



## Two Years in Review

FROM CO-PRESIDENT GEORGIA COSGROVE

I am rewriting this message on the day of the Supreme Court’s six to three decision ruling affirmative action in college admissions unconstitutional. It remains to be seen what impact this imposition of “color-blindness” on the selection process will have on our scholars. There is no question that the upending of the status quo at selective colleges and universities will lead to years of scrambling to maintain some semblance of equity and inclusion while complying with the rollback of policies that acknowledge the reality of racial bias in education and the workplace. The language of the ruling places the onus on teenage college applicants to “discuss” in their essays how generations of systemic racism has affected their lives. In this context, providing our scholars with the tools they need to pursue competitive academic tracks and build their resumes will be even more important to their success going into GABC’s next 50 years than it has been since 1974 when we welcomed the first scholars.

With the end of my two-year term as board Co-President on June 30, I am trying to wrap my head around all that has happened in those 24 months. It has truly been an honor to be directly involved in the lives and accomplishments of our scholars and to work with the tireless team of staff and volunteers who keep the program humming along through the highs and lows of teenage life, rigorous academics, scheduling curveballs, leaky pipes, flooded basements, college search stresses, new scholar selection for the coming year, and more. It is a joy to see how these six young women have become sisters who support one another and their peers, who truly enjoy spending time together. Our two 2023 graduates, Kilee Simon and Janelle Wilkinson, chose to spend graduation night with their housemates rather than attending Project Graduation with their classmates. Needless to say, it is bittersweet to see them move on, but we couldn’t be prouder of who they are and what they have both accomplished.

Stay tuned for the fall newsletter and watch our website for reports from our rising seniors, Andrea Kaluma and Jasmine Laryea, on their summer CIEE travels to Morocco and South Africa, respectively. We will also welcome two new freshman and welcome back our rising sophomores, Kyra and Tamojah.



I wish all the best to our 2023-24 Co-Presidents, Judy Wright and Laura Berkowitz Gilbert, to be ably assisted by Nancy Patton as Vice-President. ▼



Jasmine, Andrea, Kilee, Janelle, Tamojah and Kyra were thrilled by a visit from 2021 graduate, Lauren Cyrus, at the year-end celebration in May.

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### NEWSLETTER

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## Two Years in Review

### FROM RESIDENT DIRECTOR LYNN PRENDERGAST

First of all, thank you to the Guilford ABC Board members and all of the people that support ABC. It has been a fabulous year and we couldn't have done it without you. As I finish my fifth year as Resident Director, I am still amazed at the number of board members and volunteers who help make the Guilford ABC house and program so wonderful.



I am so proud of my girls and the tremendous school year they have had. Their hard work, perseverance, and ability to tackle challenges is inspirational and contagious. From joining the fencing team, to taking on different roles in the *Little Shop of Horrors* production, to taking AP and IB classes, to making friends wherever they go, these young ladies are amazing.

Now it is time to talk about my two phenomenal 2023 graduates. They are ready to spread their wings and fly. They are ready to dazzle their college professors and classmates. They are ready for new experiences that will continue to shape them into their best selves.

Kilee's compassion and desire to make the world a better place are just a few of her admirable qualities. She is a natural leader and passionate about her opinions and values. Talking in front of large groups to deliver important messages comes naturally to her. Her superb writing skills and ways with words also set her apart from many. She is one of the busiest scholars I have seen in my five years. Besides her challenging schoolwork, she balanced and excelled on stage, as Senior Class Co-President, singing in Voices and with regional singing groups including Shoreline Soul. Boston University had better be ready for Kilee, she is a mover and shaker and a superstar. I can't wait to hear what path she decides to take with her studies and her unending skillset.

Janelle's insightful, honest, and humorous personality lights up any room she walks into. I started to call her "Mama Janelle" this year as she continued to become more and more assertive and supportive with her guidance and being a leader in the house. Her sense of style and artistic talents shone a spotlight on her creative talents. She got great joy from making incredible birthday cards for members of the house and making everyone feel special. Her kind and generous heart have made the house a home for anyone that walks through the door. Her future pediatric patients will have one of the best pediatricians ever. Muhlenberg College is getting one of the best people I have ever met!

I love my girls and it's bittersweet to see them head off to college, but I truly believe that I will have a long friendship with both Kilee and Jasmine. They will always be special to me.

Thank you all for a fabulous year! I can't wait to welcome the new and returning scholars in September. ▼

# Janelle and Kilee Celebrated as Graduating Seniors

Janelle Wilkinson and Kilee Simon, graduating Guilford ABC seniors, received multiple rounds of applause and plaudits from their proud families, ABC leaders, host families, representatives of Guilford schools, and a surprise guest at the annual End-of-Year Celebration, May 19, at the Nathaniel Greene Community Center.

Guilford High School principal, Julia Chaffe, praised the two scholars:

“Kilee, you fulfilled a leadership role throughout your high school years.”

“Janelle, you demonstrated yourself as a formidable negotiator!”

“You both are leaving Guilford High School a better place.”

She presented each young woman with a book of poetry by Amanda Gorman, who spoke her original poem, “The Hill We Climb,” at the Inauguration of President Joseph R. Biden, January, 2021.

Squeals of delight erupted from all six of the 2022-23 members of Guilford ABC when they encountered their former Guilford ABC housemate Lauren Cyrus, now a rising junior at Hampton University in Virginia, founded in 1868. In an impromptu speech, Lauren said, “I am able to have confidence, to be a mentor at college due to ABC. “You, my sisters, helped me grow and inspired me to just be – me.”

Lauren looked over at Lynn Prendergast, Resident Director of ABC who lives in an apartment at the Guilford ABC House on Church Street and offers continual guidance to the six women. Speaking with a catch in her voice, she said, “Lynn, you have a pure heart.”

The current residents of ABC House looked at their “second mother” with faces filled with emotion.



When Lynn took the microphone, she acknowledged the six young women before her with a loving smile. Then, speaking of the two graduates, she recounted their talents, saying “they are ready to spread their wings.”

Janelle who matriculates at Muhlenberg College, a private liberal arts college in the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, first began speaking with praise of Lauren who had finished the ABC program two years before her. “You had a crucial role in forming who I am

today, Lauren. And Lynn, you were always there for me, providing solutions, organizing activities, telling valuable stories, and being an exceptional second mother to me. Ms. Chaffe, as GHS principal you made me the best version of myself.” She concluded with individual praise of each of her ABC “sisters” and their specific skills that meant so much to her along her high school journey.

Kilee who heads for Boston University in a few months wanted to find the right word to capture ABC and the town of Guilford. She decided that all-encompassing word was “Community.”

“In Guilford, we all know each other. My many memories are tiny specks of gold dust.” She listed the experiences that had shaped her: senior class president, a volunteer in elementary schools, the lead in the school play, and felt she became “a vessel of change.” Kilee lauded her “five adopted sisters” and advised them to “never stop testing your limits.”

Judy Wright, Guilford ABC co-president, announced that Kilee and Janelle each are receiving a Guilford Foundation College Education Award of \$2500 for each year of college and other funding for their post-secondary education.

Floral arrangements for the event tables were created and contributed by Kate McNellis of Folklore Flower Company. ▼



Janelle Wilkinson processing into the commencement ceremony



Class Co-Presidents Hannah Contessa and Kilee Simon address the Class of 2023



## Fun and Inclusion with GHS Musical

All six Guilford ABC scholars sang and acted in the spring musical, “Little Shop of Horrors” and expressed positive reviews of the student-created experience.

“It gave us a chance to be part of a bigger picture. Everyone was welcoming – all there together, and no one was left out,” said Kyra, who was in her freshman year at GHS and played the part of an urchin. “The atmosphere at Guilford High School is no hierarchy.” She praised the guidance and direction by teacher Ms. Cara Mulqueen-Teasdale, theatre arts department coordinator.

“She had us all on the same level, welcoming anyone who came into the room, and it was a lot of fun.”

Andrea, one of the ensemble singers and now a rising senior, found the play “an amazing experience! It was my first time as a GHS actor, and even though it was hard work, it was a good group and it reassured me when other people told us how good we were.”

Janelle, who just graduated and is going on to study at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, worked on props in a group of 14 students who made everything for the set, including the revolving florist shop.

“I was amazed at how long it took to make the dentist gas mask – we worked on it five times! It was fun meeting younger students, and we all got along. If we had problems, we talked it out.”

Tamojah, now a rising sophomore, assisted the props crew chief. She glowed when she spoke of the props team.

“I really liked them all.” Because all elements of the show were student-made, she worked on making the leaves for the florist shop setting and the dentist mask as well.

Kilee, graduating senior who will head for Boston University this fall, also played and sang as a street urchin.

“I loved being on stage!” she trilled “It’s an escape from the real world. I had fun with my accent and costume – in the 1950s style. My favorite song was ‘Downtown.’ She appreciated the guidance of Ms. Mulqueen-Teasdale – “Immerse yourself in the role. Become one with the role. She was really good at working with all students.”

Kyra, a rising sophomore this fall, liked learning “how to be part of a bigger picture and learn why things are in the play. We also learned how to pre-plan each element because all students participated in the creation.”

The girls remembered the fun of the Wrap Party where they sang songs and played with the pinata. Their most important takeaway from participating in the spring musical: “There was no embarrassment if you made a mistake. No ridicule.”

Lynn Prendergast, Resident Director of ABC Guilford, praised the play experience as “helping the girls learn skills and branch out.” ▼



### 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](mailto:gcosmook@gmail.com) with contact information and ideas for reunion activities. We want to hear from you!

# Congratulations ABC Scholars!



Clockwise from top: National Honor Society President Kilee Simon with inductees Jasmine Laryea and Andrea Kaluma; Janelle and Kilee at Senior Awards Night; looking good for Junior Prom; Janelle, Lauren and Kilee catching up at the year-end celebration on May 19.

## Nursing Home Fashion Show Inspires Kindness

Senior patients at Apple Rehab in Guilford sported beaded necklaces and flowery blouses at a fashion show with a theme of “cultivating kindness.” The clothes and jewelry were personally selected from inventory at the Hole in the Wall consignment and thrift shop that supports the Guilford ABC program, by Patty Sullivan, supervising manager.

Smiling from wheelchairs, the ladies showed off their finery during the event that took place during National Nursing Home Week in May. Lori Spadory, activities director for the rehabilitation center, was inspired to create the fashion show during her visit to the shop.

“The ladies are still talking about it! It was wonderful for their self-esteem,” Lori said.

Apple Rehab is located at 10 Boston Post Road in Guilford. ▼

*Pictured, top row: Rosemary, Margie, Ann; second row: Marilyn, Marie, Rosemary.*





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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](mailto:gabcmain@gmail.com).*

## "A Cause Dear to My Heart"

**P**atty Sullivan, supervising manager of the Hole in the Wall consignment and thrift shop that substantially supports the Guilford ABC program, has a passion for it.

"These girls – our ABC scholars – are lovely ladies who are going to change our world. I want to help them achieve their goals," she said. Sullivan has been with the shop for *eleven* years. She credits the prior director, Marge Welsh, for all she knows. "I learned everything from Marge. She was so calm and set a wonderful example."

Sullivan supervises the group of volunteers and five paid managers who work part-time to oversee the store. Volunteer Joan Simonetti was effusive in her reason for joining the crew there. "Every day is like Christmas. Unique things come in all the time. People are very generous with their donations. It's such a fun atmosphere here."

Dove Hellman, an assistant manager has been with the store for four months. "I love Hole in the Wall! It's my favorite place to find clothing – I started shopping here as a teenager. It's very friendly, and there are a lot of good deals here."

Jan vonHolzhausen agrees. "All the people are wonderful. Good spirits here." Michelle VonDambroski moved to Guilford in 2017 and has been with the store since 2018. "You meet a lot of different people shopping. The managers are very kind. And I found a brand-new pair of golf shoes for just

\$1.00!" The most unusual item she saw for sale was a bacon press. "I didn't know what it was actually," she laughed.

Laura Dagostino has volunteered for two years. "It's the people," she said right away. "Things move pretty quickly here. The price is reduced after one month, and then to a dollar a second month after that. The prom dresses are so inexpensive," she marveled. "And we sold a giant birdcage and two gorgeous chandeliers!"

The store attracts antique dealers and some individuals who buy 30-40 items from the dollar rack to resell. A master list keeps track of the inventory.

At the cash register, Linda Cappiello said she enjoyed "interacting with people and seeing what treasures they have. It's such a good cause, a good purpose this store."

Hole in the Wall attracts shoppers from out of town. Volunteers told of visitors from Texas, California, Maine, northern Connecticut, New Zealand and regulars from all points along the shoreline.

"It's a fun atmosphere," they all confirmed.

More information with hours the shop is open is found at [www.guilfordabc.org/hole-in-the-wall](http://www.guilfordabc.org/hole-in-the-wall). ▼