



A BETTER CHANCE

Opening the door to greater educational opportunities since 1963.

SPRING 2015

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

Excerpts from an MLK sermon

The annual service to honor the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was held on Monday, January 19th at the United Methodist Church in New Canaan. The memorial event is organized by the Interfaith Council of New Canaan and involves members of our local clergy and town government. We captured a few excerpts from our two ABC House seniors, Osaze Wilson and Kwaku Gyasi, as they spoke and offered their reflections on the day.



Osaze Wilson
NCHS Class of 2015

"I understand this is a service to commemorate Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. but I would like to focus on a theory rather than the man. This theory is one that Dr. King put into practice through his message and benevolence. Hate, we know, is a natural human emotion. I like to call it Love's evil cousin. Hate can be characterized as an organization of aggressive impulses directed to a person or group of people. It is composed of habitual bitter feeling and accusatory thought. It's not a long shot for hate to also be considered extra punitive; the hater feels justified in his emotion because of the action of the hated...Overcoming this takes work, takes watchfulness, takes a willingness to be exposed and uncom-

fortable all in the name of setting things right. Martin Luther King Jr. understood that this (doctrine of hate) could be reversed. Just as hate ends in prejudice; King saw that another natural human emotion, love when coupled with tolerance, creates a more powerful opposing force to racism. It becomes: Equality."social relations with others difficult.



Kwaku Gyasi
NCHS Class of 2015

"...On behalf of the boys, I will like to thank you all for your support and help throughout the years. I Have A Dream. Those four words ended up having more significance in American society that anyone could imagine at the time of the speech. Because of people like Dr. King Jr., we are able to live in a society where we can all eat together and sing together and be American together. Because of dedicated people like Dr. King Jr, the ABC community and I are able to live his dream and put ourselves in positions to thrive in American society. I'm able to look at my skin color and see it as an inspiration rather than a limitation. Because of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech, I am able to dream."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President—Mike Curran
- Treasurer—Bob Labbanz
- Secretary—Mike Murray
- Julie Bossidy
- Susan Boston
- Amy Burger
- Candace Curran
- Tracy DuPont
- Susan Donnelly
- Howard Freeman
- Bob Mantilia
- Marylou Salvati
- Marty Shannon
- Mike Turpin
- Arri Weeks
- Laura Wilson

HOST FAMILIES

- Julie & Michael Bossidy
- Tracey & Al Dupont
- Jennifer & Richard Essigs
- Mary & Peter Freiberg
- Courtney & Michael Grigsby
- Margaret Pastel & Steve Hoover
- Thea & Robert Ross
- Marylou & Mike Salvati

HOST FAMILY COORDINATOR

- Tracy Dupont

STAFF

- John and Laura Walsh—Resident Directors
- Tutor—Ellen Berube
- Tutor—Tony Adams
- Cook—Beth Jones

Lighting the Way for ABC New Canaan: Cansam Electric

Our physical property is in constant need of repairs and the normal maintenance associated with weathering our hard winters and eight teenaged boys. The repairs and physical support we receive from our community allow us to retain dollars to support our scholars continuing education and social experiences. This month we celebrate Cansam Electric for providing significant electrical work at no cost, expenses that would divert funds from our core mission.

Founded in 1931 by Canio M. Sanseverino and headquartered in Stamford, CT, Cansam is third-generation family-owned and operated business that has earned a fine reputation for its commitment to providing the highest quality workmanship, reliable customer service along with superior knowledge and experience. Tom Sanseverino, the company's President is a New Canaan resident and a great supporter of ABC New Canaan.

Please Donate to ABC and Help Us Build A Community of Strong Children:

Frederick Douglas once responded to a critic who had cited the lack of personal responsibility as a prime factor in perpetuating poverty. He did not disagree with some of the self-inflicted problems that endure to this day. Instead, he simply shifted focus to the solution: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

As we head into the summer of 2015, we gather around our campfires and across a thousand green fields to watch children, grandchildren, friends and family enjoy the benefits of a life filled with so much love and support structures. At the same time, we are saying goodbye to students we have nurtured and prepared to compete in a hot, crowded world – a world that seems to be accelerating change across every possible industry and geography. Those of us that are closest to ABC, would encourage you to see how your financial and intellectual contributions can be put to work to help a few treasured scholars find their way into roles as leaders and change agents across a generation that will desperately need them. These young men bring perspective, humility, humor, creativity and a strength that will help them face and overcome many of challenges that have broken lesser men.

The return on your investment in ABC New Canaan is measureable and offers a more visible multiple return for a community and for our scholars. Our graduates have graduated from some of the country's finest universities and

gone on to pay back our commitment to them by committing to others. The investment you make today helps build a stronger generation of children and reduce the ranks of broken or underachieving communities. The missing ingredients are empathy and vision – The ability to see the need and to move beyond cynicism to believe that you can still make a difference. Our accomplishments speak louder than our words. The following is a partial roster of universities attended by our students over a period that spans nearly half a century: *Boston College, Boston University, Brown, Colgate, Columbia, Columbia Law School, Cornell, Denison, Georgetown, Hamilton, Harvard, Holy Cross, Lafayette, Lehigh, Northeastern, NYU, Penn State, Quinnipiac, Rutgers, Skidmore, Stanford, St. Lawrence, St. Michaels, Syracuse, Trent State, Tufts University, University of Colorado at Boulder, Union College, University of Connecticut, University of Massachusetts, University of Richmond, University of Rochester, Villanova, Wesleyan and Yale*



Alumni Sound Bites

Postcards from our alumni as they carry their experience, strength and hope with them into universities and on to the workforce.

William Choi – NCHS 1998 – ABC Alumni Liaison, Graduated from Lehigh University 2002

I worked in Investment Banking for 7 years with MKP Capital on their flagship Partners fund. "I'm currently with family owned Commercial Real Estate firm. Live in Manhattan and love exploring the outer-boroughs by bike. My experience in ABC has allowed me to enjoy being outside of my comfort zone and embrace challenges.

The Pura Vida at NCHS held the mobile food packaging event on Saturday, May 31st and Sunday June 1st.



Devaun Bovell, NCHS Class of 2013, Boston College sophomore

I would like to thank my host family, the Currans. They took me in freshman year with open arms, and I quickly became a part of their family. Going on trips or even just going to a movie with them made me feel like New Canaan was a home.



Jelani Alladin, NCHS Class of 2010, NYU Tisch School for the Arts, 2014

I owe a huge part of my success to the A Better Chance foundation, New Canaan High School and the community of New Canaan. There are no amount of thank you's I can say, that will adequately express the amount of gratitude I have for the teachers, guidance counselors, tutors, family, friends, host families and board members that have supported my journey.



President's Letter June 2015

By Mike Curran



Every Spring, the President has the privilege and opportunity to look back over the year and review what has been accomplished.

Accomplishments come in many varieties, but most importantly from the standpoint of our Mission they focus on the graduation of our seniors (Kwaku and Osaze) and their acceptance into quality universities. As I write this, Kwaku has committed to the University of Connecticut and Osaze has committed to George Washington university in Washington DC. Both our seniors have grown tremendously from their freshman year in terms of their capabilities and personalities and we know they will develop further as they pursue their academic careers.

Beyond the achievements of our two graduating seniors, I should note that all the scholars earned Honors or High Honors at least one quarter during the year and some achieved Honors in every quarter. All participated in and often excelled in sports (football, basketball, baseball, track and wrestling) and other extracurriculars. Finally, all of them added to the fabric of New Canaan in terms of community and social service, friendship, and school spirit (yes, they all want to beat Darien in every sport).

It is with some degree of sadness that we say goodbye to Kwaku and Osaze, but is also with a great sense of pride in their accomplishments and the knowledge that they have taken advantage of the Better Chance offered by an ABC program that the town supports so generously.

Michael Curran
President, A Better Chance New Canaan

Save The Date

Please plan on joining us at
New Canaan Country Club on
October 3rd, 2015

for our annual gala supporting ABC New Canaan and celebrating just under a half century of helping underprivileged scholars realize their full potential in life.



Brian MacCalla (left) and Kwaku Gyasi (right) proudly display photos of themselves in action that they received at the end of the season varsity basketball banquet honoring the players and coaches.