

# BERRYBROOK NEWS

November, 2008

- Wednesday, November 5      BPA meeting 9:30 am
- Tuesday, November 11      Veteran's Day, No School
- Thursday, November 13      4 & 5 Day visit Plimoth Plantation  
Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm
- Monday, November 17      Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- November 26, 27, 28      Thanksgiving Break, No School

## *Notes from the Headmaster*

I would like to congratulate the Berrybrook Parent's Association on the wonderful Fall Festival held on October 18<sup>th</sup>. The event reflected all the values important to our Berrybrook community. Team work, generosity, caring and fun were the characteristics of the day. BPA president Tammy Kirk, and the many volunteers who helped create the festivities had every detail under control. The crafts and games were age appropriate and the music by the *Resonators* was just right. Hay rides at Berrybrook are always special and this year was no exception. Our grounds never looked more lovely and inviting due to the work of Berrybrook parents. The complimentary snacks were healthy and filling and the refreshments for sale complimented the cool fall day. Tassia Russell deserves a special mention for single handedly painting a special design on every little face and thank you to her son Jack who waited patiently for his turn at the very end. Mothers and fathers who volunteered to make the festival happen worked hard to make sure all of the children attending the festival were safe, happy and engaged. The event really brought out the best in all of us and demonstrated what we can achieve when we work together. The Berrybrook Parent's Association is a strong organization that combines the enthusiasm of new parents and the experience of seasoned ones. I think that Katharine Mann, our founder would be very proud of the BPA and its sustained support of the school and I know she would have enjoyed the Fall Festival as much as I did. Keep up the good work.

*Pat Keeley*

## *2 & 3 Day Activities*

The month of October began with the important subject of fire safety. The children were able to try out real equipment and learn about “emergency evacuations”, which are practiced monthly at Berrybrook. We even had a visit from the Duxbury Fire Department which came complete with a ladder truck. The next week we focused on the beautiful autumn world around us; taking nature walks and working with acorns and leaves. For the last two weeks we were involved in a lot of orange activities – pumpkins, making fresh orange juice and collages. As Halloween approached we read stories about the holiday and made special treats for our celebrations.

As November progresses, we will be working with wood. The children will be creating unique structures and painting them, as well as working with tools that are necessary for building. Then we will turn our attention towards Thanksgiving. November is a natural time to talk with children about being thankful for family, friends, and the abundance of good things nature provides. Children will be making seasonal favorites including bead necklaces and turkeys and each class will arrange a Thanksgiving observance appropriate for their group. How fast the year is already speeding along, it is amazing to see how quickly the children have made Berrybrook their own.

Fall Parent Conferences have started and will continue through the month of November. The meetings are a wonderful opportunity for teachers and parents to share information and to

make plans for the best possible experience at Berrybrook. During the conference teachers will share observations of your child and touch on specific areas of development.



## *4 & 5 Day Activities*

The 4 and 5 Day classes have been learning about shoes. We talked about the history of shoe making and the children were able to see and touch different kinds of shoes and shoe making tools. We hope that you have enjoyed seeing our display on the table outside the office. The following is a chant that the children enjoy reciting:

### **Cobbler**

There's a cobbler down the street,  
Mending shoes for little feet.  
With a bang and a bang  
And a bang, bang, bang.  
With a bang and a bang  
And a bang, bang, bang.

Mending shoes the whole day long,  
Mending shoes to make them strong.  
With a bang and a bang  
And a bang, bang, bang.  
With a bang and a bang  
And a bang, bang, bang.

In October, the children enjoyed working on Halloween projects. We also talked about changing seasons, apples, pumpkins, spiders and bats. We learned about pretend and real with visits from the Bones family and by participating in a Halloween play based on the book "*The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid Of Anything*," by Linda Williams. We ended the month of October with pizza made by the children!

In November the children will be learning about Pilgrims and Wompanoags. We will visit Plimoth Plantation on Thursday, November 13.<sup>th</sup> where the children can get a glimpse of everyday life in 1627. What kind of homes did they live in? What did they eat and how did they cook it? What did they wear? How about their shoes? Did the children go to school? What did they do for fun? This experience helps the children begin to understand our local history.

When we visit the Plantation, we ask the children to please refer to the Wompanoags as Native People and to ask relevant questions, as they are often direct descendants of the Wompanoag tribes. We explain to the children that the people in the village are pretending to be Pilgrims. These people have studied very hard to learn all about the Pilgrims they are portraying. They will answer our questions as if they were living in 1627.

When we return to Berrybrook we will have discussions about what we saw on our trip and participate in activities which will help to summarize all that we have learned.

Throughout November we will be talking about family traditions and what it means to be thankful.

Just before our Thanksgiving Holiday break, the children will participate in baking and preparing a special snack to share together on Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, including freshly made butter. The children chant these words when shaking the cream into butter.

Shake, shake, shake the cream,  
Shake and make it flutter.  
Shake, shake, shake the cream,  
And turn it into butter.

## *Facts about Pilgrim Children*

Children in 1600s New England had to work hard. Their chores included: fetching water from the brook or spring, gathering fire wood, herding animals, gathering berries and other wild plants, and helping their parents cook, clean, preserve food, plant and harvest crops, and care for younger children.

Children were expected to show courtesy to adults, including their parents, by bowing and curtsying to them.

Both girls and boys in 1600s England and New England wore Gowns (dresses) until they were seven years old.

Children often slept on mattresses that were laid on the floor at night. The mattresses were usually stuffed with straw. Some children slept in their parent's bed.

Children and adults probably only took baths a few times a year. They thought bathing was unhealthy.

## *Berrybrook Outdoors*

This month, the outdoor temperature will start to drop. Please remember to dress children ready for outdoor play. We plan on going outside every day. Warm layers are a good idea, so children can remove clothing if they get too hot. The weather changes so rapidly in New England, children should have hats and mittens available. Also, it is a good idea to check your child's change of clothing at school. Clothing dropped off in September may not be a good match for November weather!

After mother nature sent a hard frost teachers stopped applying insect repellent. Repellent will still be available at school if parents would like to apply it to their own children. We will inform parents in the spring if insect repellent once again becomes part of our routine.

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## *Community Service*

With Thanksgiving approaching and the start of the holiday season, the Berrybrook community puts emphasis on helping others.

For the last 7 years, children in the 4 & 5 Day classes have coordinated donations for the animals at the Kingston Animal Shelter. Starting this month, all Berrybrook children may bring in donations for the animals and place them in the decorated boxes in our lobby. Mrs O'Neil has spoken to the shelter to find out what items the animals really need. If you could donate just one of these items it would be greatly appreciated.

## 2008 ANIMAL SHELTER WISH LIST

- Litter, Litter & More Litter
- Purina Kitten Chow
- Canned Cat Food  
(Small 6 oz. cans, (not beef)  
No diced or sliced, they don't like it)
- Baby Food (chicken/turkey)
- Dog biscuits
- Leashes
- Paper Towels
- Laundry Soap
- Q-Tips
- Palmolive anti-bacteria dish soap

Also at the shelter, the animal care fund assumes medical expenses for the cats and dogs. At Berrybrook we are collecting only pennies to help the animals. We call it, "Pennies for the Pound." There will be jars outside the office for the pennies.



### *Parent Discussion Group*

In response to our questionnaire from the first Parent Discussion Group the next meeting will focus on....

### ***"Problem Solving, Responsibility and Independence"***

Please plan on joining Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. La Forest and other parents for an open discussion on Thursday evening, November 13 at 7:00 pm

# *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 parent/teacher 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 or her own person, with unique strengths, weaknesses and attributes.

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

Plan on having both parents attend the conference.

Tell your child in advance about this time for the teacher and parents to talk.

Prepare in advance your thoughts, questions or concerns. Alert the teacher in advance about a particular topic or concern you wish to discuss. Bring in and/or take notes.

Follow-up with teachers on any agreed upon school/home approaches.

Follow up with your child with an age appropriate discussion about the conference.

## *Remember*

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

Stay focused on the child. A child's well being and strengths are most comfortable to discuss. Conference time provides an opportunity to address any areas of concern. Through open communication a strategy can be agreed upon. Children respond best when they receive similar responses in both their school and home environments.

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

Parent/Teacher Conferences is time well spent!

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

## *Berrybrook Board of Directors*

Halloween is over and for many parents the holiday stress is here. It is hard for families to balance the demands of the season. There are gifts to buy, foods to prepare, holiday events to attend, volunteer opportunities at every turn, and we still have to do the laundry, go to work, feed the family and clean the house. We all take on additional responsibilities and stresses during this time of year. I thought it was appropriate to take a moment before the craziness begins and remind everyone in the Berrybrook community that we have so much to be thankful for.

Berrybrook families send our children to school where they have the comfort of routine and the stimulation of exciting new projects. The children come through the doors of Berrybrook and into the capable hands of our teachers. The staff here at Berrybrook have mastered the art of staying calm and diffusing stress for our children. They comfort children when they are sad and most importantly, they empower children to find their own solutions to conflict. We have all heard a Berrybrook teacher ask a child "Did you tell the other child how that made you feel?" Our children are learning to calmly handle conflict and are taught the skills they will use all their lives to cope in a stressful world. I am thankful that Berrybrook has such a talented group of teachers and staff.

I am also thankful for the community of Duxbury that recently purchased a portion of Berrybrook's property for conservation land. When I pick-up my son from the playground, I look out over the beautiful open fields that will remain protected for generations to come. We take for granted that there are beautiful vistas in our coastal communities but what we have at Berrybrook is a view that is getting harder to find in many areas of our state. Both the school and the townspeople have placed a priority on protecting these spaces for our children. Take a moment and look around you when you are at Berrybrook, there are beautiful natural areas everywhere.

Finally, I am thankful for the Berrybrook community of families. Our greatest resource is the capable, caring parents around us. When the stress of the season hits hard, lean on one another. Ask for help with a carpool, offer to host a play date, prepare an extra dinner and share it with a friend. There are resources within our community. Sometimes all we have to do is ask for help. Berrybrook is a unique school with so many wonderful things to be thankful for. Take a deep breath this holiday season and remind yourself that we have this special place.

*Betsy Davenport*

### *Thank you*

We'd like to thank all those who have already contributed to the 2008 Annual Appeal. For the past four years, *every dollar* raised in our Annual Appeal campaign has gone directly into **The Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund**. This fund was created to assist children who otherwise may not have the opportunity to start, or continue on at Berrybrook. Donations to the 2008-2009 Annual Appeal are welcome any time during the school year. Donation envelopes can be found in the lobby. On behalf of those whom your generosity touches, Thank you.

*The Berrybrook Development Committee*

## *Berrybrookschool.org*

As much as the Berrybrook curriculum honors traditions and simple activities, the business side of Berrybrook strives to keep up with the technologies that modern parents of young children use to obtain information. In 2000, Berrybrook had its first contact with the World Wide Web. In 2005, a Berrybrook website was introduced – [berrybrookschool.com](http://berrybrookschool.com).

Starting November 1, 2008, **[berrybrookschool.org](http://berrybrookschool.org)** will be the new and improved website representing our school. For the past several weeks, the parents of Ethan Monroe in the 5 Day Class have been volunteering to help with the new site. Derek and Sherry Monroe have put in a great deal of work registering the domain name, choosing a hosting site and designing the format. As current Berrybrook parents, the Monroes have a good understanding of our school, and their understanding of what parents want to see on the web site has been invaluable. When you have a chance, take a look. We would welcome any feedback.

Derek and Sherry are two of so many talented parents in our community. Thank you to the Monroes and to all of the generous parents to contribute in so many ways to our school.

*Pat Keeley*

## *Professional Development*

Berrybrook has a wonderful combination of teachers who are eager to learn and a board who values professional development. The board provides the time and funding for teachers to build skills and this professional environment helps to maintain a quality early childhood program for our children.

During our first Professional Development Day on Friday October 24, we had an early breakfast meeting with the Personnel Committee of the Board. At 9:00 we started a 3 hour training by Christine Haak from the Duxbury Emergency Management Agency. The training included information regarding any alert or accident at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant and the procedures in place for such an emergency including notification of schools and families, sheltering in place procedures, and evacuation to our host school, Braintree High. After lunch we discussed our Department of Early Education and Care re-licensing which will happen in January, and the remainder of the afternoon was spent working on classroom portfolios which are part of the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) re-accreditation process.

In addition to the 3 professional development days during the school year, the Board provides 2 extra hours of planning time for teachers each month. The extra time is extremely productive and the wonderful results of those meetings will have a positive effect on the quality of the program we offer children and parents.

The professional development of Berrybrook teachers and staff extends to the larger community. Seven staff attended a presentation on October 28<sup>th</sup> by Lynne Reeves Griffin author of “*The Negotiation Generation*” at the Duxbury Performing Arts Center. Berrybrook teachers stay current with new ideas and the issues parents of young children are facing.

We appreciate the support of Berrybrook parents and will keep you up to date with additional professional development efforts.

## *Berrybrook Parent's Association*

Happy Fall! We now seem to be in the swing of the Berrybrook routine as children settle into their classes and enjoy making new friends and continuing to play with old friends. The Fall Festival proved to be an amazing kick-off event for the new school house with over 300 attendees. The beautiful foliage, brisk weather (and thankfully no rain!), hay ride, blue grass band, fun games/crafts, popular face painting, great food, and the gathering of friends & family all made for a perfect setting for our fall celebration!

Again, I wanted to extend my gratitude to all the volunteers, participants, and sponsors for a terrific Fall Festival! The Bizzozero family deserves high praises for sponsoring our Hayride, as well as the Zaniboni and Monroe family for co-sponsoring the live band! Tassia Russell's face painting was a great hit with all the children and very much appreciated. We also are thankful to all the families who assisted in setting up, decorating, grilling and serving food, working on crafts, donating cider and popcorn, and cleaning up after the event.

Now starting in November, we will finalize plans for our classroom children's enrichment programs, parents' enrichment programs, fundraising efforts, community outreach, and the first educational communitywide event. Our top priorities will be discussing our holiday outreach programs and our participation in the Festival of Trees. As supplies are alarmingly low at the Pilgrim Hope Shelter, we will be putting out a box early this year to start of collection. Please watch for a posted list of recommended donations this week! In addition, another big community event approaching quickly is the Festival of Trees, which benefits Cranberry Hospice,

at Plimouth Plantation. Mark your calendars for December 5th through December 7th, 2008. Thank you to Becki Bizzozero for heading up this ([bizzozero@yahoo.com](mailto:bizzozero@yahoo.com)) this venture. As mentioned in my e-mail last week, we are hoping to recruit volunteers to work on the gate ornaments (quick and easy project), which will then be decorated differently by each class room. **Hope to see you at the November 5<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am meeting!** Also, a sign-up sheet will be on the BPA table for the actual tree decorating on December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 3-7 pm at Plimouth Plantation.

During our meeting, we will also be discussing our Holiday Children's Tea Party and the launch event for our BPA sponsored library. Children are welcome to accompany you and play in the main meeting room. If you are able to help in any capacity, we welcome and appreciate your help. Again, we are grateful for those families who have already made donations for BPA dues. We are hoping to make our final collection by November 15<sup>th</sup> in order to properly schedule our children's enrichment programs for the year! Dues can be left in the basket on the BPA table.

Finally, our family directory is coming out of the printers and will be in your cubbies next week. We hope you will get involved in the Berrybrook community and help to make this year in our new schoolhouse an unforgettable one!

Warm Regards,  
Tammy Kirk, BPA President

