



Anticipating Spring

FROM PRESIDENT MARIE BERRY

This March we mark the one-year anniversary of the pandemic that has affected us all. We have been so fortunate, with the help of our amazing staff, volunteers, and board members, to keep our scholars safe. We continue to follow COVID protocols and anticipate vaccines for most by the end of spring, so that we can enjoy the warmer weather and outdoor activities. In addition, we look forward to socializing and the return to in-school learning, four days a week, at Guilford High School that began March 15th.

Like many local organizations, Hole in the Wall, the primary source of income for Guilford ABC, was affected by the pandemic and forced to close for four months. Although our operating funds were impacted, we are grateful to those at Hole in the Wall, its volunteers and the Guilford community that have provided much needed and appreciated assistance throughout the year. It does take a village!

It's because of you and so many others that we've been able to maintain our staff, provide technical and educational support for our scholars, and continue our mission. I am proud of Guilford ABC and our amazing scholars who have bonded, worked together and accomplished so much during this challenging year. They are our future leaders — we will continue to strive to have their voices heard as we help them grow as individuals and succeed academically. ▼



Corinne Wilson and Elisa Milano spent a Friday evening cooking dinner and baking with the girls.



Arianna, Taylor, Lauren, Kilee, Janelle & Jasmine.



A huge "thank you" to Bishop's Orchards for selecting Guilford ABC as its February "round up" beneficiary, which resulted in more than \$4,000 in donations. Bishop's has been a supporter of ABC for many years, and we are so grateful to them.



A BETTER CHANCE GUILFORD

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Remote Learning

FROM RESIDENT DIRECTOR LYNN PRENDERGAST

The scholars have been very busy with the hybrid learning model, which included being at school Mondays and Tuesdays and working remotely on Wednesdays through Fridays. This schedule, as you can imagine, has presented many unusual challenges and unexpected opportunities. Our tutors, Cori and Sharon, have done a fabulous job helping the girls with time management and their engagement in online classes. It takes a lot to keep 6-8 laptops, a handful of Chromebooks, and a bunch of smartphones connected, and luckily, a WIFI update and boost was completed before the girls returned in the fall. The scholars have become very self-sufficient when it comes to making breakfasts and lunches around their class schedules. They have also bonded, spending more time together than in previous years, watching movies, playing games/ cards and cooking in our new kitchen.

Besides learning, we have been trying to be creative with COVID-safe, creative activities. We had our first ever cook-off which featured ramen noodles. Lauren and Jasmine won, and they will be selecting the dish for our next cook-off in the near future. The scholars have participated in Zoom meetings with potential new scholars and in-house tours for prospective students and their families. Our COVID-safe outings have included painting pottery, going to It! at Jordan's Furniture (the world's largest indoor ropes course), and playing laser tag. We enjoyed a Super Bowl party sponsored by the Student Life committee complete with decorations, a delicious menu of tailgate food and a football pool to win gift card prizes.

The students have made the best of a difficult year. We talk fondly about our normal activities such as visiting with host families, GHS afterschool activities and being able to go to friends' houses without masks. Even though our three newest scholars have not yet had a typical ABC experience, they have done their best to stay positive. Luckily, we have been able to stay healthy thanks in great part to the girls' consistent following of the COVID protocols put in place by the ABC Board to keep us safe.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in person, through Zoom meetings and phone calls. We greatly appreciate the meals provided by so many Board members when Jeanne was out sick with COVID. Your support and encouragement are essential! ▼



Guilford ABC College Education Fund

The Guilford ABC College Education Fund at the Guilford Foundation has received a wonderful \$50,000 challenge grant. We're part way there and need additional gifts totaling \$30,000 to meet this generous challenge.

The fund provides modest tuition assistance to each of our graduating seniors throughout her four year of college as long as she maintains an overall B average and stays on track to graduate in four years. For more information, contact Connie Dickinson at cdickinson240@gmail.com. ▼

Zoom Chats with Scholars

FROM KRISTEN EVELAND

In early December, Guilford ABC created a platform of 45-minute bi-weekly ZOOM calls with our scholars. The goal was to connect the girls with women in the community and around the country. Lori Pleasure ('78) kicked off the series and connected us with alumni who shared their stories of Guilford High School, college, and career paths. We also enjoyed talking with Principal Julia Chaffe and ABC board member Regina Demitrack who shared her work at Yale New Haven Hospital. We spoke to Chris Cabrera from Maryland who was highlighted in *People Magazine* as one of the magazine's favorite black, women-owned brands. She has created a line of sustainable hand and foot care products called Naturally London.

Our upcoming local guests include Angela Clemmons who started Shoreline Soul Gospel Choir and board member Kyma Ganzer, LEED AP BD+C, who is a project manager at LaRosa Building Group. We will end our series with Sharmese Walcott who is Hartford's State Attorney and Pfizer scientist Caroline Blakemore. Our hope for the fall is to meet many of the speakers face-to-face and continue our conversations. ▼

A Day in New Haven...

Guilford ABC board members Melonie Swan and Marie Berry took advantage of a sunny Sunday at the end of February to enjoy downtown New Haven with the scholars. The visit included a trip to the Yale Bookstore, a stop at Yale's Payne Whitney Gymnasium to see where basketball is played and, of course, trying out some famous New Haven style pizza. A walk down Chapel Street led to some ice cream and dessert...delicious! ▼



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Shop Hole in the Wall, Support Guilford ABC

Since reopening in July after a four month COVID-19 shutdown, the Hole in the Wall Consignment and Thrift Shop has been a busy place — busy despite adherence to safety protocols limiting the number of patrons allowed in the store at one time. Not surprising, the flow of donations and consignments has been brisk with so many of us cooped up in our homes! Household items and spring clothing are being accepted now. (Donations are accepted anytime, consignments by appointment.)

While not quite back to where it was before closing in March, we are optimistic that revenue from 2021 sales will recover and continue to provide vital support for Guilford ABC, as its primary source of funding. Thank you to everyone who has continued to donate, consign and shop!

We also extend heartfelt thanks to Patty Sullivan and her team of managers who have kept things running smoothly despite the loss of many volunteers who did not feel safe resuming their shifts during the pandemic. If you have time on your hands and want to spend a few fun hours each week helping out, please contact Patty at hiwabc@gmail.com, call (203) 453-2088, or stop in and fill out an application. ▼



SAVE THE DATE!
HITW 45th Anniversary Gala
Thursday, May 5, 2022