

April 2025

**April 18**

**Good Friday - no school**

**April 21 - 25**

**Spring vacation week**



## Notes from the Head of School

Each spring, we kick off our Annual Appeal for the Wheeler Scholarship Fund, which you may have heard during your time at Berrybrook. If you had a tour, we mention to all families that we have a Scholarship Fund. Often, the first comment is “Oh, I don’t think we’d qualify”. So what exactly IS the scholarship fund?

What is it?

The Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund is the primary source of tuition assistance to Berrybrook families. All money raised through the Annual Appeal is earmarked for the Wheeler Fund. 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.

Who qualifies?

The Wheeler Scholarship Fund was created by Mrs. Katharine Mann, our school’s founder. She created the fund so that finances never prevented a child from attending Berrybrook. All assistance is based on demonstrated financial need, the number of families applying for assistance that year, and the amount of funding available.

Does it need to be paid back?

The assistance is a scholarship, not a loan. Many recipients will make donations to the Fund years later when their financial picture is a bit stronger as a way to pay it forward to other families.

Will the teachers or anyone else know who receives help?

The process is a confidential one. Families complete an online application, and are required to submit supporting documentation such as W2s and prior tax year reports. The Board of Directors receives a report of how much aid has been awarded and the number of children benefiting from the Fund. No names are attached to these reports.

Who is Helen Wheeler?

Helen M. Wheeler was the first director of Berrybrook, when Berrybrook first opened its doors over seventy years ago in September 1954. Mrs. Mann and Miss Wheeler were both

graduates of what was known as the Nursery Training School of Boston, which is now the Eliot-Pearson School, a TuftsUniversity affiliate.

How is it funded?

All money raised from the Annual Appeal or similar fundraisers (minus fees such as PayPal processing fees) goes to scholarships.

How can I receive more information?

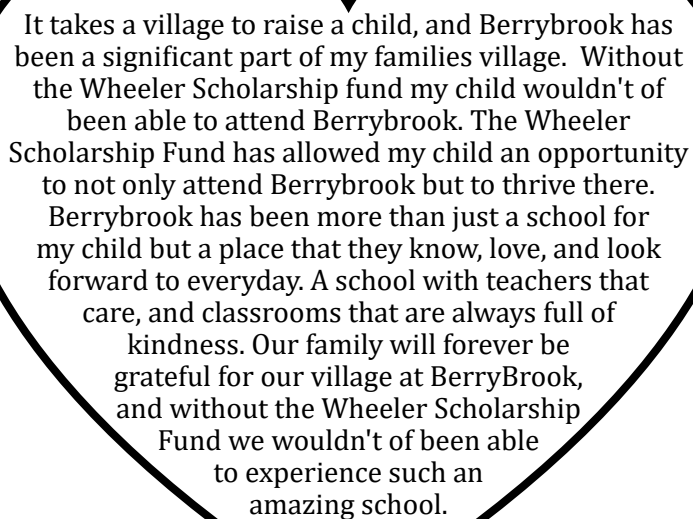
I would be happy to speak with anyone who is interested in applying for the Wheeler Scholarship Fund!

How can I make a donation?

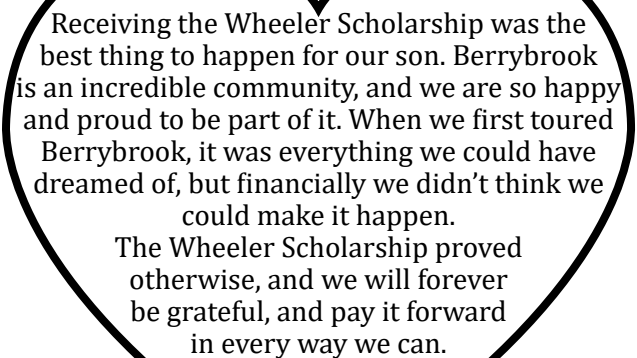
Berrybrook is a non-profit organization, which means any donation made is tax deductible. Donations can be made through cash, checks (made out to Berrybrook School Annual Appeal), through our PayPal link on our website which can be found at <https://www.berrybrookschool.org/donate>, or Venmo @berrybrook267.

Thank you to past donors to the Fund, which has helped hundreds of children throughout the years. Please read just a couple of thank you messages we have received.

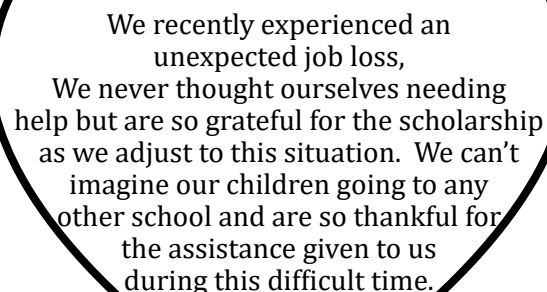
~ Mrs. Watts



It takes a village to raise a child, and Berrybrook has been a significant part of my families village. Without the Wheeler Scholarship fund my child wouldn't of been able to attend Berrybrook. The Wheeler Scholarship Fund has allowed my child an opportunity to not only attend Berrybrook but to thrive there. Berrybrook has been more than just a school for my child but a place that they know, love, and look forward to everyday. A school with teachers that care, and classrooms that are always full of kindness. Our family will forever be grateful for our village at BerryBrook, and without the Wheeler Scholarship Fund we wouldn't of been able to experience such an amazing school.



Receiving the Wheeler Scholarship was the best thing to happen for our son. Berrybrook is an incredible community, and we are so happy and proud to be part of it. When we first toured Berrybrook, it was everything we could have dreamed of, but financially we didn't think we could make it happen. The Wheeler Scholarship proved otherwise, and we will forever be grateful, and pay it forward in every way we can.



We recently experienced an unexpected job loss, We never thought ourselves needing help but are so grateful for the scholarship as we adjust to this situation. We can't imagine our children going to any other school and are so thankful for the assistance given to us during this difficult time.

**Please help us achieve our  
Annual Appeal goal of \$5,000!**



*Berrybrook's Founder,  
Katharine Mann*



**venmo**

**PayPal**

Limited spots remain for the 2025-2026 school year!



**Berrybrook  
Preschool  
Now Enrolling  
for Fall**

## **Teacher's Notes**

Is my child ready for kindergarten? This question lingers around the Berrybrook halls every year around this time. The weather is getting warmer, kindergarten conversations are happening over the dinner table, children are talking about it at school. Some children are excited and/or nervous to 'go to kindergarten'. That excited or nervous feeling can present in many different ways: anxiety, acting out, asking if kindergarten 'starts very soon/next week,' the whole idea can be overwhelming to a young child. You, as the parent may also be nervous, excited and anxious. Give a gentle reminder to yourself that while you are capable of regulating your emotions (mostly), children are unable to regulate their emotions without the help of the adult(s) in their lives, especially during times of change and transition. While you might be excited to share all of the 'big' things ahead, try and remember that your child doesn't understand in the same way that you do.

At Berrybrook we teach the whole child. Physically, emotionally, academically, mentally; there are many factors that go into whether your child is ready. As teachers, we are teaching, watching and observing your child from the very first day of school each year. We take into consideration the foundations of learning at this level. In the 4 & 5 Day program, we see if the children show some self-direction at the beginning of the year. Do they like to participate in activities? Do they show empathy? Can they begin to recognize shapes, the letters in their names? We listen and talk to the children; we watch them listen and talk to each other. Each child learns and grows at their own pace, what works for one child may not work for another and more importantly, one way of learning is not better than another. We have conversations, so many conversations with parents, and more if they're needed. Have confidence that the teachers are preparing your child for what is next, whether that's another year of preschool or moving onto kindergarten.

Seven years ago, I found myself thinking about whether or not my child was ready for kindergarten. While my first child was at Berrybrook, I was a nervous wreck. Though I thought my son was brilliant, adorable, (all the adjectives), I kept wondering in the back of my mind if he was ready. Was he confident enough? Was he mature enough? Could he handle the long days? I brought up my worries/anxiety during my fall conference when he was in the 4-day classroom, and yes, I asked for an extra conference in January to discuss this topic further! Berrybrook's teachers are understanding, accommodating, and just as they give the children room to grow into themselves, they also give the parents the same room to grow and learn. When I met with Mrs. LaForest to talk about my son, she let me 'vent,' all my worries and frustrations, she listened, she helped, and in the end she said that my son was 100% ready for his next step (and she also reassured me that I was also ready).

Is my child ready for kindergarten? Is my child ready to walk? Run? Is my child ready for middle school? A relationship? College? What I've learned over the years, especially after becoming a parent, is to stick with your instincts, they're usually right. BUT, when you are questioning those instincts, the biggest lesson I've learned is to always ask for help or advice (whether it's teachers, other parents, friends), in all stages of life. It takes a village.

~ **Mrs. Larose**

*Mrs. Larose teaches the 5 Day class*

## Parents Association Notes

Hello Berrybrook Parents!

Spring is blooming at Berrybrook as each tulip and daffodil that the children planted last fall begins to pop out of the ground! We cannot wait to see the beautiful blooms!

Teacher appreciation week is May 5-9. As part of our annual tradition, the BPA will be collecting contributions for the teacher luncheon as well as gifts for Mrs. Watts and Mrs. Piccuito. The classroom parents will also collect contributions for a small gift for each of your child's teachers.

### UPCOMING BPA DATES

- April 11 - JEM Family Fun Friday
- May 5-9 - Teacher Appreciation Week

**Family Fun Fridays:** I think it's safe to say the children had the best time listening to stories and singing with Ryan from Big Ryan's Tall Tales. The infectious laughter in the Big Room at Berrybrook is still ringing in my ears (in a good way, of course!). We hope to host Big Ryan again in the future!

We're looking forward to our next FFF in April at JEM Equestrian! Children will be provided with carrots and grain to feed horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, pigs and alpacas. Not only will the children be able to feed various animals but there will also be bunnies out to snuggle with! Register [here](#).

**Apparel:** If you haven't already, be sure to check out our Berrybrook apparel. We have toddler/kids sweatshirts, t-shirts/long sleeves, hats and fleece blankets available for purchase. All proceeds go towards enrichment program funding.

**Other News:** We are looking for a new co-president! If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please email us at [berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com) for more information.

**Stephanie McGarry, Emma Kender and Michelle Crowley**

Coach Bels from Scoops has provided all Berrybrook students with a 15% off coupon for their Spring session. These lacrosse clinics are designed to ensure the game of lacrosse is learned the right way; the fun way. Their goal is to help kids to be better players, teammates and individuals on and off the field. Please use code: BERRYSPRING during checkout. You can register for [here](#)! If you have any questions you can email Michelle Crowley at [berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com).

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

Fellow Berrybrook parents,

As I enter my sixth and final year on the Berrybrook Board, I wanted to share my thoughts and observations of this unique and special school.

My introduction to Berrybrook took place in 2012, when a friend mentioned the school as my wife and I began our preschool search; word of mouth referrals can be so powerful! Immediately upon arrival, Berrybrook's quaint and spacious outdoor areas set it apart. Upon meeting the teachers, hearing about the traditions and the school's approach to learning; my family was easily on board.

All four of my children attended Berrybrook and treasure the times they spent there. Memory Books are just one example of the special traditions that make Berrybrook unique. Other traditions that come to mind are the end-of-year ice cream making, and how the children prepare a special Thanksgiving feast and centerpiece.

Our eldest daughter had the pleasure of taking the Beginners class with Mrs. LaForest in 2012; the experience came full circle for us when our youngest also had Mrs. LaForest as her teacher in 2023. Another fond memory for my family is Mrs. O'Neil teaching my son in 2016, her last year teaching before retiring in 2018. Mrs. O'Neil taught at Berrybrook for 40 years.

Even though some teachers may no longer be there, the Berrybrook traditions remain! As a member of the Berrybrook community for over 12 years now, it is clear that Berrybrook stays true to its original mission set by Mrs. Mann in 1954; "to provide a place to develop self-esteem and confidence, to help a child not to be afraid to fail - to learn by trying".

All my children hold their memories close and look back at their time at Berrybrook with wide smiles. It truly is a special place.

### **My Ask**

As a member of the Board, I encourage parents to get involved. It takes *a lot* of time and effort on the part of the teachers, administration, and the Board to keep Berrybrook the vibrant, nurturing and welcoming environment it has always been. My wish is for more parents to answer the call to get involved -- and stay involved -- so Berrybrook can continue to enrich the lives of children in so many wonderful ways.

### **How Parents Can Get Involved:**

- Attending Events
- Get involved with the Berrybrook Parents Association ([berrymbrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrymbrookparentsassociation@gmail.com))
- Join the Board with your area of expertise (education, marketing, finance, etc) (Speak with Mrs. Watts if interested)
- Tell a friend/neighbor about the school (word of mouth)

A large part of keeping the traditions and momentum of Berrybrook going is the community and the families that support the school. The more people passionate about Berrybrook we can get involved, the more the school will thrive.

~ ***Michael Collentro***

Board Member