

December 2016

Wednesday, December 14	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
Thursday, December 15	4 Day Class Holiday Sing-along
Friday, December 16	Beginners, 2 Day, and 5 Day Classes Holiday Sing-alongs
December 19 - January 2	Holiday Break
December 26 - 30	2017-2018 Enrollment Packets mailed
January 3	2017- 2018 Enrollment begins



Notes from the Head of School

In my opinion, last month was a difficult month for parents. My boys are older - almost 12 and 8.5 - and knew quite a bit about the election and the candidates. As a family we had some lively discussions with everyone chiming in with their opinion, and the boys had a lot of questions about the topics also. Regardless of how anyone felt about a situation, we were kind in our responses and treatment of one another. As a parent it was at times hard to enforce that family quality, when the candidates who were running for President weren't so kind to each other. I think no matter your political affiliation, it's safe to say that neither of the candidates were kind to each other. So the question becomes - how do we "teach" our children kindness when they see such poor behavior from those who are hoping to hold the highest office in our country? I have always told my children that my first priority is to keep them safe - that's the biggest responsibility of a parent in my mind. My next job is to raise kind, considerate, productive members of society. They know that I don't need them to be the cutest, smartest, most athletic children. My goal is to know that they are well rounded individuals. My last Parent/Teacher conferences were some of the best ones I have had in my boys' elementary career. I heard that yes, they should probably spend more time on math facts and it would be a good idea not to rush through their work, but both teachers told me how kind and considerate the boys are - and that they get along with everyone in the class. I admit I had some tears in my eyes walking back to the parking lot, and it gave me a much needed at the time confidence boost, that perhaps I was doing an okay job at this parenting thing. This tends to be the time of year where families are looking at opportunities to provide for those less fortunate and who may not be able to provide for their families as we are able to. I challenge you all to carry this sentiment throughout

the whole year - not just donating food at Thanksgiving or toys at Christmas/Hanukkah. Being kind shouldn't occur just when you are looking to gain something - like votes in an election. Being kind shouldn't be something you turn off and on. Being kind shouldn't be something you should have to think about doing - it should just "be" and occur naturally. With so much unrest in today's world, it is more and more important to raise children who are kind to other people. At Berrybrook, we work every single day to promote kindness in the classrooms and among our community. It is just part of the Berrybrook day; teachers model kindness and compassion and the children learn by that model. We know that our goal is to help shape our Berrybrook students into kind, compassionate members of society. Wouldn't it be great if one requirement to run for political office was that you needed to be a Berrybrook alum??

Wishing you a peaceful holiday season ~ *Mrs. Watts*



Holiday Sing-along Schedule

*All classes will be celebrating on their last
day before vacation.*

Please plan on joining us for the festivities.

Beginners Families are invited to join us at 9:00

2 Day Families are invited to join us at 9:00

3 Day Rooms 1 and 3 Families are invited to join us at 9:00

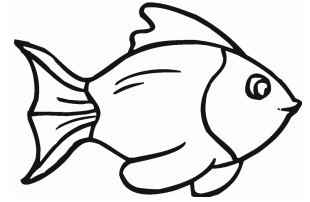
4 Day Families are invited to join us at 1:15

5 Day Families are invited to join us at 10:30

*Each class will finish their sing-along with a special treat,
which will conclude the day.*



Beginners Notes



During the month of November, the Beginners learned about families. As our class bulletin board filled with family pictures, we talked about our homes and the people who live in them. The children love to share what their family looks like, along with looking at their fellow classmates' families too. With Thanksgiving at the end of the month, the Beginners also learned about turkeys and talked about healthy foods that we see in a cornucopia (a fun word to say).

We also are introducing three more students to our classroom by the beginning of December. All of the beginners are adjusting with ease, and getting familiar with new friends being added to our routine. We are excited about our new open enrollment, and are looking forward to our three final new additions in the month of January!

In December, we begin introducing the holiday season with projects such as candles and trees. Music is very popular this month as we add holiday tunes to our repertoire. Our holiday sing - along and gathering will be on Friday, December 16th. That is our final day before we start our holiday break. This is a short get-together when we will share a couple of holiday songs along with some of our favorites. All families are welcomed to join us at 9:00 for merriment and refreshments.

Happy Holidays!

~ *Mrs. Savoy*

Mrs. Savoy teaches in the Beginners and 3 Day classes



Kingston Animal Shelter Donations

November brings an annual Berrybrook Community Service Project started by Mrs. O'Neil many years ago. Families may bring in donations of supplies needed to benefit the Kingston animal shelter. To receive these donations, boxes will be decorated by the children with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals glued onto a colorful background. These boxes will be placed in the lobby and near classroom doors along with "Pennies For The Pound Jars". There will be class discussions about "What is an animal shelter?", "Adoption of pets", and "Being respectful of all living things." It is important for all children to develop empathy and practice kindness. Taking care of pets and other animals is a meaningful way for children to develop these traits.

First Year Project Notes



December is a busy and exciting month for the First Year Program students. The anticipation and demands of the Holidays are everywhere! At Berrybrook we try our best to stay focused on the importance of this time of the year, actually any time of the year. Things we all know are important but occasional get lost in the shuffle - Family, Thankfulness, Giving and our Time.

In keeping with Berrybrook philosophy and the MA Department of Education guidelines we will continue to incorporate many areas of learning through play for your child.

Holiday Tree Project

Language Arts will be achieved through reading the book *“The Littlest Tree”* by Cass Hollander.

Mathematics will be made fun by counting candy canes and ornaments that they will glue on the tree.

Science will be explored through watching glue begin to “hold” their tree together.

Social Studies will take place when this homemade gift is brought home to share with family or a loved one.

Art will be enjoyed by all through the “tree decorating” Holiday sing-along presented by the class to their families on Wednesday, December 14.

The First Year Program teachers wish everyone a safe, healthy and happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year 2017!

~ *Mrs. Delano*

Mrs. Delano teaches in the 3 Day/Room 3 class



Second Year Project Notes

The Seahorse



One of my favorite projects to do with the 4 and 5 Day children is the seahorse. After reading the book Mr. Seahorse, by Eric Carle, we discuss some facts about seahorses that we learn from the book and what the children may already know from their past experiences and discussions with family. This supports language arts skills, giving the children a chance to express themselves and work on memory recall. Our discussion also includes learning in the areas of science as well as social sciences while we discuss seahorses' habitat and their characteristics.

This is one of the many projects that will take the children more than one day to complete. It is time-consuming and the children put a lot of work into creating this sea creature. The first day, students watercolor paint a paper seahorse. This step supports art and creative thinking, planning what color combination to use and how they will apply it on the body. The next day the children choose and cut painted scraps of paper to make spikes on the back of the seahorse. Mathematics is applied as the students count a minimum of five spikes. They are shown how to glue the spikes on the back side of their paper so that the colorful spikes can be seen. In this step, the children are hearing directional words such as 'behind' and 'on top', well as opposites. A cupcake wrapper, the ones often used to serve snack, is cut in half and glued to create a fin. Finally, an eye is glued on the front of the seahorse. The cutting and gluing involved in this final day strengthen children's fine motor skills which is part of health education and development. The process, as well as the product, are an example of the children's daily hard work here at Berrybrook!

~ *Miss McNulty*

Miss McNulty teaches in the 4 Day and 5 Day classes

The Berrybrook Staff would like to thank the Parents Association for arranging snacks for our monthly after-school meetings. Each month we have a 2 hour meeting to discuss curriculum and other matters. These meetings are scheduled from 4:15-6:15 and we appreciate having a snack to fortify us. We are thankful for all of the support and encouragement we receive from parents. It is very thoughtful of parents to take time from their busy schedules to prepare refreshments for us.

Thank You Very Much!!

Parents Association Notes

We hope all of you and your families had a happy Thanksgiving! Please let any member of the BPA know if you have comments, suggestions, or areas where you would like to become more involved! The holiday season is a very busy time of year for everyone and that includes our Berrybrook students and families. There are lots of fun activities and traditions planned at Berrybrook this month for everyone to look forward to.

Thank you to everyone who brought in donations for the Duxbury Interfaith Council! For December, Berrybrook School, along with Wicked Good Cause's Do-Gooders Committee, is happy to announce our 3rd Annual Holiday Gift Drive. Wicked Good Cause is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide support to local families in need. This year we will be partnering up to provide gifts for two local families, five children in all, ranging in age from 1-8. If you are interested in making a child in your community's holiday a little brighter, please take a tag with a gift request from the giving tree found in the lobby of the school. Once you have purchased a gift you can bring the unwrapped gift to school and place it in the drop box. We ask that all gifts be dropped off by December 14th so that we can distribute them to the families. For more information about Wicked Good Cause visit wickedgoodcause.org and please feel free to contact Julie Materna at julieladd@hotmail.com if you have any questions. Thank you so much for your support and happy holidays!

Now that the children are settled in to their new Berrybrook schedule and routines, enrichment activities will begin for all students after the New Year. All classes will now participate in Inspire Kids Yoga. This program consists of monthly sessions with a certified yoga instructor, who will focus on yoga that encourages self-esteem and body awareness. We are also working on additional fun enrichment activities for the children later in the school year.

Thanks to all the families who participated in Claychick Family Art Hour back in November. The children (and parents) seemed to really have fun! The turkey handprints were beautiful!

Also, save Friday, January 6th for some puppet fun at Berrybrook. More details to come. BPA DUES! Thank you to everyone who has already paid their BPA dues! If you have yet to do so, it's not too late! We ask for a \$30 contribution per family, which goes directly toward student enrichment in and out of the classroom. Forms are available at the BPA table. A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation!

Thank you and Happy Holidays,

Jill Cooney & Danielle MacKinnon Co-Presidents berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

From The Board of Directors

Holiday Giving

The holidays are quickly approaching and we are beginning to feel that magic in the air. There is something so special about having little ones at this time of year. Not just for the fun of watching them feverishly opening gifts but the twinkle in their eye when they watch the first snowfall, or their sweet little voices caroling, or the anticipation of baking cookies on a chilly day. This time of year it is also important to remember those that may not be so fortunate to have a warm safe place to create these wonderful memories. It is challenging with children to articulate the struggles of those less fortunate at this young age, however I believe it is instrumental to instill in our children that their lives are blessed but certainly not everyone is as lucky. While protecting them from how hard of a place the world can be, we need to also remind them that we need to do what we can to help others. How do we accomplish this without exposing them to too much? It's easy to write a check to a worthy cause but what do our children learn there? Are they even aware that there is a donation being made?

Rather than giving money to a charity I challenge you to donate your family's time. Choose a charity or facility that is child friendly. If you aren't able to find one that works for your family, have your child choose 10 toys that they can donate. In our home, we explain that those toys they selected are going to another child who needs them. There are many charities that will provide a shopping list for a child or family in need. Bring your kids with you to pick up the items on the list reminding them why you're doing this while you're out and about shopping.

Many organizations have meal programs that you could donate your time to. If they don't permit children, lead by example. Tell them what you're doing and ask that they make centerpieces for the tables to cheer up folks. Make holiday cards that you can hand out to patrons. While these acts may seem small, the value to the recipient of your family's good deeds is immeasurable.

You can find more ideas for charitable giving and volunteering with your children at:

projectgivingkids.org

birthdaywishes.org

<https://mommypoppins.com/bostonkids/volunteering-with-kids-and-families-in-boston>

Happy Holidays from the Berrybrook Board of Directors!

Amy Goldberg

Secretary, Berrybrook Board of Directors

Colder weather is on its way...

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Public Schools** are closed due to weather emergencies. Please watch 7NEWS (NBC) for cancellation notices. Parents may call the school to check the voice mail message if they are unsure about a snow cancellation. As the weather changes, be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play, including the Nook. Now is a good time to locate all hats, mittens, gloves, and warm jackets that will be necessary as we head into December. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers, or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom. **Please remember to label all clothing.**



NOOK NEWS



Our school family has been enjoying The Nook at Berrybrook in new ways this past month. First year classes look forward to their visits. The children become excited while getting their coats on; making plans with friends about what they will do. Sounds of running, jumping and laughter rise up with the melodies created on the Marimba and Akambira. They are making discoveries while enjoying the sounds of nature.

Second year classes have been exploring, measuring, and predicting. The main focus of the Nook is active child-based learning. Children are leading the course of discussions. One of the skills teachers are actively encouraging is being observant of details. We encourage children to label what they see, make a hypothesis about what is happening and what the outcome might be. They then have the opportunity to reproduce these ideas on paper.

We have MANY budding scientists and naturalist! The children are bringing these skills into many parts of the Berrybrook day. It is so exciting to hear a child transfer the knowledge gained outdoors to the classroom when they make connections.

We are adding materials and equipment as the school year progresses. We now have tables for artwork and building with small items. We look forward to using a wonderful new water table in the spring. Real red clay bricks add a new component to the building area where the children are using them in very creative ways. All classes will have an opportunity to plant Narcissus (daffodil) bulbs in the NOOK. We look forward to watching them bloom in the spring.

Five Day worked on a Locust Tree seedpod project one day. Creating these shakers outdoors in the lovely fall sunshine, beneath trees which have stood on the school property for years made me feel connected to the past. Native peoples, as well as cultures all over the world have used these seedpods to make music for hundreds of years. Children were relaxed, working so carefully and expressively during that activity. Perhaps they were feeling connected as well. One of the things teachers are noticing while learning in the NOOK is enhanced attention spans. This beneficial byproduct of outdoor learning seems to be helping children settle, focus and express themselves more confidently.

The children attending Lunch Bunch Program also visit the NOOK. This time before eating together has been a great time for them.

Please remember we welcome families to visit the NOOK while school is not in session, so come down and enjoy. Just please remember to bring your trash with you when you leave.

Also, please remember to dress for the weather - layers are a great way. When it feels warm in the parking lot, the NOOK often feels much colder. Rain and snow are wonderful ways to explore in nature. The teachers will be taking full advantage of these opportunities as the seasons change.

MRS. DUNN - Nook Coordinator