

March 2023

Friday, March 17  
Friday, March 24

Enrollment Contracts Due  
Professional Day - no school



Notes from the Head of School

In Like a L I O N



The month **roars** in like a lion,  
With a crash and a slam!  
Then, tiptoes out **gently**,  
Like a **quiet** little lamb.

Out Like a *Lamb*

The month of March  
Has just blown in.  
To say that **spring**  
Will soon begin!



It's a bit of a quip at schools that March is the longest month in the academic calendar with its 67 days (or what seems like it!) The weather is often unpredictable, sicknesses are lingering, and the tease of spring weather is brutal. But much like the saying goes in regards to lions, lambs, and weather - the month of March is a huge traditional month for preschoolers. They seem to change and mature overnight. Although we see it each year, it still strikes and amazes us when it happens. It's exciting but as with all developmental stages, it's not just a leap to the next stage. There are sputters and 'redos' along the way - again, much like New England weather and its 42 false starts to spring. We're so excited to be on this Lion/Lamb journey with you!

~ Mrs. Watts

## **Teacher's Notes**

*How Sweet It Is!*

I am having a hard time believing that I have been walking through the Berrybrook gate for over twenty years now. When I was first interviewed in the farmhouse to be a teacher here, I had already had some classroom experience in different settings, but Berrybrook felt so *right* that I knew I wanted to be a part of it. One of the aspects that appealed to me was the traditions that have been an integral part of the school for so long. Tree -tapping was one of the mentioned traditions that I personally had no pre-existing knowledge about. The extent of my personal experience was opening up a bottle of prepared syrup and pouring it on my apple pancakes!

I have many warm memories of “learning the Berrybrook way” that first year, but I felt that I was learning about the tree-tapping process right alongside the children. Before the designated day, there was much discussion among the seasoned teachers about what day would be best to officially tap. The weather forecast needed to predict cold nights followed by days that would warm up considerably. Once the perfect stretch of weather was identified, the preparation began. The spickets, buckets, bucket covers, hand drill, and hammer were collected, cleaned, and ready to go.

The teachers planned ways to introduce the children to this experience with props and lesson plans in the classroom including the eye-catching opportunity to have “syrup” in the water table. Real tree stumps were set up in the classrooms with collections of the necessary tools that would help create a visual of what was going to take place outside. The children had time to experience hands-on how the whole process would take place. The classroom activity lent itself to open-ended conversations amongst the students and teachers about new vocabulary (what the heck IS a spicket?), time and patience (how long does it take to fill a bucket with sap?), and a connection with nature (isn't it amazing that a tree can help us make syrup?).

Finally, the big day arrived and all of the classes made the pilgrimage to the Berrybrook maple trees down near what is now the Nook entrance. Mrs. O'Neil showed all the children that were gathered on the ground in front of the trees past tapping holes on the tree that were closing back up and found a good spot to drill. After making a small hole, she carefully tapped a spicket into place along with an attached bucket. All of the children and teachers then waited with held breath for the first sound of the tap, tap, tap of the sap collecting at the bottom of the bucket. Then everyone had a chance to catch a drop of sap falling into the bucket to taste and decide if it tasted like water or syrup. Over the next week or so, the teachers would all help bring in the full buckets of sap to be boiled down. Every time someone would enter the farmhouse, they would be met with a very unique smell in the air and steamed-up windows. Finally, when the syrup was officially done, the classes celebrated with either sugar-on-snow parties or a stack of pancakes. And this year, the tradition will continue - how sweet it is!

*~ Mrs. Piccuito*

*Mrs. Piccuito teaches in the 2 Day and 3 Day Room 1 classes*



## **Parents Association Notes**

Welcome back, we hope everyone had a wonderful February vacation! The BPA has been busy this year coordinating enrichment opportunities, organizing Family Fun Fridays, and thinking ahead to events and activities for the spring. While creating memorable experiences for the children is our top priority, another important role of the BPA is to build a strong sense of community amongst the Berrybrook parents. One of the hallmarks of our school is the eagerness of our committed parents to get involved and to connect with one another. Over the last few months, our town has been through a lot, and we think we speak for everyone when we say, there is a lot to connect on. So, the BPA would like to help facilitate those conversations and strengthen our community by bringing back Berrybrook Moms Night Out this spring. We want to make this work for as many people as possible, so we created a survey to better understand your schedules. If you're interested in attending, please take a moment to provide some feedback in this brief [survey](#). We look forward to connecting with you!

### **Enrichment**

We are expecting a visit from the "Tooth Fairy" this month. Dentistry for Children will be visiting the classes to teach them about proper dental hygiene in a fun and engaging way. We also have Jesse Stiglich returning this month to engage the students in a fun drumming class!

### **Family Fun Fridays**

Love was in the air at Mix it Up Kitchen last month! The children decorated freshly baked Valentines Cookies with royal icing and sprinkles and created some beautiful bakery boxes to take their treats home in. Our March Family Fun Friday will take place at the Duxplex, where the children will participate in a Scoops Lacrosse class. For those of you who have been involved with Scoops in the past, you know Coach Bels brings the fun and "lacrawesome" energy to another level. To register for this event, please sign up [here](#).

### **Resources for Maternal Mental Health**

We would like to share a resource for pregnant or postpartum mothers, of which there are many in the Berrybrook community. Postpartum Support International is an organization that promotes awareness, prevention, and treatment of maternal mental health. Please visit their website [here](#) to learn more information about these various mental health conditions, find support groups, and access a directory of providers in your area that have specialized training in perinatal mental health.

### **Help Support Your Child's Enrichment Program**

As always, thank you to those who have already paid their BPA dues! If you have yet to do so, it's not too late! A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation! Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. You can email us at [berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com).

Alex Casamassima and Stephanie McGarry  
BPA Co-Presidents

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

Resiliency, Healing, and the Berrybrook Way

The first several weeks of dropping off my daughter for Beginners class were hard. She and I were so close, and she completely rejected the notion that I had to leave. We would have little conversations about how nice the teachers were, and she would argue, "You're nice too. You stay here." It was not easy. It was hard every day. And every day, my daughter bounced back by pick up time.

In the last couple of months, with my children now in high school, middle school, and the upper elementary school, our family has endured along with other Duxbury and Berrybrook families some really hard times. Most recently, the hoax that led us to believe there was an active shooter at Duxbury High School sent me into a level of adrenaline-overdrive I had never experienced before. It took me a good 36 hours to resume normal function.

It's tempting to say, "Thank goodness, nothing happened," and try to forget about it. In fact, something did happen. Something broke inside of us when we thought our children were under fire. Something broke inside of us when Laney Ladd suddenly died. And something broke inside of us when the Clancy family tragedy came to light.

*How do we bounce back?*

Each of us will find our own path. Some of us were hurt much more deeply by the actual losses of family and friends than others. I don't mean to draw false equivalencies at all, only to say that the impact of these traumatic events has been widespread and deeply felt among our community.

I began by writing about my daughter because it helps me to contemplate how profoundly her entire existence shifted by being separated from me on a regular basis as she began at Berrybrook, how new she was, and how much she was being asked to handle. I am so grateful for the nurturing environment that Berrybrook provided where my daughter could figure out for herself how to bounce back, how to live in her new normal. If only we all could create a more Berrybrook-like world that would support each other through hard times.

*Maybe we can.* The ingredients are simple: patience, love, kindness, gentle words, laughter, song, healthy snacks. Et voilà! Do you feel a little better already?

Let's remember this spring how everyone is working on their own bounce back, finding their own new normal, and let's extend our Berrybrook way as far as we can reach.

With gratitude for my children's five years as Berrybrook students, and for my six years as a Member of the Board of Directors

*~ Michelle Hatfield  
Board of Directors*

# Founder's Day

## March 30, 2023

In honor of Mrs. Mann's birthday

Berrybrook School was founded in 1954 by Mrs. Katharine Mann. After Berrybrook had been established for a few years, Mrs. Mann created a scholarship fund in honor of Helen M. Wheeler, who was Berrybrook's first director. The Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund is designated as the primary source of tuition assistance to Berrybrook families. The primary 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.

Please consider a gift to the fund that has allowed hundreds of children to experience Berrybrook when financial means may have otherwise prevented enrollment at our amazing school.



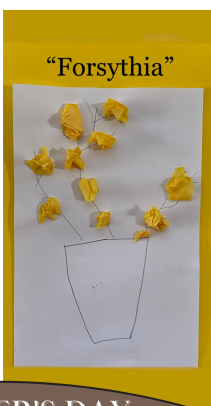
Thank you!



We have kicked off our annual "Founder's Day" campaign to benefit the Wheeler Scholarship Fund. We hope you consider a gift to the fund that has allowed hundreds of children to experience Berrybrook when financial means may have otherwise prevented enrollment at our amazing school.

We have set a campaign goal of raising \$5,000 by **March 30**, which is Mrs. Mann's birthday. Please consider participating in our campaign with a gift of *any* size.

Thank you for your support!  
Mrs. Watts



FOUNDER'S DAY  
In honor of Katharine Mann

