

BERRYBROOK NEWS

January, 2010

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Last night while we were fast asleep,
The old year went away.
It can't come back again because,
A new one's come to stay.

Monday, January 4	Enrollment for Berrybrook families begins
Tuesday, January 12	BPA meeting 7:00 pm
Monday, January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School
Thursday, January 21	Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm
Wednesday, January 27	Professional Day, No School Berrybrook Board meeting 7:30pm

Notes from the Headmaster

When people ask me about Berrybrook, I often say that Berrybrook is more a "state of mind" than a preschool. The families, teachers and board members the school attracts share values about young children, relationships and the environment that are unique. I hear people say, "That is so Berrybrook!" when describing certain wonderful, simple activities. It was certainly the appropriate descriptive term for our tree at the Festival of Trees in December. It was "So Berrybrook" to have one of our families as the sponsor. Thank you to the Patel family for their generosity and also to Brooke Lovett and Karen Gallagher for donating their time to create the "Summer on Winter Street" design for the tree. The Berrybrook state of mind was evident in all of the donations received for the Pilgrims Hope Shelter, coordinated this year by Fleur Pang. What we share at Berrybrook is not easy to put into words. It's just the indescribable feeling you get the first time you walk through the gate and decide this is the school for you. This month, many of you will have the opportunity to choose Berrybrook again. Our goal is to work with parents to develop capable, confident, interested learners the "Berrybrook Way." Thank you for choosing our school and thank you for sharing your children with us. Happy New Year.

Pat Keeley

2 & 3 Day Classroom Activities

December was a busy month. Families were the focus. We began the month by talking about Hanukkah. We learned songs, played with dreidels and made our own potato latkes. The children made special beached themed ornaments for the Berrybrook tree at the Festival of Trees. Our tree was beautiful. During December we also made watercolor candles for our school tree and gifts for our families and baked cookies for our sing-a-long. Thank you to all the family members who participated in that special day.

January brings a new month and a new year. We will begin our new year by making party hats. Our bird friends need help during these cold winter months. The children will learn about how to help them. Then our classrooms will transform into the "Berrybrook Hospital". We will learn about keeping ourselves healthy.

As we return to school from our holiday break we will be reminding children how to prevent the spread of germs. We will review what we discussed in September. As children enter the classroom we will continue to wash hands before engaging in play. Reminders will be given about covering coughs and sneezes with your inner elbow, using tissues for runny noses and washing hands. We encourage parents to reinforce these lessons at home.

Even though it is cold and snowy we will continue to go outside whenever

possible. Please remember to send your child with hats, gloves, boots, snowpants, etc. If your child wears boots to school you may send slippers for the classroom. We plan on enjoying the winter weather as much as possible.

Happy New Year!

4 & 5 Day Classroom Activities

To ring in the New Year we begin the month of January with discussions of cold and wintry weather. We talk about temperature and wind-chill factor and most importantly how to properly dress for this kind of weather. The children are encouraged to dress all by themselves including zippers, snaps, and buttons. Proper fitting boots, mittens, hats, snowsuits and pants are appreciated. Tight fitting clothing can be very frustrating to children who are learning how to dress themselves. In fact, they may give up trying. It is helpful for the children to practice dressing themselves at home. Thank you for encouraging them to do so.

In January we begin to learn about winter birds. There will be observations, stories and art projects. We talk about feeding the birds in winter and how important it is to continue feeding them once you have started. They depend on us.

In the middle of January we begin our unit on health. The children make a book about themselves and

learn about nutritious foods and dental health. At the end of the month we begin to learn about space: what is a planet? comet? asteroid? moon? There are all sorts of questions. We are fortunate to know a person who is knowledgeable about this subject and is willing to answer our questions.

Speaking of knowing a lot about one subject, if anyone has a special interest or a hobby/ collection they would like to share please let the teachers know. It would be beneficial for the children to learn from your experience and a welcome addition to our curriculum.

For upcoming projects we need any and all used greeting cards you may be discarding whether they be birthday, holiday, get-well, etc,. We will be happy and grateful for whatever you may donate.

In February, shoeboxes (any size) are needed for our Valentine's Day celebration. Also in February we will be studying postage stamps. Please save any envelopes that have cancelled stamps. The children will be cutting these stamps off for an upcoming activity.

Thank you for all your help. It is greatly appreciated.



Cold Weather Tips

The first cold weather we had in December reminded us to be prepared. By now parents have located all snow pants, boots, hats and mittens that had been packed away.

At Berrybrook we will go out every day that is not freezing or raining. Children should come prepared for the outdoors. We know that some days it is hard to tell what the weather conditions will be at the end of the session, so when in doubt, you could pack snow pants and boots in a tote bag to have in the cubby.

Please remember to have your child arrive with boots, hat, mittens, jacket and snow pants. Even when there is no snow, these extra clothes allow for warm, comfortable outdoor play. Please mark each item with your child's name.

Thank you!

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.

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.

Berrybrook Parents' Association

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! We hope that you and your family enjoyed the holidays and had some family fun during the vacation. We are looking forward to all that the BPA has to offer in 2010.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Berrybrook community for making our two community outreach efforts so successful. The Festival of Trees which benefits the Cranberry Hospice was a sight to see! Our beautiful "Summer on Winter Street" tree looked spectacular. Thanks to Brooke Lovett and Karen Gallagher who chaired this event and to South Shore Sleep Diagnostics: Drs. Anit Patel and Bernard Durante for sponsoring the tree. Thanks to all who made donations to the Pilgrims Hope Shelter. Thanks to Fleur Pang who helped us organize this effort and deliver these much needed items in time for the holiday.

The BPA sponsored directory was placed in your child's cubby last month. We hope that you find this directory helpful throughout the year. A special thanks to thank Michelle Kelly for her assistance on this project.

The Toy Box in Hanover hosted an all day shopping event on Dec. 7th and 20% of the total sales went back to Berrybrook. Thanks to all who participated in this holiday fundraising event!

The schedule for enrichment programs is filling up. A visit from a local dental hygienist is scheduled for January as well as a visit from Ed Sorrentino (aka. "Spaghetti Eddie"), a percussionist from the South Shore Conservatory who will present the program *Ed's Beat*. In addition, the children will have an opportunity to get moving when the fitness program *Hop, Skip, Jump* visits in late February and early March.

Our next BPA meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 12th at 7pm.** We hope that you will join us in discussing future enrichment programs, a potential parent book group, and ideas for fundraising!

Fondly,
Jane Redman, President

*Congratulations to Soren
Morales in 3 Day room 3
and his family on the
new addition to their
family -
a baby boy, Jensen.*

Berrybrook Board of Directors

My Morning at Berrybrook

It would probably be overstating—but not by much—to describe my visit to Berrybrook one morning in December as magical. As a former teacher and new Board member without children at Berrybrook, I thought it important for me to see the school humming.

During the last few years I have spent a good deal of time with my grandson at Bleeker Street Park in New York City watching pre-schoolers zip around, grapple over toys, and periodically erupt in frustration and tears. Of course park behavior is different from school behavior. Still, my first observation at Berrybrook was of a wonderfully settled environment. No doubt long past the separation issues of September and into their “work” routines, the children seemed busy, collaborative, and comfortable; the teachers calm and attentive. I am probably not the first person to make the comparison to Mr. Rogers Neighborhood.

The next thing I noticed was a kind of prevailing pedagogy. In the two- and three-day class, for example, one of the children at the glue and glitter station brought her project to Mrs. Delano and asked, “What makes this stick?” Instead of giving her the answer, Mrs. Delano guided the child’s attention back to the project table to *discover* what makes glitter stick to paper.

Perhaps my most important observation came as a kind of revelation. For many years, I corrected 50+ essays weekly, carting around a heavy pile of black and white composition books on the campus where my husband and I both taught and where my two sons attended school, K-12. I used to think (not without complaint) that teachers of the upper classes had more preparation time. Not so. It’s just a different kind of homework.

Moving between two classes at Berrybrook, noting details of the work stations set up carefully in advance by the teachers, and watching Mrs. O’Neil’s enchanting production in the all-purpose room, I was struck that morning by how much preparation time the teachers must put in daily to keep their classrooms structured *yet* full of discovery and their very young students focused *yet* happy.

Magical? Maybe.

Carol Gibbon

Exploring Play

by Joan Neal

While playing, children need to follow through with their own ideas and to explore what it is like to be someone else by pretending. This unlimited sense of exploration may be encouraged with the use of materials or toys such as; dress up play clothes, art materials, blocks, legos, dolls, animal figures, etc. However, toys based on a television characters and movies may inspire children to play in a particular way instead of using their imagination. "When children lose control of their play – whether the content they are imitating is violent or not – one of their central avenues for growth and learning is undermined." (Levin D. E. 1998, remote control Children: Combating the Hazard of Media Culture. Washington D.C. NAEYC). Television shows such as nature specials or educational programs can have a positive influence on children intellectually and emotionally.

As children explore the world around them, they learn how to get along with others, discover new ideas and gain confidence to try different activities. Play is an essential part of life. Other types of learning involving play include; language skills, mathematics, cooperation, curiosity, self-esteem and problem solving. When listening to children when they are in the dramatic play area, I am amazed how they are able to put a plan together. They discuss each child's character and how the role should be played along with the dialog. Also, during the play activity, I have observed the children doing their own problem solving, such as sharing a particular item. The few times I must assist the children with an issue, the children feel free to express their feelings and then find a solution to the problem. All of these play experiences help to develop positive self esteem.

Simple rules to stimulate positive play include; people are not for hurting, conflicts are resolved by talking and everything must be returned to its place. These ideas help to foster productive and safe play. Play in its many forms helps children become well rounded individuals.

The Snowman's Resolution

Aileen Fisher

The snowman's hat was crooked
And his nose was out of place
And several of his whiskers
Had fallen from his face.

But the snowman didn't notice
For he was trying hard to think
Of a New Year's Resolution
That wouldn't melt or shrink.

He thought and planned and pondered
With his little snow-ball head
Till his eyes began to glisten
And his toes began to spread;

And at last he said, "I've got it-
I'll make a firm resolve
That no matter what the weather
My smile will not dissolve.