenure with Gaby as she delves into her presidential role. As Dan Hall retires from the Board, we offer a special thank you for his many contributions to ABC, including his 17-year leadership role as newsletter editor and Development and Communications committee member.

Passing of original alumnus, past president

Ellis Rowe, one of the initial students in A Better Chance of Andover when it opened in 1967, recently died at age 65. He graduated from Andover High School in 1970, when ABC of Andover was all-male, and his later successes demonstrate the professional heights a student of color from limited means can reach when given the kind of chance that ABC offers.

A Dartmouth College graduate, Rowe's career led him to a division of Mars Corp., where he rose to group president, retiring 30 years later. Ellis was also president of the Black Alumni of Dartmouth Association. In 2016, the Brownsville Community in Miami, Florida honored him with the 2016 Home Grown Achievers Award.

Sadly, we share the news of Doug Mitchell's death on July 31 after a long illness. Doug, who served as ABC of Andover's 7th president, was particularly happy during the 50th anniversary celebrations to talk and laugh with the ABC alumni who were scholars during his tenure on the board of directors.

Two new scholars join ABC

Larissa Cardine

If you see a young lady with a smile on her face offering her positivity to everyone around her, you probably encountered Larissa Cardine, one of our new freshmen who hails from Chicago.

Friendship is of primary importance to her, and her sense of humor helps her seek out the fun of life. She hopes her future involves fashion design entrepreneurship, and she weaves music into her life regularly which helps feed her creativity and achieve her goals.

Larissa loves to learn, and her future plans include college and perhaps the study of law. With her upbeat attitude and unique personality, she is a welcome addition to the ABC House.



Kijari Boyd

An impressive vocabulary? These three words describe a delightful addition to the ABC House—Kijari Boyd, a young lady who calls Atlanta, Georgia, her home.

Kijari's interests include gymnastics, cheering, dance, and mainstream music. A voracious reader, she surrounds herself with books, and her vocabulary shows it identifying herself as a pescatarian, amiable and diligent. AHS is a good fit for Kijari, a friendly teen positively impressing her teachers.

She describes herself as a goofy in a good way because she is joyful and loves to laugh.



First-year scholars meet new ABC host families

Stephanie Sparling Williams, along with husband Corey and dog Roman, welcome Larissa Cardine to their family. The Williams are eager to introduce Larissa to hiking and "Urban Trekking" - visits to galleries and museums, festivals and fairs, live music, road trips and camping.

Jacqueline and Brian Pitts and are thrilled to host Kijari Boyd, also a first-year scholar. Kijari is joining their family of three children and a dog - Emme is a sophomore at Andover High, Drew is in Middle School, Avery is in Elementary school. Their dog, Max, joined the family last summer. They are looking forward to sharing their active lifestyle with Kijari including exposure to Boston sports teams, swimming in their pool, and family events with their large, extended families.



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Spring graduates advance to college

Jenni Nguyen (FL) is settling into life in Chicago, where she is enrolled in the Honors College at DePaul University. A passionate community organizer, Jenni has already joined several student groups to engage in social justice activism in her new city.

Elise Cabrera (NYC) (on right) is a student at SUNY Potsdam. In addition to classes, she plans to continue multicultural awareness work and participate in the school's renowned music program.



Heat, gas restored

The gas is back on!!! The new ranges are ready for cooking and the heating systems are keeping things toasty.

Thus read the joyous message from our venerable House Manager, Susan Connolly, on November 19. Heat and gas have finally been restored after nine long weeks! We are celebrating this news with Thanksgiving and gratitude. We thank our town's leaders, Columbia Gas, and the electricians, plumbers, and inspectors for their tireless efforts to restore the ABC house to a fully functioning dorm residence for our scholars and staff. We also want to thank our host families for stepping in with a warm place to stay during the initial crisis, as well as the many friends and neighbors who offered hot showers until an electric water heater could be installed.

Special thanks go to Susan Connolly for shepherding us through this crisis. Susan was our response team leader, monitoring the alerts provided by the Town of Andover and Columbia Gas, and working with all of the installation teams on site. Most notably, Susan came up with interim solutions to keep our staff and students warm, to provide hot water, and to create innovative methods of cooking. Susan was our anchor throughout!

It's been a long road from that first evening of evacuation to the Senior Center/Youth Center. Cheers to ABC of Andover; we weathered the crisis thanks to a multitude of help and support!

What We Do

Mission: *Closing the education gap for financially needy students in American society.* We bring motivated students of color from underperforming schools to live in Andover, where they attend Andover High School to better prepare for college. Thanks to donor generosity, we provide these scholars with a house on Main Street and a complete network of support and love.

Enrollment: 7 scholars currently from New York, Chicago, Atlanta, and California.

Results: All 142 graduates over our 50 years have entered high-level colleges and universities.



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