

BERRYBROOK NEWS

December, 2009

First Snow

**Snow makes whiteness where it falls.
The bushes look like popcorn balls.
And places where I always play,
Look like somewhere else today.**

Friday, December 18

Holiday break begins

Monday, January 4, 2010

School resumes/2010 Enrollment begins

Notes from the Headmaster

At Berrybrook, teachers work to help children feel part of their classroom community. A lot of time is spent discussing ethical behavior and the responsibilities we have to each other. We talk about caring for ourselves and others and we encourage children to make decisions about behavior based on that caring. Building that sense of community is important to creating an environment where children feel confident to express themselves and to try new things. This month, our school will be offering parents, teachers and students opportunities to participate in caring for others beyond Berrybrook. The Berrybrook Parent Association has arranged to collect items for the Pilgrims Hope Homeless shelter in Kingston, and 4 & 5 day classes are coordinating contributions to the Kingston Animal Shelter. Another wonderful opportunity to involve the whole family in supporting others during the holidays is to visit the Festival of Trees at the Plimoth Plantation this coming weekend where you can see the tree decorated by Berrybrook children and support the South Shore Cranberry Hospice. Spending time helping others helps children develop tolerance and gratitude. It also builds self confidence and breaks down stereotypes. Research shows that children who participate in community service are twice as likely to volunteer as adults. Our Berrybrook children will grow up to make the world a better place. When children become involved in community, everyone benefits.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Pat Keeley

2 & 3 Day Classroom Activities

The month of November sure did have us thankful for many things! We showed how thankful we are for our families by bringing in family photos. Puppets and stories told of how we can be thankful for friends by listening to one another and talking through our problems. Our classroom "Textured Turkeys" were quickly covered with feathers formed at home by friends who had very creative ideas for decorating! Traditional Berrybrook projects were of importance in November such as painting and filling assorted canisters with corks to create drums, as well as our pinecone turkeys which always make a memorable addition to the dinner table on Thanksgiving Day! Our Thanksgiving Feast was celebrated with our favorite foods and topped with the butter we made and we all enjoyed creating ornaments for the Berrybrook Holiday Tree that will be on display at The Festival of Trees at Plimoth Plantation.

December's arrival brings holiday cheer and spirit surrounding us everywhere we go: friends' and families' homes, grocery stores and shopping malls. December at Berrybrook will focus on families and traditions. Activities will include reading books and talking about how many different cultures have celebrations this time of year. Children will make delicious potato latkes, learn holiday songs and bake cookies. Beautiful decorations fitting to the season will be seen in cubbies – watch out for the glitter!

Children will also be making gifts for their families and friends.



Hannukah Latkes

"Take a potato – pat, pat, pat
Grate it and make it flat, flat, flat
Fry it in a pan with fat, fat, fat
Hannukah Latkes clap, clap, clap!"

Potato Latkes

6 Potatoes
4 Tablespoons flour
1 Teaspoon Salt
1 Egg

Peel and shred potatoes into a bowl. This can be done with a cheese grater or food processor. Add flour, salt, and egg and mix together. Form mixture into table-spoon sized patties. Cook in hot oil until golden.

Enjoy!

Just before the holiday break arrives and we part from each other until the New Year, families will join together for our 2 and 3 Day Class Holiday Sing-A-Long. This is a wonderful, relaxed and joyous time of being together to sing some holiday songs and enjoy a special snack made by the children. Invitations with details will be in cubbies.

We hope to see you there!

4 & 5 Day Classroom Activities

Thanks to all of you who chaperoned our visit to Plimoth Plantation. We have been reminiscing about our visit at circle time, with the help of the talking feather, Our learning has continued with many books read about the lives of the Pilgrims and the Wompanoag Tribe as we compare what life was like long ago for families to our families and the way we live today. The children proudly completed their miniature replicas of Plimoth Plantation complete with Pilgrim houses, wetus and mishoons! Great effort went into our baking and making butter for our Thanksgiving feast. Good company and good food were enjoyed by all.

December is a busy month at Berrybrook. The 4 and 5 Day classes learn about family holiday traditions through song, dance, baking, art and literature. They will take part in decorating the classroom as well as learning the importance of giving whether it be a helping hand, kind gesture or word, or actual homemade gift. All second year classes prepare a special holiday performance for their parents. This performance will be a gift of music from them to you.

The holiday performances will be presented at the following times:

4 Day Classes – December 17th
5 Day Class – December 18th

On the day of the performance, Parents bring their children to their classrooms at their regular arrival time then wait as the performance will start shortly thereafter. At the conclusion of the

performance there will be a holiday snack which the children have prepared. After the snack is enjoyed together our day will end and the holiday break will begin.

Happy Holidays to you and your families. Enjoy your time together.

Thank you

Berrybrook Teachers would like to thank parents for all of the thoughtful, generous words and deeds we receive so often from parents. It means so much to us. Your support and goodwill make Berrybrook a place where teachers and children can do their best work. We appreciate all of the parents who volunteer in so many ways - by helping in classes, assisting with a cooking project, accompanying classes to the Plimoth Plantation, making playdough, or bringing in recyclables.

We find Berrybrook parents to be cheerful, understanding and flexible and your hard work with children at home makes our jobs at Berrybrook a pleasure.

*Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle,
Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano,
Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. La Forest,
Mrs. Neal, Mrs. O'Neil,
Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Pisani,
Mrs. Rosen, Mrs. Swan and
Mrs. Watts want to wish all
Berrybrook Families a restful, happy
and healthy holiday season.*

Toys of Value

Making decisions about what toys to purchase during the holidays gets more difficult each year. Children and parents are inundated with television ads from thousands of toy makers trying to convince them that their toy is best.

Parents are under tremendous pressure to buy the “hot” item that may be sold through films, TV ads and even fast food restaurants. Play is essential for children and toys are the tools of play. Healthy toys promote imaginative, creative, interesting, and long lasting play. A group called TRUCE (Teachers for Resisting Unhealthy Children’s Entertainment) has some hints for choosing healthy toys. They recommend the following:

- Choose toys that can be used in many ways
- Choose toys that allow the children to determine the play
- Choose toys that appeal to children at more than one age
- Choose toys that are not linked to video games, TV or movies
- Choose toys that can be used with other toys for new and more complex play
- Choose toys that promote respectful, non-stereotyped, non-violent interactions
- Choose some gifts to make at home with your children to give to others. Berrybrook Playdough is always a nice gift!

Berrybrook School Playdough Recipe

4 cups flour
2 cups salt
4 cups water
4 tbsp oil
4 tbsp cream of tartar

Mix all in a large pot. Cook on medium heat until dough forms. Cool, knead, and store in an air-tight container.



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.

Remember to send your child dressed appropriately for outdoor play everyday! Berrybrook children will go outside unless it is raining or freezing. When in doubt, it is better to pack boots, snow pants, mittens and hat than to be caught without those items!

Enrollment 2010-2011

During the holiday break, the office will be mailing Berrybrook parents re-enrollment information for the 2010-2011 school year. The month of January is reserved for current and alumni families to enroll. Applications from new families will be processed starting in February. Our goal is to meet the needs of all of our current families and every effort will be made to accommodate parent preference. However, parents should be aware that Berrybrook reserves the right to make class placement based on the needs of the children and the composition of the group. Parents should feel free to contact Mrs. Keeley with questions about enrollment.

Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund

The Berrybrook Board of Directors sets aside funds for tuition assistance through the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. The fund was created in honor of Berrybrook's first director and teacher. It provides financial assistance to families who wish to attend Berrybrook but do not have the financial means to do so and it also helps current Berrybrook families who experience financial hardship during the school year. It truly honors Berrybrook's founder, Katharine Mann and her vision to provide a quality early educational opportunity for all children. Berrybrook School is enriched by a community of parents, alumni and friends whose generosity reinforces these values and helps to provide for each and every child.

To raise these tuition assistance funds, the Board of Directors conducts an Annual Appeal. A letter goes out to current and past families every spring. The Appeal is an opportunity for families to make a contribution to the fund so others may be able to experience Berrybrook. Donations to the Appeal are welcome at any time during the year. In an effort to reduce postage cost and paper usage the Board has made it possible to donate to the Annual Appeal on-line at <http://berrybrookschool.org>. Donations are appreciated and are strictly voluntary.

In addition to the Annual Appeal, the Board has recently expanded the opportunities for families to participate in raising funds for assistance:

Berrybrook Quest

The first "Berrybrook Quest" was held on November 7, 2009 and was a huge success. Thank you to all who attended on that beautiful autumn day. Every dollar raised from that event has gone into the scholarship fund.

Berrybrook Tag Sale

The first Berrybrook Tag sale last year was so well received, the Board will be holding the 2nd Annual Berrybrook Tag sale in March 2010. Thank you to those who have already brought in donations. Please know how much your contributions are appreciated. We will continue to accept items right up to the day of the event, donations can be deposited in the Great Room. Again, all profits from the sale of these items will be directly deposited into the Helen Wheeler Scholarship fund which assists families needing tuition assistance.

Thank you for your contributions.

Berrybrook Parent Association News

It is hard to believe that the holiday season is upon us. The BPA calendar is filling up with wonderful enrichment activities for our children, opportunities for parents to get together, events to give back to the community, and for Berrybrook families to enjoy some winter fun as well!

Enrichment:

The enrichment programs for our children begin in January with a visit from a local dental hygienist. In addition, science, movement, and music programs are in the process of being scheduled as well.

Community Outreach:

The Festival of Trees is underway! An eight foot tree has been purchased for Berrybrook and our theme will be "Summer on Winter Street". Each classroom will be decorating ornaments to adorn the tree. The Festival of Lights takes place Dec. 4th -6th and we hope that all of you will visit Plimoth Plantation to see this spectacular tree!

Pilgrims Hope is our second community outreach event. A letter was placed in your child's cubby with suggested items needed for the shelter. A collection box has been placed at the BPA table. Please make your donation by Dec. 10th to ensure that the shelter receives these much needed items in time for the holiday!

Fundraising:

All of the fundraising done by the BPA goes into enrichment programs for children and adults and community wide

social events like the Harvest Fest and the Spring Fling.

Get some holiday shopping done while supporting the BPA! The Toy Box in Hanover is hosting an all day shopping event on December 7th from 9am-8pm and 20% of the total sales will go back to Berrybrook. At the time of the sale, just mention Berrybrook. For families that can not make it to the store on this day, they offer the following options: call-in your order (they can provide personal shopping over the phone, 781-826-3750), or shop on the website www.thetoyboxhanover.com and enter "Berrybrook School" in the coupon code. Happy Shopping!

For the Teachers:

Since the teachers do so much for our children, we thought it would be nice to do something special for them. A staff meeting is held once a month after school for the teachers. We would like to recruit parents who would be willing to provide fruit, drinks, or cheese and crackers. A sign up sheet will be placed at the BPA table with a list of scheduled staff meetings. Thanks in advance for supporting our hard working teachers!

Parent Book Group:

The BPA officers are interested in getting your feedback on a potential book group. Interest has been raised about selecting a book which might provide some insight on parenting. Please email Jane Redman (janearedman@hotmail.com) if you'd be interested in taking part in this BPA event!

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Family Fun:

Once the wintry weather hits, the BPA would like to host a sledding party at Berrybrook. Since mother nature is unpredictable, notification will be via email. Scheduling of the event will take place on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

Apparel:

The opportunity to purchase Berrybrook apparel is ongoing. The shirts and price list are on display at the BPA table. You can also visit the Berrybrook website to access the order form.

Our **next BPA meeting** will be on **Tuesday, January 12 @ 7pm**. We hope that you will join us to share your ideas and get involved in upcoming events.

We wish the entire Berrybrook community a wonderful holiday season!

Jane Redman, President
Devon Kohler, Vice-President
Trisha Stravin, Secretary
Stacy Watts, Treasurer

Random Acts of Kindness

Pat Keeley

At the last BPA meeting, there was a full agenda, covering all of the wonderful events planned for this year. Also on the agenda, was a discussion about how to aid families who may need help in the parking lot. Many parents, at one time or another, have had the situation where they have one child to drop off at Berrybrook and one, or two, or three children in the car who are sleeping or not feeling well. The BPA wanted to brainstorm to see what could be done to assist parents in that situation.

After agreeing that recruiting volunteers to sign up for scheduled parking lot duty was impractical, and setting aside certain spots for parents with young ones would mean setting aside the entire parking lot, the solution that was finally proposed was to encourage **“Random Acts of Kindness.”**

I am well aware that Berrybrook parents need no encouragement to help each other out. I see many thoughtful acts happening in the classrooms, hallways, playground and parking lot. I am positive Berrybrook parents would not hesitate to help if asked. What we want to encourage is the extra step of offering help to a parent who may be too shy to ask.

Many parents have been at Berrybrook for years and are familiar with the parents of their children’s classmates, but every year we have new parents sending their first child to preschool who may need time to get to know other parents and may not be comfortable asking for help.

One of the many things I love about Berrybrook is our drop off routine that brings parents and their children into our school each day. Having younger and older siblings in our school builds a feeling of community that is unique to Berrybrook. The Berrybrook experience would be very different if we didn’t see each other everyday. I realize that on some days, drop off can be a challenge and so that is why along with the BPA I would like to encourage parents to notice when other parents are in distress – (you know that look!) and offer a “Random Act of Kindness” and help by watching sleeping children in a car, or walking a student in.

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Holiday Traditions

'Tis the seasonto be stressed out, anxious and completely overwhelmed! I think it is a safe assumption to say I am not alone. Every year as the holiday season approaches I make a promise to myself that I will begin my holiday shopping on October 1st. Of course I have everything organized, color coded and ready to go, however, here it is December 1st, I have yet to cross one single name off my list! Ironically year after year somehow it all works itself out, everything magically gets accomplished and the holidays come and go in a blink. The memories of the season never seem to be all the anxiety, and pressure I feel, it is the wonderful traditions that we share. Sometimes I have to take a step back and tell myself how unimportant it really is to make sure I pick out the right Monster Truck and that the real importance is the time we share with our friends and families celebrating all the season has to offer.

Having a young family and just starting out everything seems new. Berrybrook has taught me over the years the importance of starting new traditions. Although Berrybrook has so many traditions throughout the year I always look forward to this season in particular. The children take so much pride in learning their holiday songs and sharing their beautiful ornaments with their friends and family, and of course, the holiday celebration before we leave for the break always brings tears to my eyes. Our family looks forward to returning to the Festival of Trees each and every year, it is always a race to find the Berrybrook tree!

I would like to share some of our family traditions with all of you.

Festival of Trees

Friday, December 4th-6th (www.cranberryhospice.org/festival - for details)

Edaville Railroad – Christmas Festival of Lights

Friday Night Fireworks the month of December (www.edaville.com for details, and coupons)

Martha's Vineyard – Christmas in Edgartown

December 11th-13th Featuring: shopping, artisan fairs, parade, arts & crafts, concert, chowder fest, cookie contest, concert, tree lighting, caroling, best of all – Santa!

Nutcracker

Duxbury Performing Arts Center – December 24th-27th (see the ad in the Duxbury Clipper) Boston's Opera House- November 28th – December 26th

Family Tree Decorating

We invite all of our family and friends over to share in decorating our tree! It is fun for the children, as well as the adults. We share food / drink, music, stories and laughter.

I would like to wish all of you – friends, family and faculty a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year! Cherish everything the season has to offer, celebrate old traditions and welcome the new. Remember the real importance of the holidays and try to avoid angst over the challenges that come with it!

Enjoy, and Peace to All, Jenn Zaniboni, Board of Directors