

December 2020

Wednesday, December 16	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-Alongs
Thursday, December 17	4 Day Class Holiday Sing-Along
Friday, December 18	Beginners, 2 Day and 5 Day Holiday Sing-Alongs
December 21 - January 1	Holiday Break
December 26	2021-2022 Enrollment Packets mailed
Monday, January 4	2021-2022 Enrollment begins



Notes from the Head of School

In the Berrybrook newsletter four years ago, I wrote about how difficult parenting the prior month had been in the weeks following the arduous election season. Who knew how much more stressful parenting would be this December post election, trying to keep holiday traditions DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC! We've all seen the memes that basically challenge the future to up the ante - the ones along the lines of "2019 was horrible, can't wait for 2020! 2020: 'Hold my Corona!'" or the disaster calendar/bingo (Who had murder hornets for May? Jellyfish invasion in June?). Understandably we are approaching 2021 with bated breath, trepidation, and curiosity about what the New Year will bring.

It's hard to envision what the holidays will look like, especially if you watch or listen to the news and learn about the COVID cases increasing around us. For those of us who visit Santa for the classic photo - what will it look like with everyone social distancing and wearing masks? We can hope that many years from now we will look back at those photos and say to ourselves, "Oh yeah, remember that time we all had to wear masks?" If you're like me and unless the year is on the photo, you have to really think back to when the photo was taken. I think we can all agree that if you have a holiday photo this year with Santa adorned in masks, you'll never forget it's from 2020!

Regardless of which traditions to continue with during this pandemic time, I encourage you to approach it in a way with your children that presents the event in a positive light. Rather than “Ugh . . . wearing masks is awful. How can we do this with Plexiglass?” you can remind your child (again, if Santa is a part of your family’s holiday culture) that you are helping keep Santa safe and healthy, and that he appreciates your efforts as well as wanting to keep you illness-free. You’ll feel better presenting the positive rather than highlighting the negative, and your children will pick up on that.

Trust me, I loooooooooong for the days when I can gather up our family stockpile of what seems like approximately fifty masks and have a beautiful bonfire. Until then our family will listen to the experts, coordinate our masks to our holiday attire, and wish hard for a healthy new year for all when the ball drops at midnight on the last day of this very memorable year.

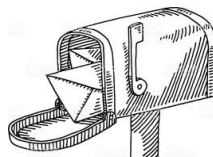
Wishing you and your family a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season!

~ Mrs. Watts

It’s that time already!!

2021-2022 enrollment information

will be mailed on December 26th. Please be on the look out for Berrybrook mail and let the office know if there are younger siblings (who will be 3 by next December 1st for Beginners, and 3 by September 1 for the 2 & 3 Day classes) who need an additional application.



Teacher's Notes

Painting to Music

This year in the 5 Day class, we have started a Paint to Music series. At least once a month, we choose a day where the project will simply be painting to music. The idea is to use a different type of music each time. The instructions I give are as simple as, "Paint what you hear," or "Paint what you feel," or "Let the music guide you." We have only done the activity three times so far, but we are blown away with the impact it is having on the children.

Our first piece of music was a waltz (The Blue Danube by Johann Strauss II). We used blues and purples as our color scheme. I asked the children to just listen for a few moments before I even passed out the paints. It was clear from the start that this activity was enjoyable for all of them. One of them said, "This reminds me of the music Beauty and the Beast dance to." Another child said, as her head swayed back and forth, "This music makes me feel happy."

The second time we did this was shortly before Halloween. We used organ music, (Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor by Johann Sebastian Bach). The children seemed even more connected to the music this time around. One child said, "This makes me feel like bats are flying around me." Another child said, "It makes me feel like slowing down." And another said, "It makes me feel wobbly."



For our most recent Painting to Music session we used Navajo drum music. We have been talking about Native Americans and making drums, so this seemed like the perfect choice for this month. The children were tapping their feet, and bobbing their heads along to the music. One of them said, "This music is strong." Another child said, "This makes me think of nature."



I have been amazed by the 5 Day children. Their perspectives, ideas, and feelings connected with the music has really taken me by surprise. They are truly allowing themselves to just “feel it” and are then comfortable enough to share their feelings with me and their classmates. In our short time of doing this, I started taking note of just how beneficial this activity can be. Here is my list so far:

- It is an open ended art activity.
- The focus is on process, not product.
- The children are learning to notice different rhythms and different sounding instruments.
- It is building emotional awareness.
- It is creating a foundation for music appreciation.
- It allows them to interpret and process sensory information.
- They are beginning to understand that things they hear, or experience can shape their feelings. It helps with language skills. Spontaneous conversations start among the children where they use beautiful descriptive language to describe the music to each other.

Towards the end of each activity, I will ask the children how the music made them feel. I wait until the end so that they have had plenty of time to experience and process it. They usually answer right away. If they do hesitate to answer, I never push them to label their feelings. The activity itself allows them to understand that the music did indeed have an effect. Emotions and thoughts that once were intangible and confusing are now visible on their paper, expressed through their artwork, without any communication barriers. There is no pressure to get it right, because there is no right or wrong here. It is very freeing and enjoyable for all children to be able to experience art like this. I feel very lucky to be taking this journey right alongside our 5 Day students.

~ Ms. Kelley

Ms. Kelley teaches in the 5 Day class

From The Board of Directors

Berrybrook Continues to Benefit Our Family

I still see the Berrybrook way in my children, now in middle school and upper elementary school. There are many little ways in which they quietly reflect the values of Berrybrook: kindness, empathy, having a good sense of humor in a fraught situation, and love of play to name a few.

Then there are the things that just shout Berrybrook. My son's twelfth birthday was November 17. That night, as we finished setting the table and I plated up one of my son's favorite meals, I observed from the corner of my eye my daughter using scissors to cut a piece of cardboard. I immediately recognized the classic Berrybrook Birthday Crown zig-zag edge. Without a word she measured her brother's head for the right fit. And without a word I pressed the stapler through as she held the cardboard carefully to just the right place.

If you haven't had a Berrybrook Birthday yet, let me tell you the teachers make each student feel so special. Each student makes his or her birthday crown, chooses the snack, and gets to perform important tasks like turning out the lights. And then there's the birthday chair, which is colorfully decorated. No presents needed to make each student (including kids whose birthdays are in the summer months—everyone is celebrated) feel incredibly special.

I don't know how to describe the feeling I had watching my daughter make my son a birthday crown other than to say it warmed my heart. I think I actually felt warmer—a welcome feeling on a chilly November night!

Berrybrook has given my children some of their life-long friends. More importantly though, in this modern age where parents are stretched to the limit, Berrybrook traditions shared by my kids have strengthened their most significant life-long relationship: the bond between brother and sister.

We parents are all experiencing parenthood for the first time, and it changes every year (or every day) as the children grow. Berrybrook has seen thousands of preschoolers over the years, and the wisdom passed from teacher to teacher enriches our kids and fills the gaps for us. This holiday season I am thinking of Berrybrook as I give gratitude for all the little things and big things my children learned in their preschool years.

~ Michelle MK Hatfield
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 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.