



Celebrating 60 Years

## November 2014

<b>Wednesday, November 5</b>	<b>BPA Meeting 12:15pm</b>
<b>Tuesday, November 11</b>	<b>Veteran's Day, No School</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 12</b>	<b>Second Year Trip to Plimoth Plantation</b>
<b>Saturday, November 15</b>	<b>Admissions Open House 10-noon</b>
<b>Wednesday, November 19</b>	<b>Board Meeting 7:30pm</b>
<b>November 26, 27, 28</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>



## Notes from the Head of School

November is a special month for giving thanks. Recently, I have been grateful for the unusually warm, wonderful, weather we have experienced since school started. When I am standing at the gate on a beautiful day, almost everyone coming through comments on what a "gift" the day is, and I can't help feeling that it improves everyone's mood. Children and Teachers have been able to spend so much time outdoors, and that is just good for everyone. Families have been lingering on the playground after school and our afternoon classes have especially enjoyed the late afternoon view of the Berrybrook fields. There is something about the natural beauty of Berrybrook that makes people feel welcome and relaxed. Families who attended the Harvest Festival and enjoyed a hayride in the field experienced that peaceful feeling. Even the extra parking in the field is a unique experience for families, very different from a paved parking lot! Thank you so much to the BPA officers and all of their volunteers for planning an event that made the most of Berrybrook's beautiful, natural environment.

The abundance of outdoor time brings to mind the book, *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."

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Modern society is providing less and less unstructured time outdoors for children and more and more activities that happen 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. Today, 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.

In the *Last Child in the Woods* Richard Louv 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 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 our philosophy 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, Mrs. Keeley*

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## **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.

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!



## Beginners

We teachers in the Beginners Class can honestly say we enjoy coming to work every single day. It's been such fun getting to know the children in our Beginners classroom. They are becoming so comfortable and confident. Our classroom is filled with conversations, funny stories, smiles and laughter. Friendships and are being formed with both teachers and classmates. It's been a wonderful start to our year.

In October we sang fun Halloween songs, painted pumpkins and squeezed fresh orange juice. Our project times are a fun way for children to enjoy the season while also participating in sensory and creative art expression. We also spent time focusing on our feelings with songs, stories, and our circle time activities.

In November we will focus on our families and homes as a way to celebrate Thanksgiving. We've been learning so much about ourselves, now we can share with each other the people we care about! We will have fun with glue, paint and feathers and sharing stories about the people that make our houses our home.

Thank you for making time for our fall conferences. Families are such an important part of Berrybrook. Soon we will be asking for family photos to display in our classroom to further reinforce this idea to children. They will be a great conversation starter.

We are very thankful to you for entrusting your children with us each day!

Happy Thanksgiving!  
Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. Piccuito and  
Mrs. Rosen

## First Year Program News

During the month of October first year students learned about the season of fall. We tasted apples, went on nature walks, created nature collages from items we collected, explored acorns, and carved pumpkins! Through the year we will continue our nature walks, monthly, weather permitting. We will observe the beautiful Berrybrook grounds during different seasons. We also learned about fire safety. Some classes had a visit from the Duxbury Fire Fighters. For other classes, the Duxbury Fire Department plans to visit us during the month of November. Finally, students are beginning to learn about feelings. Throughout the year we will build on this knowledge to help children identify their own feelings and those of others, to promote successful interactions.

Parent-Teacher conferences have begun and will continue through November. Each class will have a sign-up sheet available. Conferences are a wonderful time for parents and teachers to have a conversation about each child.

As we head into November the weather will become chilly. Please remember to bring jackets, hats, and mittens. We plan on going outside every day, weather permitting.

November will be a busy month for us. A favorite unit for the children is wood working. We will even use real hammers! Later in the month, we will begin talking about Thanksgiving. All classes will enjoy their own "feast" with items made by the children. One tradition at Berrybrook involves making our own butter. Children watch as the teacher pours cream into a bottle. With the cover tightly closed, we all take turns shaking, until it turns into butter. We sing...

*Shake, shake*

*Shake the cream*

*Turn it into butter!*

The children enjoy their butter with the feast!

We wish all of our Berrybrook families a Happy Thanksgiving. May you enjoy this special time with family and friends.

Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. McDonough, and Ms. McSharry

## Family Matters

We began our new Big Room/Chat Room events in October. Both morning and afternoon sessions were valuable. Our discussion flowed easily while the children played.

Thank you to parents who attended our orientation evening focusing on Parent Participation in Berrybrook Environments. Parents learned some tried and true *Berrybrookisms!* If you were unable to attend, copies of the Parent Participation Handbook are now available in the office.

Please note:

First Year Classes have posted volunteer sign-up sheets on their class bulletin boards.

Families of Second Year Classes can speak to teachers to arrange a time to share a hobby or interest, help with a cooking project, or volunteer in other ways.

The Beginners Class (Thursday and Friday, Room 3) continues to adjust to their daily routine, therefore teachers will let families know when volunteering and visiting the classroom will begin.

Thank you for your help and involvement in your child's class. It is very much appreciated and enjoyed by all of us at Berrybrook.

Parents are welcome to our November Big Room/Chat Room meetings on Wednesday November 19 from 1:10-2:00 pm, and Tuesday December 9 from 9:10-10:00am. The topic - *Keep Calm, and Carry On During the Holidays!*

Remember, Our Family Matters section on the Berrybrook website is always available for you to send in questions. At Berrybrook,.... *Family Matters!*



## Second Year Program News

Children have been working hard on all of their autumn projects and activities during the month of October. November brings with it more fun to have and much to learn about people from long ago. We will have our annual trip to Plimoth Plantation on Wednesday, November 12. All 4 and 5 Day Classes will meet at the Plantation at 9:00am.

Mrs. O'Neil describes the experience well:

"Berrybrook is located in a history rich area once inhabited by Native Americans and Early Settlers. One of the ways preschoolers learn history is by connecting past to present. For many years it has been a long time tradition to go on a field trip to Plimoth Plantation each November. Children are particularly interested in viewing kitchens and bedrooms of Pilgrim houses and comparing them to the kitchens and bedrooms in their own homes. There is always the question, "Where are the bathrooms?" After returning from the field

trip there will be a follow-up activity of making Plimoth Plantation dioramas. Each child will make one to take home for the holiday. This project takes many days to complete, perhaps a week or more, and will include a Pilgrim house, stone wall, garden, wood pile, wetu (Wampanoag Home) and mishoon (dugout canoe).

Note of interest: Amelia Poole, former student of Berrybrook, is featured as Sarah in the book "Sarah Morton's Day, A Day in the Life of a Pilgrim Girl", published by Scholastic, Inc. 1989. Additional note of interest: Katharine Mann (founder of Berrybrook School) was very much interested in local history. Mr. Mann had a replica of a Pilgrim home on Brookdale Ave in Kingston. Berrybrook children would dress in Pilgrim costumes and travel to the "Pilgrim House" for a feast of cornbread, cranberry sauce, and homemade butter."

Children will have their Thanksgiving feast at Berrybrook on Tuesday, November 25. Each child will make a floral arrangement to decorate their place at the table and then take it home to enjoy with their families on Thanksgiving Day. Here is a poem we all say together at Thanksgiving time, with accompanying sign language :

### **Let's Be Thankful**

Let's be thankful for this day,  
For our friends and for our play.  
Let's be thankful, let's be glad,  
For the food and things we have.  
Let's give thanks for you and me,  
For our home and family.  
Let's be thankful for this day,  
For our friends and for our play.

We say this poem together, being thankful for all we have and for the people in our lives. Family and friends are so important. At Berrybrook friendships among classmates have begun to form and already evolve and change. It is very common and appropriate for children to begin using language regarding friendships such as:

“Will you be my friend?”

“You’re not my friend anymore.”

“We’re friends, not you.”

Children are learning what being a friend truly means. Developmentally, children see a friend as someone who belongs to them, who is always with them, and plays only with them. They are experiencing, and therefore learning, that people can have more than one friend and that someone can still be another’s friend even when playing with someone else or somewhere else. Often times a friend may say, “You’re not my friend right now,” simply because there is physical space between them or they are involved in another activity. Therefore, the intent of their words was not to be hurtful but rather factual because children think very literally.

Rest assured that these words provide opportunities. These opportunities provide experiences. These experiences then ultimately provide learning and understanding. Please let your child’s teachers know should you be concerned about any of their friendships so we can help.

We are all very thankful to you for entrusting your children to us every day.

The Second Year Teachers,  
Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,  
Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. Neal, Miss McNulty,  
Mrs. O’Neil, Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Rosen

## Community Service

It is nearing the time for an annual Berrybrook Community Service Project.. Families may bring in donations of supplies needed to benefit the Kingston animal shelter. To receive these donations, boxes will be decorated by the children with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals glued onto a colorful background. These boxes will be placed in the lobby and near classroom doors along with “Pennies For The Pound Jars”. There will be class discussions about “What is an animal shelter?”, “Adoption of pets”, and “Being respectful of all living things. It is important for children in these formative years to develop empathy and practice kindness. Childhood is short, and these children will, in the not-too-distant future, be the adults of tomorrow. It is the hope of the Berrybrook teachers that what children learn from this project will remain with them forever.

### **Hurt No Living Thing**

Hurt no living thing;  
Ladybird, nor butterfly,  
Nor moth with dusty wing,  
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,  
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,  
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,  
Nor harmless worms that creep

*Christina G. Rosetti*

### Lunch Bunch News

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.

## Parents Association News

Hello November! Thank you all for supporting Harvest Festival. The day was a success because of all of you. A big thanks to everyone who donated a basket/raffle item, silent auction item, refreshments, decorations, and volunteer time. A special thank you to Jessica MacFarland for going above and beyond.

### Enrichment

The BPA has been busy planning enrichment activities for the year. Monthly yoga sessions began in October for the second year students and will begin in January for first year and beginner students. Also coming in January will be interactive drumming sessions. More details to follow.

### Family Fun Fridays

We had a great turn out at last month's Family Fun Friday at Bog Hollow. The weather was perfect for pumpkins and hay rides. The November FFF will be held on November 21st from 1:00-2:30 at the South Shore Natural Science Center in Norwell. Be on the look out for a sign up sheet and additional information at the BPA table.

### Holiday Giving

With the holiday season upon us, Berrybrook likes to give back to the community. Last year we were blown away by the generosity of the Berrybrook community in supporting the Carolina Hill Shelter in Marshfield. This year, the BPA will again 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 the details will be posted near the tree. Thank you in advance for your support.

### Odds and Ends

Thank you to all of the families who have already supported the BPA through dues this year. It is still not too late. Checks can be made out to the BPA and left in the basket by the BPA table.

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, 11/5. Our meeting will be at 12:15. We are trying a different meeting time because it can be difficult for parents to attend meetings in the evening. We are hoping that scheduling a meeting between classes and during Lunch Bunch might be convenient for parents. We hope that you will join us and get involved in the upcoming events.

As always, we thank you for your participation and support!

Donna Hillary



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. These meetings are scheduled from 4:15-6:15 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 refreshments for us.

Thank you very much!



## 60 Years of Berrybrook

To continue with our plan to share a Berrybrook poem in each Newsletter during our 60<sup>th</sup> year, included this month, is a verse that was written for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration back in 2004. The following lovely words were spoken by Rabbi Silverman at a celebration we had at Plimoth Plantation as part of the blessing before dinner.

Rabbi Silverman's children attended Berrybrook and he often came to Berrybrook as a special visitor. As you read his words you will see that he has captured beautifully how we feel about this place.

### **Blessing for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Berrybrook School**

Drink deeply friends  
Of life's sweet pleasures.  
Enjoy them all in fullest measures.  
And let us learn from experience wise,  
How best to strengthen our family ties.

Through kindness,  
Love and thoughtfulness,  
To nature's wonders attentiveness,  
We best can capture happiness.

And so we offer grateful praise  
That we would start so many days  
At Berrybrook  
Which sets us and our children  
Upon our ways.

Meadow and brook,  
Maple trees, goats and geese  
Teachers and friends,  
Our wonderful family on Winter Street.

We give thanks to the source of life  
Who has kept us in life and sustained us  
And enabled us to reach this  
Joyous day of celebration.

## School Cancellation

Now that it is November, we could see snow at any time! Berrybrook will cancel school if Duxbury **Schools** or the **Silver Lake School District** close due to a snow or other emergency. Please watch 7NEWS (NBC) for cancellation notices. Parents may call the school to check the voice mail message if they are unsure about a snow cancellation. As the weather changes be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play. Now is a good time to locate all hats, mittens, gloves, and warm jackets that 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.



### **Babies R Us!**

Congratulations to the Maggiacomo family in 3 Day-Room 3 on the arrival of their new baby boy, Logan.

Congratulations also to the Hamilton family in 4 Day-Room 2 who welcomed their son, Matthew.



## Talking the Talk at Berrybrook

Michelle Taylor, Berrybrook Board of Directors

Through the years there has been plenty of buzz around the idea of reading with children. The message to read early and often is widespread. Reading to children from birth on provides important exposure to phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Additionally, it can ignite a life-long love for reading. Routine story time can also foster a strong bond between parent and child!

While reading with young children is a critical component of developing foundational literacy skills, equal attention must be paid to talking with children to develop solid language skills. Language and vocabulary researchers, Betty Hart and Todd Risley, are well known for the 1995 research study which highlights the 30 million word gap that permeates families of low income children. This same study indicates that by age 2, children from professional families tend to learn 30% more words than children from disadvantaged families. Part of the reason for the disparity is simply the amount of talking that happens in the home. On average, researchers found that children from disadvantaged families heard 616 words per hour; children in working class families heard about 1,251 words per hour, while children from professional homes heard approximately 2,153 words per hour. By the time these children turned four, the amount of words heard in one year were:

- Disadvantaged: 13 million words heard
- Working Class: 26 million words heard
- Professional: 45 million words heard

Another important element to be aware of is the type of talk children experience in the home. Research has shown that there are two types of talk that families typically conduct: “Business Talk” and “Extra Talk”. “Business Talk” which is more directive, custodial speak that involves giving directions and redirecting children, is the most common and universal type of talk children hear from adults. Interestingly, researchers discovered that regardless of the “talkative” traits of a family, the volume of “Business Talk” is relatively the same.

The difference for more chatty families is the quality and frequency of the *other* type of talk. “Extra Talk” happens when parents and caregivers narrate a child’s activity and weave in more sophisticated vocabulary naturally during play or social experiences, thus a child’s language development is amplified. In this way, families take advantage of “teachable moments”, they model rich language exchanges and they provide more opportunities for students to practice talking.

Hart & Risley discovered that the amount and quality of talk between children and families/caregivers has a profound influence on a child’s language development by age 3, and can further impact school readiness and overall academic success. At Berrybrook, teachers, children and families effectively “talk the talk”. In any given classroom, or outside on the playground, teachers refer warmly to students as friends, model interactive language, and develop learning experiences that provide opportunity for children to develop context for language. Given this knowledge, as the mother of a Berrybrook alum, I’m sure I echo the sentiments of my fellow Berrybrook families when I say that I feel so fortunate that our teachers do an outstanding job of fostering language development in young children.

Interested in reading more about this fascinating topic? Check out: [Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children](#) by Betty Hart & Todd R. Risley.