

# BERRYBROOK NEWS

*March, 2008*

*What do we do in March?  
We skip in the new spring sun,  
We chase the hats that breezes snatch,  
We jump and hop and run.*

<b>Wednesday, March 5</b>	<b>Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm “Dad’s Night Out”</b>
<b>Friday, March 14</b>	<b>Enrollment Forms Due</b>
<b>Friday March 21</b>	<b>Good Friday, No School</b>
<b>Wednesday, March 26</b>	<b>Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:00 pm</b>

## *Notes from the Headmaster*

This month, a combination of hopes and dreams and hard work are gearing up to bring Berrybrook into a new school house and a new chapter in our long and successful history. Soon I will be inviting children and parents inside the lovely building that has risen before our very eyes. The construction itself has taken only seven months, but the energy and vision to get our community to this point has taken over half a century. It started with Mrs. Mann, and her purchase of the farm house and the surrounding land for Berrybrook. The farm house was a fitting environment for her philosophy and served the school well for over 50 years. Now, a portion of the land she placed in the Lucretia Prentiss Bailey Trust will enable our community to have a fitting environment for the next 50 years and beyond. Through the years, hundreds of students, teachers, parents and board members believed in Mrs. Mann’s dream to provide an opportunity for an early childhood education that awakens the joy of discovery and learning. They had the same passion for Berrybrook that we have today. Katharine Mann had faith in her school and faith that the school would always attract capable people to take good care of Berrybrook and she was right. Over 2,556 students and their parents, 51 teachers, 7 headmasters and many volunteer Board members have believed in Berrybrook. Because of Mrs. Mann’s generosity and all of those who believed in her vision, our community has a new home and a bright future.

*Pat Keeley*

## *Classroom Activities*

March is our transition time from winter into spring. Children start the month with winter activities, and slowly but surely, during the month you'll hear your children talking more and more about spring activities. Children will be watching for buds and other signs of growth outside. The wide variety of plants surrounding our school is a bonus for this type of exploration. Hopefully, by the end of the month, rising temperatures will allow Berrybrook maple trees to be tapped to provide us with sap for maple syrup.

In March, and throughout the year, teachers champion constructive play. Children have many opportunities to make their own decisions about what to do next, and with whom. Our environments and activities support respect for the children's ideas, choices and style.

In [The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness: Five Steps to Help Kids Create and Sustain Lifelong Joy](#), Dr. Edward M. Hallowell, a Harvard child psychiatrist advises parents to have fun with their children, let them follow their own dreams, encourage them to play sports, read aloud to them for as long as they will let you, make family dinners part of your routine, and create family traditions. In Chapter 8 of his book, *Play: The Source of Lifelong Joy*, Dr. Hallowell states, "The reason to encourage children to play is not merely that play is a wonderful end in itself---although it is that. As a child plays, he learns a special skill---the skill of play---and it is a skill that is more

useful than any other. The skill of play, of being able to make creative use of time no matter where you are or what you are doing, is the skill that lies behind all discoveries, all advances, all creative activity. If you can play, you will always have a chance to be happy and to do something great."

Here are some ideas for parents to promote healthy play at home:

**Provide opportunities to play with peers** - Children develop better, more sophisticated social strategies when they are able to maintain relationships with other children they like over long periods of time.

**Endorse positive, relevant strategies.** - Parents of competent children talk about various options, but endorse friendly, prosocial strategies that leave the door open to play or friendship. Children react more positively to peers who try to solve problems by negotiation or compromise rather than tattling, aggression or verbal coercion.

**Reflect a positive, resilient attitude toward social setbacks.** - Exclusion by peers is a fact of life for preschoolers. Parents of socially competent children endorse interpretations of social events that attitudes and encourage children to take an optimistic view of others and themselves as play partners. They reflect an upbeat, resilient attitude toward social setbacks and the belief that situations can be improved with effort and positive behavior.

## *Parent's Association*

I want to share something with the Berrybrook community. I have often said that I learn just as much as my son Reece does at Berrybrook. Our teachers have helped me to think about recycling. My son Reece is in the lunch bunch program. I have noticed that when I clean out his lunch box, I find the plastic bags from his snacks. This gentle reminder has inspired me to be thinking more green. I have now purchased a reusable sandwich sized Tupperware, small drink container with a straw, and reusable containers for his snacks. I have to admit that I had not given much thought to all of the juice boxes, individual snack wrappers, and plastic bags that I had been using. Just starting this has inspired me to be thinking about how else I can be more environmentally conscious. I have put a very large Rubbermaid container in my pantry to use for everything I can recycle. My friend Katherine Shepler has said that she has treated this task as a challenge; to try to recycle as much as she possibly can. My friend Breanna Kirk has also encouraged me to bring reusable bags to the grocery store, Target, CVS, etc. to avoid using their plastic bags. She surprised me with a gift of 6 reusable bags from Whole Foods (great fabric-like roomy bags- I love them!) It feels really good to be living more deliberately, and having more respect for the world around me. I have also logged on to [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org), which is a service that opts you out of catalogues that you don't want.

Especially around the holidays, now I won't be throwing away five catalogues a day! I am writing this in hopes that it will encourage you to think about how you can be more green. Thank you to the teachers for helping me to be more environmentally conscious. I know I'm driving around in an SUV, but this is a start... If anyone has any other tips, I would love to include them in future newsletters.

I wanted to extend a big thank you to Tricia Stravin for all of her work in coordinating the children's enrichment programs. The South Shore Natural Science Center visited at the end of February, and was a memorable experience for our children. In March, Mrs. Stravin has arranged for Irish Step Dancers to perform for the children.

We are beginning to think about the upcoming spring fling that takes place in May. We are looking for volunteers to help with the planning of this wonderful tradition. If you are able to help in any capacity, please contact any of the BPA officers. We will be planning a BPA meeting in mid to late March.  
Nancy Cooney, BPA President.

### *Parents Helping Parents*

Stephanie Handfield has shared information on two companies that offer peanut free sweets for families with peanut allergies -

Gourmet Chocolates Without Nuts  
[www.vermontnutfree.com](http://www.vermontnutfree.com)

Nut Free Confections  
[www.nutfreecandy.com](http://www.nutfreecandy.com)

## *The Value of Parent/Teacher Conferences*

By Kris Delano

Berrybrook strives to provide a positive, nurturing and open environment for its community of children, parents, staff and administration. Day to day interactions provide an opportunity to address questions and concerns however individual conference time is valuable.

### **Why make time for a Conference?**

Conferences are an essential ingredient for quality early childhood education.

Conferences provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss a child's progress, identify concerns and to set future goals.

Conferences help to identify your child as his own person, with his own strengths, weaknesses and attitudes.

### **How to make the most of a Conference**

Both parents attend if possible.

Prepare in advance thoughts, questions or concerns. Bring and/or take notes.

Teachers or parents may alert the other in advance on a topic or concern they wish to discuss.

### **Follow-up on any agreed upon school/home approach in regard to the child.**

Depending on the child-tell them in advance about this time for the teacher and parent to talk about Berrybrook. Follow up with the child about appropriate conversations you had.

### **Remember**

Relax...parents and teachers work as a team-being open minded, respecting and supporting each other for the benefit of the child.

Stay focused on the child's observations and concerns.

Preschool is a time to build life skills - separating from parents, cooperating with teachers, sharing with peers, developing conflict resolution skills, participating appropriately in group activities, beginning to discover oneself.

Looking forward to our Conference time together!

*(Mrs. Delano teaches in the 2 and 3 Day classes)*

## *Berrybrook Board of Directors*

As you know, the Lucretia Prentiss Bailey Trust has a purchase and sale agreement with the Town of Duxbury to sell a portion of the property to the Town for conservation purposes. The sale is listed as Article 22 on the warrant for the Duxbury Town Meeting on Saturday, March 8, 2008, and residents must vote to approve the sale. In order for the sale to go through, two thirds of the voters present must vote yes.

The sale includes 27.23 acres of open field adjacent to the school named "the Oak Tree Lot" and also a 13.3 acre parcel across the street that abuts the O'Neil Farm. The school will retain 27.33 acres on which the school buildings are located.

The Board is asking all Berrybrook parents who reside in Duxbury to consider supporting the sale of the land by voting yes on Article 22 at the Town Meeting. We believe the sale will secure the future of Berrybrook for generations of children to come and also preserve one of the most beautiful open spaces in our region.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to our School.

