



April 2021

April 2  
April 19 - 23

Good Friday - No School  
Spring vacation week



## Notes from the Head of School

Many years ago a parent remarked that the office functioned like it was like two ducks....everything looks calm and collected on the surface, but you knew that for all that calm there was a whole lot of paddling going on under the surface that no one saw. I frequently think back to that parent and appreciate her comment, as it meant a lot to have our hard work acknowledged. And of course that extends to the classroom as well; so much work and planning goes into each and every area of the classrooms and activities, with the goal of the children not knowing how much goes into it.

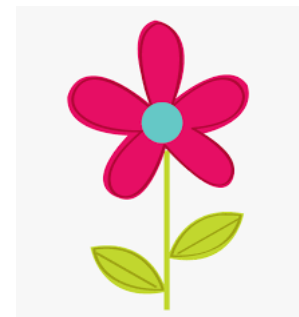
It feels like I am always thinking of, and about, Berrybrook. Many times it may seem that I put Berrybrook first, sometimes at the detriment of my family. We have a rule at the Watts house that there are no phones at the table, but there have been many times I break my own rule when I know a Berrybrook teacher needs something from me, or I tell my kids "I just need to answer this email/text." In their eyes Berrybrook is coming first, but they might not know that two minutes of my attention now may prevent an event requiring more of my attention down the road from occurring.

Oftentimes in our "duck-like state" we forget that we are also people too, with identities outside of Berrybrook. While I spend more time with my coworkers on a daily basis during the week than I do with my immediate

family, I of course always wear the hats of mom, wife, daughter, aunt, friend, neighbor, and more. While I try to compartmentalize as much as possible, clearly my roles spill into each other. I bring my work home with me - both physically when I am in front of a screen completing work, and also mentally when I am thinking through situations at Berrybrook - whether it is a child who is struggling with an issue or wondering when I should schedule the carpets to be cleaned. I have many hamsters in my head running in a million directions at any given time!

What is important to remember too though, is that my teachers are also human and have their lives outside of Berrybrook. This past month has been a trying month, with one of our Berrybrook family members undergoing treatment for cancer. That's just it though - we are family. When one of us is down, we rally around the other. I tell my coworkers that we're one big seesaw - when one of us is down, the others rally around. When I was out with COVID in December, my team rallied. We have a saying in the Berrybrook halls - "help a sister out". This year it seems like a lot of us sisters are requiring help from each other and we are answering each other's calls and rallying around. Our goal in all of this though? That the children have no clue that their teachers and other Berrybrook adults may need some rallying. We are their ducks, paddling under the water but they see us cool, calm, and collected on the surface. Thank you to my fellow ducks, especially this year. I'm not sure I could paddle without you.

~ Mrs. Watts



## ***Teacher's Notes***

### The Magic of Spring

Happy April! A new month and a new season. Spring always makes me feel hopeful. Spring brings more daylight, birds chirping louder, new growth, peeping chicks, warmer weather, windows open and lots of bright colorful blooming flowers. As we begin to spend more time outdoors, we are noticing the new buds popping up all over and look forward to when they show us their colors.

To carry on with the idea of new beginnings, I would like to share a special spring project that the children will create and a special book that the 2 and 3 Day classes will read this month. Our project is a Berrybrook tradition - the children paint a blown-out egg (this year it is an artificial egg) with shimmery paint. The egg is attached to a pipe cleaner and then hung from a potted branch in the classroom. The children pick an egg to paint while it is hanging. Every painted egg is uniquely original and the children are very proud of their one-of-a-kind creation. These eggs are displayed in the classroom before the children take them home and share them with their families.

A story that we will read this month is called "The Tiny Seed", by Eric Carle. This is a story that explains the life cycle of a seed. The story takes us on a journey of how a seed becomes a beautiful tall flower. The seed travels all around the world and has to withstand many obstacles to finally become the biggest, tallest flower. We will be talking about the life cycle of a seed during our circle time and going outside to observe the plants that are popping up around Berrybrook. The children can also share with us what they observe at home in their own yards. Maybe there will be a new flower that pops up in their yard...and it may just be another tiny seed.

*"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." — Audrey Hepburn*

*~ Mrs. Knight*

*Mrs. Knight teaches in the 2 Day and 3 Day room 1 classes*

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

Ordinarily, I associate special events, like birthdays, strongly with their seasons. For example, warm fall weather recalls the days my children were born. The return of weather and light unique to certain weeks or months signifies the passage of another year.

Berrybrook traditions are like that, too. Leaves and fall colors on the art that comes home right about the time I realize last year's sweaters don't fit anymore. Holiday songs when it gets dark early and Valentines to brighten the dreary midwinter.

Now that the days are longer--and often rainy and windy--I'm brought back to the start of the pandemic, and not just by the date on the calendar. Buying (or trying to buy) paper towels and toilet paper. I still get worried we will run low. I'm tossing out a few cans of food I bought a year ago that we never got to.

But mostly, on a March or April day, I'm remembering how my girls played on the porch in warm coats. We spent a lot of time talking to friends and family on Facetime and making crafts from our innumerable Amazon boxes. I think about watching the bird feeder and hoping the vegetable seedlings would turn into something. I got most of these ideas from Berrybrook. I was trying to bring in the normalcy that comes from routine and predictability, which is what we were most missing.

We didn't really get to experience the spring traditions of Berrybrook last year. It was our family's first year, so I don't know them yet. Of course we've missed some this year, too. Instead we added masks and the daily survey.

We weren't there last spring, and I remember that—its' absence—so well. But I also think of Berrybrook in these memories, too. For missing it, and for giving me ideas on how to get through the hours that didn't involve a screen.

Now there are also the familiar rites of spring to tell me that things are turning around, as they always do. By the time the forsythia blooms, it's time to mow the grass, and oysters have started to grow in the bay again. These aren't tainted by Covid. They just live alongside other memories, from the years without a pandemic.

I'm looking forward to having spring memories from Berrybrook this year to add in. And I know I'll be very glad every spring to be reminded that the fundamental core of Berrybrook can come with us outside the gates and into all seasons, good and bad.

**~Claire Gochal**

Board Member