

November 2012

<b>Wednesday, November 7</b>	<b>Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Thursday, November 8</b>	<b>Second Year Trip to Plimoth Plantation</b>
<b>Monday, November 12</b>	<b>Veteran's Day, No School</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 28</b>	<b>BPA Evening at Rock, Paper, Scissors</b>
<b>November 21, 22, 23</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>



Notes from the Head of School

New this year in our Berrybrook newsletter are monthly book reviews by Berrybrook teachers. Last Month Mrs. LaForest reviewed *Keeping Your Child in Mind* by Claudia M. Gold, and this month, Mrs. Fosdick has a great review of *15 Minutes Outside* by Rebecca P. Cohen. I also wanted to mention one of my favorite books - *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv. In the book, Mr. Louv makes the case for "Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder." He quotes Robin Moore, Director of the National Learning Initiative at North Carolina State, who writes,

*"Children live through their senses. Sensory experiences link the child's exterior world with their interior, hidden affective worlds. Since the natural environment is the principal source of sensory stimulation, freedom to explore and play with the outdoor environment through the senses in their own space and time is essential for healthy development.... This type of self-activated, autonomous interaction is what we call free play. Individual children test themselves by interacting with their environment, activating their potential and reconstructing human culture."*

Modern society is providing less and less unstructured time outdoors for children and more and more activities indoors or in front of a computer screen. I remember as a child, I would leave the house after breakfast, and go outside until I got hungry for lunch, then I would go back outside until my mother called us in for dinner, and then back outside again "until the street lights came on." I grew up in Boston, but my neighborhood had plenty of school yards, gardens and parks that brought my playmates and me in close contact with nature. In today's society, parents feel children need to be supervised more closely, but it doesn't mean that we cannot provide safe experiences for them in natural settings.

At Berrybrook, children have always been able to enjoy a rich, open outdoor environment that presents many choices for creative play and engagement. I feel that

the number of trees and the proximity to the woods brings children and families even closer to our natural environment. I don't know about you, but every time I am outside at Berrybrook, I get a very peaceful feeling. In the *Last Child in the Woods* the book states,

*"The quiet wisdom of nature does not try to mislead you like the landscape of the city does, with billboards and ads everywhere. It doesn't make you feel like you have to conform to any image. It's just there and accepts everyone."*

I agree. There is something about the natural beauty of Berrybrook that makes you feel welcome and relaxed. Take our recent Harvest Festival for example. If you were here that day and enjoyed a hayride in the field, you also experienced that peaceful feeling of being in nature in a special way. Even parking in the field is a unique experience, very different from a paved parking lot. Thank you so much to the BPA officers and volunteers for planning an event that made the most of our beautiful, natural environment.

After our visit from Hurricane Sandy, the nature trails that we walk with children will have to be inspected to make sure they are passable and safe. Mr Murray and I will look at every rock and root and make the adjustments to keep the trails safe for children but still natural and authentic enough for them to feel like they are exploring. Nature walks are a great way to clear your mind, get some exercise, and learn about our environment.

November is a special month for giving thanks. I am so thankful for the abundant resources available at Berrybrook; for our beautiful natural setting, for Katharine Mann's vision, for the Board of Directors who keep Berrybrook headed in the right direction, for the teachers who inspire, for the parents who care, and for the children who teach us something new every single day.

I am thankful that the Berrybrook setting and philosophy that we share so closely reflect the natural world – *"It doesn't make you feel like you have to conform to any image. It's just there and accepts everyone."*

Happy Thanksgiving, Pat Keeley



The Berrybrook Staff would like to thank the Parents Association for arranging snacks for our monthly after-school meetings. Each month we have a 2 hour meeting to discuss curriculum and other matters that impact our interactions with children and families. These meetings are scheduled from 4:00-6:00 and we appreciate having a snack to fortify us.

We are thankful for all of the support and encouragement we receive from parents. It is very thoughtful of parents to take time from their busy schedules to prepare beautiful and delicious refreshments for us.

Thank you very much!

## First Year Program News

October in the first year classes was full of learning...and cooking! Apple songs, projects and making applesauce brought to life the magical cycle of a little seed that becomes a tree that then becomes a fruit we can eat! This also extended our learning, discussion and participation in caring for our vermicompost bins and compost tumbler. Fire safety involving role play and discussing ways to be safe was emphasized by a visit from the Duxbury Fire Department and practice of our monthly Emergency Evacuations. October would not have been complete without fun with pumpkins, spiders and ghosts! Celebration of these ideas always brings about the simple joy of childhood.

October provided children with time to adjust to the routine of their school day, the ability to begin to trust their teachers and work on building confidence with separating. Through daily experience, children are now reassured that someone will always be there at dismissal time when the cow bell rings. How proud they are of the success they are having!

November brings with it the continued building of confidence and security, now with the added idea of exploring together with peers. Conflict resolution now occurs daily and teachers wear the hat of "Emotional Coach", modeling words for children so they will begin to ask for a turn when a friend is finished, express when they are feeling sad if their block building gets knocked down, and practice phrases such as "How can I help?" when joining others in play. We thank you for your continued support in modeling these ideas as well when you volunteer in the classroom or go about your day as parents. Your children are on the road to learning how to get along with others and are beginning to experience the magical

feeling of what it's like to be an important part of a cherished group of children.

In November as we work with wood and tools, you will be hearing about "Sally and Her Toolbox" which teaches children about the real tools they already have to solve problems with their friends. Role playing with puppets will demonstrate to children how to express their feelings with others and are sure to become characters they will mention to you at home. The month of November is filled with being thankful for friends, family and the food we eat with traditional Berrybrook projects such as making our own butter!

The tremendous progress being made in all areas of development makes this the very appropriate time to hold Parent – Teacher Conferences. It is always a rewarding time to discuss together how your child is adjusting to school and plan for the months ahead. Classes will be in touch with families about scheduling these special meeting times.

We are thankful to you for entrusting your children with us as we are all learning, every day.

Mrs. Barlow, Mrs Capasso, Mrs. Delano,  
Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. LaForest and  
Mrs. Piccuito

### A Thanksgiving Thought

The day I give thanks for having a nose  
Is Thanksgiving Day, for do you suppose  
That Thanksgiving dinner would  
taste as good  
If you couldn't smell it?  
I don't think it would.  
Could apple pie baking---  
turkey that's basting  
Not be for the smelling? Just be for tasting?  
It's a cranberry-cinnamon-onion bouquet!  
Be thankful for noses on Thanksgiving Day.

- Bobbi Katz

## Second Year Program News

October is gone and with it the “Bones Family”. Perhaps you are aware of their visit each year around Halloween time and then again, perhaps you are not. This is the story of how the “Bones Family” came to Berrybrook in the first place.

Many, many, years ago there was a director new to the school. Beatrice Von Bayer was her name. She brought with her a wealth of knowledge pertaining to music and drama and she also brought “Mr. Bones”. Now I’ve heard said that every family has a skeleton in their closet but at Berrybrook...unthinkable! or so I thought. I voiced my opinion on the subject and was reassured that the children would thoroughly enjoy his visits and much to my surprise...they did! As the years went by the “Bones Family” grew to include Mrs. Bones, Grandpa Bones, the four year old twins, Betty and Bobby Bones (named after their parents, Elizabeth and Robert) and their dog “Skelley”. As you have probably guessed, the “Bones Family” are paper skeletons and they come from the world of make-believe. Each year they take a flight from Honolulu Hawaii (where they live) to Plymouth Airport. When leaving the plane, one member of the family (usually Grandpa) slips on a banana peel and is taken to Jordan Hospital for X-Rays. The X-Rays are brought to Berrybrook for the children to look at. They can see his neck, hip, knee and ankle. While in Plymouth, they stay in a motel overlooking the ocean and travel back and forth to Berrybrook by Taxi. They love to visit the children, shake their hands and listen to them sing their favorite song:

How do you do (Mr., Mrs.,  
Grandpa, Betty, Bobby) Bones,  
how do you do?

How are you (Mr., Mrs., Grandpa,  
Betty, Bobby) Bones, how are  
you?

How’s the man in the moon and  
the witch on her broom?

How do you do (Mr., Mrs.,  
Grandpa, Betty, Bobby) Bones,  
how do you do?

Following the song, children ask their visitors questions. “Why do you have a crack in your head? Why are you made of paper? Why can’t you stand by yourself? (Each family member is suspended by a rubber band attached to their head which is then held by a teacher). The answers talk about how eating healthy foods makes healthy teeth and bones. The Bones family tells the children that when they were four years old they didn’t eat healthy foods and now they have a condition called “Osteoporosis” and that is why they need help to stand and walk.

They show the children a picture of their office in Hawaii (they have a family business), tell them about their dog “Skelley”, and the twins show them their favorite travel toys (two dolls and miniature dinosaur skeletons).

They hang around for a few days and sometimes dance the Hula. It’s a big trip and they often mention feeling “chilled to the bone” as well as being “bone tired”. Then back to Hawaii they go to rest and warm up.

From time to time the children have received letters from the Bones family but not often because their hands and fingers are weak and it's difficult for them to hold a pencil. Sometimes the children write letters to them, also.

The purpose of the Bones family visit is to help the children in our second year classrooms discuss and understand the difference between what is real and what is pretend. With the focus of Halloween on witches and ghosts and other things that might frighten young children, it's a natural time to talk to children about make-believe.

Now you know the story of the "Bones Family" and how they came to Berrybrook. Do YOU have any questions???

Other halloween activities provided teachers the opportunity to extend learning. For example, did you know spiders have eight legs and that not all webs are built the same? Children learned that bats fly at night, hang upside down and eat lots of mosquitoes. The teachers at Berrybrook extend learning whenever possible in a variety of ways.

The month of November begins with preparing boxes for the annual Community Service Project of collecting donations for the Kingston Animal Shelter. Children will cut pictures of cats and dogs from calendars, magazines and catalogs to glue onto boxes, which will then be placed in the lobby and outside classroom doors. "Pennies for the Pound" jars will be in various locations throughout the school. There will be class discussions about animal shelters and adoption of pets. This project gives children a sense of satisfaction knowing that their efforts and contributions make a difference in the lives of animals.

Each November the second year children visit Plimoth Plantation. The trip this year will be on Thursday, November 8. Children trek along the nature trails stopping at intervals to duck through doorways into homes of Native People and Pilgrims to catch a glimpse of everyday life of two different cultures as it was three hundred and eighty-five years ago. Follow-up activity for this field trip is a diorama of Plimoth Plantation. Each child's diorama includes a Pilgrim house as well as a wetu (home) and mishoon (boat) of the Native People. These dioramas take many days to complete – perhaps a week or more. Parents, children, and teachers alike are all aglow as the children carry their dioramas down the hall, out the door, and through the gate to be transported home for all to enjoy.

Thanksgiving at Berrybrook will be celebrated with a mini feast of homemade cornbread, butter, jelly, a slice of turkey and other tasty foods. Children will feast until their tummies are full and then, hopefully, (weather permitting) will have time on the playground before heading home for Thanksgiving break.

Upon returning to school, preparations will begin for the December Holiday Season.

It's a busy, busy time of year,  
Creating memories to hold dear;  
All too quickly the days slip past,  
But our dear memories will last and last.

We wish everyone a Happy  
Thanksgiving!

The Second Year Teachers,  
Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. Neal,  
Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Rosen,  
Mrs. Swan and Mrs. Worley



Parents may be wondering why the children put the classroom jack-o'-lantern in a special place outdoors. After the children have learned about the life cycle of a pumpkin using all of their senses; touching, seeing, smelling, and listening to stories, it is with great anticipation that the children find a particular spot outside of Berrybrook to observe the changes as the jack-o'-lantern decays and returns to the earth. So if you see jack-o'-lanterns around the Berrybrook property, please remind the children to look with their eyes because these jack-o'-lanterns are an important part of an on-going science experiment!

### From the Lunch Bunch Teachers

Thank you to parents for carefully packing lunches that are safe for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation, understanding and your attention to checking ingredient labels.



Thank You

## Join us for Parent Discussion Group

The first Parents Discussion Group topic was "Participation in the Berrybrook Environment." We talked about the many ways teachers appreciate parent volunteers helping out. If you were unable to attend copies of the handouts are available in the hallway just above cubbies.

The next Parents Discussion Group will be held on Wednesday, November 7th, at 7:00 pm. The topic will be "Curriculum in your Child's Classroom." This is a great opportunity for parents to gain insight into the reasoning and process of why projects are chosen. Parents will also gain a greater understanding and appreciation for the effort your child puts into completing these fun, meaningful activities.

We will discuss:

- Why particular activities are chosen
- What skills are involved in completing these projects
- Development of fine motor skills
- Building self esteem through gaining confidence in new found abilities
- The importance of prepositions in young children's learning
- Open ended projects - the no-fail approach

Come! learn what goes on behind the scenes, how class surveys are conducted, and key phrases used by teachers to encourage children to try something new.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn  
and Mrs. LaForest

## Parents Association News

Welcome November! Before we move on I wanted to be sure to send another huge thank you to all the families for supporting Harvest Festival in such an amazing way! The day was a great success in terms of participation, fun and fundraising! All monies raised will go directly to enrichment activities for the children. In addition to all of you who baked, donated items, volunteered, set up, cleaned up, bid and brought the family, a special thanks to Ne ssralla's Farm in Marshfield, Sunshine Gardens in Kingston, Hannaford and Roche Brothers for their support!

### Enrichment Activities

Enrichment activities have begun for the year with the launch of the GrowFitKidz program at Berrybrook. The program consists of monthly sessions with a certified trainer focusing on different areas of physical fitness and fun for the children! Look for updates in your child's cubby after each session.

### Family Fun Friday

We may have been rained out in October, but the November Family Fun Friday is not to be missed. We are trying a new event this month called Pizza and PJs! Bring your children in their favorite pajamas for an early evening pajama party with pizza and storytelling by Berrybrook favorite Big Ryan from 4-6 pm on November 16th. Cost is \$5 per family. Look for sign-up information at the BPA table and in your cubby next week.

### Festival of Trees

This year Berrybrook will continue the tradition of decorating a tree at the Festival of Trees in support of Cranberry Hospice. We are able to have a participating tree because of the

generous support of the Garrett Family and Volta Oil. Thank you! This year's tree is based on the Eric Carle book "*A Home for Hermit Crab*." Be sure to mark your calendar and visit the event to see the tree and your child's ornament the weekend of November 30th at Plymouth Plantation. Details to follow.

### Holiday Giving

Last year we were blown away by the generosity of the Berrybrook community in supporting the Carolina Hill Shelter in Marshfield. Again this year the BPA will be hosting a giving tree in the lobby of Berrybrook. On the tree you will find ornaments that list a child's gender, age and holiday wish. The tree will appear after Thanksgiving and all details will be posted near the tree. Thanks in advance for your support.

### Shopping Night at Rock, Paper, Scissors - Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>!

Please mark your calendar and plan to join the BPA for a night of shopping at Duxbury's *Rock, Paper Scissors* on November 28<sup>th</sup> from 7-9 pm. The store will be open to Berrybrook parents and friends only for the night to help you get a jump on your holiday shopping, with free gift wrapping!and refreshments. Best of all 20% of sales will come back to the BPA to help support enrichment and special Berrybrook needs. Look for an evite and flyer with all the details!

### BPA Dues

It is not too late to contribute dues to the BPA. We ask for a \$30.00 per family donation but we are thankful for any amount you can contribute. Dues can be left in the basket at the BPA table. Thank you! Questions, comments, concerns? Let us know at

[berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com)

## **“I Love to do the Projects”**

By, Katie Szczesny, Mom to Sam (4.5 yrs, 5 Day Classroom 2), Kyle (6.5 yrs), and  
Member of the Berrybrook Board of Directors

As I pulled into the Berrybrook parking lot last week, I noticed five or six kids swinging on the swings – swinging as high as they could go – with no teacher or adult there giving any of them a push. Now *that*, I thought, is something you don't learn in Kindergarten.

We all want our kids to be the best they can be, whether they are 4 or 24. But it's so easy to get caught up in the fast paced, competitive, and over scheduled day to day life prevalent in society today. If your neighbor's 4 year old is already reading, you start to wonder why yours is not. Your sister's 5 year old can write 26 perfect letters and tie his own shoes, and yours is just beginning to scratch out his first name and still wears Velcro. You get the idea.

Being at Berrybrook is about fun, making new friends (and keeping the old), building confidence, sharing, learning to do the monkey bars, working on fine motor skills, and of course, learning. I asked Sam what is his favorite part about going to Berrybrook every day. His first response was “Getting to see Reed,” (a friend in his class) but then he said, “I love to do the projects.” He comes home each day eager to share what he learned and proud to show me all of his projects. Can he write his name? Yes. Can he tie his shoes? Nope. (He'll learn someday). Does he have a blast every day at school, bringing home new knowledge and new ideas? Yes. Isn't that what matters the most when you're 4 ½? His self-esteem and confidence in his own independence have also grown exponentially since he started attending Berrybrook.

An article found in the March/April 2011 edition of Exchange magazine “Impacting readiness: Nature and Nurture,” by Jane M. Healy, states “Instead of trying to speed up development, we should enrich each stage with interesting, challenging, and developmentally appropriate activities. In this way, we not only help intelligence and academic readiness grow, but we also lay solid foundations for the brain's higher-level abilities for reasoning and creativity.”

Many of us are concerned about if our kids will be “ready” for Kindergarten next year. They will be! They have had two amazing years at Berrybrook; acquiring a vast amount of social skills, knowledge, and the self-esteem they need to start Kindergarten. According to Mrs. Keeley, several Kindergarten entry level skills identified by Chandler School kindergarten teachers are:

Letter recognition	Rote counting to 10
Write first name	Proper pencil and scissor grip
Independence with belongings (put coat on, zipper, pack & unpack backpack).	

Our children work on these skills (and so many more) daily at Berrybrook – sometimes it's obvious and sometimes it's not. There is never a doubt in my mind that the teachers are “teaching” our children something new every day, whether it's how to work on their letters or figuring out the best way to ask for a turn with a toy. I am amazed at how the teachers can accomplish so much just by asking a child a question or making a statement, rather than giving orders or instructions. All of a sudden, the child's brain starts churning and they figure out what to do or say on their own! My favorite use of this at home is the “I see” statement. “Sam, I see you left your jacket on the floor.” And wouldn't you know it; he goes over and picks it up!

*continued.....*



Time seems to fly by and before you know it, your 4 year old is going to be 14. When he's 14, will you remember if he could write his first name legibly when he was 4 ½ or 5 ½? Tie his shoes at 5 or 6? The time our kids spend at Berrybrook is precious – for them as students and for us as parents.

Katharine Bailey Mann, the Founder of Berrybrook, states “Berrybrook School was founded to provide a place for healthy emotional development, a place to develop self-esteem and confidence, to help a child not to be afraid to fail – to learn by trying.”

And like Sam says, they love to do the projects.....

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The following principles are from *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education:

1. **All young children are capable of learning.**
  - All children are capable of positive developmental outcomes. Preschool teachers should hold high expectations for all young children.
2. **Children show individual differences in development.**
  - Although children develop skills and competencies through a generally predictable sequence of milestones, they do not develop them in exactly the same way or at exactly the same time. Some children may have a developmental delay or disability that requires individualized expectations, experiences, and materials.
3. **Knowledge of child growth and development is essential for program development and implementation.**
  - Decisions about appropriate curriculum for groups of children and for individual children should be based on knowledge of child development and on careful observation of children at play.
4. **Children's language skills are the best predictors of academic success.**
  - Development of children's English language skills should be a major goal of the preschool curriculum. Early childhood is a critical time in the development of vocabulary and other language skills. These skills provide the foundation for learning to read and write and for later academic achievement.
5. **Developmental domains are highly interrelated.**
  - Development in one domain influences the development in other domains. This interrelationship must be considered in planning preschool programs. For example, children's mathematical learning may occur on the playground, in dramatic play, and while using sensory materials.
6. **Young children learn by doing.**
  - Teachers should provide opportunities for children to explore materials, to engage in physical activities, and to interact with peers and adults. A balance of child-initiated and teacher-selected activities will maximize children's learning.
7. **Families are the primary caregivers and educators of their young children.**
  - Program staff must give families the information they may need to support their children's learning and development. Program staff and families should also work together to ensure that children are provided with the best learning experiences possible at home and at preschool.

## Berrybrook Book Review

Rose Fosdick

*15 Minutes Outside, 365 ways to get out of the house and connect with your kids*, by Rebecca P. Cohen

Dance classes, swimming lessons, gymnastics, ice-skating lessons, soccer teams, t-ball, baseball, etc. are the current ways parents are involving their children in physical activity. The rate of childhood obesity has increased over the years. Parents are aware of the importance of physical exercise to promote healthy lifestyles. Having your children involved in scheduled activities is a great way to promote great health. But, have you ever thought to make your life simple and have your children play outside? The author, Rebecca P. Cohen, of the book, *15 Minutes Outside, 365 ways to get out of the house and connect with your kids*, has done exactly that. She discovered that if she set aside at least 15 minutes per day to engage in an outdoor activity with her children, everyone would benefit.

She made a decision after walking outdoors on a brisk day with her two boys, that there was so much physical activity in playing outdoors, and so much to learn from nature, that she now spends a part of everyday outdoors with them. She has discovered in doing so, that her family has become closer, more relaxed, communicates better, and the physical activity comes in forms of just sheer fun!

As I was reading her book, I was reminded of what we do here at Berrybrook. We spend a good amount of time, daily, outdoors. We take walks in the woods, roll down hills, discover various critters living under rocks and woodchips, run, jump, swing, climb, observe changes in seasons, observe trees and plants, watch birds, all of which are some of the suggestions from her book.

The book is full of outdoor activities and it is broken down into months. Cohen has provided lists of activities for each month, and they are all described in detail. They are very simple activities that any family can do. The idea is to get outside with your children every day, no matter the weather. She suggests bundling up in the winter, or putting on rain coats and rain boots in the rain and heading outdoors, even if it is for only 15 minutes. She has found that through the time spent outdoors, her children have learned things and experienced things that are invaluable. They have learned to see exercise as a fun part of life, by doing activities involving the use of their muscles in a natural and fun way.

There are so many great ideas in this book, that I cannot list them all but feel that it is a book worth reading and keeping. You can easily find something to do outdoors every day of every month, regardless of the weather. I also liked her idea of keeping a bag packed by the door with supplies needed for outdoors. She would change the supplies according to the season, but it was always there and ready to go. She also kept a set of cards with activities on them in the bag. You could keep her book in the bag too!

*continued.....*

Although scheduled activities are wonderful for the children, just think how easy it would be to head outdoors and play every day! You could even think of it as your scheduled activity for the day! Spending time with your children engaged in their play, as an active participant, will benefit their physical health and yours. Not to mention, it is great for everyone's mental health too!

*(Mrs. Fosdick teaches in the 4 Day-Room 1 Class)*

Speaking of outside.....

As the weather changes be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play. Hats, mittens or gloves, and warm jackets will be necessary as we head into November.

As always, it is a good idea to label all clothing. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants, and snow boots. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom.

Thank you!



### **Snow Cancellation**

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Schools** or the **Silver Lake School District** close due to a snow or other 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.

In rare situations, there may be times when we must cancel classes during the day to ensure the safety of our children, families and staff. In those cases, the teachers will phone families in their class.

#### **From the Office**

Tuition payment #4 is now due.

Annual tuition is divided into 10 equal payments. Families have received an electronic invoice for payment # 4 due November 1.

Please contact Mrs. Watts with any questions about tuition accounts.

Also, please contact the office with any changes in your contact information.

Thank you.