



ABC New Canaan

EDUCATION, EQUITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

These are the guiding principles of A Better Chance (ABC) New Canaan. Our commitment to these values is unwavering – across everything that we do. Our mission is to provide talented young men of color with transformative academic opportunities, support them in becoming well-rounded and confident leaders, and prepare them for success in college and life.

ABC New Canaan offers its scholars an exceptional education at one of the nation's top-rated public high schools with all living and academic expenses fully covered. We provide a nurturing environment with an extensive support system and endless opportunities for personal growth and exploration. ABC New Canaan is so much more than just a college-prep program. **We are a family**, made up of scholars, caring staff members, a dedicated board, welcoming host families, and passionate volunteers. Our scholars live and learn in a close-knit community where they feel safe, loved, and celebrated as individuals. From the day our scholars arrive until they graduate, they are supported in all aspects of their journeys to thrive, learn, and grow to prepare for a lifetime of achievement.



“The ABC New Canaan program opened doors that otherwise would have been closed to my son. It nurtured, supported, and prepared him for college and beyond. #forevergrateful”
— Eugenia Uwa-Omede



ABC NEW CANAAN AT A GLANCE

ABC New Canaan opened its doors nearly **50 years** ago in 1974.

92 Scholars have graduated from our program and gone to college.

We spend \$90,000/year to support each scholar's participation in our program.

Scholars pay \$0 to participate in ABC New Canaan and live at ABC House.

Beginning in 2024, ABC New Canaan will award each graduating senior a **\$10,000 scholarship** to support his college education.

ABC NEW CANAAN
A COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROGRAM

ABC New Canaan is an affiliate of A Better Chance National (ABC). Since 1963, ABC has been the preeminent resource for identifying, recruiting, educating, and developing leaders among underrepresented young people of color throughout the United States. ABC is the oldest and only national organization of its kind. It selects, prepares, and places gifted students of color in the country's most rigorous and prestigious independent day schools, boarding schools, and public schools.

ABC New Canaan is one of just 20 Community Public School Programs (CSP) within the ABC National umbrella, selected for its high-performing high school, dedicated community, and robust resources. **CSPs combine the best of both a boarding school and day school experience for students in a family environment.** Founded in 1974, ABC New Canaan is one of the oldest and most successful Community School Programs.

Our program welcomes scholars into the New Canaan community, where they:

Attend our nationally ranked high school and realize their academic potential

Live together family-style at our ABC House in downtown New Canaan under the care of our supportive resident director

Participate in all the athletic, artistic, volunteer, and extracurricular activities that New Canaan has to offer

Become a part of the local host family and have a home away from home for their four years in high school and beyond

There are no fees to participate in our program. We cover the costs of virtually everything for our scholars for all four years, including:

- Housing and meals at the ABC House
- School lunch
- Weekly allowances for scholars (\$25 per week)
- Sports uniforms and equipment, including sneakers, cleats, etc.
- Extra clothing and toiletries as needed
- After-school activities both in and outside of New Canaan High School
- Music lessons, sports training, extra-curricular programs, field trips, youth mission trips, and much more
- Weekend activities
- Summer enrichment programs
- Tutors
- Standardized test prep courses
- Private college advising
- College tours and applications
- Driver's education for scholars in their hometowns
- Transportation to and from home for school breaks and long weekends
- **\$10,000 college scholarship (\$2,500 per year) for each graduating ABC New Canaan Scholar**

NEW CANAAN HIGH SCHOOL (NCHS): AN EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION



New Canaan High School (NCHS) — the heart of our scholars' academic experience — consistently ranks among the top public high schools in the nation, with its graduates attending some of the country's most prestigious colleges and universities.

Beyond academics, NCHS is known for its highly supportive faculty and abundant extracurricular activities, from championship-winning team sports to fine/performing arts, community service — and everything in between. NCHS's 46-acre campus contains new turf fields and athletic facilities, a state-of-the-art performance venue and library, and a newly restored planetarium.

NCHS AT A GLANCE

- Ranked #2 best public high school in CT and best college prep public high school by Niche
- Ranked #320 best public schools in the US of 24,000
- Rated A+ for academics, teachers, and college prep by Niche
- In the top 1% of public schools for STEM in the nation
- Winner of National Library Program of the Year
- Superior athletics with 59 teams in 18 different sports
- \$28,443 spending per student
- 1,286 students in grades 9-12
- 11:1 student-teacher ratio

CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

NCHS offers a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, including:

- › 28 AP Courses offered across all subject areas
- › World language offered through five levels of French, Spanish, Mandarin, and Latin
- › College-level courses offered to academically motivated students through UConn Early College Experience
- › A wide array of electives across academic disciplines, visual and performing arts, career, and technical education, from AP Psychology and Principles of Business to Photography and Woodworking

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

NCHS offers over 80 co-curricular clubs and organizations that provide all students opportunities to pursue their interests, express their creativity, or try something new, including:

Model UN • Debate Club • Theater •
TV Broadcasting • Photography Club •
SLOBs (Service League of Boys) • Robotics Club



ATHLETICS

In 2023/24, NCHS will have 59 athletic teams in 18 different sports, offering many opportunities for students at all levels. School teams have won state championships in football, lacrosse, soccer, basketball, swimming, golf, tennis, track and field, and cross country, producing numerous NCAA and professional athletes. Boys' sports include:

Fall: Football, Soccer, and Cross country

Winter: Basketball, Wrestling, Ice Hockey, Indoor Track, Swimming/Diving, Skiing, and Squash

Spring: Baseball, Track, Golf, Tennis, Lacrosse, Volleyball, and Crew



WELCOMING FACULTY

NCHS boasts exceptional teachers and administration who wholeheartedly support our program and our scholars. One of ABC New Canaan's board members sits on the faculty at NCHS and personally looks after the scholars at school to ensure their academic success and well-being.

GUIDANCE AND COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS

The counseling office provides services to all students in academic guidance, college preparation, and social and emotional development. Starting in freshman year, experienced guidance counselors work with students to plan a robust college-preparatory curriculum and a four-year academic plan to develop their highest academic potential and prepare them for college. Seniors also participate in a six-week internship program to gain real work experience in a field of their choosing.

For more information about New Canaan High School, please visit: [www.https://www.ncps-k12.org/o/nchs](https://www.ncps-k12.org/o/nchs)



NEW CANAAN

New Canaan is a vibrant, picturesque town with a welcoming personality. One of the few “walking towns” in Fairfield County, New Canaan has a population of 22,000 and a strong sense of town pride. It is located an hour outside NYC and is easily accessible by train. New Canaan is one of the safest towns in the state and an idyllic place to go to high school.

New Canaan’s charming downtown has a wide variety of restaurants, bakeries, shops, and much more. Best of all, **everything is located just outside of ABC House’s doors.** New Canaan also boasts nature preserves, parks, sports fields galore, churches of all denominations, art centers, ice skating, a 60,000 sq. foot YMCA (all ABC New Canaan scholars have memberships), and a brand new state-of-the-art library. There are endless activities and community-wide festivals, including the famous holiday stroll, block parties, and the annual May Fair Carnival.

For nearly 50 years, the town of New Canaan has championed the mission of ABC New Canaan and supported its scholars. Our program is funded 100% by the generosity of local residents, volunteers, foundations, businesses, New Canaan High School, and The Board of Education.





ABC HOUSE

ABC House is a warm and supportive place for our scholars to live, learn, grow, and form lifelong friendships. Welcoming and comfortable, ABC House is truly a family **HOME** for our scholars, resident director, and tutors. Our house is in the perfect in-town location, and the high school is just 1.4 miles away, making for a quick bus or bike ride.

A hub of activity and enrichment, ABC House features a great communal space downstairs, a comfortable living room with a TV, video games, and a piano. Our house also offers designated study areas and nightly tutoring where each scholar has his own desk, Apple desktop, and a laptop from school. Our kitchen is fully stocked, and our dining area is bright and spacious. Best of all, our wonderful cook, Beth, prepares dinner for our scholars and resident staff, who eat together, family style, every night.

Upstairs are our scholars' bedrooms, which they decorate as their own, perfect for relaxing and recharging. We also have a 3rd-floor lounge and tons of workout equipment in our garage. Our house accommodates up to eight scholars.

"ABC has been like a family to me since I stepped foot in the House. I immediately recognized how welcoming and caring everyone was. I feel nothing but blessed to be a part of such a great and well-developed community. My favorite part about ABC House is that everyone is treated equally and respectfully. The house has such a great atmosphere, with plenty of fun. My four years here have been incredible."

— Javier Perez-Soto,
ABC New Canaan Scholar, Class of 2023
University of Richmond



ABC NEW CANAAN STAFF

Jamie Boris **Executive Director**

Jamie is a passionate and dedicated leader who brings over 25 years of nonprofit leadership and experience to ABC New Canaan. Responsible for overseeing all facets of the organization, Jamie drives the fundraising, operations, and engagement with the board of directors. Prior to joining ABC New Canaan, Jamie was an independent non-profit consultant, and she also spent 11 years at The Ovarian Cancer Research Fund (OCRF) in New York as the organization's first executive director. Under her direction, she transformed a start-up charity into the country's leading private funder of ovarian cancer research, raising over \$34 million.

Previously, Jamie spent four years as Director of Special Projects at Educators for Social Responsibility and designed conflict resolution and diversity programs for New York City public schools and community organizations. She holds a BA in American Culture from Northwestern University.

Jamie has lived in New Canaan for 20 years with her husband and their two children (both of whom have gone through the New Canaan Public School System). She is an active volunteer in her community and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Domus Kids.



Khanisha Denise Moore **Resident Director**

Khanisha joined ABC New Canaan in 2020 and is a natural-born teacher, mentor, and leader. As Resident Director, she is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and guidance of the scholars and management of the ABC House. She diligently works to provide a safe and supportive environment to ensure the scholars' well-being and growth.

Armed with both a BA and a Master's degree in Management and Organizational Leadership, Khanisha is currently working towards a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership at the University of Bridgeport. Her journey in education began in 2016, serving as an Academic Advisor and Tutor with Upward Bound in college. After graduation, she spent two years in AmeriCorps and volunteered at Great Oaks Charter School in Bridgeport as a 1:1 Behavior Support, Tutor, and Teaching Assistant. After just one year, she was hired full-time as a Dean of Students at Great Oaks. In 2017, Khanisha began working with children with autism as an Applied Behavioral Analyst while completing her master's degree.

Currently, she is an On-Track Coordinator (Transition Specialist) in Stamford Public Schools. Khanisha is a proud member of the French-speaking Baptist Church of Norwalk. She serves as The Music Ministry Coordinator, directs three choirs, and is The President of The Young Adult Association.



Kendrick Constant **Resident Program Advisor**

As Resident Program Advisor, Kendrick provides tutoring, enrichment programming, and mentoring at ABC New Canaan. He also serves as our Alumni coordinator. Kendrick joined ABC New Canaan in 2020 and has a degree in Finance and Accounting. Throughout his college years, he dedicated himself to positively impacting the lives of his fellow students by serving as the Black Student Union President and M.A.L.E.S (Men Achieving Leadership Excellence and Success) President. In these roles, he fostered student engagement, volunteerism, and personal development in these positions. Kendrick also worked as a Peer Advisor, supporting underprivileged students' transition to college from high school. Kendrick currently works at Northwestern Mutual and is an active volunteer in his community, helping youth unlock their full potential.



Matthew Dorissant **Resident Tutor**

Matthew is the newest member of our team and brings over 17 years of direct work experience with youth and adolescents to the organization. Matthew grew up with a strong family background, fostering his passion for serving today's youth. With a degree in Human Services, he is the founder of Heart and Smarts Tutoring and is an exceptionally talented educator, mentor, and academic advisor. Matthew is currently the director of the drop-in center at Domus Kids. Previously, Matthew served as the Senior Education Director at Norwalk Grassroots Tennis & Education and the Summer Camp and Education Director at the Boys and Girls Club in Stamford, CT.



LIFE AT ABC NEW CANAAN: BE YOURSELF – AND BELONG TO SOMETHING BIGGER

Each of our scholars brings his own talents, passions, and interests to ABC New Canaan. We celebrate our scholars as individuals with unique strengths and personalized needs. They are remarkable young men. **Every day is filled with opportunities for exploration and personal development.** These activities foster a sense of camaraderie and brotherhood, instill essential life skills such as leadership and adaptability, and equip them with the tools they need to succeed.

OUR CURRENT SCHOLARS



John Baluyut
Junior

Hometown: Bronx, NY



Christopher Feliz
Freshman

Hometown: Methuen, MA



Yanfer Martinez
Sophomore

Hometown: Bridgeport, CT



Dariel Ortiz
Freshman

Hometown: Bronx, NY



Kian Ragaza
Sophomore

Hometown: Bronx, NY



Henyerson Tolentino
Freshman

Hometown: Bronx, NY

“ABC House is a loving and energized house where we do our work and have fun with each other. The high school is great, and the people there are welcoming, making the experience of moving to a new school and town more enjoyable and loving. The program also provides us with many resources like tutors and college advisors. The high school and house are amazing places, and I am so happy here in New Canaan.”

— John Baluyut, Junior

“What I like about ABC is that anyone can be a part of it if they just work hard and be diligent. I feel lucky to be able to experience and get A Better Chance and all it comes with. I couldn’t be happier. The high school and students are great as well. The ABC house is just like my home. I feel so welcomed and comfortable, and everyone here is so nice and friendly. Last year, I reached a new level of maturity and have become a step closer to becoming the man that I can say I am proud to be. I am excited for what this year brings.” —Yanfer Martinez, Sophomore

“ABC has allowed me to grow as a person, and I appreciate the time and effort they put in to help me learn and study as a scholar. New Canaan High School is an amazing place for academic and social interactions with peers and teachers alike. From joining music organizations and playing school sports to studying hard, I was able to grow and become a better person last year. The ABC house is also a great place of friendship, support, and help. I love the community that I have here. I am also really proud of my increased self-confidence thanks to my Host family and the guys at ABC House.” —Kian Ragaza, Sophomore

ACADEMIC SUCCESS & COLLEGE ADVISING

Academic success is our primary goal, and we support our scholars every step of the way. All scholars have a dedicated Academic Advisor and two Resident Tutors who track their academic growth daily through the PowerSchool, which documents all academic activity from homework assignments and quizzes to tests and final exam scores. Scholars have mandatory study hall Monday through Thursday night from 7-10 p.m, supervised by our Resident Tutors who provide individualized support to help our scholars succeed in their classes.

As scholars enter their junior year, they receive intensive college access services and map out a two-year plan to gain admission to the college of their dreams. ABC New Canaan covers all costs associated with these services, including:

- › Enrolling scholars in SAT/ACT prep courses through the premier testing organization in the county
- › Engaging an outside expert college advisor to guide our scholars through college application and selection process
- › Assisting our scholars and their families through the financial aid process to secure scholarships and assistance
- › Bringing scholars on college tours and visits during the year

ABC New Canaan boasts a 100% graduation rate. Our scholars have attended prestigious colleges and universities, including Yale, Cornell, Boston College, NYU, Villanova, Georgetown, Denison, Northeastern, Boston University, Colgate, and Tufts.



Colgate University



Yale

UNIVERSITY OF
RICHMOND

BOSTON COLLEGE



S Syracuse University



SOCIAL SUPPORT AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Recognizing the challenges all high school students face, and the additional challenges of being a student of color in a predominately white environment, we provide our scholars a safe environment and essential social and emotional support. A licenced social worker meets weekly with our scholars in a group setting and individually to help them navigate the complexities of adolescence, cope with the pressures of academic and teenage life, make positive choices, and develop a strong sense of self.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

ABC New Canaan scholars participate in various sports and after-school activities to broaden their horizons, develop leadership, social, and athletic skills, and get involved at school and in the community. **Every day is filled with opportunities for exploration and personal development.** Our staff works with scholars to select these activities and support their participation. Scholars often begin a new sport or extra-curricular activity without prior experience and emerge as enthusiastic and valuable contributors and teammates. From captains of Varsity sports teams and leading men in school plays to saxophone players in the school band and leaders in the local youth group, our scholars have done it all.

We also bring special speakers and host enrichment activities at ABC House -from cooking classes to managing finances.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

ABC New Canaan scholars participate in one or two summer enrichment programs to enhance their educational studies, pursue an interest, and maintain momentum between academic years. These programs also allow scholars to explore courses of potential interest in college and careers and provide exposure to a college environment. Our team works with scholars to find dynamic summer opportunities. Recent scholars have studied in Italy for a month, participated in one to three-week courses in STEM, business, medicine, and coding at major universities nationwide, and trained at sports academies.



HOST FAMILIES

A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Our host families are a cornerstone of our program and essential members of our ABC family. Host families open their homes and hearts to our scholars, giving them **a home away from home** and helping them feel part of the New Canaan community. The boys spend every Sunday afternoon and night with their host families and one full weekend a month. The generous gift of time and care given by our host families is fundamental to the success of our program, and our scholars and their host families form lifelong friendships and bonds.



"The love I feel at ABC House is also felt with my Host Family. They have been wonderfully supportive during my four years and make me feel like I'm a member of their family, a real second son. I love spending weekends and special time with them." — Javier Perez-Soto, ABC New Canaan, Class of 2023, University of Richmond (Host Family: Michele and Kevin Salmini)





“ABC New Canaan positively influenced my life and set me on a path to success. I gained meaningful academic and leadership skills, tried many new activities, and built long-lasting relationships. I’m proud to be an alum and mentor younger scholars in the program.”

—Devaun Bovell,
ABC New Canaan scholar, Class of 2013
B.A., Boston College,
M.S.Ed, University of Pennsylvania

OUR ALUMNI & LIFE AFTER GRADUATION

When ABC New Canaan scholars graduate, they are academically prepared, intellectually curious, and ready for college. They leave New Canaan High School as well-rounded and confident leaders. Because of the different activities, programs, and experiences the boys have had during their four years at high school, they enter college with a wide variety of interests and skills to explore further.

The spirit of togetherness, bonding, and belonging the scholars have in the house stays with them always. They are brothers for life and part of the ABC family forever.

Our scholar graduates rise to become influential leaders in their careers and their communities, while staying proudly involved with ABC New Canaan. They actively support our scholars and often return to visit ABC House and their host families. Three of our alumni are on our Board of Directors.



ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ABC New Canaan accepts students from Massachusetts to Washington, D.C., with family incomes of less than \$150,000. You are eligible to apply if you:

Identify as a **person of color**: Black/African American, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, or Multiracial

Are **male**. ABC New Canaan is a boys-only program.

Are a citizen or permanent resident of the **United States**

Are currently in **grade 8**

Consistently perform at or above grade level in **math and English**

Have an overall **academic average** of a B+ or better

Rank in the top **ten percent** of your class

Participate in **extracurricular** activities, both in and outside of school

Demonstrate **leadership potential** in school or through activities outside of school

Receive good teacher **recommendations**

Are of upstanding **character**

Thrive in a **group environment**

Are **eager to be part** of the New Canaan community and live at ABC House

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Report Card: Families will need to submit a current year/most recently issued report card

Transcript: A transcript showing the student's grade issued for the previous year

Test Scores: SSAT or ISEE test scores

Proof of Income: Families will need to submit one of the following:

- ▶ The first two pages of all 1040 forms for the family's most recent tax returns
- ▶ Any employer-issued W2s
- ▶ Any 1099s for miscellaneous income

Recommendations: Each student must submit a letter of recommendation from their guidance counselor, math and English language teachers.

There are two ways to apply to ABC New Canaan:

You may apply through ABC National by [clicking HERE](#).

You may apply directly to ABC New Canaan. Please send an email to Jamie Boris to request an application at jboris@abchousenc.org. Completed applications are due by December 31, 2023.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Thank you for your interest in ABC New Canaan. Please contact Jamie Boris at jboris@abchousenc.org or 917-842-5844 with any questions or to schedule a visit to ABC House. We hope to meet you soon!