



October, 2010

Tuesday, October 5	Parent Discussion Group 7:00pm
Monday, October 11	Columbus Day, No School
Saturday, October 16	BPA Harvest Fest 10:00-1:00
Thursday October 21	BPA meeting 7:00 pm
Wednesday, October 27	Berrybrook Board meeting 7:30 pm
Tuesday, November 2	Professional Development Day, No School

Notes from the Headmaster

I want to thank all of our families for a wonderful start of school. This year we asked a parent or caretaker to stay with each child for the entire session the first day. We appreciate parents taking the extra time to make arrangements to make that possible. The feedback regarding our new first day of school format from both teachers and families has been very positive. Having children share their first day of school with parents minimized anxiety for everyone and made for a very positive experience to start the new year. Berrybrook teachers and staff reflect on our practices constantly, and I am so proud of our commitment to make adjustments and improvements in our interactions with children and families. Many hours of discussion and planning go into every detail. Our new first day format, shortened school days and home visits are all designed to make the transition to school comfortable for our young students and to ease any anxiety parents may have.

Teachers and I realize how painful separation can be, but we know the happy outcome of the process is growth. Already the children are feeling right at home in their Berrybrook environments and their enthusiasm for all of the activities teachers are planning is remarkable. Even as early as the second week of school the teachers observed problem solving and social skills developing as the children become contributing members of their tight knit classroom communities. I know I speak for all Berrybrook teachers when I say how honored we are that you share your children with us. We know what it takes for you to trust others with your most precious possession, but in sending your children to Berrybrook you are giving them the gift of independence, discovery and friendship and you are showing your children you have the confidence in them to become their own person. Enjoy this special time.

Pat Keeley

First Year Program News

September breezes gently arrived, as the 2 and 3 day classes began their visiting days. Parents and children enjoyed meeting teachers and exploring the class rooms together. In September we spent our time together learning about each other and getting to know the classroom routines. You may have heard the tune “Make New Friends” a few times at home. As September came to a close, we were entrenched in the jelly making process. You may have heard about grape smooshing, and lots of purple! Look for a warm jar of fresh jelly in your child’s cubby at pick up time!

As we enter into October, classes will be exploring the change in seasons from summer to autumn. Children’s activities will include leaf painting and nature walks. We will also be learning about fire safety this month, with a visit from the Duxbury Fire Department. Halloween is enjoyed in a friendly way by painting a paper bag pumpkin, carving a jack-o-lantern and making a special treat in school for a harvest celebration.

Parents of first year students will be able to sign up to volunteer in mid October. There will be a sign up sheet on the class bulletin board. If you plan on volunteering, it is a good idea to attend the October 5th “Parent Discussion Group” at 7:00pm. Teachers will be sharing tips on classroom routines and helpful phrases to use with children.

Please let us know about any questions or concerns you may have. We are off on another wonderful year in the First Year Program!

Thank you,
First Year Teachers - Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. La Forest, Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Pisani



**THIS MONTH, EACH GROUP WILL BE
CARVING A LARGE PUMPKIN.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE A
PUMPKIN TO YOUR CLASS, PLEASE
TALK TO YOUR TEACHER.
THANK YOU!**



Second Year Program News

The first day of school in September for the second year students proved to be a very meaningful experience for families. Children and parents had the opportunity to explore their classroom, meet their teachers and see the friends they will share their school year with – giving true meaning to the words of the familiar song “make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver, the other gold.” Confident in understanding the routine of their child’s day, families now arrive at Berrybrook where parents say goodbye to their children at the door so they can enter happily, wash their hands, and begin their day.

Comfort of the familiar and excitement of the new have been the focus of the entire month of September. Songs, old and new, bring us together at Circle Time. Books that pique our growing curiosity challenge us a bit more at Story Time. Sign-making occurs in the Block Area. “How do you write ‘MOM’ ?” is heard at the Writing Table. Children putting covers on their own playdoh containers so it doesn’t dry out is a common happening at the Playdough Table. At the easel,

children are painting then learning to place their paintings on the drying rack all by themselves. Friends are interacting during Open Snack as they practice checking to see if a chair is available, crossing off their names, washing their hands and joining others when they are hungry. Responsibility is being learned as children clean up materials they have used and respect the materials and ideas of others.

Daily projects are being completed by everyone, every day. A theme of “sea life” emerged this month as the important, developing skills of writing, cutting and creative thinking resulted in watercolor fish, seashell collages, and sun catcher fish...even fish for “fishing”! Please feel free to visit our classroom at Dismissal Time to see displays of our work in the classroom, however thank you for keeping in mind that the children worked very hard cleaning their space so it is ready for the next class to use.

A surprise awaited in cubbies as children brought home their first project traditional to the second year program. Children created their own “quahog garden” by placing statice (another term for sea lavender) and baby’s breath in shells. We learned that quahog shells were used long ago as a form of money, called “wampum”, when Indians used them to make beads. The shellfish inside different sized quahog shells have different names: “clams” or “chowders” for the large ones, “cherrystones” for the medium-sized ones, and “little necks” for the smallest . Children also learned that the quahog’s shell is made up of two “halves” or “valves”. They chose their quahog shell carefully and will cherish this Berrybrook keepsake.

The month of September ended with a tradition shared by everyone at Berrybrook: the making of Berrybrook Grape Jelly. The jelly making process

was discussed in more detail as everyone contributed to plucking and cooking the grapes, pressing the grapes for juice then cooking and taking some jelly home...but not before eating it for snack!

The season of Autumn has arrived, however warm days linger and summer feels close, still. October brings with it learning about apples. Children will make applesauce, participate in an apple tasting “survey” to learn how we can record and analyze information to discover which apples children enjoy the most , least or the same, and create daily projects that reflect the apple picking season outside in nature. As we learn about Fire Safety, we will meet a very special character named Pickles in a chapter book read in all classes. October would not be complete without pumpkins, bats, spiders and witches ...or a pizza making snack for a Harvest Celebration! Teachers will be in touch with parents to arrange for volunteers. October projects are completed over a period of days and children will be proud of their thoughtful, careful and creative work. The month will conclude with a favorite story about a Little Old Lady Who Wasn’t Afraid of Anything as the children will participate in a way to make the story come to life!

Happy Autumn!

The Second Year Teachers,
Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. O’Neil, Mrs. Neal,
Mrs. Rosen and Mrs. Swan

Emergency Evacuation

Berrybrook emergency evacuation drills started in September and will continue during the year. During our drills, teachers discuss the necessity of being able to get all children and teachers out of the school in case of an emergency.

It is a good idea for families to talk about fire safety at home too, and to agree on a safe a meeting place.

Halloween at Berrybrook

In October, Children will celebrate some Halloween traditions by learning Halloween songs, decorating classrooms in Halloween colors and carving pumpkins. As part of our Halloween activities, we will be discussing the differences between make believe and reality. Sorting out these differences is challenging for preschoolers and may cause some anxious feelings. Halloween can be overwhelming for some children and that is why we ask that costumes remain at home.

Individual classes will be choosing and preparing special snacks. **Because Berrybrook has children with severe food allergies, we ask that candy be enjoyed at home.** This is especially important to remember after Halloween when children may want to bring candy to school in pockets or backpacks. At Home, Parents are encouraged to check ingredients on all treats. Often, the “specialty” versions of Halloween candy are not made at the same plant where “regular” versions are made and may have different ingredients.

Arrival & Dismissal

Please remember the front door will be locked 15 minutes after arrival time. Any families arriving late may ring the doorbell and Mrs. Watts or Mrs. Keeley will let you in. Thank you to parents for waiting until 9:00 in the morning and 1:00 in the afternoon to enter the classroom. Teachers need every minute to prepare for the children. Likewise, thank you for arriving on time for dismissal. Children worry if parents are late. If you have an emergency, please call the office so we can let your child and teachers know you are on your way. Please remember our safety rules:

- **Drive Slowly.**
- **Turn engines off.**
- **Bring siblings with you.**
- **Supervise children after signing out.**
- **Latch the gate behind you.**
- **Hold hands in the parking lot.**
- **Children must never be left unattended in cars.**

A helpful Berrybrook tradition has been for parents to meet another parent with younger children in the lot at arrival and dismissal and park next to each other. One parent can watch younger children in the cars, while the other parent walks Berrybrook students to or from school. Please remember that anytime you have an emergency or need help at arrival or dismissal, you may call the office and we will assist you.

Welcome

Some returning Berrybrook families had new additions over the summer –

Ginger Corby
(4 Day - Rm 1)

Jack Sutcliffe
(4 Day - Rm 2)

Hazel Patel
(4 Day - Rm 1)

And two new Berrybrook families had additions in just the last few weeks!

Tatum O’Grady
(3 Day - Rm 3)

Evan Sampson
(3 Day - Rm 1)

Congratulations!

Parents Association News

Welcome back to school!

The BPA has been very busy planning the 2010 Fall Harvest Festival for Saturday October 16, 2010 here at Berrybrook. We are very thankful for all the volunteers and generous donations that have already come in. We are excited for our tractor pulled hay ride from O'Connor Landscaping Company as well as new entertainment for the children this year. We are also excited to add a bake sale table.

The BPA plans and coordinates enrichment programs for the children. Prior years' enrichment programs have included visits from musicians, storytellers, a spinner, the Duxbury Maritime School, as well as nutritionists and refresher first aide classes for parents.

As parents of a child enrolled at Berrybrook, you are automatically a member of the BPA. I encourage everyone to join us at the monthly meetings to share your ideas, make suggestions for enrichment programs, and volunteer to help in any way that you can! I can assure you that being involved will enhance your experience at Berrybrook. We have kept the yearly dues fixed at \$30 per family to help support and continue these great traditions at Berrybrook. Please leave a check made to the BPA in the dues basket at school. The money goes straight to paying for the enrichment programs sponsored by the BPA.

To volunteer for the Harvest Festival, please contact Mimi Gallagher at mgallagher_919@comcast.net or Cheryl Kilduff at pilates_guru@yahoo.com. We are currently looking for people to help the day of the event and parents willing to help gather some donations for the event.

We are also working on a parent "Volunteer at Berrybrook Day" to help the teachers with some projects that need some attention before winter. Please keep an eye out for a date and time.

November and December might seem far off, but we have already booked **The Toy Box** in Hanover for a Berrybrook parents only night of shopping, wine and cheese. Save the date of Wednesday November 17 from 7-10 PM.

Our October meeting is scheduled for **Thursday October 21, 2010**.

Soon the BPA will be using email in addition to the newsletter and notices to send information and reminders to parents.

Thank you very much.

Mimi Gallagher, President
Pam Campbell, Vice President
Heather Canty, Secretary
Cheryl Kilduff, Festival Co-Chair

Join us for Parent Discussion Group!

On Tuesday, October 5, at 7:00 pm, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. La Forest and Mrs. O'Neil will hold the first Parent Discussion Group of the year. The discussion will focus on parent participation in Berrybrook environments and how parents can prepare themselves to be effective in the classroom. It will also be a great opportunity to learn more about the Berrybrook philosophy. During the discussion teachers will introduce some successful strategies we use with children.

Plan on coming to the first parent discussion group to learn tried and true techniques for communicating with young children!

Walk With Me

by Cynthia C. Dunn

We carry our babies in the womb; we carry them in our arms; we carry them in slings and back packs. Eventually, our little ones are ready to take their first steps. Instinctively, we bend down with outstretched arms encouraging them to walk to us and praising them for their amazing efforts. They are willing to try, willing to take the risk because they know that we are there to catch them, to scoop them up into the security of our loving arms. And when they fall, we greet their tearstained faces with compassion and support, letting them know that everything will be all right. It is indeed a joyful and memorable moment as we watch our child walk alone for the first time. It is a milestone in their development, For us, it is just the beginning of one of the many challenges we face as parents: finding the balance to keep our arms outstretched in unconditional, loving support and simultaneously allowing our child to walk alone.

The transition from toddler to preschooler is an exciting time. Developmentally, children are learning about themselves. They venture beyond the safety of our arms to explore their world and they begin to recognize their independence. They are now seeing themselves as their own person, separate from their parents. This emerging consciousness began in late infancy. They are independent beings who can do things on their own. And they relish this independence! It's a thrilling, action-packed and tumultuous time. It's a time of great change.

For parents, the preschool years are a time of change and adjustment as well. We relish the memories of those quiet moments when we sat and cuddled our little bundle and rocked away peacefully. We must now shift gears to help our child feel secure in their emerging independence. Not an easy task!

It's a proud day when our children start school for the first time. With this new adventure, we can expect a range of emotions from gleefulness to sadness and anxiety. For many children, this will be their first real separation from home and it is not unusual over the next several weeks to see tears and even fearfulness as you leave them in the morning. Some children may even appear to transition into school smoothly, only to regress months later. This is their period of adjustment. As parents we have some adjusting to do as well. It's not easy to leave them when they are crying and clinging to our arms...the most secure place in the world. It's difficult to see our little ones in distress when our own hearts are unsure too. Yes, beginning school will be a roller coaster ride for all of us, child and parent alike.

We can help to soften this bumpy ride by providing our children with tools for an easier separation and transition into school. Building their confidence is key to helping our children feel secure in themselves and secure in the world. One way to foster independence and accomplishment is to encourage our child to "Walk with me." Some children will not relish this idea at first but our job is to promote and positively reinforce this behavior. By allowing our children to walk into school rather than being carried, sends the message that they are capable and that they have some control over being in school. A simple step indeed, but one with huge rewards.

As parents, our dream is to see our children grow into strong, independent people. A "Walk with me" attitude gives them the support to stand on their own and the knowledge that we are beside them always, with waiting, loving arms to embrace them.

(Mrs. Dunn teaches in the 3 Day Room 1 and 2 Day Room 3 Classes.)

Berrybrook Board of Directors

The following is an email Mrs. Keeley received from a past Berrybrook student who attended Berrybrook in 1966. We often get correspondence or a visit from alumni, and we are delighted to hear about their memories and we are very proud when they compliment the Berrybrook community on continuing Mrs. Mann's vision and legacy. This email is a nice reminder that we are all part of something very special.

Hello Ms Keeley

Last Saturday my sister and I were visiting Massachusetts for a family reunion and both she and I made a quick detour to visit BerryBrook.

We had a delightful time walking around the school, admiring the new building, laughing and talking about our favorite BerryBrook Memories and taking pictures in the rocket ship and the boat.

My favorite memories were carving pumpkins and cooking the seeds, walking down to the pond in the field looking for polywogs, and playing on the old wooden jungle gym. Oh and "mooing" at the Nava's cows in their fields on the way home.

My sister's memories were of the cubbies in the front room of the original building, the songs she learned, and child size bathroom upstairs along with hooks and stickers of birds or flowers marking each one.

We both, along with all our other siblings, have delightful, fond memories of Mr and Mrs Mann, Miss Wheeler, Alec and the old white dog Jane.

BerryBrook was an important part of our childhood, where we all learned to be curious and enjoy learning.

Thank you for faithfully continuing Mrs. Mann's vision and legacy.

Nancy Johnson Tacoma WA (attended BerryBrook in 1966)

and on behalf of my siblings

Debbi Johnson Baltimore MD(1965)

Dean Johnson Everett WA(1963)

Bill Johnson Kent WA(1961)

Ann Johnson Shondelmyer Newport PA (1960)

and in memory of my father Roger Johnson who often said, other than family, his involvement with BerryBrook was what brought him the most joy in his life.

Best wishes to our families for a another memorable school year from the the Board
Mark Longsjo, President

Mint Julep, Thelma and Louise

Mrs. Keeley

Many long time Berrybrook families know Mrs. O'Neil who teaches in our 5 Day morning class. Mrs. O'Neil has been at Berrybrook for over 30 years and is our resident expert on our Berrybrook past as well as local history. She is also our primary resource for the care of plants, animals and all living things. Mrs. O'Neil has often brought damaged plants back to life and has nursed birds and other creatures back to health. For many years Mrs. O'Neil has kept sheep in what we call the "Goat House" which is the small building on the left as you leave the parking lot. When I first started at Berrybrook in 2000, there were three sheep; Mint Julep, Thelma and Louise. The sheep were a big attraction for our students and children and families often got into a routine of stopping by to visit on their way home. The sheep were lovingly cared for by Mrs. O'Neil who never missed bringing them food and water once in the morning and once at night, every single day. Many families have animals as pets and companions and have experienced the joy they add to life, and have also felt the sadness when a beloved animal passes on.

Mint Julep and Louise passed away over the last few years and this past summer, Thelma passed away, which will sadly bring to an end the visits to the Goat House at the end of the day. Because of her care, Mint Julep, Thelma and Louise enjoyed a happy and very long life. They all lived well beyond a typical life span of a sheep. Berrybrook families became very fond of the sheep and will miss stopping by to say hello. I wanted to let parents know about Thelma in case their children ask about the sheep. I feel parents will know the best way to respond to their children. I have a good article at school entitled "When a Pet Passes On" by Alison Landis Stone, that has some good thoughts about coping with a loss of a pet. It is available anytime for families who may experience a loss of their own.

I wanted to thank Mrs. O'Neil for keeping her sheep at Berrybrook where children and families could have the pleasure of observing them, and I wanted to acknowledge the special bond that Mrs. O'Neil had with the sheep. Mint Julep, Thelma and Louise were wonderful companions and we'll miss them.

I Held A Little Lamb

One day when I went visiting,
A little lamb was there,
I picked it up and held it tight,
It didn't seem to care.
Its wool was soft and felt so warm-
Like sunlight on the sand,
And when I gently put it down
It licked me on the hand.

