



December, 2010

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!**

Wednesday, December 15	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-a-Long
Thursday, December 16	4 Day Classes Holiday Sing-a-Long
Friday, December 17	2 & 5 Day Classes Holiday Sing-a-Long
December 20 - January 31	Holiday Break
Monday, January 3 2011	Classes resume, 2011-12 Enrollment begins

Notes from the Headmaster

Many holiday traditions from a variety of faiths include light from lamps or candles or stars and use light as a metaphor for faith, understanding and peace. At Berrybrook, teachers know that each child has their own little light. It is a glow from within that contains the temperament, talents and traits that create a unique and special person. Berrybrook teachers have many goals for their students, but perhaps the most important goal is for children to become aware of their own little light that shines inside them. Classrooms and activities are created to help children learn to know themselves and grow into their own person. Teachers ask questions and use phrases with the children to promote their self confidence and sense of self - "What do you think? How do you like your work? What could you say to your friends to let them know how you feel? You must be very proud of yourself! Give yourself a pat on the back! You worked really hard on that project. Do you have an idea? I can see you really like to paint (build, sing, draw, run...)." All of these questions and responses are designed to help a child develop an identity and a strong voice. As preschoolers, children are just beginning to see themselves as separate from their parents and it is a dynamic, exciting and challenging process. It is natural for parents and teachers to worry about what we are teaching our children, about how we are helping to shape them, about how they will measure up to our expectations, but we must also protect and preserve the unique light in each child. We must cherish their unique spirit and appreciate that special little light and let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Have a happy and relaxing holiday season,

Pat Keeley

First Year Program News

The month of November flew by at Berrybrook. The first year classrooms started out the month exploring tools and making wood collage artwork. Throughout the classroom there were opportunities for the children to use carpentry tools - plastic and real alike! As the month progressed, the children had discussions about helping others. Classes decorated boxes to collect donations to help animals living at the Kingston animal shelter. For the last two weeks before the holiday, our focus turned towards Thanksgiving and all that it encompasses - Pilgrims and Native Americans, thinking about what we are thankful for, and turkeys!

Looking into the month of December, there will be excitement in the air and many glitter-covered projects! The classes focus on light (candles and stars) and how light is celebrated with many holidays this time of year. We will begin with Hanukkah - making potato latkes as a special treat. The last two weeks, the children will be working on gifts for their families and learning some traditional holiday songs for our annual sing-a-long on our last day of class. Please be looking out for your invitation in your child's cubbie.

Potato Latkes

6 Potatoes
4 Tablespoons flour
1 Teaspoon Salt
1 Egg

Peel and shred potatoes into a bowl. This can be done with a cheese grater or food processor. Add flour, salt, and egg and mix together.

Form mixture into table-spoon sized patties. Cook in hot oil until golden.
Enjoy!

Hannukah Latkes

"Take a potato – pat, pat, pat
Grate it and make it flat, flat, flat
Fry it in a pan with fat, fat, fat
Hannukah Latkes clap, clap, clap!"

We wish
everyone Happy
Holidays!

Mrs. Capasso
Mrs. Delano
Mrs. Dunn
Mrs. La Forest
Mrs. Piccuito
Mrs. Pisani



Second Year Program News

Although a we had a damp and cold day at Plimoth Plantation this year, the rain managed to hold off for our exploration through the Pilgrim and Native villages. Thank you to all who were able to chaperone our visit. We have continued our learning of the Pilgrims and Wampanoag Tribe through books, pictures, and discussions of what we learned at our visit. Children used the "talking feather" at circle time to describe what they saw and learned there. Their observations were reinforced through replicas of the plantation that they each created. Creating their own Pilgrim home, wetus, and mishoons in a three dimensional village was a great culmination of the experience. We ended our month with a Thanksgiving feast, complete with the baking of good food and the making of home-made butter.

December is upon us, and with that comes a very busy time at Berrybrook. Children learn about family traditions through song, dance, art, and literature.

Very special projects are done and presented as gifts for the families. Berrybrook has many traditions that the children will also learn. The importance of giving is a focus of learning, and the children learn that giving doesn't always come from material things. Giving can be as simple as, offering a helping hand, a kind word or gesture, or making a home-made gift. All second year classes prepare a special holiday sing-a-long for their parents. This is their gift of music to you.

The holiday sing-a-longs will be presented at the following times:

4 Day Room 1: December 16th at 1:15

4 Day Room 2: December 16th at 2:15

5 Day Room 2: December 17th at 9:15

On the day of the sing-a-long, parents are to bring their child to the classroom at arrival time. At the conclusion of the sing a long, all are welcomed back to the classroom for a holiday snack that the children have prepared. After the snack is enjoyed together, our day will end and the holiday break will begin.

The 4 Day - Room 1 class will be welcoming a new member in 2011. Sophia Lee will joining students and teachers in the afternoon. Please join us in welcoming the Lee family to Berrybrook.

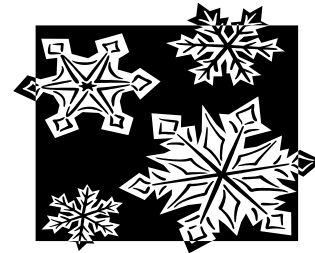
Happy Holidays to you and your families. Enjoy your time together.

The Second Year Teachers,
Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Neal,
Mrs. Rosen and Mrs. Swan

Welcome

Annabelle Najarian in the
5 Day Room 2 Class has a
new baby brother,
Hank!

Congratulations
to the Najarian family!



Snow Cancellation

Berrybrook will cancel school if Duxbury Schools or the Silver Lake School District close due to a snow emergency. Please watch the news for cancellation notices. Parents may call the school to check the voice mail message if they are unsure about a snow cancellation.

Enrollment 2011-2012

During the holiday break, all current Berrybrook parents will receive re-enrollment information for 2011-2012. January is the month reserved for current and alumni families to submit an application.

Our goal is to meet the needs of all of our current families and every effort will be made to accommodate parent preference. However, parents should be aware that Berrybrook reserves the right to make class placement based on the needs of the children and the composition of the group.

The Berrybrook Board of Directors sets aside funds for tuition assistance through the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in receiving information about financial assistance please contact Mrs. Keeley.

Parents Association News

It is hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us already. The BPA calendar is filling up with wonderful enrichment activities for our children, opportunities for parents to get together, events to give back to the community, and for Berrybrook families to enjoy some winter fun as well!

Enrichment:

The enrichment programs for our children begin in January. We are very excited to plan some great experiences for the children including science, movement, language, and music programs.

Community Outreach:

The Festival of Trees is underway! An eight foot tree has been purchased for Berrybrook and our theme will be "The Mitten" by Jan Brett. Each classroom will be decorating ornaments to adorn the tree. The Festival of Trees takes place Dec 3-5 and we hope that all of you will visit Plimoth Plantation to see this spectacular tree! This year, we are also sponsoring a decorated holiday room at the King Caesar House Christmas Tour. Please stop in and see the beautiful room Dec 11-12. For more information, please check their web site <http://www.duxburyhistory.org/events.htm>

Pilgrims Hope is our community service event. We have posted a sign with suggested items needed for the shelter, and a collection box has been placed at the BPA table. Please make your donation by Dec. 13th to ensure that the shelter receives these much needed items in time for the Holidays!

Family Fun:

Once the wintry weather hits, the BPA would like to host a sledding party at Berrybrook. Since Mother Nature is unpredictable, notification will be via email.

Apparel:

The opportunity to purchase Berrybrook apparel is ongoing. We have decided to

clean house and sell all we can at super reduced prices. The long sleeve anniversary shirts are \$2 a piece. All other items, cap and t-shirts will be sold for \$5 each. Please let me know if you would like to buy anything. We have an inventory list on the BPA table.

Our **next BPA meeting** will be on **Thursday January 20 @ 7pm**. We hope that you will join us to share your ideas and get involved in upcoming events.

We wish the entire Berrybrook community a wonderful holiday season!

Mimi Gallagher, President
Pam Campbell, Vice-President
Heather Canty, Secretary

Parent Discussion Group

The PDG on November 18th focused on support for Grandparents, Nannies, and Caregivers & Babysitters. In today's world children are cared for in many different environments. It was an opportunity for any adults to come together and discuss how we can support parents and each other for the well being of the children. Many informative handouts are available at the Parent's Discussion Group nook (top of the cubbies in the hallway.)

December is a time of year when parenting skills can be truly challenged. Setting appropriate expectations for yourself and your family may help to keep your Holidays happy days.

Hope to see you at the next Parent Discussion Group. The topic and date will be announced in the January 2011 Berrybrook Newsletter.

Happy New Year!
Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Delano and
Mrs. LaForest

Berrybrook Board of Directors

What Do You Remember?

In one of our albums is a photograph of our son, Brendan, receiving his “diploma” from preschool, circa 1980. I called Brendan to tap his memory:

Do you remember the name of your preschool? *No.*

Do you remember where it was? *In the basement of a church.*

Do you remember any of your teachers' names? *No.* Any of the activities? *No, not really.*

Kat, my daughter-in-law, (somewhat chattier in her answers) thought she remembered the name of her preschool: *I know it sounds odd but it was called the High High School.* She, too, could not recite her teachers' names, even the one who had to extract a Kleenex from her nose—the only activity she remembered. Minutes after our conversation, Kat sent this text: *I just Googled the school...it was called the Heiskell School!*

Most of us—at least those of us who did not attend Berrybrook—typically remember very little about our preschool. All the more extraordinary therefore is the recent e-mail published in the October Newsletter from Nancy Johnson, Berrybrook '66, narrating her multiple and vivid memories. It was, after all, 44 years ago. Clearly, Berrybrook provided a memorable experience for Nancy and her four siblings.

Teachers at all levels, but especially those of the youngest students, have precious few ways of knowing how well they are doing, how much of a difference they are making, or how many students will remember them at all. It is especially heartening, then, that Nancy has circled back though time to

thank Mr. and Mrs. Mann and Miss Wheeler, to acknowledge their influence in enlivening her curiosity and love of learning, and to express her appreciation for the staff and teachers at Berrybrook today for all they do to keep this vision of early childhood education so special.

Carol Gibbon,
Berrybrook Board of Directors

Thank you!

Thank you so much to all of the families who donated items for the Kingston Animal Shelter. Mrs. O'Neil will be bringing your generous gifts to the shelter, but there will be a box and a jar for pennines for the next two weeks. Thank you again for making the animals very happy.

Tuition payment #5 is now due.

2 Day \$ 235.00

3 Day \$ 345.00

4 Day \$ 428.00

5 Day \$ 505.00

Annual tuition is divided into 9 payments. Payment #1 is the non-refundable payment due with your enrollment agreement.

Payments #2 - #9 are due the first of the month from September through April with no tuition payment in May.



The Reading Mother

**You may have tangible wealth untold:
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
Richer than I you can never be –
I had a mother who read to me.**

- by Strickland Gillilan

From *Best Loved Poems of the American People* (Gillilan, cited in Trelease, 1986, p. vi).

Professional Development at Berrybrook

At Berrybrook, the Board of Directors provides for the continual professional development of teachers and staff. All staff receive training in CPR and First Aid before school starts in September. All staff are members of the NAEYC and receive its monthly publication *Young Child* which provides articles about current best practice in early childhood education. Three days are set aside during each school year for teachers to improve their skills in areas that will have a direct impact on their work with children. On November 2nd, we had an in-house training on Sensory Integration provided by South Shore Therapies. Our senses provide us with a great deal of information that our nervous system is constantly focusing, screening, sorting and responding to. Children have to organize all that input in order to participate successfully in our classrooms. Beth Boudry OTR/L, our trainer, gave us the following example of what complex interactions must happen when a teacher says, "Johnny, put your coat on."

Children must:

- Focus attention on the teacher and and hear what she is saying.

- Screen out other incoming information going on around them.

- See the coat and adequately plan on how to begin.

- See the armhole openings and sense muscle and joint position to know where to put their arms in relation to the coat sleeves.

- Feel with their touch awareness that the coat is on the body correctly.

- Zip or button the coat using motor planing, touch awareness and fine motor skills.

All of the above has to happen for Johnny to put on his coat! Our Sensory Integration discussion focused on helping children whose may have difficulty integrating input from their senses.

In addition to in-house training, Berrybrook teachers take advantage of conferences, workshops and trainings offered in the community. Several of us recently attended the talk by Kathy Hirsh-Pasek - "Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children *Really* Learn and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less." through the Duxbury Parent Connection. (The top ten ideas from the book are on the following page.) This Wednesday, at an after school meeting, we will have training on nutrition for young children.

All of the staff want to thank the Board and our families for their support of our professional development efforts. The more we learn as educators, the better the experience we can offer the children. We are privileged to work in an environment where personal and professional development is so valued.

- Mrs. Keeley

Top 10 Takeaways - Kathy Hirsh-Pasek
Einstein Never Used Flashcards: How Our Children *Really* Learn and
Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less

www.theparentconnection.org

November 4, 2010

1. Free play and guided play help children develop critical 21st century skills: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, content, creative innovation, and confidence
2. Think “less is more” when it comes to children’s scheduled activities. Too many structured, organized activities can crowd out valuable time children need to engage in self-initiated play.
3. How you learn is as important as what you learn. Research shows that when children are more actively engaged and learn through play,
 - at age 5, the children do better in reading and math; better in social tasks that require positive peer play; better in tasks that require attention to another person’s beliefs
 - at age 12, these children like school more; are more creative in their writing; do better in reading and math
4. EQ (Emotional Quotient) is as important as IQ. From the last two decades of research, it is clear that children’s emotional and behavioral adjustment is important for school success. Play experiences offer children opportunities to build those social and emotional skills.
5. Learning and play are compatible; learning takes place best when children are engaged and enjoying themselves.
6. Playful learning can happen in life’s everyday experiences – the grocery store, counting and matching socks, lemonade stands, etc.
7. When parents engage in guided play with children... the children use richer vocabulary and build a foundation for later math and spatial skills. That language is related to better spatial tasks that feed into the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
8. Play is as important for learning in early childhood as in middle/high school and even has many advantages in adulthood.
9. Don’t be misled by exaggerated science behind marketing claims that promise “brainy” results. Many toys and DVDs are marketed as educational when in fact there is no evidence to prove it. Open-ended toys such as blocks, boxes, and dress up clothes can be used in many ways, and allow children to direct the play.
10. A perfect day for our children includes playful learning:
 - Free play - where children choose their own activities
 - And guided play - playful learning where adults subtly guide children’s discovery.

Remember... 'Tis the Season to be Jolly

By
Kristen Delano

“December is a month filled with holidays – including Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanza. These holidays have in common a sense of joy and excitement, and as adults we want to share these feelings with our children. In our enthusiasm, however we have to be careful to recognize that children view the holidays differently from adults. First the activities surrounding the holidays can simply overwhelm a child. Their meal schedule is different, the foods they eat are different, there are many visits from family and friends, parties to attend and in general the pace is much faster than any other time of the year. Second, since adults are caught up in these activities, they may not focus their usual levels of attention on their children’s emotional needs.”

- Mary Ucci, Educational Director of the Child Study Center of Wellesley College

Reducing Holiday Stress for Families and Children

1. Keeping emotionally and physically healthy is a gift we all deserve.
2. Stay in your family routine. Adults as well as children thrive best with structure.
3. Avoid the “everything must be perfect” attitude. Be realistic with your ideas.
4. Avoid living up to children’s, society or relatives expectations.
5. Set priorities for your family. Ask family members what is most important to them.
6. Evaluate past years. What worked, what needs revising or eliminating.

Traditions – It’s a wonderful time of year to begin or continue family traditions- baking, singing, reading, decorating, cards, events, etc.

Gift giving – Remember gifts may be time, talent or tangible.
Children can set the table, sing a song, draw a picture, etc.

Remember those in need – Homeless shelters, Senior citizens, Animal Rescue League.

(Mrs. Delano teaches in the 2 Day and 3 Day Room 3 Classes.)

