



Welcome New Scholars!



Kilee

Sophomore **Kilee Simon** hales from Bronx, NY. Kilee likes being active, and her interests range from basketball and volleyball to language arts, history and science—especially animal biology. She settled quickly into the ABC house and values the sense of sisterhood among her housemates. Though Guilford at first seemed isolated compared to New York, Kilee discovered she can walk to stores and not have to rely on public transit. As she prepares for her future, she plans to take advantage of GHS' wide-ranging academics and clubs, along with the opportunity to learn to live on her own before going to college.



Taylor

Freshman **Taylor Wiles**, also from the Bronx, comes from a family of ABC alumnae. Applying to ABC, Taylor knew what to expect and has had a smooth transition to Guilford, the ABC house and GHS, although she misses her younger brother. Guilford represents a fresh start to explore new things with new people and to take advantage of the many opportunities this town offers. Taylor loves writing and film. She recently received a camera for her birthday and looks forward to editing videos—and a future career in film. She also enjoys swimming.



Jasmine

Freshman **Jasmine Laryea**, from Hillside, NJ, first learned about ABC from a middle school teacher. She was drawn to applying to Guilford ABC because of the level of support and attention scholars receive. Moving into the house with five other girls has been easier than she expected, having grown up with two brothers. Jasmine is interested in science and math and enjoys West African dance and swimming. She is also experienced in ballet and jazz dance. Her ABC goal is to graduate from GHS with honors while developing relationships with friends and teachers. ▼



A BETTER CHANCE
GUILFORD

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marie Berry PRESIDENT	Nancy Abramson SECRETARY
Judy Wright VICE-PRESIDENT	Sue Renner TREASURER
Laura Berkowitz Gilbert	Elisa Milano
Charlene Blake	Laura Noonan
Julia Chaffe	Cathy O'Keefe
Georgia Cosgrove	Nancy Patton
Melissa Dayton	Lori Pleasure
Regina Demitrack	Lisa Rogers
Connie Dickinson	Linda Sanacora
Larry Dowler	Winnie Seibert
Kristen Eveland	Ann Street
Kyma Ganzer	Melonie Swan
Mary Lane	Susan Welsh
Kathleen MacElhiney	Corinne Wilson
Tobie Meisel	Jeff Zeitlin

ADVISORY BOARD

Cindy Banks	Marie Landry
Cheryl Barbour	Mark Mackowiak
Claudia Buzzi	Renee McIntyre
Helen Carlson	Marcia Myhre
Peter Dickinson	Pamela Petersen-Crair
Lou Federici	Jennifer Wilcox
Gwen Gunn	Carol Wright
Kaaren Janssen	

ABC SCHOLARS

Lauren Cyrus	Kilee Simon
Jasmine Laryea	Taylor Wiles
Arianna Alvarez Pena	Janelle Wilkinson

ABC STAFF

Lynn Prendergast RESIDENT DIRECTOR	Sharon Risse TUTOR/ASSISTANT
Jeanne Mele RESIDENT ASSISTANT & COOK	Amanda Sweeney MATH TUTOR
Cori Ouellette TUTOR/ASSISTANT	Shirley Urban TUTOR
Sherri Pranzo TUTOR	Patty Sullivan HOLE IN THE WALL MANAGER

HOST FAMILIES

Andrea Perez & Dennis Garcia
Dani & Rob Howard
Nicole & Phil Kikosicki
Corinne & Matt Wilson
Susan & Damian Doria

P.O. Box 140 • Guilford, CT 06437
www.guilfordabc.org

A School Year Underway

FROM PRESIDENT MARIE BERRY

In September we welcomed our six ABC scholars and their families to Guilford for the 2020-2021 school year. We have three returning and three new scholars, all of whom were thrilled to arrive at the house. After almost six months at home, the girls were excited to be back in school, looking forward to all the possibilities of the year ahead. We worked hard over the summer to ensure the girls arrived to appropriate safety guidelines, a thoroughly sanitized house, additional outdoor space, and major renovations that included a new kitchen and study!



After careful review, we decided to keep the scholars here through Thanksgiving break to minimize their exposure to the virus from traveling to and from their homes. All parents agreed with this change, which necessitated hiring additional staff at the house for hybrid learning. Our girls are physically at school on Monday and Tuesday, and working at home on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday with GHS distance learning. We have hired two professionally qualified assistants, Sharon and Cori, who share the role of tutor/assistant between the hours of 7:30am and 3:30pm on the days the girls are working from home, and occasionally on a weekend.

During the first month, the girls are enjoying as much time outside as possible, with many activities planned to keep them engaged. They are clearly having fun and getting to know each other, while we continue to take safety precautions seriously. In the coming months, along with school-work and keeping COVID-free, the girls will be busy with Halloween, volunteering at Hole in the Wall and preparing some holiday dishes in their new kitchen.

Thank you to all our board members for their ongoing help and support and for their commitment to making this a fabulous year for our scholars. And special thanks to GHS, HIW and the many people in our community that provide continued support to Guilford ABC! ▼



M.J. Petretto Golf Tournament Supports GABC

On September 14, the 11th Annual M.J. Petretto Golf Classic was held at The Farms Country Club in Wallingford. Guilford A Better Chance is one of the beneficiaries of this charity event. This year's tournament was rescheduled twice because of the pandemic, yet through the efforts of M.J. Petretto and her team, a socially distanced tournament was successfully held under beautiful skies. Guilford ABC was represented by three foursomes as well as a number of board members who volunteered their time to support the day's activities. ▼

Off to a Great Start!

FROM RESIDENT DIRECTOR LYNN PRENDERGAST

Our three new and three returning scholars are settling in very nicely, figuring out routines and developing new relationships. They are a talkative and social group who seem to share many common interests. The returning scholars are helping the new ones learn about the house, the school, and the ABC experience. They are really hitting it off as a group and enjoying themselves.

Our bonding activities have included a team scavenger hunt around downtown Guilford, a boat ride around the Thimble Islands, lots of meals out, celebrating Arianna's 16th birthday, going to Rose's for a corn maze, and swimming at a board member's house.

Our backyard has been a great spot for socially distancing. The girls have had already met with their academic and student life advisors and their host families. After two weeks of social distance meals, we are starting to have family style dinners sitting together at our new dining room table.

With so many improvements over the summer, the house looks amazing, and, as we envisioned, the kitchen has become the focal point, truly the heart of the house.

We are all looking forward to a rewarding and productive year. It's off to a great start! ▼



From left to right: Arianna Alvarez Pena, Kilee Simon, Resident Director Lynn Prendergast, Jasmine Laryea, Resident Assistant and Cook Jeanne Mele, Janelle Wilkinson, Lauren Cyrus, and Taylor Wiles.

**Photographs of ABC scholars
by Kerry Schutz Photography**

“What I did last summer..”



Arianna

Junior Arianna Alvarez Pena was planning to participate in a month-long summer program in Spain which was, of course, cancelled. Instead, she attended a program at Syracuse University, designed to help her improve her writing skills (the same program which a former GABC student attended, which eventually landed her at Syracuse for college). Arianna wants to ace her classes this year and begin focusing on college research.



Janelle

Janelle Wilkinson, a sophomore, had signed up for an art program at Yale, but when it was changed to all online, she chose to attend two summer programs at Fordham designed to help students be ready for the next school year after a quarter of virtual learning. Janelle intends to focus this year on her grades, especially her Spanish, so that she will be ready academically for future challenges.



Lauren

Lauren Cyrus, senior, had been planning on an exciting summer—an Advanced Law and Trial internship where she would have worked on real cases with senators and congressmen, and a trip to Ghana and Panama to learn more about their culture. Both opportunities were derailed by COVID-19, so Lauren spent the summer working on projects to support her local community. She notes that she is ‘finally’ a senior and starting the college application process. ▼



GABC Host Families

The host family connection is a vital part of our scholars' high school experience. Usually, the girls spend one weekend each month living with their host family and participating in the family's activities. This year, because of so many health-related restrictions, the girls will not sleep at their host families' homes, but they will spend one Saturday a month with them for the first semester.

We are delighted to welcome three new Guilford host families this year

Andrea Perez and Dennis Garcia will be the host family for sophomore Kilee Simon. Dennis and Andrea have two children, Sergio (freshman at GHS) and Gabi (freshman at U of New Haven).

Dani and Rob Howard will be hosting freshman Taylor Wiles. The Howards' two children are Jackson (freshman at GHS) and Fox (6th grader at Baldwin).

Nicole and Phil Kikosicki will be hosting freshman Jasmine Laryea. The Kokosickis have two children, Corbin and Parker, who are in 4th and 3rd grade at A. W. Cox.

Returning host families include **Corinne and Matt Wilson** who host junior Arianna Alvarez Pena, and **Susan and Damian Doria**, host parents for senior Lauren Cyrus. Final arrangements are underway for hosting sophomore Janelle Wilkinson.



Two recent events served as ice breakers for the girls and their host families. Elisa Milano held a gathering of host families and scholars at her home. Saturday, September 26th was the first host family day, and ABC students spent time with their host families doing a variety of different things including apple picking, swimming, walking around New Haven, hiking, and enjoying lunch. ▼



ABC Welcomes New Staff

In response to the challenge of a hybrid remote schedule at Guilford High School, GABC has found two excellent new tutors/assistants to ensure that our scholars have both the supervision and the academic resources to succeed.

Sharon Risse brings an extensive background in teaching and tutoring in English, reading, math and organizational skills. Having raised her own family in Guilford, Sharon offers a mature presence for young scholars away from home and has a keen understanding of teens.

Cori Ouellette, a Madison resident, is a recent graduate of Clark University where she captained the women's basketball team. After taking a gap year as a paraprofessional in the Madison school system, she is currently enrolled in the Masters of Social Work program at Southern Connecticut State University. In addition to assisting the girls academically, Cori brings a familiarity with the Shoreline, which will enable her to initiate fun activities for the scholars during a time when the pandemic has limited many of our regular activities.

Welcome Sharon and Cori! ▼

Guilford ABC College Education Fund

Our most recent graduates—Julia, T-Jauni, and Sumaiyah—are back in college, each buoyed by a \$2,500 grant to help with tuition for the 2020-2021 college year. We anticipate having a fourth graduate in 2021, so we are hoping to continue to build this fund.

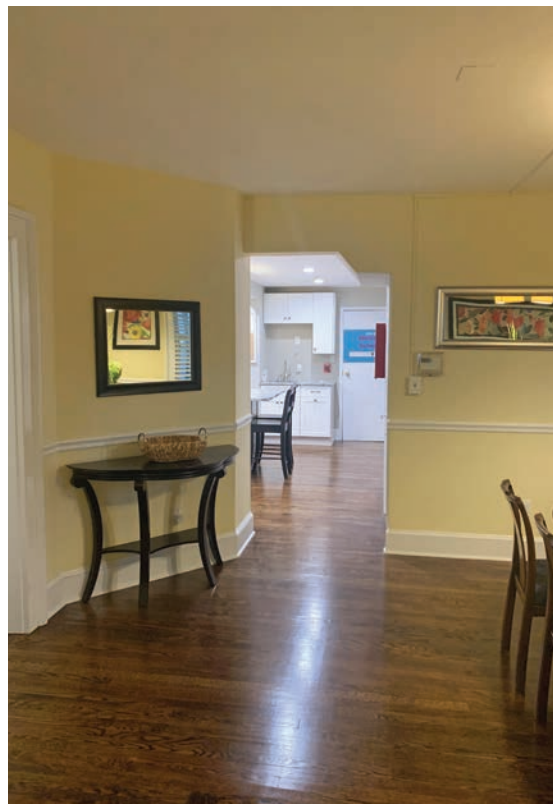
Contributions should be sent to the Guilford Foundation, P.O. Box 35, Guilford, CT 06437, with a note designating the contribution to the GABC College Education Fund.

We are grateful for continued support of this program, which not only helps our scholars but also appeals to young women considering applying to our ABC program. Please send any questions to Connie Dickinson (cdickinson240@gmail.com). ▼

House and Grounds: Make-over!

Along hoped for kitchen expansion/make-over and installation of a new HVAC system got off to an early start, given the girls' unexpected departure in March. That extra time came in very handy, because of COVID-related shortages of materials and appliances—and the typical, unforeseen complications of all renovations, particularly those involving old houses.

Many board members worked together to ensure that our scholars were welcomed back to a clean, safe and comfortable learning and living environment. Bedrooms were reconfigured to accommodate each scholar having her own room, and COVID precautions - including extra cleaning supplies, posted rules about mask wearing and good hygiene and a log of visitors for contact tracing—are firmly in place. The house has never looked better or been safer! ▼



The major new kitchen renovation began in April, with the demolition of the old kitchen, pantry and bathroom to make room for a 16x16 state-of-the-art gathering place with a center island, hardwood floors, recessed lighting and plenty of cabinet space. We are so appreciative of Michael Hyrb and Commercial Construction for their help in coordinating this project. At the same time, we added a new HVAC system to provide both heat and air conditioning to the entire house.



A BETTER CHANCE GUILFORD

**P.O. Box 140
Guilford, CT 06437**

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #96
Guilford, CT

Guilford ABC is enormously grateful for its Community Sponsors, many of whom provide pro-bono or reduced rate services to help us with our mission as well as our house, grounds, and Hole in the Wall.

CORPORATE SPONSOR

The Guilford Savings Bank

COMMUNITY SPONSORS

- Guilford Civic Women's Club
- Guilford Community Fund
- Guilford Newcomers' Club
- Lenny and Joe's Fish Tales
- Estate of Milton S. Marcus Charitable Gift Fund
- MJ Petretto's Foundation
- The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
- The Guilford Foundation

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS/ IN-KIND DONATIONS

- American Carting Company, Richard Morrow
- Bishop's Market
- College Matters, Madison
- Baldwin & Baldwin Contractors
- Kerry Schutz Photography
- Milano Secure Storage
- Carl Johnson, The Wood Rack, Branford



Hole in the Wall is Open Again!

MASKS, HAND SANITIZER...ACTION!

Hole in the Wall is back in full swing with many COVID safety measures. Only eight customers are allowed in the shop at a time so that both shoppers and volunteers can feel safe and stay socially distanced. Floor arrows guide customers down one-way aisles; masks are mandatory; and hand sanitizers are set up throughout the store.

Donations can once again be dropped off at any time. To arrange a consignment appointment call 203-453-2088. We welcome you to shop for a "new to you" favorite bargain or distinctive treasure. If you visit on a Sunday between 12-4 you may be fortunate enough to greet and meet our ABC scholars. They are at the helm every other Sunday during the school year. Hope to see you soon. Please be well and stay safe.

45TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

New date for the HIW 45th anniversary gala: May 6, 2021 at Woodwinds in Branford. Plan to join us for a fabulous, fun evening of food, fashions, DJ and amazing silent (and live) auctions!

MAKE YOUR AMAZON SHOPPING PROFITABLE FOR GABC

AmazonSmile gives a small portion of each sale to a not-for-profit of your choice. Go to smile.amazon.com and select Guilford ABC as your charity of choice. Then remember to go to smile.amazon.com for all of your online purchases!

