

January 2020

Monday, January 6

2020-2021 Enrollment Begins

Saturday, January 11

Berrybrook Open House 10 am - 12 pm

Monday, January 20

Martin L. King Jr. Day - No School

Wednesday, January 22

Board Meeting 7:00 pm

Wednesday, January 29

Connections Curriculum Night



Notes from the Head of School

Happy 2020! It feels like just yesterday that the hype over Y2K was taking over everyone's thoughts. It is hard to believe it's been twenty years since some thought all computers would stop working, especially those using programs calculating years as two-digit figures. I would be lying if I said that there wasn't a little piece of me that was hoping that my student loans would be wiped out by Y2K! Mr. Watts and I were in Virginia celebrating this momentous occasion with friends and I remember some of our family members were worried that we wouldn't be able to fly back to Massachusetts if everything crashed.

Changing from the year 1999 to 2000 was mind-blowing; let's be honest, how long does it take for some of us to stop writing the past year on checks or other paperwork? It's usually mid-February for me before I start consistently dating things correctly. And now this month, those of us who still write checks (thank you Venmo!) will be trying to creatively figure out how to change the '1' we started to write for '19 to a '2' for '20 and make it look like we meant to write 2020 all along! A big change for Berrybrook occurring in 2020 is the increase in the calendar for our students. As you may remember, the Board of Directors made the announcement recently that Berrybrook students will be starting one week earlier in September and now attending two weeks past Memorial Day, which is an overall increase of two weeks in the school year.

Change happens slowly at Berrybrook as we look at everything from all angles and assess the potential impact on anything and everything and this calendar change decision is no exception. Each year, teachers return to school a week before the students for required trainings along with many team meetings to prepare the environments for the students. With the added days, teachers will be returning earlier in August and working further into June, translating into a necessary increase in salaries for next year. The length of our summer program may change, as we usually have a week between between Ice Cream Day and the first day of the Summer Nature Program to prepare for the busy summer weeks. There will be many ripple effects to the changes in the calendar, but what will NOT change is our traditional home visits and Visiting Days, which provide a gradual transition back-to-school, and the amazing staff who make Berrybrook so special.

I think it's pretty fantastic that the Board of Directors is able to make this change in the calendar available with no extra increase in tuition. Berrybrook is transparent with our tuition costs, and we publish our tuition rates on our website when many other schools do not offer that info up front. Of course each year the Board must vote a small increase for tuition - this year is a 4% increase, less than in previous years - as all other expenses such as Eversource, Comcast, and more increase as well. While you will see an increase in tuition for the 2020-2021 school year, please know that the 4% increase is based on the number of weeks in the "old" calendar. Also true for many of our families, is that they will be increasing their amount of time at Berrybrook (2 or 3 Day moving up to a 4 or 5 Day) which will almost double the tuition cost.

Another remarkable thing about Berrybrook is our Helen Wheeler scholarship Fund, that our founder Katharine Mann created. The purpose of this fund is to provide tuition assistance to parents and/or guardians of children who have been accepted to Berrybrook, and who would not be able to attend without financial assistance. Mrs. Mann never wanted the cost to prevent a child from attaining a quality early childhood education. Not many preschools are able to offer tuition assistance to families. We are very proud that this is a traditional component of our wonderful school.

You may not be aware that at Berrybrook, everyone receives a subsidized tuition; our operating budget is not strictly supported by tuition alone. Mrs. Mann created the Lucretia Prentiss Bailey Trust in honor of her mother, and her ongoing charitable gift through this Trust allows the Board to set tuition rates about 20% below the true cost of our programs. About ten years after founding our school, Mrs. Mann placed legal responsibility for Berrybrook's welfare in the

hands of the Board of Directors. Part of the Board's job is to keep an eye on the school's financial health while also ensuring that the students have a quality early childhood education under the guidance of skilled, experienced early childhood educators.

I could go on and on and on about what makes Berrybrook unique and fabulous. Last month as current and alum families sent in holiday cards, I opened each one, Mrs. Piccuito and I would reminisce about the families and marvel at how grown our former students have gotten over the past year. I'm not sure how many other schools receive holiday cards from families who attended twenty years ago, but I think that speaks to the impact Berrybrook has made on these families. We are also lucky to have a Board of Directors so invested in Berrybrook. Many of our Board members are or have been parents of Berrybrook students, and know what it is like to walk through the gate, drop children off for their first days, and enjoy ice cream on the last (usually brutally hot) day; they know how special Berrybrook is for everyone.

January is the month for families to enroll, or reenroll, at Berrybrook for the 2020-2021 year; we look forward to this process and thank you for your continued support of Berrybrook. We hope you are as excited for this calendar change as we are!

Wishing you a wonderful 2020! ~ Mrs. Watts

Thank You !!!

We would like to thank all the families for their generosity this holiday season.

All the notes, goodies, and gifts were very much appreciated.

Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

Time Flies

Now that the hustle and bustle of the holidays are over and we are all settling back into our normal routines, I want to take a few moments to reflect on how time flies.

Each year as I am putting up my Christmas tree I feel nostalgic while hanging the ornaments my children have made me over the years. As I look upon these handmade ornaments (some made in preschool, some in elementary school), I feel my heart ache. It honestly seems like yesterday when I first hung them on the tree. Time flies by so quickly. My children are all grown now, but I still think of them as children.

A couple of weeks ago, I was having a conversation with one of my students in the 5 Day class. He was talking about an episode of "Thomas the Tank Engine" where one of the engines bumped the freight cars into another engine, making the first engine derail. He was talking about how that episode frightened him a bit and sometimes he would ask his family to fast forward through it. All of a sudden, I had this vivid memory of my oldest son, who was three years old at the time and loved "Thomas the Tank Engine", running to me crying "Silly freight cars! Silly freight cars! They are bumping James (an engine)! I don't like it!" And I would always have to fast forward through that part of the episode. I felt my heart ache a bit. I had forgotten all about this until this child reminded me of it. Again, time flies. You think you will never forget the little things, but you do.

I guess where I am going with all of this is to remind parents to enjoy every moment of your children. I always find myself saying to parents of new babies, "Enjoy them, it goes by so fast"! Not only does the first year of their lives go by fast, (and we document everything from first word to first step), but their entire childhood goes by fast. It really does.

So remember the next time you may be feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, or even elated with some proud accomplishment they have made, take a moment to let it all sink in. Take a moment to look at your child / children and hug them and really try to enjoy the moment. Trust me, they will always be your "children" but they will not always be little kids. Time flies.

~Mrs. Fosdick

Mrs. Fosdick teaches in the 4 Day and 5 Day classes

Parents Association Notes

Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the holiday sing alongs and had a wonderful holiday break!!

We wanted to thank the entire Berrybrook community for helping us to contribute many requested and needed toys to Horizons For Homeless Children. The outpouring of support for our giving tree was just another example of how our community comes together to help those in need.

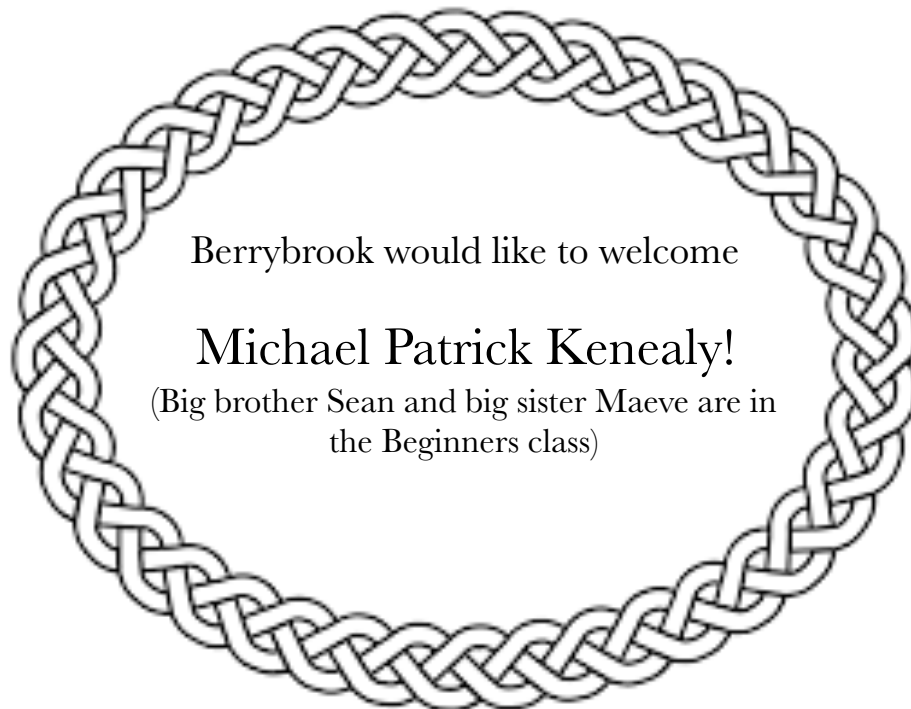
Thank you to those that attended the Gardens-Aglow event at the Heritage Museum and Gardens in Sandwich. The weather was seasonably perfect and many smiles were seen while visiting with Santa and riding the beloved carousel.

We will be working on the details of some enrichment opportunities for the community upon the children's return in January. Stay tuned!

As always, thank you to those that have 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. A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation!

Thank you!

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



From The Board of Directors

The Gift of Time

Recently I was in a kindergarten classroom and the students were discussing their holiday break. The teacher shared that over her break, she baked cookies with her children and had several friends over. Student responses included traveling to relatives' homes, playing board games with family members, having friends over, and playing outdoors with family and friends. Later, when the teacher and I conversed privately, we noted that the responses seemed different than we expected. The teacher explained that prior to the break, the students discussed toys they were hoping to receive or trips they were taking, so she thought that these topics would be discussed. Surprisingly, the student responses revolved around the theme of spending time with others. Not mentioned were the "hot toy," the "best vacation spot" or the "perfectly crafted holiday meal." Upon further reflection, I realized that the seemingly simple, yet so important idea of spending time with others is really what matters to our young children.

As the new year begins, we all conjure up resolutions. Losing weight, exercising more, contributing more to our savings accounts, developing and framing our favorite pictures from our phones, and finding the missing puzzle pieces are some common resolutions. The last one may be a stretch, but I think all of us can agree that we often make similar New Year's resolutions. And there are many good reasons to make resolutions - - they help us set goals, improve ourselves, and remain motivated. After talking with these kindergarten students, I realize that a good resolution may be something simple, something achievable, and something so important to our children - - spending time with them in a *simple* way.

It is easy to get caught up the idea that spending time with our children has to be something formal. For instance, I often try to plan a "family day" where we go somewhere in Boston, and although it is fun, it is also a lot of work. If something small goes wrong, which it inevitably does when you trek five people in town for the day, I feel defeated and wonder if my effort to create "family memories" went astray. Our children always say they like the family day, but I know they also like spending time at home with us. And it was clear from talking to these kindergartners that spending time with family and friends doing simple things is very meaningful.

As we enter the new year, I challenge you to not only resolve to "do more" like exercise but also to "do something seemingly simple with your children." Perhaps it is playing that board game that has been collecting dust in the closet or sledding with your child in the snow. Or perhaps it is supporting the local food pantry together as a family. In this new year, I am going to try to look at our "family days" through our children's eyes and that will help guide me. I will remember what these kindergartners said, and how the simple things, like playing outdoors, become meaningful to them. Remaining simple, yet meaningful is the Berrybrook way, and it can guide us all in 2020.

Andrea Doton
Berrybrook Board of Directors



Colder weather is here...

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 9 am 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 outdoors in January. 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.

BERRYBROOK ADMISSIONS

OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2020

10 A.M. - 12 P.M.



Berrybrook would like to thank everyone who donated to the Kingston Animal Shelter. The animals are more comfortable and content this winter because of your generosity.

