



Where 'The World Opened Up'

FROM CO-PRESIDENT GEORGIA COSGROVE

As we look toward Guilford ABC's 50th anniversary in the fall of 2024, we can't help but reflect on the journey that has led to where the organization is today. While digging through some old files in search of artifacts from the 25th anniversary, I stumbled on a tattered copy of an article from the *Sunday New York Times* on October 31, 1999, "Celebrating Where The World Opened Up." The article reported a reunion of 23 of the 43 GABC graduates as of 1999. The opening paragraph described the challenges they faced:



is mutually beneficial remains strong. While diversity has increased at GHS, our current scholars still feel the challenges of being black in a predominantly white school and town. Recent events in local and national politics have made clear the fact that there is still much work to do around social justice and equality.

We are grateful to all of you on our mailing list of some 1100 households for your support and advocacy that takes many forms. You are helping to ensure that Guilford A Better Chance will enter its second half-century with a strong sense of continued purpose and commitment to our mission.

Thank you. ▼

"When Cheryl McPherson, one of 10 children from a poor black family in Philadelphia, arrived in Guilford in 1974 as part of the program A Better Chance, she said she felt that she had entered a foreign land. At school she had to adjust to a rigorous academic schedule; outside school, she had to adjust to life in a town with only 8,000 residents, nearly all white."

The article notes the Guilford residents who spearheaded acceptance of the program at Guilford High School (GHS). They included founding board members Joe Arnold, who provided the down payment on the Church Street house and secured a mortgage, and Corky Fisher, who served on the Board of Education during the first years of GABC operation. The small group of board members converted the house for its new purpose, chose the first house parents, found host families and tutors, selected the first scholars, and raised funds to keep the program running.

Fast forward to 2023 and much has changed, but the core belief that having the GABC scholars in our community



ABC Scholars Tamojah Tomlinson, Andrea Kaluma, Kyra Amani, Janelle Wilkinson, Kilee Simon, and Jasmine Laryea. Photo by Kerry Schutz Photography.

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EXPLORING WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Before the COVID shutdown, board member Kristen Eveland began a series of Sunday suppers at her home featuring guests with interesting careers to discuss with our GABC scholars. These sessions continued on Zoom during 2020 and 2021, then resumed in person in the fall of 2022, including a fun hands-on session at Flowers on the Green with owner Chrisie Baker. 2023 started with dinner at David and Pam Harding's house and a Google chat with their daughter, Kitty Harding, who is a Senior Program Officer in the Gender Equity Communications division of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle. In February, board member Jenny Schaffer and her husband hosted the girls for a session with Abby Goodman, who is Senior Director of Sales at Doximity, the largest online network of healthcare professionals in the country. In March, they sat down with Dr. Rachel Litwin, a clinical psychologist who has her own practice in Old Saybrook. They practiced mindful exercises and decorated coping kits. The 2023 dinner series will end with Marji Shapiro, a former GABC board member and a job coach. ▼



INTRODUCING...

The Hole in the Wall recently welcomed two new assistant managers to the staff. Dove Hellman, who recently moved to Guilford from New York, brings delightful energy and artistic flair to her work. Beth Mishler also works as a realtor at William Raveis in Madison and is a natural in the retail/resale world. We are ever grateful to Patty Sullivan and her amazing team for all that they do to keep the shop going strong and providing major financial support for GABC. ▼

Where Will I Be in 10 Years?

Three Guilford ABC students considered this question as well as how to overcome an unexpected interruption while pursuing their goals.

Andrea Kaluma, a junior, has been toying between goals of law and medicine. Still thinking about her decision, she said “I hope to see myself successful in whatever field I end up in. I believe my hard work will pay off. The tools and guidance I’ve been given here at Guilford ABC will definitely help me.” Last summer, Andrea participated in an online medical internship at Georgetown University and loved it.



And what if something happens to interfere with achieving whatever your goal is? Andrea paused, then answered with confidence beyond her years: “Life is unprecedented. Some things are in your control. I’ve overcome some trials and tribulations in my life up to now, so I think it all depends on persistence. In past hardships, I’ve always pushed forward.”



She went on to explain that she wants to achieve a PhD in physics. Andrea has been inspired by and looks to Albert Einstein and his view of the world – “asking questions and using education to test your mind.”

Kyra Amani, a freshman, expects simply to “be happy” in 10 years. “I’m close to family and friends now,” she explained, so the future would be the same. Kyra’s interests are science and music. She’s a singer and

considers her voice an instrument. She’s learning guitar and will be part of the Guilford High School jazz band. “Maybe I’ll become a conductor,” she muses, bringing together all the instruments.

And if something intervenes in her plans? “I’ll adapt,” she said promptly. “I’ll make the best of it and find something else ...I’ll depend on my passions.” She sees her life with Guilford ABC as “a step toward independence.”

Tamojah Tomlinson, a freshman, is convinced she’ll end up in the medical field. “I’ve always been interested in medicine and biology...and animals. She’s loved math since a really young age. Her brother is a high school math teacher. “He really inspired me. He’s so passionate about math,” she said with a big smile.



When asked what she would do if anything should interrupt her plans, she was pensive at first. “I’m not really sure what I would do.” Then, confidence took over her voice: “I’ll explore other options,” she said firmly.

Grounded and poised, these three young teens seem at ease talking about their futures and happy to be part of the Guilford ABC program. ▼

SAVE THE DATE! Golfers & Volunteers Needed for GABC Benefit Monday, June 26

There are three ways you can contribute to the annual M.J. Petretto Foundation Golf Classic at Farms Country Club in Wallingford. Golf with your foursome, contribute items for the silent and live auctions, or volunteer at the event. It’s a fun day! Come join us! For more information, go to www.mjpfoundation.org or email GABC Board member Jeff Zeitlin at ajzeitlin@comcast.net.

CALLING ALL GABC ALUMNAE! 50th Anniversary Celebration

Our 50th anniversary is next year, 2024. We’re reaching out to all our former scholars to hear stories of where you are now and what you are doing with your careers. We could use your help finding contact information for alums missing from our lists. And we’d love to have you help out on the Reunion Committee! Please email Georgia Cosgrove at gcosmook@gmail.com with contact information and ideas for reunion activities. We want to hear from you!



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GABC will mark its 50th anniversary in 2024. To honor this milestone, please consider providing for the next 50 years by adding a legacy gift to GABC to your estate plans. If you have questions about this please contact Georgia Cosgrove at gabcmain@gmail.com.

Treasure Hunting at The Hole in the Wall

Cashmere sweaters, bikes, helmets, quilts, and fancy lingerie regularly attract crowds of bargain-hunting shoppers at the Hole in the Wall Consignment and Thrift Shop that supports the Guilford ABC program. But co-president Georgia Cosgrove was doubling as cashier recently when a customer purchased an unusual find – an antique sterling silver flask consigned by a GABC supporter. The flask was sold empty, of course, and went for \$125.00!

On one busy Saturday, 11-year-old Scarlett was shopping for high heels.

"I love it here – there are fun things, cool things!"

She was wearing a green sweater she had purchased on a previous visit. Twins Madeline and Stella, eight-years old, were shopping with Nicola, an experienced adult shopper who had worked at Hole in the Wall when she was in high school. She returns at least once a week and often brings the girls for a Girls Day Out.

Many of the donated clothes sport name brands – Talbots, London Fog, Calvin Klein, for example. A full-length mink coat with fox trim was ready for its next close-up – ideal for the next costume party or school play with a retro theme. Specialty items on display during the winter included a very large birdcage, a child's rocking chair, a pair of Wedgewood bowls, and several three-foot tall crystal vases.

Shoppers crowded the aisles in all three rooms. They carried baskets spilling over with scarves, games, leather purses. Out in the parking lot, a Mercedes sports car pulled away, its front seat filled with new treasures.

Hole in the Wall Consignment and Thrift Shop is located at the corner of Park and Boston Streets (at the back of the parking lot) in Guilford. It's open every day with varying hours. For more, visit www.guilfordabc.org and Hole in the Wall Consignments on Facebook. ▼

