

## January 2021

**Monday, January 4**

**2021-2022 Enrollment Begins**

**Monday, January 18**

**Martin L. King Jr. Day - No School**

**Wednesday, January 27**

**Board Meeting 7:00 pm**



### Notes from the Head of School

As we approach a new year, it's so easy to look back on 2020 with a "Good Riddance!" mentality. Since the beginning of March, when rumblings of a strange virus on the other side of the world began, I can look at each of the following months with an "UGH" perspective. A minor surgery for me, a challenging diagnosis for one of my children, the unexpected passing of my mother-in-law hours after my husband had shoulder surgery, and the cancellation of our annual family vacation are just from the first 3 months. Each day seemed like a feeling of waves just knocking us down before we had barely gained our footing from the previous breaker. And then of course there are the global issues we as a society faced together on top of the pandemic - tumultuous elections and racial tensions. Going into the last month of this year, I tested positive for COVID. Anyone else just felt like throwing in the towel on any given day??

I'm not sure if it's just plain ol' human nature or not, but many times it was almost easier to feel the negatives of it all. A real Glass-Half-Empty feeling. So many days (and mostly, sleepless nights, which is when I am writing this) I wondered if I was strong enough for all of it. Am I doing enough for my kids? Am I a good leader? Have I reached out to extended family members enough lately? Did I buy all the gifts I meant to? What I am supposed to ask as a parent at the IEP meeting? Should I have added little stickers to our Christmas card envelopes, or were the festive stamps enough? How are we going to pay for college in 2 years? Do we have enough milk in the fridge for breakfast tomorrow or should I have to run to the store quickly? Did I miss the Zoom parent-teacher

conference signups? Sugar or chocolate chip cookies for Santa this year? Did I call in the dog's med refill for this month? Should I start buying extra toilet paper, just in case? They say I should do something for self-care ... who is "they" and how do I not feel guilty if I do? How/can I balance it all??? My mind's rambling is worse than the whole "If You Give A Mouse" book series, where an endless stream of thoughts and events occur with the main characters.

One of Dr. Phil's famous sayings is that "it takes 1,000 'atta boys' to erase one negative statement". This last month especially I was focused on many negative thoughts and feelings, especially with our COVID closure. Also on many of those sleepless nights, I reread encouraging emails I have received over the years, and have filed into a special folder for times like these, to help boost my morale. It may not answer my question about whether we have enough toilet paper in the house, but it will help me realize that no one is perfect, even with the best of intentions. And nope, I cannot do it all and neither can the next person. We do our very best, and like we tell the children "Tomorrow is another day and you can try again". Here's hoping 2021 got that message and will feel inclined to TRY AGAIN!

~ 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. Watts and Mrs. Piccuito

# **Teacher's Notes**

## **Remote Learning**

So, it happened. We had to close Berrybrook for a week. However, the show had to go on. By show, I mean we transferred to remote learning. When I got the news that we would be closed and it was time to engage our remote learning plan, I'll be honest, my first thought was, "Ughh." Remote learning is so tricky for everyone involved! I would 100% rather be at school working in my classroom than trying to teach a lesson on video. There was so much that went into what we needed to do behind the scenes.

Have you ever watched a movie and at the end thought, "Wow! What a great movie!"? Have you ever had the opportunity to watch a documentary of the making of a movie and what goes on behind the scenes? If you have, you may be surprised at how much work goes into it. The final product looks so polished and easy. However, there are hours of work behind each final product. Someone had to research the subject, write the script, collect all the props, film the actors, etc. To me, that is much like remote learning. The final product (our videos) are viewed by an audience (the parents and children) and it appears to look so easy.

Just like a movie, there was research to be done. What could I do on video that would make sense to the children? We tried to continue the lessons we were working on at school, but we had to do it at our homes. We had unlimited resources at school to work with. At home, not so much. For example, we had projects on the calendar to do that week, but could they be done at home? Could I teach the children through video how to make a Menorah? Would they have all the materials they needed? Did I?

Then there were hours on the phone with co-workers coordinating and planning. How could we do this? What are we going to teach this week? Who is going to teach what? What ideas do you have that will work? I was on the phone for an hour with Mrs. Rosen, after she was on the phone with Mrs. Connell, after she was on the phone with Mrs. LaForest, and so on. There was a lot of discussing and planning and coordinating.

Then, of course, there was the actual filming of the videos. Ok, tricky. I had my plan in place of what I wanted to say and do. I got my phone set up and checked to make sure I and all of my props can be seen through the viewer. I started recording. Whoops! My phone slipped off the stack of books it was piled up on. Okay, start again. (Remember not to make any weird faces as I press the button to record, smile!) Okay, start recording. Whoops! My prop fell off the wall and hit me in the head! Ughh! Start again. Whoops! Flubbed up that line. Start again. Great, I finished the entire lesson, read the book, sang the song and realized my phone stopped recording 3 seconds in! Ughh! Start again. Finally, I finished. I played it back. What in the world is that weird teacher voice I had going on? Oh yeah, I'm talking to myself, recording myself, alone. No wonder I sounded so weird!

From there we go to the challenge of uploading it to [YouTube](#). Thanks to Mrs. LaForest we have a technical expert who manages this! Not that we haven't had any issues in this area with recordings that time out, uploads that won't upload, etc.

After all is said and done, do I think it is worth it? Absolutely! Is it the best substitute for what is taught at Berrybrook? Not sure. But, I do know this: it is what we have to work with, and I will do anything to reach out to the children, to keep that connection. The connection is what is so important. The children need to see us, and hear us (even if it is the weird teacher voice!) and it helps to make them feel like we are still here and a part of their day. During this pandemic, we have learned that sometimes we have no choice. We have to do what is safe for everyone. Please know, that no teacher or staff

member at Berrybrook School was the least bit happy when we were shut down! None of us wanted to be teaching remotely. We want to be doing what we do best, and that is teaching the children. We missed our daily interactions with them, sharing ideas at circle, seeing their happy little faces, and having our conversations. We miss every day that we are not with them!

*~Mrs. Fosdick*

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



## **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 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.**

## ***From The Board of Directors***

### **A New Chapter**

“Make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other is gold”

If there are a handful of mottos that I think of when I look back on our Berrybrook years, this song is most certainly one of them. I recall this quintessential Berrybrook song being sung each day to announce snack time had begun in my child's 3 day class, and another year just for fun at circle time. This simple song that I have known since my childhood is the perfect reminder that friends can be brought with us in our hearts into new chapters of our lives. A reassurance that making new friends is easy and that no matter how much time has passed or how far away we are, we take with us our memories and our friends.

My three children, all of whom attended Berrybrook are starting to help pack up the house as we prepare to move out of state after living in Duxbury for over 10 years. They have never moved before, and understandably have many different feelings that arise and fluctuate daily. I remember similar feelings arising when my oldest was transitioning from Berrybrook to Kindergarten. Looking back, most of her fears were about missing her teachers, making new friends and what her new school would be like. I reminded my daughter that we can always come back and visit her old (truly gold!) teachers. I also told her she would make new friends because she is one of the kindest people I know. Spoiler alert; we visited Berrybrook almost daily, and my daughter made many quality friends at Chandler. Sometimes it was hard, but mostly it was great.

Here's what I know. I know for certain that Berrybrook was the shiniest piece of gold I could have ever hoped to find all those years ago. This gold will continue to shine on in my children everywhere we go, because this school taught my children a way of life. Kindness, compassion and empathy were the bedrock of my young children's lives. Thank you Berrybrook for letting us in, for guiding me as a parent, and for the innumerable ways you provided for us. Off we go into the silver sunset to make new friends.

We love you!

~ Sarah Murray

*Berrybrook Board of Directors*

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***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.***

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