

October 2022

October 5	BPA meeting via Zoom
October 10	Columbus Day - no school
October 22	BPA Harvest Festival 11am - 2pm
October 26	Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:30 pm via Zoom



Notes from the Head of School

For the past two and a half years, we've all been in a sort of limbo status. Is this the year/month/week we are returning to normal? What exactly is "normal"? Do we *want* to return to normal?? Never did it hit harder than when I was inputting the birthdates of the Beginners class when I realized that the oldest Beginners student was not yet six months old when the Great Quarantine began. This is the divide. From this point forward, we will be enrolling students whose entire childhood has been shadowed by COVID.

For years, Berrybrook has been (lovingly) chided as being old-fashioned - we have no traditional screens in our classrooms (no iPad time) and for years it was pencil and paper when signing up for a parent/teacher conference. As with everyone we were forced to pivot (anyone else cringe when hearing or seeing that word?) to bring changes to Berrybrook that we've decided aren't always that bad. Parents who work outside of the home may not have been able to attend daytime parent/teacher conferences - now the pattern of both parents attending, albeit some virtually - has grown. For myself, I know I opt for Zoom conferences with my children's teachers; my husband is in his office in Boston while I'm in Berrybrook's multipurpose room, and we can meet with our kids' teachers where before I would attend solo and then relay info to him, with no questions or input from him at the time.

Our drop-off procedures in the past would be that parents would walk children to their individual classrooms. In Year One of COVID, no one besides children and staff were allowed at all into the building. What were we going to do? How were we going to connect with families? Before we knew it though, the children who we worried so much about, these children of the pandemic, were connecting as a class community faster than we'd ever seen before. Children were more responsible for their

belongings quicker than in the past. Hmm.....we were onto something positive in such a negative time? We as a staff, those who examine everything under a child-focused lens, realized that saying goodbye at the door, something we would never had considered before, was doing great things for the children! Now our new normal (yet another term I can't wait to retire) is saying goodbye at the door and watching those children gel and have ownership of their school and classroom in record time.

I virtually attend a Zoom meeting four times a week with early childhood directors across the state and I find myself waffling between hopefulness and helplessness. As a group, we advocate for the appreciation of the early childhood education field. We worked for months to educate politicians on the importance of voting in funding for our field. I am raised up by the collective optimism of my fellow attendees, and broken down when the government seems to not recognize the importance of this field when no funding was voted in. I listen to the agonizing stories of schools closing classrooms or entire schools due to no staffing. I am so very thankful to know that our Berrybrook families appreciate the work we do with their children, and that I have teachers who show up energetic, full of ideas, and with a love of all things Berrybrook to provide the best experience for our children and families. I know that this is not true for all children in early childcare settings and that breaks my heart. I've worked in those settings and have worked with some who I question why they are there since they didn't seem to care. More than twenty years ago I came to Berrybrook and knew I found home. I'm so very glad you are with us this year; welcome home.

~ Mrs. Watts

SAVE THE DATE

Berrybrook Harvest Festival

Saturday October 22

11:00 - 2:00



Teacher's Notes

Three Important Words

SEEK and we shall find...

This year we shall keep that in mind.

CONTRIBUTE what we know and believe...

Then something important with others we will leave.

BELONGING... it's what we all long for.

This school year we will find it ~ and more!

SEEK, CONTRIBUTE, BELONGING.

These three words hang in our classroom,

On the shelf, right next to Bear.

These three words, very soon,

With each other we will share.

All school year long,

We will practice what the words mean.

Looking to ourselves and others,

Being sure that everyone is truly heard and seen.

Offering our ideas and opinions

On all that really matters to us, each one.

Then, collectively we will see,

How we really belong to our whole group, such fun!

So let's all model how to never stop *seeking* what matters

or *contributing* what we know...

For when we do, we find we *belong* all together...

This school year ~ just wait and watch us grow!



~ Mrs.LaForest

(Mrs. LaForest teaches in the 4 and 5 Day classes)

Berrybrook Parents Association Notes

Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Piccuito, and parent volunteers have been busy putting details together for our annual **Harvest Festival**. Hopefully many of you are able to attend and enjoy the crafts, games, hayride and food on **Saturday, October 22nd from 11-2**. Early bird admission and raffle tickets are available until October 14th and can be purchased through Venmo (@BerrybrookParentAssociation), cash, or check.

Thank you to those of you who have already donated to the Harvest Festival, or volunteered your time. The Harvest Festival would not be a success without the support and generosity from Berrybrook Families. We are still actively seeking volunteers and donors for the event. If you are able to participate in any way, please refer to the sign up genius that has been sent out. The next planning meeting for the Harvest Festival is scheduled for October 5th at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

Thank you to everyone who has already paid their annual BPA dues. If you have not already, you may still send in your \$30 suggested contribution which goes directly to our student enrichment programs. Enrichment typically begins in October for the 4 and 5 day classes, and in previous years has included yoga, Irish step dancers, community workers and more! The Beginners, 2 and 3 day classes will join in starting in January. Every Berrybrook parent is automatically a member of the Parents Association and are welcome to all BPA meetings.

Thank you for your support and participation! For any questions or feedback, please feel free to email the BPA at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

Lunch Bunch

Mrs. Bonner, Ms. Connell, Mrs. Larose, and Mrs. McLaughlin would like to thank all parents in advance for being so careful to pack allergy safe lunches for their children. We appreciate our families taking the extra time to make sure all Berrybrook children are safe.

From The Board of Directors

My children are fortunate enough to live just a five minute walk from their grandparents. One of the neighbors on their street has for decades cultivated a natural meadow full of wildflowers in the abutting yard. There have always been an abundance of milkweed plants growing amongst the wildflowers, which consequently attracts flocks of monarchs year after year who come to lay their eggs, feast on the leaves and eventually drink nectar from the flowers.

This past August though, something terrible happened. A well-intentioned guest of the elderly neighbors went out into the meadow to clear out some of the bittersweet weeds and mistakenly removed all of the milkweed. The neighbors were heartbroken and they retold the sad tale to my father-in-law one afternoon, as they stood over the trailer of brush. During their discussion they discovered a number of monarch chrysalises and caterpillars had been tossed in with the milkweed to be sent to the dump. As any "Papa" would do, my father-in-law saw an opportunity that his grandchildren would enjoy and decided to set up a butterfly rehabilitation center for the monarchs. For the last two weeks of August, my children were put to work as the caretakers and scientists.

A quick Google search showed that a chrysalis could actually be reattached to a branch by gently tying it with a small piece of dental floss. My children visited every day to watch the progress of their monarchs. Some were still caterpillars munching on the salvaged milkweed leaves. Many were already in chrysalis form and had been carefully and successfully re-hung from a variety of branches. The children loved observing each step of the magical progress. They learned that they could predict which chrysalis would be the next to open by observing when it turned completely black and the wings were faintly visible. They watched as the butterflies hung upside down for hours after they emerged, stretching their transformed wings. They learned by observing the butterflies' behavior, how much time they needed before they were ready to be brought to the garden and set free. Releasing a butterfly brought the most excitement. Each time the girls would bounce up and down and sing a song they had learned at Berrybrook:

*butterfly, butterfly happy all day...
butterfly, butterfly fly, fly away!*

I am happy to report that 100% of the butterflies in our rehabilitation center survived. Seventeen monarchs in all were salvaged from the brush and all seventeen survived and thrived!

Grandma and Papa went on vacation during the last week of the summer just before the final butterfly had a chance to emerge. The rehabilitation effort of course got relocated to my kitchen. On the very last day of summer, before my Berrybrook graduates headed off to Kindergarten, I watched the final butterfly silently break free of its chrysalis in the late morning sun. I blinked and it had changed.

The children observed and released butterflies last spring with their 5 Day class at Berrybrook. The teachers discussed then how symbolic the process was of our own children and their transformation and growth throughout the year. My twins began at Berrybrook as Beginners and perhaps even more profound was their "transformation" over the three years that they spent there. They were so small when they walked into Room 3, nervous, shy and unsure. Throughout their time they were so lovingly nurtured

and encouraged. They were embraced for all of the ways that they were unique and special and in their own time they grew confident enough to spread their wings; approaching new friends, attempting gross motor challenges on the playground, taking training wheels off a bike, and sharing their ideas at circle time.

When Number 17 was brought outside she took off before we could reach the garden. She flew clear across the yard while my girls threw their heads back in laughter. They still sang her send off song, but she was so ready! Like Number 17, my twins took off the next morning, confidently and without hesitation. They walked right onto the school bus and smiled their biggest smiles as they waved goodbye through the window; they too were so ready! I hope you enjoy watching your own children transform over the course of this school year. This is just the beginning and at some point you'll blink and they'll be spreading their wings ready to take off.

Emily Balboni
President
Berrybrook Board of Directors
berrybrookbod@gmail.com

Berrybrook Families are growing!!!!

Welcome

Reese Angel

(big brother Owen is in the 3 Day Room 1 class)

Olivia Cayzer

(big brother Henry is in the 5 Day class,
and big brother Charlie is in the Beginners class)

Thomas Chancholo

(big sister Josephine is in the 4 Day class)

Otis Kerry

(big brother Russell is in the 4 Day class)