



December 2019

Wednesday, December 18	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-Alongs
Thursday, December 19	4 Day Class Holiday Sing-Along
Friday, December 20	Beginners, 2 Day and 5 Day Holiday Sing-Alongs
December 23 - January 3	Holiday Break
December 26	2020-2021 Enrollment Packets mailed
Monday, January 6	2020-2021 Enrollment begins



Notes from the Head of School

In a world of over seven billion people, it always surprises me how small the world can seem. More specifically, it surprises me how often my circles overlap in a world full of so many people. We all have them - our 'friend' circle, our 'work' circle, our 'family' circle, and more. A couple of years ago I was at the services for my brother-in-law's father, and I spotted a Berrybrook family across the room. As we approached each other we both blurted out, "What are YOU doing here?" at the same time. As I was saying, "Mike's my brother-in-law, married to Keith's younger sister", the Berrybrook mom told me that she and her sisters had grown up next-door to Mike's family and their families were super close and had vacationed together for years. Two of my circles were now closer, and overlapping a bit.

My vacation last month was amazing, but also bittersweet. The reason for the cruise - which had been in the plans for almost a year - was to spread the ashes of a dear friend, who passed away from breast cancer last October. The circle of those impacted by cancer certainly touches many, many people unfortunately. We met Nancy and John through my father-in-law, Bob, many years ago and we would see them at family parties and holidays, and they became our friends, and not solely friends of my in-laws, which has been true for many of their friends - I now count them in my own circle of friends.

When Nancy's second battle with cancer didn't have the prognosis we had all hoped for, she asked John to spread her ashes near the Piton Mountains in St. Lucia, where they had honeymooned in 2001 (side story: they were stuck there for 6 days due to the aftermath of 9/11). John told us about the cruise and without a second thought . . . well, first we had to make sure childcare and dog care was secured . . . we were booked on the cruise. We were made of thirteen people celebrating Nancy's life - my in-laws, friends, and Nancy's relatives. Some we had known for over twenty years, some we had met in 2011 when we helped with fundraising for the doctor who helped Nancy become cancer free the first time.

We left on a Saturday and it was a blend of tears, laughter, good food and drinks, and sunshine. On the fourth day a little light bulb went off and I realized that one of the women, who for years we had shortened her last name to a nickname, had the same last name as a current Berrybrook student . . . a name that is not at all common. I've known this woman for ages, and have known the Berrybrook family for nearly a year. When we all met for dinner that night, I asked her "Is your daughter-in-law so-and-so?" to which she replied yes and I then told her that her grandson was at Berrybrook! We laughed and joked about what a small world it is, but in reality it's another example of overlapping circles. And a reminder that you never quite know your audience, or who-may-know-who. I find that Duxbury, and by extension, Berrybrook also has tight circles. I'm always amazed to learn who went to high school together and now have their children in the same Berrybrook class. I find too, that my circles can be tighter as things change, or that my hometown circles from years ago can seem so far away, but yet that distance falls away when we see each other even if it has been twenty years.

Children are the same, and you may see your child's circles ebb and flow during the years. I've also learned, that my children's circle of friends don't have to match my own. Yes, I have gained some fabulous friends from meeting them through my kids' activities, but I know I don't have to force a circle just because my children have a circle - that's just a great benefit if and when it does naturally occur.

As for circles, I am so very thankful I was a part of seeing Nancy's circle of life with her return to the Piton mountains of St. Lucia. It was a simple ceremony where John spoke loving words saying goodbye to his wife, and we all watched as Nancy's ashes and the pink rose petals we tossed into the sea were slowly swept away. A few shots of Nancy's favorite spirit were enjoyed by many, and as Nancy was quite the jokester it was only apropos that what was probably someone whose permanent address was the beach approached our chartered boat trying to sell us very up-charged coconut chunks and bumming some money,

all while we were in the water saying our goodbyes. One could only think Nancy was watching over us trying to have “a moment” while this guy was interrupting our somber ceremony and she was having her own chuckle from up-above.

As cliché as it sounds, life is short and life can be unfair. It took a trip saying goodbye to a friend who passed way too early to recognize that it is important to get away and enjoy all I have. Coordinating work, the kids, the pooch, and more was so overwhelming to prepare for this trip. My village kicked in and many pitched in to help - the kids missed us but also enjoyed their time with friends and extended family; Berrybrook was still standing upon my return. While I feel guilty that we had such a good time on a trip that was planned for such sad reasons, I’m so glad to have been able to spend that time with that certain circle, and I probably would never had put the pieces together that my Berrybrook circle overlapped my friend circle had I not had light dawn on Marblehead that night at dinner.

During the upcoming holidays, I hope you and your numerous circles take time to slow down and enjoy this time. “Time flies” is another cliché that rings especially true this time of year and it seems to go by quicker and quicker, especially as I get older. I can’t believe that next month is the start of the year 2020 - not too long ago, to reference the year 2020 was along the lines of science fiction!!

Wishing you and you family a wonderful holiday season!

~ Mrs. Watts



I am very happy to announce that Berrybrook has achieved a new five year term of accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Our term is valid through June 1, 2025.

The accreditation process is a very rigorous process, which includes months of work demonstrating our high-quality programming for children. This achievement is the result of continued hard work and commitment to the early education field by our amazing teachers, staff, and Board of Directors. We truly appreciate the support of our families who help make Berrybrook such an amazing program.

Thank you to everyone who helped with this achievement!

Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

'Tis The Season

'Tis the season for running millions of errands, shopping for the perfect gifts, getting those holiday cards out, and cramming in as many holiday activities as you possibly can. As much as we may try to avoid the hustle and bustle that the holidays warrant, it is inevitable. However, over the last couple of years while I watch my young children experience the holidays, this special time of year has taken on a new meaning for me.

My two older children are four and two years old. After talking to them a little bit about the holidays that are coming up, out of curiosity, I asked them what they remembered from the holidays last year. When I asked my four year old she said, "baking cookies with you, Mama." My two year old said, with excitement, going to his grandparents' houses (which we did). Of all the gifts they got on Christmas, surprisingly, they didn't mention one present. They both talked about traditions we had as a family, and spending time with loved ones. Those were the special moments that made an impact on my children's memories.

One of our new favorite family traditions is driving to Lilah Lane to look at all the Christmas lights and decorations. To those who are not familiar with this Pembroke neighborhood, it is the best collaborative display I have ever seen, and it is a little extra special for us because my oldest child is named Lyla. Several nights in December, after the kids are fed dinner and put into their pajamas, we do a few circles around Lilah Lane. Every time we do our parade around, it reminds me that it is ok to slow down and just enjoy the beauty this time of year has to offer.

Everywhere you go, you'll see this holiday beauty, and it doesn't escape Berrybrook either. The school has so many wonderful traditions that we have carried on throughout the years. Every class makes a variety of turkey projects for Thanksgiving. We all cook latkes to celebrate Hanukkah and bake cookies for Christmas. And, of course, we beautify most projects with lots of glitter! One of the best parts about celebrating the holidays with your children here at school for the teachers is that we get to learn about everyone's family traditions and what the holidays are like for all of them.

So when you are stressing out about making enough food for that Thanksgiving feast, or finishing that holiday shopping (or just starting it), remember it is not about perfection. It is about carrying on traditions, starting new ones, and making lasting memories with loved ones.

~ Mrs. Savoy

Mrs. Savoy teaches in the 3 Day Room 3 class

Parents Association Notes

We hope all of you and your families had a happy Thanksgiving! The holiday season is a very busy time of year for everyone and that includes our Berrybrook students and families. There are lots of fun activities and traditions planned at Berrybrook this month for everyone to look forward to.

We are excited to partner up with Horizons for Homeless Children again this holiday season. Tags are available on the Holiday Tree and through an Amazon wishlist that has been emailed to everyone recently. If you need the Amazon wishlist link, please let us know and we will be happy to resend it to you.

Our next Family Fun Friday event will take place at Heritage Gardens on December 6th. Wristbands will be available for pick-up at Berrybrook prior to the event. We look forward to seeing those who can join us.

Thank you so much to everyone that donated to our Treats for Troops. We collected over 136 pounds of candy to send overseas.

BPA DUES! Thank you to everyone who has already paid their BPA dues. If you have yet to do so, it's not too late! We ask for a \$30 contribution per family, which goes directly toward student enrichment in and out of the classroom. Forms are available at the BPA table. A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation!

Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Diana Stewart and Jess Bisceglia, Co-Presidents berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

From The Board of Directors

Every year around this time an elf visits our home. Her name is ElfiePants (or so my kids tell me). After her initial delivery of chocolate advent calendars, the designs of which are perfectly curated to my kids' tastes, and a note in her signature cursive elf scrawl that she'll "be watching"...we never see her again. Aside from a tiny misplaced jingle bell on my daughter's dresser or a sprinkle of glitter that appears on the kitchen island overnight, there isn't much evidence that she's been around.

ElfiePants is a pretty busy elf. On top of taking care of her elf family, she works at a major Elf University. The university is pretty far from where she lives outside the North Pole, so she has to take the Polar Express to get there. Sometimes she doesn't have much energy left at the end of the day for her other elf duties, the most important of which, to her at least, is making magic. She rushes through our house making sure there's nothing to report to Santa. Maybe she loses a bell on the way. Maybe she stops long enough to sprinkle some glitter, or jot a quick reminder to be good, if she finds out someone threw a toy dinosaur at their sister or was a little too fresh at dinner.

Sometimes ElfiePants isn't sure if she's doing enough. She knows other amazing elves who stick around long enough to get caught up in all sorts of fun and silly scenarios for the kids they're in charge of to find the next morning. She knows some elves who bring their assigned kids gifts and treats almost every day between Thanksgiving and Christmas, to get them very excited about what Santa may deliver them on the big day. Sometimes ElfiePants feels bad...and sometimes she even resents this entire tradition – shouldn't the kids Santa assigned her be able to behave on their own? Did they really need her watching and keeping them in line with incentives and gentle threats to avoid the dreaded coal in their stockings? Wouldn't she be able to help Santa more if she was back at the North Pole building toys or taking care of Rudolph? Should she instead be practicing that Elf-Self-Care she's been hearing so much about, by going to bed early or taking some down time for herself with a glass of elf wine?

Whatever the case, my kids are dazzled by her. They believe in her. Though she only leaves traces, they anticipate her arrival as soon as we put up our tree, and talk about her fondly all season long. As the holidays approach I'm trying to remember that whatever our "elves" do, or don't do, is fine, and is enough. A little magic goes a long way this time of year. Happy Holidays!

~ Beth Marois *Berrybrook Board of Directors*



Colder weather is on its way...

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 9am arrival time.

In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a two hour delay, the AM session, as well as Lunch Bunch, will be cancelled.

Beyond a formal cancellation, we urge parents to use their best judgment about driving young children to school in inclement weather.

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 December. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots. 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.

Save the date!!!

Berrybrook Open House

Admissions 2020-2021

***Saturday, January 11, 2020
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.***

Spread the Word!!!





Holiday Sing-Along Schedule

*All classes will be celebrating on their last
day before vacation.*

Please plan on joining us for the festivities.

Beginners: Families are invited to join us at 9:00

2 Day: Families are invited to join us at 10:30

3 Day Room 3: Families are invited to join us at 10:00

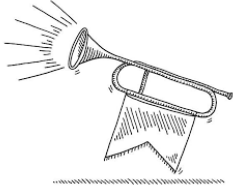
3 Day Room 1: Families are invited to join us at 10:30

4 Day: Families are invited to join us at 3:00

5 Day: Families are invited to join us at 11:00



*Each class will finish their sing-along
with a special treat
which will conclude the day.*



The Berrybrook School Board of Directors is pleased to announce an exciting change for the 2020-2021 school year!

Berrybrook students will start school the Tuesday after Labor Day and finish school two weeks after Memorial Day, **adding two weeks to the Berrybrook school calendar.** The Board, in consultation with Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Piccuito, and the teachers, approved this change to better align the Berrybrook calendar with other schools in the area and to help children and families with the back-to-school and summer transition times. Berrybrook will still follow the traditions of Visiting Day and home visits - now a week earlier!

Berrybrook is able to provide this extra programming without raising tuition beyond the standard increase that is done each year. More details about tuition and the calendar will be mailed to families after the holidays. The Board is very excited that starting next year, Berrybrook students will experience two more weeks of all that Berrybrook has to offer - exploring nature, creating unique projects, building friendships, and having fun!