A Better Chance

Opening the door to greater educational opportunities since 1963.

SPRING 2013

A BETTER CHANCE OF NEW CANAAN ▪ 64 LOCUST AVE., NEW CANAAN, CT ▪ WWW.ABCHOUSEOFNC.ORG

President's Message
June 2013

By Jim Slattery

At the end of the school year, I will have completed my 7th year of involvement with the ABC of New Canaan program; initially as a host family, then moving to the Treasurer position and these last two years as President. These years of association with the program have been extremely enjoyable, as I watched the program move forward in so many ways. Following the lead of the last two presidents, Melinda Fager and Melanie Berman, we continued with their initiative of advancing the academic requirements for our ABC Scholars. These initiatives helped to ensure success not only in New Canaan High School, but also as the boys move onto college. We are all extremely proud of how well our scholars have handled the transition to college, and the success that they have and will continue to achieve. We have no doubt that all of our scholars have bright futures ahead of them. Devaun Bovell, our graduating senior, who will be attending Boston College in September, is a perfect example of how the program continues to achieve academic success.

The leadership of the program is transitioning into good hands next year with Mike Curran agreeing to take over the presidency in July. Mike has a lot of great ideas on how to continue to move the program forward. His energy, patience and insightfulness will be extremely helpful as he continues to advance our program.

I would like to thank all the directors, host families, friends of the board, resident directors, tutors, cooks, and our local supporters for all the assistance that they have provided me during my tenure as President. Most of all I would like to thank our donors for making the ABC program in New Canaan possible. Without the generosity from the people of New Canaan, we would not have been able to continue to achieve our mission. We aim to provide our scholars the opportunity to get a high quality education and make the most of themselves as citizens. In addition we aim to instill the principles of honesty, integrity and respect that guide our program.

Thank You

Farewell

Sadly, it is time we say good bye to Resident Directors Nora McCarthy and Stuart Weiner after four years of service to ABC of New Canaan. They are moving to Montclair, NJ, to embark on a new adventure. Their children Eli and Maxine will enter first grade and pre-K. Nora will continue to direct Rise, the East Harlem non-profit she founded that trains parents to write about their experiences with the child welfare system. Stuart will continue freelance producing for the Sundance Channel. We are grateful for their four years of dedication to the program and wish them great success and happiness in their future. They have such fond memories of their time in New Canaan, including cooking Thanksgiving dinners, baking Christmas cookies and flan, picnicking at Waveny, playing lazer tag, relaxing at Spa Castle, and watching the boys grow and become confident young men..

Save the Date: Fall Fundraiser, September 28, 2013, Country Club of New Canaan

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Jim Slattery
Treasurer: Jay Braden
Secretary: Michael Murray
Susan Boston
Patty Bratches
Joe Buongiorno
Sally Campbell
Susan Carroll
Michael Curran
Susan Donnelly
Suzanne Einstein
Tom Gerardi
Marianne Grandin
Polly Perkins Johnson
Jim Kucharczyk
Joel Miller
Kelly Newton
Bitsy Richardson
Marylou Salvati
Jeanie Shaw
Charlie Taben
Laura Wilson

HOST FAMILIES

Candace & Michael Curran
Michael & Julie Bossidy
Susan & Michael Donnelly
Tracey & Steve Karl
Margaret Pastel & Steve Hoover
Thea & Robert Ross
Marylou & Mike Salvati

HOST FAMILY COORDINATOR

Susan Donnelly

STAFF

Nora McCarthy – Resident Director
Stuart Weiner – Resident Director
Rishonda Thomas –Tutor
Anna Hughes – Tutor
Beth Jones – Cook

Mike Curran

Mike Curran, the current Activities Director and an Executive Committee member, will be taking over the reins of the ABC Program from Jim Slattery as President. Mike and his wife Candace have been New Canaan residents for almost 23 years and their three sons attended NCHS. They are no strangers to the program as they have been a host family twice, first back in 2005 and most recently to graduating senior Devaun Bovell.

It all began when former President Melinda Fager approached Mike asking if they could step in when a host family had to drop out. While that only lasted a year as the young scholar's family relocated to North Carolina, the Currans were hooked. Later, when their youngest son Sam was solo at home, Devaun joined their family. For the past four years, they have had some great times together.

As Activities Director, Mike has been in charge of events and field trips. Wherever their destination, the ABC boys have visited colleges, taken in a sporting event, toured the historical landmarks and sampled the local cuisine such as Philly cheese steaks!

Mike is proud of the great work that has been done by previous President's and Board's. He has some new ideas brewing, things such as a "Parents Day" in the fall, much like "Parents Weekend" at colleges. He wants the boys, their parents and the Resident Directors to get to know each other on a fun informal basis. He also plans to expand the interaction between the Board and the boys through monthly dinners. Most of all, he is excited about the opportunity to continue ABC's mission of preparing the boys for college and helping them grow into successful young men.

Career Aspirations

By Kwaku Gyasi

TV Broadcasting is something that I love learning about. During my freshman year at New Canaan High School, I took TV Broadcasting as an elective. In my biased opinion, NCHS has one of the best TV Broadcasting departments. I really began to gain an interest in the subject. I love all aspects of venting my creativity--the editing, the filming, and the ability to give people a voice. As a kid, growing up in Bronx, NY, I was never a great artist or a writer. People who have those skills are able to show their creative side in an intellectual way that I've envied because of my lack of talent. With TV Broadcasting, I am able to create my own piece of work. I look at filming as a writer writing a novel, or an artist drawing a masterpiece. People can see my vision and my content clearly.

I also enjoy being able to give people a story. I enjoy filming interviews the most. In my camp there was a cook who had to cook for about 300 people. It is a hard job to please everybody. I decided to interview her to show people how hard it actually is. She was able to have a voice and the audience respected her even more because of it.

I am extremely thrilled about the possibility of going to Syracuse University this summer to take a two week course, Introduction to Film. A wise man once told me, "Follow your first instincts." It wasn't until my freshman year of high school that I was introduced into the concept of this cliché. Now I am coming to an understanding that cliches do contain wisdom. My first instinct is to take advantage of every opportunity presented to me.

Off to College

Devaun Bovell, our graduating senior, is off to Boston College in the fall and planning on running track. He intends to study sport management, or a related field. Devaun has had an incredible academic and athletic career during his four years at New Canaan High School.He consistently made honor roll and excelled in both football and track. In the early years, he participated in football and all along, he ran track. He wrapped up his track career by winning first place in the FCIAC in hurdles and in addition he made all county and all New England. We congratulate Devaun in his accomplishments and wish him well in college and future endeavors.

New Resident Directors

John and Laura Walsh are 20+ year residents of New Canaan and all three of their children have gone thru the high school. Since they are now empty nesters, they are happy to start a new chapter in their lives, by dedicating time and energy to what they feel is a wonderful program in our community.

Please consider making a donation to ABC today.

Check donations should be sent to:
A Better Chance, Inc. of New Canaan,
P.O. Box 355, New Canaan, CT 06840
You can also make a donation online via our secure payments system using your credit card. Go to www.abchouseofnc.org.
Click the Paypal Donate button on our home page. Thank you for your ongoing support!