

## November 2021

**November 11**  
**November 24, 25, 26**

**Veterans Day - no school**  
**Thanksgiving Break - no school**



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## Notes from the Head of School

My newest guilty pleasure is: PODCASTS! My library of downloads ranges from true crime to educational, from intermittent fasting stories to those that are (totally not suitable for children but are) about children. The latter one is probably my favorite because in a way it's also self-care for me ~ I cannot listen to these around my children, and therefore it's time for ME as I'm listening to this one alone. I don't multitask with this one other than driving, and I've also found myself looking around at other cars to see if anyone next to me has seen me hysterically laughing in a car all by myself! ("Have Kids They Said" with Rich Davis and Nicole Ryan ~ again, DO NOT LISTEN TO THIS WITH CHILDREN IN EARSHOT; YOU'VE BEEN WARNED!)

I've also learned not to judge a podcast by its cover. The ones that I think might not resonate with me are the ones I find myself rewinding, to really listen to what was just said. Funny enough last year I wrote about something that a former NFL player who was on a podcast about intermittent fasting who spoke about choices in life; granted he was speaking about food choices, but it could be applied to every choice we make in life.

Last month I was listening to the podcast with Mayim Bialik and she had a former NBA player on. She asked him if he had a favorite mantra and when he replied I nearly pulled over to write down word for word what he said. (As a child of the 70s/80s who would record favorite songs off the radio to make 'mixed tapes', I often forget that technology allows me the opportunity to go back and listen at a safer time than pulling over to the side of the road off the highway!)

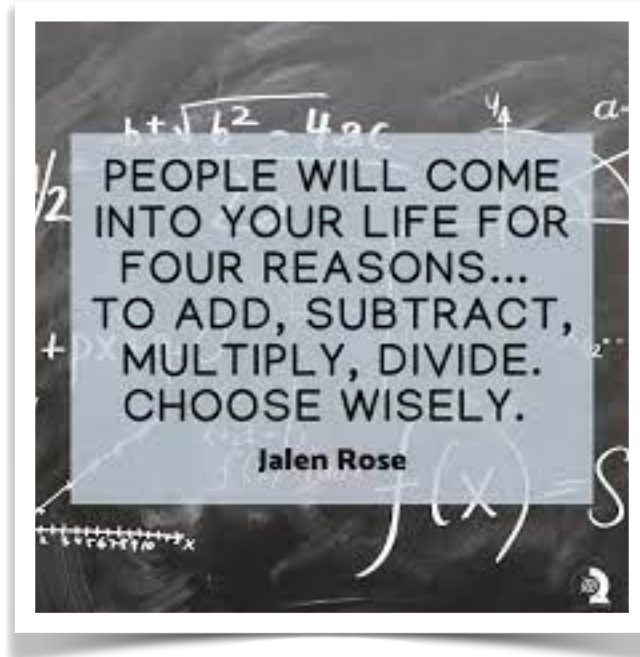
Jalen Rose, when asked about his favorite mantra, replied:

People come into your life for 4 reasons . . . to add, subtract, multiply, or divide.  
Choose wisely.

Wow. Wow. Just WOW!! How very true is that?!? I can think back to periods in my life where certain people filled each of those separate roles, and there are also a few people in my life who at different points, that one person, hit each of these four roles. So what does it mean? Should you only have people who have what seems like the 'positive' roles of adding or multiplying? Or can adding be a negative ie: people who add stress to your life vs. adding joy to your life? Does division imply making you less than? Or does dividing allow you to reexamine a situation to approach life differently?

In the end I believe it doesn't really matter if you feel if each mathematic operation is a positive or negative, it only matters how it makes you feel. Like life itself, perception is what truly matters. Choose your perception wisely.

~ Mrs. Watts



# ***Teacher's Notes***

## Parent - Teacher Conferences

Throughout the school year we continue to stress the importance of communication among teachers and parents, building that strong home-school connection. Another way we do this is by meeting with families twice a year to hold our fall and spring parent - teacher conferences. These important, scheduled meeting times provide yet another opportunity to share with you all that your child is learning at Berrybrook.

Before meeting together, you will receive an assessment form detailing your child's development at a certain point during the school year. We as teachers provide goals for learning appropriate to the age and development of children within each program, then observe and record your child's progress throughout the year. It can easily be believed that children at the Beginner, Preschool and Pre-K level are simply "playing" while being at Berrybrook daily, however their "play" is their "work" and there is much to be observed while enjoying this very important "work".

Children learn developmentally at their own pace based on many factors such as their age and capability, reaching certain milestones along the way. However, other factors have an impact on how they learn, such as temperament, personality, interests and learning styles. Our assessment forms cover 8 areas of development and rather than a "grading system" of check marks or other letters demonstrating a type of measurement of performance, you will see descriptions of progression of learning among each criteria within a developmental area. These provide a true reflection of how your child is growing.

Families receive assessment forms prior to meeting with teachers, therefore bring any questions you may have with you. This is also a wonderful time to share with you all that your child is experiencing in class and how all this learning is occurring in a natural, meaningful, joyful and fun way... the way all learning should be!

In the coming weeks you will receive an email that will allow you to sign up for a time to meet with one of your child's teachers. I speak for all of the Berrybrook teachers when I say we are so looking forward to spending time with you and discussing our favorite things to talk about ~ your child and their learning!

~ Mrs. LaForest

*Mrs. LaForest teaches in the 4 Day and 5 Day classes*

## ***From The Board of Directors***

A few weeks ago my twin daughters celebrated their fifth birthday. As the girls came skipping out of their final Berrybrook celebration wearing glittery handmade crowns I couldn't help but think about how fleeting and special this time is. This tradition is a simple but oh-so-special celebration and like most things at Berrybrook it comes with an embedded lesson: sharing, making choices, patience, manners, the names of the months, the passage of time.

In pre-Covid times parents were able to share in these special Berrybrook celebrations. I remember being asked at my son's fifth birthday as he walked around the "sun" (a very safe battery operated candle) to share memories from his first five years as he paused in front of his class between each rotation. I began to reflect on the girls' first five trips around the sun and the profound part Berrybrook has played.

It was during their first "rotation" that we became part of what Mrs. Watts always refers to as the Berrybrook "family". The twins were just babies then, being shuttled around in the double stroller as I dropped my son off at the 3 Day program. We packed up our first house the day after his Visiting Day and moved to Duxbury. While my husband grew up here, it took awhile for this area to feel like home again. We lived out of suitcases in his childhood home for most of that first year, in a perpetual holding pattern, waiting for construction on our own house to be complete. Everything felt temporary and chaotic as deadlines continued to be pushed back.

When my mom passed away unexpectedly that year, I felt like the floor had collapsed underneath me; everything that felt permanent was gone. In that first year of heartbreak our Berrybrook family of staff, teachers, and friends helped us find consistency and put one foot in front of the other. My son's teachers provided a safe place for him to learn through play and encouraged his curiosity and imagination. He made his first friends here, friendships that have remained intact and stronger than ever years later. It was on the Berrybrook playground that I met my first friends in town; friends who were in the same "season" of life as we were, whose children enjoyed playing with our children, who made us laugh and made this town begin to feel like home.

In the "rotations" since that first one, a lot has changed. We feel rooted and established in this wonderful community and very fortunate that our children get to grow up in such a beautiful, historic town. We've enjoyed countless days and a few late nights enjoying the beautiful beach surrounded by our Berrybrook friends; and sometimes when we are VERY lucky we've even had a celebrity sighting out there (Mrs. Connell or Mrs. Knight)! The twins eventually got their chance to attend "Beweybwook" as Beginners and made friendships of their own. Our Berrybrook family has also joined us in celebrating some of our most joyous occasions as we welcomed another daughter (a current Beginner) in 2018 and another son this past September. All of our children have grown to look forward to their very special Berrybrook traditions as much as our own traditions at home. Like my son, the twins have grown immeasurably during their time here and it is bittersweet to think that this is their last year.

In this month of Thanksgiving, I can't help but feel grateful for all that our Berrybrook family has brought to our table: friendship, tradition, growth, play, laughter, childhood memories and so much more. A few weeks ago, one of my girls came home and said

“Mrs. LaForest’s said that her favowit part of Beweybwook is that it feels like home!” I’m not sure if Mrs. LaForest actually said that (*a lot* can get lost in translation when you are five) but it *did* sound about right. I hope that this holiday season you feel the same warmth of this special community as our family has throughout the years. And if you are new to the Berrybrook family, welcome home.

Emily Balboni

*President*

*Berrybrook Board of Directors*





Colder weather is on its way.....

As the weather changes, be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play including the Nook. Now is a good time to locate all hats, mittens, gloves, and warm jackets that will be necessary as we head into November. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots with them every day. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers, or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL ALL CLOTHING WITH  
YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**



## ***Snow Days/School Cancellation***



It is our policy to cancel classes whenever Duxbury Public Schools are closed due to weather emergencies. Families should watch Channel 7, WHDH for a school cancellation at Berrybrook. Every attempt at notification will be made through email messages, text messages, phone calls via OneCallNow and/or social media.

**\*\*In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a one hour delay, Berrybrook will have the usual 9 am arrival time.\*\***

**\*\*\*In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a two hour delay, the AM session will be cancelled.\*\*\***

# *A Season of Giving*

## Kingston Animal Shelter Donations

The month of November, as everyone knows, is traditionally the start of the holiday season. Here at Berrybrook, it is the time of year that teachers share yet another meaningful tradition with the introduction of a Berrybrook Community Service Project that was started many years ago. 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 in each class with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals. These boxes will be placed on the porch near the front door to collect items brought to school. There will also be “Pennies For The Pound” jars in the classrooms for the children to add their coins brought from home. 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 to develop empathy and practice kindness. Taking care of pets and other animals is a meaningful way for children to develop these traits. Any and all donations will be appreciated by the animals and the shelter. Thank you for your help!

### **Some of the items needed are:**

Dry cat and dog food (grain free)

Baby food (ground turkey/chicken)

Cat litter

Paper towels

Tall kitchen trash bags

HE laundry detergent

Ziplock bags (quart and gallon size)

Canned Pure Pumpkin

Flea & tick medicine

Small area rugs

Dog treats

Bleach

6 ft. leashes

Kitten Milk Replacement

