



May 2012

Wednesday, May 2	Berrybrook Board meeting 7:30 pm
Wednesday, May 16	Annual Trip to Duxbury Beach 2 Day, 3 Day & 5 Day classes @ 9:00 am 4 Day classes @1:00 pm
Tuesday, May 22	Kindergarten Bus Trip for 4 & 5 Day 5 Day 9:30 (regular 9:00 arrival time) 4 Day 12:30 (children arrive at 12:15 !)
<i>Wednesday, May 23</i>	<i>BPA Spring Filing 4 - 6:00 pm</i>
Wednesday, May 30	Ice Cream Party Last Day of School for 3 Day Classes
Thursday, May 26	Ice Cream Party Last Day of School for 4 Day Class
Friday, June 1	Ice Cream Party Last Day of School for 2 & 5 Day Classes
Wednesday, June 6	BPA Staff Appreciation Luncheon

The Little Plant

In the heart of a seed buried deep, so deep,
A dear little plant lay fast asleep.
“Wake!” said the sunshine, “And creep into the light.”
“Wake!” said the voice of the raindrops bright.
The little plant heard, and it rose to see,
What the wonderful outside world might be.

– Kate Louise Brown

Notes from the Headmaster

The poem on the first page of the newsletter makes me think of all of the “dear little plants” that you may see at Berrybrook. I hope all of you had the chance to look at the second year forsythia creations that were hung in the hallway last month. It is a sure sign of spring when I see them on display. This month, the forsythia have been replaced with pussy willow creations. These projects are traditions at Berrybrook and they are among my favorites for a few reasons.

First, the Forsythia and Pussy Willow creations represent the dear little plants that we have observed blooming outdoors after a long winter, and they always serve to lift our spirits.

Second, when I walk by the display in the hall, I marvel at how many individual interpretations of pussy willows can come out of the same classroom. The project captures the Berrybrook philosophy so well. I know that preceding the actual artwork the children had a discussion in class about the outdoors and what was happening during the change of seasons. Then teachers provided examples of the actual dear little plants for the children to contemplate. What do they look like? How are the stems formed? How do the blossoms grow on the stems? Then the children were invited to the project table during class to record on paper what they had observed. They started by using a pencil to write PUSSY WILLOW at the top of their paper. Then they thought about how they would use the art materials the teachers prepared for them to create their own dear little plants. Please take a moment in the next week to look carefully at each pussy willow now on display in the hall. Some have long stems that stand straight, others have stems that bend gracefully. Some students chose to include the vase the pussy willows were in. As I said, children have been doing their pussy willow projects for many years, but each year they are so amazing. What’s more amazing is that the children do the projects in class, and they appreciate the efforts of others - there is no right or wrong. Each creation is unique and just right. That is so *Berrybrook*.

Third, and the most important reason I love these spring projects is that they remind me of the “dear little plants” that have been growing in our classrooms all year. The children who were so young in September have grown so much. I am so proud of them. After school recently, a second year teacher commented, “I wish we could keep this group for another year, don’t you feel that way too?” and all of the teachers agreed. We have grown so fond of the children and soon they will be leaving us. Fortunately, we have our first year “dear little plants” who will return to Berrybrook in the fall and they will be learning and growing and displaying their artwork in the hall. Next spring we’ll be wanting them to stay another year, but they too will be ready for exciting new things.

“Wake!” said the sunshine, “And creep into the light.”

“Wake!” said the voice of the raindrops bright.

The little plant heard, and it rose to see,
What the wonderful outside world might be.

Thank you for sharing your dear little children with us, Pat Keeley

First Year Program News

The month of April brought warm sunny weather and we were very excited to spend time outdoors enjoying spring. The children went on nature walks, participated in our egg hunt, and flew their kites. We also learned some springtime songs and created our own forsythia plants.

The housekeeping areas in our classrooms were transformed into supermarkets. The children were busy buying groceries, stocking shelves, and scanning their merchandise. We also enjoyed a favorite Berrybrook tradition of painting eggs. We know that blowing eggs is a delicate and time consuming process. Thank you to all who contributed. The end results were beautiful.

During the month of May we will continue our focus on nature as we explore insects, frogs, and turtles. We will touch on the life cycle and the transformations these creatures make during spring. Children will also learn about our oceans and the many creatures that call the ocean their home.

We will all be looking forward to our annual field trip to Duxbury Beach. This trip is a Berrybrook tradition and the children so enjoy spending the day with their friends. The trip for all classes is scheduled for Wednesday, May 16th. All parents are invited to join us for a day at the beach with their Berrybrook friends and teachers. Parents who are not able to make the trip are encouraged to make carpool arrangements for their children.

Teachers will supervise children whose parents cannot attend. More details of this trip will be sent home soon.

The last few weeks of school the 2 and 3 day classes will bring back some of our favorite activities of the year. The children really enjoy this and it's a fun way to remember our year together at Berrybrook. We will also be making ice cream in preparation for ice cream day. Each classroom will have an ice cream scoop countdown. Ice cream day is an age appropriate and fun way to end our school year. On Wednesday, May 30th the 3 Day children will arrive at 9:00 as usual, and all parents are invited to return at 10:30 for ice cream. The 2 Day class will have their ice cream day on Friday, June 1st.

Thank you so much for all of your support this year.

Miss Caddle, Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Rosen



Spring Fling

May 23!

Second Year Program News

May has arrived already! This month is full of activities for the second year students at Berrybrook. We have several field trips coming up. Our first is a trip across the street to the O'Neil farm. The children arrive at their usual drop off time and are soon prepared to walk down to the farm. The teachers ask that the children come to school with sunscreen and bug spray already applied. Also, it would be important to wear close-toed shoes and long pants. We will be walking down a small section of Winter Street, crossing a small wooded area, as well as a field. The teachers are asking that we would like to have as many chaperones for this trip as possible. Once there, everyone will enjoy a tour given by Mr. O'Neil, which is usually highlighted by getting up and close to newborn calves.

The second trip is the annual trip to Duxbury beach on Wednesday, May 16. All Berrybrook classes will spend a few relaxing hours at the beach, exploring the seaside and spending time with friends. Teachers will meet families at the beach, and have a chance to spend some time with students outside the classroom!

On Tuesday, May 24, the Duxbury "Countdown to Kindergarten" group has arranged for the 4 & 5 Day children and their teachers to take a Bus Trip to the Chandler Elementary School in Duxbury. The 5 Day morning class bus will leave at 9:30. Parents may drop off children to the classroom at the regular 9:00 start time, and are welcome to wait in the multi-purpose room or outside until 9:30 and then wave good-bye to the children as they leave on their exciting trip. The 4 Day Classes will start their trip at 12:30, so parents must arrive at Berrybrook at 12:15 on that day.

Although many Berrybrook students will be attending kindergarten in other towns in our community, we feel the trip is fun and very appropriate. The children will walk through a kindergarten classroom, peek at the bathrooms, and see the library, nurse's office, cafeteria and playground. The goal of this visit is to help children anticipate Kindergarten positively by providing children a glimpse of a kindergarten setting. Parents can expect permission slips to be sent home soon.

Information will be headed your way as the events come closer. Please check your cubbies, and always feel free to ask your teachers about details.

We will continue to be busy learning in the classroom. We will be learning about insects. Each classroom has recently received some caterpillars which we will watch go through their metamorphosis and release them back into nature. Classes will also be learning some more about ocean life to coincide with our beach trip. May is also the time to remember mom, so mothers should look forward to something special!

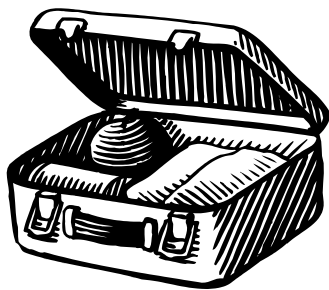
As the school year comes to an end, there will be opportunities to reflect on old favorite songs and games, and getting ready to say goodbye. It is a bittersweet time in our classrooms, looking back at all of the fun things we have done together, and how much our students have learned and grown; and at the same time, looking forward, helping to give the students the tools they need to succeed in the next step of their journey.

A very special Berrybrook tradition is the Ice Cream Day. During the last weeks of school, children make home made

vanilla ice cream to share with families on their last day of school. Through the years it has proven to be an enjoyable, "Berrybrook" way to say goodbye to good friends. On Thursday, May 31 the 4 Day children will arrive at 1:00 as usual, and all parents are invited to return at 2:30 for ice cream. On Friday, June 1, the 5 Day children will arrive as usual at 9:00. At 10:30, all parents are invited to join us.

Thank you for sharing your children with us. We learn something new from them every single day.

Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Neal, Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Swan



Lunch Bunch

The last day for Lunch Bunch will be Thursday, May 31. Thank you to all of the families who participated in our Lunch Bunch program. Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Capasso and Mrs. Neal enjoyed having a casual lunch with the children on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Thank you so much to all parents who were so careful to pack allergy safe lunches for their children. We appreciate our families who take the extra time to make sure all Berrybrook children are safe.

Berrybrook Outdoors

The warm weather is here and with it comes lots of outdoor time. Please apply sun block to your children before they come to school. Teachers will apply insect repellent to children before they go out to the playground. If you happen to be staying to play for a longer period, please remember that there is repellent available in the school if you want to reapply.

Also, please plan on sending children to school in closed-toe shoes - sneakers are a good choice. This allows children to run and climb safely and keeps sand and wood chips away from little feet. Thank you!

A Mother

by Anonymous

A Mother is one who understands
The things you say and do,

Who always overlooks your faults
And sees the best in you.

A Mother is one whose special love
Inspires you day by day,

Who fills your heart with gladness
In her warm and thoughtful way.

A Mother is all these things and more -
The greatest treasure known,

And the dearest Mother in all the world
Is the one I call my own.

Happy Mother's Day!



Summer Enrichment
The Berrybrook Summer Nature Program will be offered again this year during June and July, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 – 1:00.
There are still openings in weeks 2 through 6

Parent Discussion Group News

The last Parent Discussion Group of the year was held on Thursday evening, April 26th. The topic of the meeting was “Transitions” and this meeting, as with all the others, was looked forward to with anticipation. We kept track as the hands of the clock moved toward the appointed hour. We listened for the sound of the front door opening. Yes! We heard approaching footsteps in the hall... closer and closer...and then in the doorway appeared a parent... and soon after another parent and another ...

We would like to thank all of the parents who took the time to attend one of our Parent Discussion Groups. We enjoyed sharing our ideas and learning from you. Remember that even after the school year ends, we are available to listen and parents may contact us for information anytime by contacting Mrs. Keeley in the office. Have a relaxing summer!

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. O’Neil and Mrs. LaForest

Thank you!

Dear Berrybrook students, family, and staff,

I would like to thank you for your book donations to the Jump Start Book Program. Each and every book made a huge impact in a child’s life! Most of these children only have a few books if any at home. In total the book drive raised 3,160 books, with Berrybrook donating 775 books! (I thought last year’s total of 200 books was a lot!)

Because of your donations we were able to deliver books to 155 students and 8 classrooms! Each child received a bundle of eight books with each of the eight classrooms receiving a box of 25 books! Words cannot describe how ecstatic the children were to receive their books last Wednesday and Thursday. I really hope you will explain to your children the amazing impact they have had on other children their own age who are less fortunate.

A huge thank you to everyone who donated books!! Have a safe and happy summer!!

With Sincere Appreciation,
Kate Capasso (Mrs. Capasso’s daughter)

and Jumpstart at
Bridgewater
State University



Berrybrook Parents’ Association

Wow. The last newsletter of the year. I can't believe the year flew by so fast, but I sure am ready for some serious beach time.

I want to send a huge thanks to all of the Berrybrook families who have done so much to support the work of the BPA this year. From family fun Fridays, holiday giving to Carolina Hill Shelter, the Festival of Trees, to our new cookbook your involvement has made a huge impact to the Berrybrook community.

A special thanks to Heather Canty, Karen Gallagher, Stacy Watts, Martha Dennison and Donna Hillary who have each gone above and beyond as BPA officers this year. And to Mrs. Watts and Mrs. Keeley thank for all that you do to make Berrybrook such a special place. Everyday, you make me glad I chose Berrybrook for my children.

And don't forget that we are still recruiting for BPA officers for next school year! If you're interested, please let Mrs. Keeley or me know.

BPA Spring Fling 2012! Come celebrate the year & have some good old fashion country fun on May 23rd from 4-6 p.m. with a rain date of May 30th. If you would like to help with the planning our last meeting of the week will be May 8th at 7 p.m.

June 6 is the Year End Staff Luncheon-(after the children are out of school). Every year, parents prepare luncheon items for all the staff at Berrybrook and drop off the items at school. A sign-up sheet for parents who would like to donate food will be posted by May 15 on the BPA table and a reminder e-mail will be sent out. Please sign up to make

something special for the staff at Berrybrook.

As always please let us know if you have questions, comments, or concerns for the BPA at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com or 617-458-1621.

Allyson

*Please Welcome
Ansley Parker Materna
to the Berrybrook Community!
Ansley is the new sister of Hadley
in our 4 Day Room 1 Class.*

Congratulations!

Thank you

Berrybrook staff want to let parents know how much we appreciate the many parents who volunteered in so many ways to help make the school year a success. There is always a parent willing to help when Berrybrook teachers have a request.

We also want to thank all parents for working with us to provide the best possible experience for the children. The conversations we have at pick up, the phone calls and parent conferences that you share with us demonstrate a true partnership between school and home. Your hard work at home makes our job at Berrybrook a pleasure.

Thank you,
Miss Bent, Miss Caddle, Mrs. Caddle,
Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn,
Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. LaForest,
Mrs. Neal, Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Piccuito,
Mrs. Rosen, Mrs. Swan, Mrs. Watts

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Carrie Couto, Berrybrook parent and member, Board of Directors

Recently, The Parent Connection hosted a presentation from the renowned author and educator Tony Wagner. He spoke mostly on his recent novel Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World. As I sat in the Performing Arts Center listening to him speak, it occurred to me that most of the key elements that he believes enhance a child's success, are actually some of the cornerstones of Berrybrook's philosophy, and I wanted to highlight some of them in our Newsletter.

1. Children need to be innovative

We are all born curious, creative and imaginative but unless those qualities are actively supported and nurtured they wither on the vine. Wagner theorizes that those who have the interest and capability to problem solve and create will have the most rewarding careers and satisfying lives. Schools who are overly structured squeeze out this type of learning - at a very early age. Wagner believes it is imperative to allow children the time to learn by discovery.

2. Perseverance and Self-Discipline

These are best developed through unstructured and self-initiated play. It is through this type of play that children discover passion, purpose and intrinsic motivation. It's better for parents (and educators) to offer a "buffet of opportunities" that allows children to explore a range of activities rather than over schedule their lives with structured events.

3. Schooling often penalizes risk

Hanging on the walls of most elementary schools are pictures from different students that look exactly the same. Many schools stress the importance of following directions and penalize those who "think outside the box." More emphasis must be placed on learning through trial and error and asking questions. Again - there must be more time for discovery.

4. Instilling Initiative and Entrepreneurship

Be self directed. Intrinsic motivation is key. Given our culture's over reliance on structured play and learning, this skill will be a challenge for many kids unless they are given some reign to size up a situation, take risks and figure out a solution. The key is to allow kids to fail - and understand that learning actually comes through failing.

5. Enhance Curiosity and Imagination

Create! Kids who love to learn are more likely to be curious. They will find answers to problems because they can empathize and think out of the box. Letting kids find their flow in unstructured activities and creating time for imaginative play is critical for this skill to flourish.

As a parent, I know these can be difficult to believe and may seem counterintuitive as the pressures for your child to be able to count, read, write, etc., move to earlier and earlier ages. At Berrybrook, children constantly are learning these important lessons - but not by doing worksheets or flashcards - instead they learn in a hands-on environment that truly supports discovery and promotes a love for learning. Unstructured learning does not mean unorganized in any way. This type of learning encourages children to move at their own pace, find the answers to the questions that interest them. It nurtures curiosity and allows them to learn and express themselves through play.

As I left the PAC last week after listening to all Wagner had to say, I knew for my 4 children, there is no better place than Berrybrook.

Helen Wheeler Scholarship News

Every year, the Berrybrook Board of Directors conducts an Annual Appeal to raise money for the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. Each May, current and alumni Berrybrook families receive a mailing asking for support. Every dollar donated to the Annual Appeal reinforces our commitment to provide tuition assistance for families who wish to send a child to Berrybrook but cannot because of financial constraints. The funds also enable current families who may experience a sudden financial emergency to continue at Berrybrook.

Before we reach out with our 2012 Annual Appeal this month, we wanted to acknowledge the generous donors to the 2011 Annual Appeal which raised over \$6,225.00 for the scholarship fund making it our most successful Appeal ever. We are so grateful for their financial support and their dedication to Berrybrook. Gifts to the Annual Appeal have made a lasting difference in the lives of many children and their families who are experiencing Berrybrook because of their generosity.

The Board of Directors

2011 Berrybrook Annual Appeal Donors

Acella Construction
Henry Ayers and Rachel Sama
Jeff and Lauren Brown
Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Clifford
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The Corby-Smith Family
The Couto Family
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Michael and Courtney Selfridge
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The Szczesny Family
The Tearse Family
The Verity Family
The Shepler Family
Keith and Stacy Watts
Wellington Management Co.

Lexis Nexis Matching Gift

Berrybrook has a very talented staff with a variety of special gifts who add to the richness of our program. This year, regular readers of this Newsletter have enjoyed a monthly article written by Joanne LaForest, who teaches in our 3 Day and 4 Day

Classes. This series was the first of its kind for Berrybrook, an informative series written with parents in mind and each installment cleverly titled with a word beginning with the letter "S". Last month, Joanne's article was inadvertently left out, so this month please enjoy her last two installments... "Springing" and "Seeing."

- Mrs. Keeley

Separating, Settling, Surveying, Singing, Snowing, Sharing, Stretching..

Springing!

Joanne LaForest

Yes, spring has officially arrived but the recent treat of abnormally warm weather has forced more quickly the blooming of flowers and the song of birds to create an array of gorgeous sights and sounds. Just as flowers burst through the earth and buds pop from once bare branches, the Berrybrook children are also springing into spring! This is mainly seen in their friendships.

Friendships go through as many changes and phases as the seasons do throughout the year. At times, friendships have the warmth of love like on the brightest days of summer, the transformation of feelings like the autumn leaves in fall, a gentle peace similar to a blanket of snow in winter and, for certain, great growth as always seen in spring.

Spring is often the time where second year students grow in their friendships by trying out different roles between them. Where one child may have typically held the "follower" role, they now want to try on the hat of "leader". The current "leader" of the friendship may be unfamiliar with this and so communication, empathy and acceptance become valuable life skills that begin to be learned.

First year students may be forming their very first real friendships where they like to do everything together which, in turn, overrides everything else. This strong attraction can cause frustration over not being able to always sit together or feelings of loss when not with that important, kind, understanding friend.

What to do as parents and caregivers? When waiting for a flower to grow, one must have patience. Constant verbal reminders said to an empty pot of soil and seed will not force it to grow. Rather, provide a continuous flow of sunlight, water, love and care, then...pop! It begins to grow...and change...and grow some more...and bloom into something miraculous.

Spring has sprung! Children and their friendships are just like those flowers sprouting from the ground. Keep the sun, water, love, care...and patience coming.

Happy Spring!

Separating, Settling, Surveying, Singing, Snowing, Sharing, Stretching,
Springing....

Seeing!

Teachers and staff at Berrybrook are fortunate to see it every year. Yet “it” is never anything less than amazing. Parents have to go through it to see it. Teachers may need to encourage parents to “Hold on” or “Give it time”... and, ultimately, it unfolds. The growth and development in our children, our students, from September to May is astounding. By Ice Cream Day parents see it. Teachers see it. Mrs. Keeley and Mrs. Watts see it. Do the children see it? I believe they do. If they could express it to us this is what they might say:

“I See”

“I see now I can trust.”

First year students can now trust that when their caregiver says goodbye they will return. They can trust their emotions. They can feel safe when they are sad, angry or frustrated. They can trust that they will be respected.

Second year students can trust to say goodbye at arrival and they can now walk through any door on their own or with a friend, eager to see what awaits them. They can also trust that new teachers can become just as special as their first teachers.

“I see now I belong.”

Both first and second year students realize now that everyone is included and we are all connected here on this earth together. They see the strength when they are together. They see the joy when they are together. Most of all, they see the fun!

“I see now I am a friend.”

First year students have learned that being a friend means you may have something in common with another and find comfort together, or have a world of differences between you and learn from each other. Second year students recognize that friendships take communication, patience, and forgiveness and make you a better person for having them.

“I see now I can communicate.”

First year students communicate their feelings by learning about their own emotions and they can now listen to others. Second year students can now relate to others with true understanding and compassion. They know that the written word can be just as powerful as the spoken one.

“I see now I can do more than I used to.”

First year students may have observed first, then experienced. All of them have practiced first, and then mastered skills for their strong foundation of living and learning. Second year students may have tried something new through the encouragement of a friend. They have strengthened their abilities both mentally and physically to create and imagine more fully.

“I see now I am comfortable being who I am.”

First year students make statements such as “I feel”, “I think”, “I like” and know they are valued and respected. They know their ideas mean something, whether or not they are the same as someone else’s. Second year students take the above mentioned and can see how it connects and relates to even more people around them. This adds to their own sense of self, just like when a kaleidoscope is rotated and the small bits and pieces move in a communion of color and light.

"I see now I am ready to move on to what is next for me."

All students are ready to take what they have mastered this year into their next as a foundation upon which to discover more about themselves in relation to others. Like a web of miraculous interaction, as more connections to people are made, more of themselves can they share. Therefore, more of the expression of love, kindness and respect can be brought forth to all around them.

"It" has officially arrived!

Happy Summer ...and beyond!

Berrybrook Strategic Plan

The Berrybrook Board of Directors is excited to announce the adoption of a new 5 year Strategic Plan. The plan will guide The Board and administration in improving and expanding our programs, focusing policies and procedures and making greater use of and improvements to the beautiful Berrybrook campus.

The Board formed a committee more than a year ago to evaluate current strengths and weaknesses of the school and its programs as well as the needs of Berrybrook students and families to develop a strategic plan for the future. The committee engaged a consultant, Teresa Goode, Ed D. to facilitate this process. The committee reached out to current and past families, students, board members and teachers as well as members of our larger community to ask for their input. The Board is pleased to to announce the process resulted in an impressive document outlining changes and improvements to the school to be implemented in the next 5 years. The Strategic Plan was formally adopted by the Board on January 11, 2012 and we have just taken the first steps in of our five year timeline.

The work of the Strategic Plan Committee identified three core strategies to be detailed in the plan, Policies and Procedures, Programming and Buildings and Grounds. A highlight of these core strategies is the campus Master Plan which will allow our students and teachers to fully utilize outdoor spaces and enjoy all that the Berrybrook has to offer. The Plan also outlines new and expanded programming for younger children, Summer programs and outside partnerships, as well as surveying parents for scheduling needs.

We are also looking for volunteers help implement the Strategic Plan, please contact the office if you would like to be involved with improving the future of Berrybrook.

Copies of the complete 29 page plan are available in the office.

Sincerely, Berrybrook Board of Directors