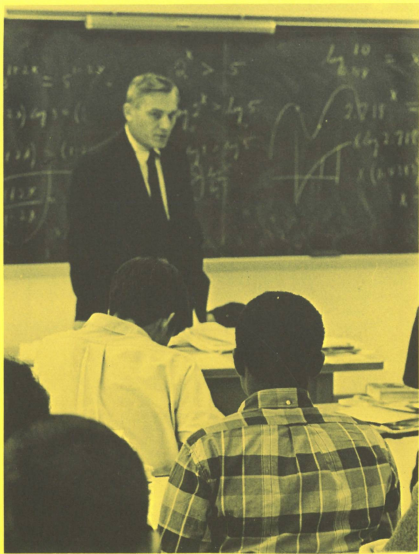


The Dresden ABC Program Hanover, New Hampshire



A Better Chance for Disadvantaged Youth

November, 1967

Dear Fellow Resident:

During the past year eight boys attended the Hanover High School in the "ABC" program. This program is designed to provide "A Better Chance" for underprivileged boys of good character and above-average academic potential to get a good high school education and a better start in life. Our program is now in its second year with ten boys attending.

Hanover was the first community in the nation where the ABC program was extended from private preparatory schools to a public high school. The program was sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Rockefeller Foundation made the publication of this booklet possible. Andover, Massachusetts has started their own program, with other communities planning programs next year.

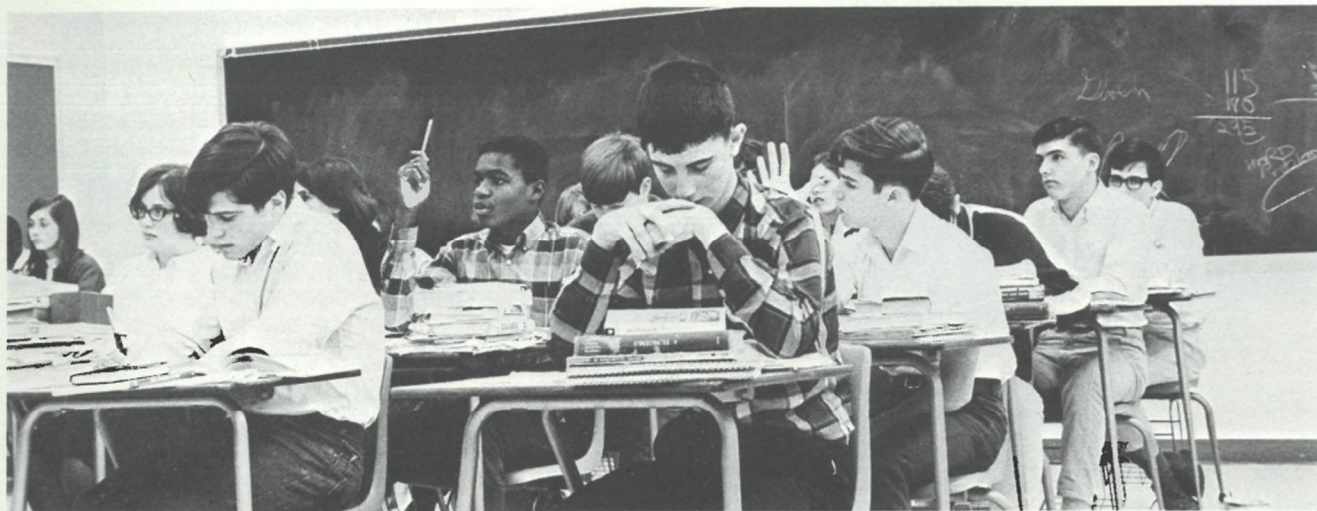
Many already have helped the program to be successful (meals, donations, etc.) and we need the support of even more people to insure its success in the future, as this is indeed a program this area can be proud of. We have therefore decided to form the Friends of ABC, who will give moral support to these students being educated in the Dresden School District. We of ABC plan to keep all friends informed through monthly newsletters and newspaper articles.

We invite you to become a friend of ABC - a friend who is in favor of the program and is willing to support it in whatever way he can. This membership is free. Please fill in the return card and return it as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

Ricky Hoekstra, Hanover
Margery Gass, Hanover
Lois Peeler, Norwich
Maggie Thoms, Norwich

Friends of ABC Committee



A Better Chance

The Challenge and the Opportunity

Howard Smith was born and had lived most of his fifteen years in rural Alabama. As he progressed through the schooling available to him in his home environment, it was obvious to his teachers that Howard was bright, capable, and responsive to opportunity — and yet because of the schooling available to him Howard was falling farther and farther behind his contemporaries who live where the educational environment is designed to encourage the able and the ambitious.

Fortunately, for Howard Smith, he had parents and friends who encouraged him to look beyond his home community for educational opportunities. He became one of more than 2,000 applicants for a program fittingly called *A Better Chance*. He was chosen and came north for a summer of intensive preparation on a college campus. He did well in his summer study and was selected for the opportunity to complete his secondary education in a public school college preparatory environment, along with seven others from his summer ABC group. Other ABC students from his summer program and from four other similar programs were enrolled as scholarship students in excellent preparatory schools. For Howard and his ABC friends the possibilities for going to highly competitive colleges, previously non-existent, are now excellent.

Unfortunately, for every Howard Smith who is selected for ABC there are several hundred applicants who must be turned away. And there are thousands of others who could easily be

applicants but who are not sought out. Although the ABC summer programs can be initiated and financed to handle the demand, there are not enough spaces in preparatory schools or opportunities in good public school environments now to take care of these students when they successfully complete the summer studies.

The Dresden ABC Program in Hanover, N. H., an experimental extension of the ABC program into the public schools, has demonstrated that ABC boys can thrive in a select high school community and that the community derives benefits too. Of course, it hasn't always been easy going, for the boys as well as many others involved in the project. But the boys, and the community, have accepted the challenge.

The challenge is there for other communities with good school systems. Would they be willing to consider giving boys from disadvantaged backgrounds the advantages they want their own youth to have? Do they feel the commitment to the greater community of man that participation in such a public school ABC program connotes? Are they capable of extending and realizing such a program?

This brief booklet is an introduction to the Dresden project and an invitation to learn more from those who administer it.

The challenge and the opportunity are both everpresent. Each community must make its own decision to grasp and to give.



The Dresden ABC Program

Background

In the summer of 1963 Dartmouth College initiated the ABC summer program with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. The first group of boys numbered 55. Fifty four completed the program, and 47 were recommended to the preparatory schools willing to include them in their student bodies. Several others, not recommended, also were admitted by the preparatory schools. Most of these students are successfully completing their high school years in the competitive preparatory school environment and are now being admitted to top-notch colleges.

In succeeding years the Dartmouth ABC program grew to 80 boys and similar ABC programs were begun on four other college campuses, including one for girls. But the growth was limited by the number of openings available to ABC students in the cooperating preparatory schools. For this reason the Dresden ABC Program, placing eight boys in the tenth and eleventh grades of Hanover High School, was initiated on an experimental basis by the residents of the community. This program is financed with funds allotted by the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity.

The Selection of the ABC Students

The eight boys from Atlanta, Birmingham, Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, Richmond, and Savannah were chosen by their school authorities or community leaders to apply for the A Better Chance program. Each boy was in some sense a risk. He had been poorly educated because of what was offered to him, but each showed signs of academic promise and personal ambition. Each boy so nominated was screened by the Independent Schools Talent Search Program, which recruits the students for both the private and public school branches of the ABC program. Before he entered the ABC summer program, the boy finally selected was guaranteed an opportunity to complete his studies at Hanover High School if he successfully completed his summer work.

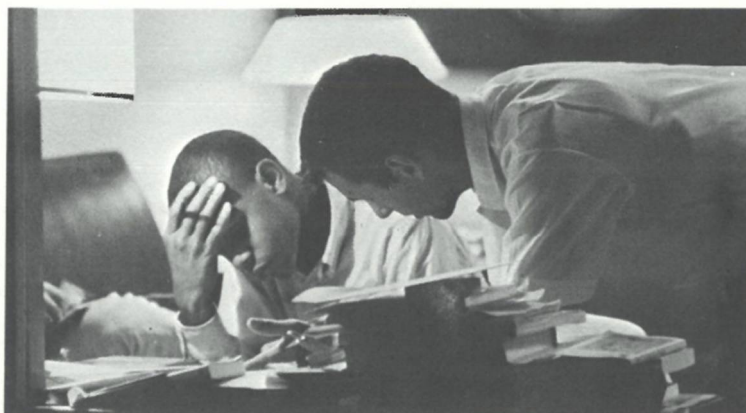
A Summer of Preparation

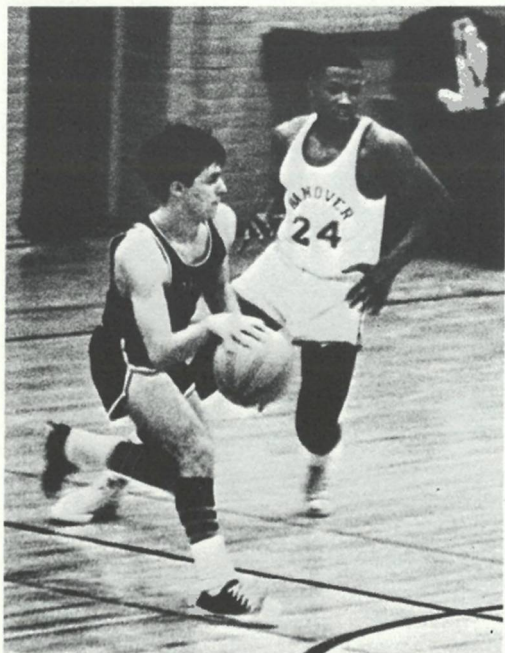
The eight weeks on the Dartmouth campus during July and August were busy ones for the ABC boys. This period of study could be their break in life; and they knew it.

The schedule they experienced was a rigorous one, flexible when necessary to meet the needs of the individual boys, but concentrating on the mastery of the essentials of good writing, reading, and mathematical thinking. Classes were small, permitting attention to the needs of each boy individually, and filled most of the morning hours. Teachers for Dartmouth ABC were picked for their demonstrated abilities and for their interest in dealing with disadvantaged boys.

Following a post-lunch study hour the boys were busily involved in sports, hikes, and other special activities such as art, instrumental music, choral singing, and dramatics. Evenings were spent studying, with the help of the Dartmouth undergraduate resident-tutors who lived with them. The Dartmouth students counselled those who had problems and acted as housemaster, coach, friend, and model.

Acceptance by Hanover High School was contingent upon successful completion of the program and upon recommendation by the ABC summer faculty.





ABC Boys at Hanover High School

The eight ABC boys at Hanover High School have the same varied interests you would find in any group of teenagers. And like their contemporaries who are also preparing for college studies, they spend the greater part of each day in school or doing homework.

But life for the ABC boys is not all studying, although it is fair to say that they are expected to work harder at their homework than most of their contemporaries. Six of the eight boys at Hanover High School play on the school's athletic teams. One is very much involved in art, and two take music lessons.

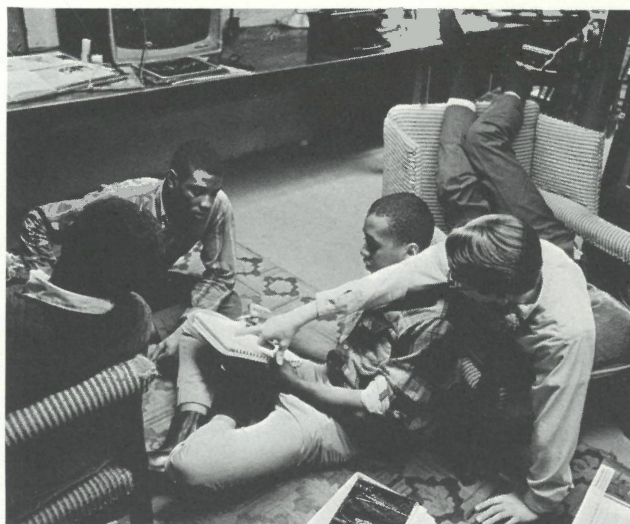
One was named to the student board for the Teen Canteen. Another is on the Youth Fellowship Board, and one was a semi-finalist in the New Hampshire-wide election of a youth governor for the state.



Community Activities

The Dresden experience has demonstrated that the ABC students possess the maturity to make a smooth transition into the life of the community. However, their presence has been in no sense a dramatic one, but rather has fostered an easy exchange of ideas and a natural broadening of outlook.

The bonds between a boy and Dresden have been strengthened in many ways: guests from the community dining with the boys in their Hanover home, Wednesday dinner with the "host" family, and invitations to Sunday dinner at homes of families in the community. Church services, church youth groups, community social events, and attendance at various Dartmouth College events and programs provide other pleasant and meaningful contacts.



A Dresden Residence for ABC

At the close of each school day the ABC boys return "home" to the residence they share with the Thomas Mikula family and two Dartmouth College undergraduates. Within easy walking distance of the high school, and right at the edge of the Dartmouth campus, this comfortable house rented from the college has recreational areas within and about it.

Living closely with the boys and sharing their moments of exhilaration as well as the problems of adjustment are resident-teacher Thomas Mikula and his wife Elva. The Mikulas have two children. Mr. Mikula teaches mathematics in Hanover High School and is the director of both the Dresden ABC program and the Dartmouth summer ABC Program.

The two Dartmouth students, one from St. Louis and the other from Chicago, are tutors, friends, and models for the ABC boys. Although both students are active in campus life they make the time to aid Mr. Mikula in helping the boys meet the academic and social challenges of the new school experience. Friendly association with the students reminds the ABC boys that college entrance is an attainable goal.

The Dresden ABC experience has shown that in this warm and encouraging atmosphere each boy finds the support necessary to maintain his own identity within the new community while preserving his ties to the old.



Dresden Community Support for ABC

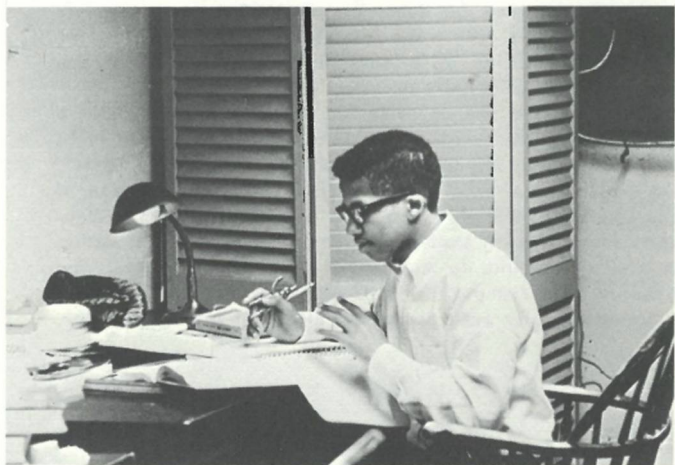
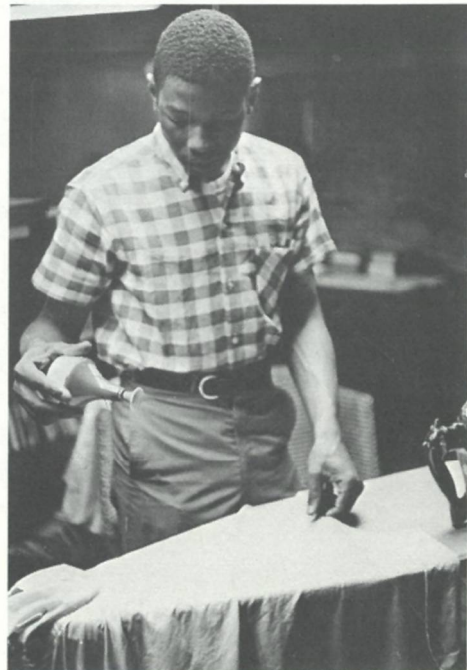
The Dresden ABC program is succeeding in its goals because of the thoughtful support of an interested and diversified group of Dresden citizens, young and old.

The program is operated by three committees:

(1.) The Board of Directors, made up of representatives of local institutions such as the school, Dartmouth College, health services, and churches, coordinates all the community efforts, is responsible for the budget, and, through the resident-teacher, supervises the daily operation of the program.

(2.) A second committee, associated with the Board of Directors, is composed of high school student leaders. They have helped develop school and community relationships to make the most of the opportunities which the program, the school, and the community have to offer each other.

(3.) A third committee is made up of "host" families, one for each boy. Each host family invites its student to dinner weekly and, in close cooperation with the resident-teacher, concerns itself with the student's welfare.





An Invitation to Other Communities

The success of ABC boys in the nation's leading preparatory schools and now in the Dresden School District community has shown what can be done. The important factor now is growth, and it can only come from communities like Hanover which will be willing to accept, guide, and train these disadvantaged, but potentially exciting, young people.

Seldom will the chance arise for a community to make a more direct contribution to the welfare of all our citizens, or to have a more lasting impact.

An ABC student who has the capacity and the courage to make his way in a high school in a predominantly white community will take away confidence, self-esteem, and the education that will enable him to succeed in college and in life. The community that accepts the ABC challenge not only provides the opportunity for such accomplishment but also gives some-

thing special to the education of its own children.

The Rockefeller Foundation has granted funds for the development of ABC programs in other communities. The project is a flexible one. The directors of the Dresden ABC program are eager to provide detailed information to any community wishing to investigate more fully the possibilities of participating in the ABC program. Won't you join with us in this urgent effort to equalize educational opportunity?

We invite you to provide A Better Chance. For information contact:

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Hanover, New Hampshire 03755
Telephone: Area Code 603
646-2540

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The people mentioned above will be willing to answer any questions that you might have.