

ABC Scholars

A BETTER CHANCE IN LOWER MERION NEWSLETTER



LOWER MERION

A BETTER CHANCE

Opening the door to greater educational opportunities since 1963.

Fall 2011

Mission Statement

ABC-LM offers a challenging educational opportunity to academically talented and economically disadvantaged students who are determined to succeed.

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Support ABC

ABC in Lower Merion is entirely supported by contributors from the local community.

Please send your tax-deductible donations to:

ABC IN LM
P. O. BOX 213
ARDMORE, PA 19003

From Inner City NY to Wall Street

■ ABC paves the route to success

Edwin DeLeon, ABCLM '06 loved his major, international relations, at Syracuse University but when the recession hit, he was upset from seeing that people in his major were not getting jobs when they graduated. He decided to reevaluate his goals. In Spring 2010 he went to a job fair, and when a recruiter told him they were only looking for people in finance and technology, he managed to talk and charm her into considering him for an internship anyway. At the end of a summer internship at JP Morgan Chase, he was offered a job when he graduated. After graduating from Syracuse in May 2011, he started work as an asset management analyst in June 2011 at JP Morgan Chase and is very pleased with his job.

When Edwin arrived at ABC as a fourteen-year-old he was stunned to realize he was only one of two Dominican's at Lower Merion High School, the other, another ABC student. So, right from the first being at ABC required him to function outside the comfort zone of his life in a Dominican neighborhood in NYC. He says that being at Lower Merion where students were college oriented and really motivated changed the kind of colleges he considered.

Of his ABC experience he says, "It opened up my horizons and broadened me educationally and culturally." He cites ABC with lots of help with college aspirations, and with the whole application process and in getting financial aid. He feels very fortunate for being able to attend Syracuse and for his new job.

Other Alumni News

Richard Fernandes '04 graduated from The LeBow College of Business at Drexel University in 2009 and is employed as a BMW Sales Consultant at BMW of the Main Line in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

Jonathan Viera '07 graduated from Bowdoin College in May with a double major in environmental policy and Spanish. He is employed as a bi-lingual benefit assistant with a reinsurance company in Portland, ME.

Jon Huang '09 is majoring in chemical engineering at the University of Connecticut where he is in the honors program. He recently took the MCAT's.

Graduating a Leader

Najee Williams graduated from Lower Merion and our program last June and is currently enrolled as a freshman at the University of Maryland. Before he graduated he sat for an interview about his four years at ABC. He said that being here meant taking responsibility for his education and becoming a leader not a follower. He was widely recognized in our program for being a leader and good role model for the younger boys. He felt the whole process would have been different if he had stayed at home. Here he met a lot of people who were here to help, including his academic advisor and host parents. Najee played football three of his years here and ran track – sprinting and doing the high jump.

UNITED WAY

If you are considering making a donation to United Way, please remember ABC-LM's donor number is 1227.

●
Dreams
come true
with ABC

The Phil Selim Memorial Fund

Phil Selim, an assistant principal of Lower Merion High School for thirteen years, joined our board when he retired. During the three years he chaired our house relations committee he left a remarkable, caring legacy. Among many other contributions, Phil believed strongly in the benefit of group activities for the ABC students and arranged and participated in many of them. Diagnosed with amyloidosis in late 2009, he died the following spring. His family graciously listed our ABC as one of the organizations for donations in his memory. We have kept those contributions separate from our regular operating funds and use them to fund group events for the ABC scholars.

A Special Trip

The ABC staff organized several group events with the students last year and ended the year with a wonderfully successful trip to Wildwood, New Jersey, over Memorial Day weekend. The three staff tutors, board member, **Nancy Bray**, and all of the boys came back with glowing reports about how much fun they had. Several boys felt having such a good time together brought everyone closer. We used money from the Phil Selim Memorial Fund to pay for the trip, a use we are sure Phil would approve of.

Exciting Addition to The ABC Family

One of the duties of the ABC staff is to promote a family atmosphere. Resident Director **Paul Elcock** and his wife **Jacey**, both of whom are lawyers, took it to the next level with the birth of their daughter, **Grace Vivien**, in June. Beautiful little Grace has a houseful of teenaged boys gaga over her.

News of the Current Students

Senior, **Jamieson Avillan** from Brooklyn, said being in ABC is positive but there are challenges. He likes that there is support from the staff at the house and from board members. What is best is hanging out with the other ABC guys. Board member, **Diane Sweeney**, took Jamieson to visit several colleges over the summer. Jamieson is on the varsity football team at LM this year.

Ugo Obieshi, a senior from Bridgeport, CT, said that being here is more challenging academically than he would have had at home. And, "I've

done things I wouldn't have otherwise: paint balling, go carting, snowboarding." Ugo stayed with his host parents, **Bev and John Keith**, over the summer and took honors physics at Harriton High School. The Keiths took Ugo along with their son, **George**, on an extensive college tour.

Wayne Phillips Gelley, a junior, says ABC has been pretty great. "There's always support – not just on academics but like an extension of my family. I can go to someone who is not just a tutor, but also a friend.

Stefon Desouza, a sophomore from Brooklyn, said the boys in the ABC house are really friendly so it wasn't bad at all to adjust to being here.

Davendra Sasenarine, a sophomore, found the biggest challenge last year was being away from family and doing everything for himself such as his laundry and getting himself up in the morning.

Freshman **Layvon McClean** from Harlem said LMHS is very big but that being at ABC is like having a lot of brothers around and they are very friendly. "Having the baby [Grace] around is very good!"

Yuejay Reeves, also a freshman, is from Washington, D.C. He finds being at ABC comfortable. "The tutors are very caring and Paul and family are welcoming. They let me play with the baby." Yuejay is playing freshman football.

We are very fortunate that most of our wonderful staff continued on this year. Resident Director Paul Elcock is starting his third year in that position and his seventh with the program. Tutor **Isabel Clark**, a graduate of Haverford, starts her third year with us. She taught English in a charter middle school in Wilmington the last two years and is now working toward a Ph.D. in English Literature at Temple. **Marissa Franklin**, also in her third year, worked in a preschool last year. She is currently enrolled in a masters degree and teacher certification program in elementary education at Cabrini College. Marissa, herself a former ABC scholar, is known as our program's mother hen.

Isabel says, "The job is great! It's wonderful to come home to a houseful of people." What Marissa likes best is "being with the boys, seeing how fun they are and young at the house, even if they are 'cool' at school."

Our newest tutor, **Eric Chesterton**, graduated from Haverford last May with a major in Philosophy. There he ran track and cross-country. He joined our staff as a tutor in September. He is currently enrolled in a program at Bryn Mawr

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ABC
Scholars
make
it happen



● Dreams come true with ABC

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND TRIP TO WILDWOOD, NJ

College to be certified to teach high school social studies.

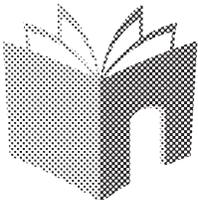
Our Rhodes Scholar

No, we haven't yet produced a Rhodes Scholar among our ABC students, but we may have helped a staff member get one. **Andrew Lanham** graduated from Haverford College in May 2010 and joined our staff as a tutor the following September. Majoring in philosophy and English, he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa his junior year. He co-captioned the track team and was an Eagle Scout. At his interview for the Rhodes, Andrew spent more than half of it describing the weekend he helped Jaimeson Avillan construct a catapult for his physics class. Andrew feels that

having the ABC tutoring job helped put his application over the top. We were delighted that Andrew, in town before leaving for Oxford, dropped by to see everyone at the Fall ABC welcome back party.

Thanks to the efforts of **Gladwyne Boy Scout Troop 181**, the ABC house got an outdoor spruce up and a brand new in-ground basketball hoop installed. **Sean Bray**, for his Eagle Project, led the effort, which included more than 100 collective hours by 40+ scouts and their parents.

Several members of the extended ABC family generously donated school supplies, totaling more than \$800, for our ABC scholars for the start of school.



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