

January 2022

Monday, January 3

2022-2023 Enrollment Begins

Monday, January 17

Martin L. King Jr. Day - No School



Notes from the Head of School

Last month I wrote about the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund and the impact the financial support has had on so many families throughout the years. Were you also aware that at Berrybrook, everyone receives a tuition rate that is subsidized by a Trust, that our operating budget is not strictly supported by tuition as with most schools?

Approximately ten years after founding our school, Katharine Mann placed legal responsibility for Berrybrook's welfare in the hands of the Berrybrook Board of Directors. Part of the Board's job is to keep an eye on the school's expenses while also ensuring that the students have a quality early childhood education under the guidance of skilled, experienced early childhood educators. Mrs. Mann's foresight also 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. What this means is next fall for example, the true cost of the 5 Day tuition for families is nearly \$9,800, but because of the Trust's contribution the 5 Day tuition rate is \$7,960. The Board is responsible for and strives to keep tuition rates comparable to other schools, while maintaining the low student to teacher ratio, competitive staff salaries, plentiful resources, and more that Berrybrook is proud of.

Without the Trust's support and tuition increase that is a modest one (especially in these days, when the cost of living is skyrocketing), Berrybrook might be forced to alter our program in ways that would have a large impact on many things: student to teacher ratios that are much lower than state regulations and abundant supplies for the students for instance. Without the Trust's support Berrybrook would just feel different.

If one were to think that I have a “hero worship” feeling about Mrs. Mann, one would be absolutely correct. I often speak to potential families that not only was Mrs. Mann ahead of her time in regards to early childhood education, she was also a FEMALE small business owner - two features almost unheard of back in the 1950s. Do I think Mrs. Mann is a hero? Without a doubt, and I wish I had the opportunity to have met her before her death in 1999, three years before I started at Berrybrook.

This month is the beginning of the admissions cycle for families to enroll, or reenroll, at Berrybrook for the 2022-2023 year and to benefit from the extended influence of Mrs. Mann’s vision and support for early childhood education. We look forward to the next stage with your children and thank you for your continued support of Berrybrook.

Wishing you a wonderful 2022! ~ 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

It is January. The holidays are over and it's time to focus on the new year. As a preschool teacher, the time from Halloween until Christmas is always so busy and crazy. In September, we start the year with excitement and the newness of meeting our students and working in our classrooms. Once that newness wears off, that's when Halloween and the holiday frenzy begins!

At Berrybrook, we are all so busy creating all of the holiday projects...ghosts, spiders, pumpkins, turkeys, harvest corn, candles, bells, trees, etc., that it seems like time flies by so fast that you can't quite catch your breath. Then, after all is said and done, along comes January!

I love January. I do not love the weather, don't get me wrong, but I love that it is like starting again. There is a newness, like we felt back in September, except we now know your children, and our classroom feels more like a family or small community. It feels like calmness after a frenzy of activities. There is no rush to get a project done by the sing-along day, no cookies to bake, no presents to get made and wrapped, etc. The children are more calm too, and they settle back into their classroom and classroom routines.

I love the January curriculum as well. I enjoy helping the children create the projects of this month. I think my favorite is the "Snow Person". It is a part of the Berrybrook curriculum that begins in the Beginners class and continues into the 4/5 Day classes. The "Snow Person" demonstrates how we build upon our curriculum from one year to the next: from the children in the Beginners class decorating a snow person on an all ready drawn snowman, to the children of the 4/5 Day classes tracing and cutting out each snowball then adding felt or material for hats, scarves, mittens, etc. Each classroom has a "Snow Person" project, but in each class it is created according to their developmental abilities. I love wandering into each classroom to see all the differences and similarities.

I hope you all enjoyed your holidays, and that you can now enjoy the calm of having them be over. I wish you all a healthy, happy, and calm New Year! Think of it as I do, a new beginning, even in the middle of our school year.

~Mrs. Fosdick

Mrs. Fosdick teaches in the 3 Day Room 1 and the 4 Day classes

Parents Association Notes

Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the time off with your families! Thank you to the amazing teachers and staff for coordinating the hot cocoa gatherings that took place before the holiday break! It was so nice to see the children interact with their peers, and be able to chat with the other families! I think we all needed that small glimpse of “normal”.

Thank you to those that attended the Gardens-Aglow event at the Heritage Museum and Gardens in Sandwich. We hope everyone loved the beautiful light displays throughout the gardens, the festive decor, and the fun activities for all. We are looking forward to our next Family Fun Friday, which will be held on **Friday, January 21st** at Tumblefun Gymnastics in Marshfield! More information to follow on this event!

After a long hiatus, we are so excited to welcome back yoga with Miss Kim! This has always been a Berrybrook favorite, and teaching yoga to kids can have such a positive impact on their well-being! During their class with Miss Kim, the children will learn breathing exercises, work to improve balance and flexibility, and increase their body awareness and mindfulness. Be on the lookout for pictures from their session on your class Shutterfly page!

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 (like yoga with Miss Kim!) in and out of the classroom. A BIG thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation!

Molly Buchanan and Kim Joyce Co-Presidents berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

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.



From The Board of Directors

During the holiday season, many families gathered to celebrate with family and friends. Perhaps you attended a holiday party with friends, a holiday show in the city with your children, or enjoyed special family time while decorating a gingerbread house or watching a holiday-themed movie. Many of these experiences involved food. Hors d'oeuvres at the holiday party, a restaurant before the show, the candy on the gingerbread house, or even the warm buttered popcorn during movie night is very common. For parents of children with food allergies, the holiday season can present challenges. Parents must ask themselves - - should we bring our child's food? Should we talk to the hosts and discuss menu items, ingredients, and the risk of cross contamination? Should we politely decline the event because the stress is too much during an already busy time of year? Unfortunately, there's no correct answer. Each family must do what works well for them at the time. But one thing is for certain - - parents of children with food allergies are particularly grateful for people and places that take food allergies seriously. Places that have systems in place so *all* children can attend and participate in the event safely. People that go the extra mile and check with parents before preparing a dish or purchasing ingredients.

One such place that understands food allergies and takes them seriously, in a respectful manner, is Berrybrook. During our tour, I remember learning that the school was nut-free, which I noted but it did not affect our decision-making. Towards the end of our daughter's first year, we learned that she had a food allergy. As much as the diagnosis was initially hard to swallow, we were determined to find a balance between allowing her to do as much as she previously could and keeping her safe. We poured over websites about food allergies, joined Facebook groups, and read every label. A quick trip to the grocery store to pick up dinner items easily turned into forty-five minutes as we learned how to substitute ingredients.

Shortly after learning about our daughter's food allergy, we scheduled a meeting with her Berrybrook teachers. During this meeting, our daughter's teachers were calm, positive, and empathetic. They assured us that they had encountered many students with allergies and had a plan in place. In fact, they had even researched various snack

ideas and proposed them to us, so that our daughter did not have to regularly eat something different than her classmates. One teacher noted that Berrybrook will never make a child feel isolated due to something she or he cannot control. Another noted that, at Berrybrook, we want children to feel safe, and we will work together to create and maintain a safe environment. This immediately made us feel relieved, and even teary-eyed. We knew we had to continue educating our daughter about her food allergy, but perhaps for the first time since diagnosis, we felt like she had a team of supporters that would look out for her when she was away from us.

Several years ago (pre-COVID), families were invited to enjoy the holiday class sing-along followed by cookies prepared by the children. This was a Berrybrook tradition where families gathered to celebrate and close out the holiday season before the winter recess. For my daughter's classroom, the teachers and staff discussed several recipes with me and then prepared a special cookie in advance so she could enjoy this tradition with her friends. As a parent, I was so thankful that she could participate so seamlessly. I did not have to pull her aside and ask her to wait while I inquired about the ingredients or search through my bag to quickly find a substitute.

As we reflect on the holiday season, we are so thankful for a school that takes food allergies seriously in a respectful way. Parents can relax knowing that the teachers and staff understand food allergies. Teachers and staff members make the extra effort ahead of time so *all* children can enjoy Berrybrook traditions. This extra effort helps families successfully navigate these potentially challenging, food-centered events so that the children can focus on discovering, playing, and learning.

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.