

# BERRYBROOK NEWS

*April, 2009*

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Tuesday, April 7	BPA Spring Fling Planning! 7 pm
Friday, April 10	Good Friday. No School
Monday April 13	BPA presents Jeanine Fitzgerald 7:00 pm
April 20-24	Spring Vacation
Wednesday, April 29	Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:00 pm
Wednesday, April 29	School Pictures, 3 Day & 4 Day
Thursday, April 30	School Pictures, 2 Day & 5 Day

## *Notes from the Headmaster*

As I was showing a prospective parent around Berrybrook last week, she asked me, "What part of the day would the children be learning?" her question caught me by surprise. I suppose it is because at Berrybrook we know that children learn everywhere and at all times. Children learn at arrival, holding hands in the parking lot, holding the door for others, and greeting teachers and friends. They are learning self help skills hanging things up in their cubbies. During independent choice they are learning how to concentrate and problem solve and at circle time they are learning how to be part of a community. Snack provides an opportunity to master hand washing and table manners. On the playground there is unlimited development of motor skills and an abundance of observations of the natural world. My response to her question about what time of the day children learn is **every second**. Every moment is a teachable moment and children are learning from their environment, peers, parents and teachers every waking moment.

Math, Science, Literacy, Social Studies and Health are all part of the interconnected curriculum at Berrybrook. Teachers arrange classrooms and activities to include all of these important areas, but also included are interactions to help children develop social skills. Berrybrook teachers design their

classrooms and curriculum to promote a sense of empathy and community, and conflicts between children are seen as opportunities for helping children become sensitive human beings. One way teachers help children develop empathy is by being active listeners. Teachers model good listening and encourage them to listen to each other. We suggest that they look directly at each other when they have something to say. We encourage responses that include how they feel about things. When children know they will be listened to, they are more apt to listen to someone else. Children in fact, are able to recite many ways to be kind and good to friends. Intellectually, they know the right choices, but developmentally, they are just beginning to put them into practice. It is our job to provide them with opportunities to demonstrate how kind they are and to practice being a good friend.

At Berrybrook, we believe that children learn everywhere and at all times. Teachers see even the tiniest incident as an opportunity to help a child learn something about the world or themselves, and then the beauty of our work is that we get to see the child put what they have learned into practice. Teachers and I celebrated a recent milestone we observed in two of our students. In the multi-purpose room during an enrichment program, a younger student stood up in front of an older student and blocked the view. There were several teachers in the room and we were interested in seeing how this situation would develop, so we did not intervene. The older student said very clearly, "Please sit down I can't see." The younger student turned around and looked at the speaker, but did not sit down. Then the older student repeated the request in a slightly firmer voice, "Please sit down, I can't see." This time it worked. The younger child sat down and the older student could now see what was going on. It was perfect. Problem solved with no teacher intervention. The older child has learned to get his needs met in an appropriate, respectful way, and the younger child has learned to listen to a request and respond with understanding. Teachers and I were thrilled with the outcome because we know how many individual Berrybrook moments went into building those important skills in those two children.

It is so important for teachers and parents to remember that children are learning not just in the classroom, or in a piano lesson, or a karate class or a soccer camp. They are learning from every situation. Sure they are learning from us when we are reading a book or cooking with them or teaching them a specific lesson, but they are also learning from us in other daily interactions – in the ways we treat and speak to them and others. The manner in which we handle difficult situations or problems will determine how they will respond to a similar situation in their future. We teach children how to read and write, but they also learn from us how to be compassionate and flexible and patient. If we want children to have all of those qualities, we must model them. Our children are learning all the time, everywhere.

*Pat Keeley*

## 2 & 3 Day Classroom Activities

The 2 & 3 Day classrooms welcome April and will celebrate spring in many ways. Our activities will include exploring **pond life** with turtles and goldfish, enjoying **weather changes** with kites, wind catchers and rainbows, and discovering **gardening** by decorating pots and planting seeds. **Berrybrook traditions** will continue with painting blown eggs and baking the delicious chocolate *Wacky Bunny Cake*. Lastly it will be **Picture Day**. We look forward to having our class picture taken because so many true friendships have formed and memorable activities were shared during our time together.

We gladly say g'bye to snowsuits and welcome the warm weather which invites us to explore the many outdoor paths and playgrounds Berrybrook has to offer.

It is a pleasure having parents in the classroom. If you were planning on coming in before the year is over now would be a good time to sign up. This time of year children are very comfortable at school. They usually enjoy sharing their classroom and classmates with dad or mom.

Happy Spring!  
2 & 3 Day Teachers



## 4 & 5 Day Classroom Activities

As the March winds disappear April hopefully will arrive with some warm and sunny weather. At the end of March, the children were discovering the process of making maple syrup. After hours of boiling the sap they will enjoy the delicious flavor of Berrybrook's maple syrup at our sugar on snow party.

The children were also learning about some of the early blooming bushes such as Pussy Willows and Forsythia. They will be watching carefully as they travel around town to see if they can spot these bushes as they miraculously change.

### Pussy Willow

I know a little pussy,  
Her coat is silver gray.  
She lives down in the meadow,  
Not very far away.

Although she is a pussy,  
She'll never be a cat.  
For she's a pussy willow,  
Now what do you think of that?

Meow,  
Meow,  
Meow,  
Meow,  
Meow,  
Meow,  
Meow,

SCAT!

In April, we will be painting blown eggs to celebrate the beginning of spring. We will be collecting blown eggs as soon as you are able to accomplish this task. Remember to break up the yolk or it will be difficult to blow through the little hole. A notice with directions was recently sent to help with this activity but if you have any problems please let us know.

Outside our windows we have placed two bird feeders which are busily being visited by a variety of birds. The children have been observing the birds flying between the trees and feeders and are enjoying watching all the activity. At circle time we have talked about the importance of keeping the feeders full therefore the children will have the opportunity to fill them as needed.

Another sign of spring is the arrival of insects which we will be observing and learning some interesting facts about. Throughout the year we teach the children to respect all living things even small creatures. Our classroom has bug catchers which we use frequently to save any insects that find their way inside.

As we arrive and depart from Berrybrook each day we have the opportunity to drive by two special animals, Thelma and Louise. The 4/5 day children will be learning about sheep this month and discover what they can do with the sheep's

wool. Watch for a unique project that the children will be creating relating to these animals.

### **BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP**

Baa, baa black (white) sheep  
Have you any wool?  
Yes sir, yes sir,  
Three bags full.

One for my master  
And one for my dame,  
And one for the little boy or girl  
Who lives down the lane.

Baa, baa black (white) sheep,  
Have you any wool?  
Yes sir, yes sir,  
Three bags full.

### **Reminder from the 4 & 5 Day Classes!**



Check for the full moon this month!

It will rise at 7:47pm on April 9<sup>th</sup>.  
Sunset is at 7:18pm

It is called  
***Full Pink Moon***

## *Berrybrook Parents Association*

Happy Spring to all! March was a great month with a highlight being our silhouette fundraiser with proceeds over \$700 for our enrichment activities and for the Spring Fling. Again, thank you to everyone who participated and thanks to Mollie O'Hara, Denise Faul and Pam McArdle for helping with the event!

During April, we are excited to bring you Jeanine Fitzgerald- "**Parenting Together,**" which was rescheduled (for April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm) after our snow storm in early March. Book your babysitter, and come with questions!! It is always wonderful to be in a community of friends learning how to better motivate and educate our children. Please spread the word and sign up, if you haven't already for this informative discussion.

This month we will also be hosting Sibling Story times for each of the classes, and enrichment programs including the Snake Lady for the older children's classrooms and the Pizza Gardens for the younger children. Several additions to our calendar this month include:

**Family Hike** – Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am. If you are around during April break, come join us for a family hike and pack a lunch to enjoy on the Berrybrook grounds.

**Lemonade Stand** – Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm. Relax with friends as you enjoy visiting a good old fashion lemonade stand. If you would like to contribute a batch of peanut-free

cookies, there will be signup sheets on the BPA table. More details will follow!

**Sea Life program** – Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> noon to 1:00 pm. This enrichment session, which is open to all students, is sponsored by the Duxbury Beach Preservation Society (DBPS). Several fellow members of the DBPS education committee and I will host this event with touch tanks of sea creatures and other educational materials covering life on Duxbury Beach.

Also in April, preparations for creating the Memory Books are in full swing! Thank you to all the Classroom parents for organizing their class gatherings to work on the books! Also, thank you to the teachers who provide photos throughout the year – capturing the glorious moments of our children's' first learning experiences and their precious friendships. This year the teachers have even organized the photos by child – a very labor intensive task... thank you!

Looking forward to celebrating the joys of spring with our annual Spring Fling! During our next BPA meeting on April 7, 2009 at 7:00 pm, we will focus on organizing this fun "carnival" event. This is a wonderful tradition at the Berrybrook School, which allows Berrybrook families to socialize and enjoy great food and music. Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 12, 2009 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm with a rain date of Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. If you are unable to make the meeting, but are interested in volunteering for the Spring Fling, please contact any of the BPA officers. We will also have a volunteer signup sheet at the BPA table. Although this is a free event sponsored by the

BPA, a flyer will be sent out in late April requiring signups for attendance, which allows us to plan properly.

Finally, it doesn't seem possible... but only a few months remain until school ends. We are now looking for BPA officers and classroom parents for the 2009-2010 school year. If you are interested, we would love to hear from you and get you involved in the Spring Fling planning. Please email me at tammyakirk@yahoo.com.

Enjoy your Easter celebrations and April break!

Warm Regards,

Tammy Kirk,  
BPA, President

### *School Pictures*

Please mark your calendars with the dates for school pictures:

**Wednesday, April 29, 3 Day & 4 Day**

**Thursday, April 30, 2 Day & 5 Day**

Kingston Photo will be taking pictures again this year. More information will be sent home soon.

Your 9<sup>th</sup> and final tuition payment is due April 1.

2 Day	\$ 209.00
3 Day	\$ 207.00
4 Day	\$ 381.00
5 Day	\$ 449.00

Thank you!

### *Dad's Night Out Parent Discussion Group*

Thank you to all the dads who participated in the successful **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Dad's Night Out" Parent Discussion Group**. We appreciated the open and sincere discussion in dealing with typical early childhood behaviors. The conversations centered around common challenges facing parents of young children and each parent's role in the family. These challenges include, but are not limited to sibling rivalry, quality time, lying, daily routines, consequences, praising, validating, cooperation, peer pressure for children and parents, etc.

Many handouts are available for any dads (or other family members) who have specific concerns and were unable to attend. Please may contact us for these handouts.

See you next year!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. La Forest & Mrs. Delano

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*Congratulations to the  
Donovan family in the 2 Day  
Class.*

*They have recently added  
another member to their family*

*Regan Kathleen Donovan*

*Welcome !*

## *“Why I Love Being a Preschool Teacher”*

**By Rose M. Fosdick**

Having daily conversations with four and five year old children really gives you an insight on how they think at this age level. Children of this age really do live in the present, and by listening to them you learn what is important to them right now. Hearing things from a child’s point of view can make a teacher’s day so much brighter.

Last year, I wrote an article about how much I enjoy being a teacher at Berrybrook School. At the end of the article, I had shared some quotes I had recorded from the children all year. The parents seemed to love it, so I decided to do it again this year. Here are some of the things your children have said during class this year:

At circle, Mrs. Caddle introduced a new song, “The More We Get Together”, and when it was done a child said, “Now THAT was like the worst song ever!”

I was talking to two girls about how I just saw one of them at a home visit, when the other girl asked me, “Well how did you get there? Who drove you there?” When I told her that I drove myself, she said, “You can drive?! How OLD are you?!”

While working at the project table, a child comes over and asks me what the children are making. After telling him that they are making “fire cats”, he said, “It don’t look much like a fire cat!”

While trying real hard to push a foot into a shoe that fell off, a child states, “I’m pushing so hard, I think the ground is cracking!”

After telling the children that we will be cleaning up the block creations in five minutes, a child says, “I’m sure glad it is not five minutes yet.”

At the snack table, a child says, “I don’t want cream cheese or butter because it is body fat.”

One child apologizes to another for knocking over his creation. The second child says, “Will you help me fix it? Because when you ‘break it, you fix it’ that’s the rule in my house.”

A child holds up a toy dreidel and asks Mrs. Keeley, “Did you make this out of clay?”

While practicing our “Winter Wonderland” dance moves for our holiday concert, a child says, “All this dancing is making me feel like a girl.”

When Patrice from “Hop, Skip, and Jump” was explaining the importance of exercise for your heart, one child says, “My Mommy did her exercise this morning to her tape and we did it with her!”

A child describes one of his teachers to his mother: "You know, Mom, the teacher with the blonde hair that has the light brown sprinkles."

During circle, we sometimes play the "Little Pony" game which asks the children to look at their clothes and if they are wearing the color of the pony we sing, then they have to go in the middle and gallop. Every time we sing, the "little 'white' pony", the children tell Mrs. Caddle she has to go in the middle and gallop because her hair is white!

After Mrs. Caddle explained her trip to Puerto Rico to the children, one of them asked her, "Did you see someone named, 'Jan,' there?"

A child asked me, "Mrs. Fosdick, is your 'brother grown-up' going to come play the piano again?"

After a discussion about President Lincoln, and why we celebrate his birthday with a holiday, a child comes into the block room and declares, "Mrs. Caddle! It can't be President Lincoln's birthday! He's already dead! And he didn't even make a crown!"

A child's grandmother told me one afternoon, that her granddaughter wanted to wear her "wiggly pants" to school because Mrs. Fosdick wears her wiggly pants, too.

I hope you all enjoy the things your children say as much as I do!

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### *Thank You for Your Generous Support*

On behalf of the Development Committee and the entire Board of Directors I would like to thank the Berrybrook community for its support of our recent tag sale to benefit the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. The Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund is the primary source of tuition assistance for Berrybrook families. The purpose of this fund is to provide tuition assistance to parents and/or guardians of children who have been accepted to Berrybrook, but who would not be able to attend without tuition assistance. Our first annual *Renew, Recycle, Reuse Tag Sale* was a huge success, raising over \$900.00! Thank you so much to all of the families who donated the hundreds items of clothing, furniture, books, toys, and other baby necessities for the sale.

Another great opportunity to contribute to our community will happen next month. Each year in May, Berrybrook School asks current and past families to consider a donation towards tuition assistance through the Berrybrook Annual Appeal. I'll have more information about the Annual Appeal in the May Newsletter.

Thank you again for your contributions to our sale and for your continued generosity and support. Working together we make great things happen at Berrybrook.

*Pat Keeley*



## *Berrybrook Board of Directors*

I am so thankful.....

As I sit in my office watching the world around me, I worry, I panic...how are we ever going to recover from the financial burdens we are all faced with today? It is affecting all of us to some degree and to some capacity. Some of us fear losing our jobs and some already have, some of us aren't quite sure how we will make our next mortgage payment. As I dwell on these unsettling facts I have come to realize that I have so many things to be thankful for.

I feel so very fortunate to have two healthy children and a happy home. What makes all of that even more precious are the wonderful people we surround ourselves with. I look forward to heading off to Berrybrook everyday, year after year and sometimes I take for granted the gifts I receive when I walk through that gate. Being at Berrybrook means more to my family than just receiving an education. Berrybrook has taught us so many valuable lessons about the environment, friendship, love, family and being thankful for all that surrounds us. We have built friendships that will endure a lifetime. I have met the most amazing teachers, witnessed patience, caring and endless creativity. Mrs. Keeley refers to Berrybrook not just as a school, but a community that I feel so fortunate to be a part of. I have witnessed my own children, as well as all of yours grow and reap the benefits Berrybrook has to offer. My children have developed an awareness and a new found respect for the outdoors and more importantly the world around them, as well as the people in it. My son was moved to tears the day he received Valentines from his classmates, that was the very day he learned they were not just people in his class, they were indeed his friends. I will treasure that moment. Berrybrook is a place to laugh, a place to cry and above all a place to be thankful for. I am so delighted to have the opportunity to serve on the board amongst such a group of dedicated people that I know all share in my fondness for Berrybrook and all it has to offer. Thank you Mrs. Keeley and your entire staff for being there for all of us everyday, you are truly an amazing bunch. Thank you Berrybrook.

*Jenn Zaniboni, Berrybrook Board of Directors*

