

# BERRYBROOK NEWS

*March, 2010*

***March winds and April showers  
Bring forth May flowers***

*- Mother Goose*

**Friday, March 5**

**KidsArt orders due!**

**Friday March 12**

(rescheduled from March 10)

**Professional Day for Teachers,  
No School**

**Friday, March 19**

**Enrollment Forms Due**

**Tuesday, March 23**

**BPA meeting 7:00pm**

**Wednesday, March 31**

**Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:30 pm**

## *Notes from the Headmaster*

Since 1954, Berrybrook School has had hundreds, perhaps thousands of children, parents, teachers, directors and board members who have contributed to its success. One of our greatest contributors was a very special person who had a long career in early childhood and all of it was at Berrybrook School. From 1959 – 1982, Jinny Dunmore worked with Berrybrook's founder, Katharine Mann and served as teacher, assistant director and director. When I learned that Mrs. Dunmore had passed away on February 20, I knew I wanted to share with all of you what I loved about her.

When I first started at Berrybrook in 2000, Mrs. Dunmore would often come by the school to visit. I looked forward to her visits because she always brought special things for the children to use, and usually an interesting article about early childhood education to share with the staff. I enjoyed talking with Jinny because of her years of experience and because she had walked in my shoes. Being the director of a preschool is very rewarding, but also very challenging and because Mrs. Dunmore had many years pass since she was directly responsible for Berrybrook, she was able to give me a perspective about my job that was very helpful to me. She knew I worried about taking care of Berrybrook children and their families, but she reminded me that Berrybrook was founded by Mrs. Mann as a "family" school, and that meant I had lots of support. And I do.

Berrybrook has wonderful teachers working hard to make sure children learn the lessons they need to be happy and successful, a board of directors to provide all the resources and tools the teachers need, and families who are supportive and thoughtful and contribute so much to the success and well being of Berrybrook School.

In my talks with Jinny, it became clear that although some things today are different than they were during her tenure, the essence of the Berrybrook philosophy and values remain. With our move to a new building, children still have cozy classrooms. The wide open fields have given way to playground fencing, but children still enjoy lots of outdoor play in a beautiful environment. Our families arrive in SUV's instead of station wagons but still know that it is "safety first" in the parking lot. Today, digital cameras capture unforgettable memories just as moving as the black and white photographs taken with a Brownie camera. Many classroom activities began years ago are now Berrybrook traditions incorporated into a curriculum supported by contemporary standards of best practice. Except for modern clothing and hairstyles, Berrybrook teachers have not changed. Our teachers possess the same standards of training, experience, commitment and caring set by Katharine Mann and Jinny Dunmore.

All of us at Berrybrook today benefit from the contributions Mrs. Dunmore made to our school. I am especially lucky to have had the benefit of her experience and her encouragement. I hope I can serve Berrybrook with as much love and grace.

*Pat Keeley*

### **Mary V. "Jinny" Dunmore**



Mary Virginia "Jinny" Cattell Dunmore, of Duxbury, died Feb. 20, after a long battle with Alzheimers disease. She was 83 years old. She leaves behind her husband of 60 years, Arthur C. "Bill" Dunmore of Duxbury; three children, Nancy Reed of Duxbury, Douglas Dunmore of Plymouth and the late Kenneth Dunmore of Barrington, Ill.; and seven grandchildren. Jinny grew up in Newton, graduated from Smith College and moved to Duxbury to raise her family. She was a preschool teacher/director at Berrybrook School for 22 years. She loved building confidence in young children and developed a program at Berrybrook integrating nature study and music. Jinny was involved with Duxbury Conservation Commission and Historical Society, was an avid square dancer, sailor, gardener and pianist. She wrote and published two books, *The Cutting Edge*, about her famous surgeon father Dr. Richard B. Cattell and a book about the first 25 years of Berrybrook School. A memorial service will be held in the spring. Please donate in her name to the Alzheimers Foundaton, [www.alz.org/join\\_the\\_cause\\_donate.asp](http://www.alz.org/join_the_cause_donate.asp). To offer condolences, please visit [www.shepherdfuneralhome.com](http://www.shepherdfuneralhome.com). Shepherd Funeral Home, Kingston.

## *2 & 3 Day Classroom Activities*

The month of February flew by. The classrooms were full of pink and red hearts, and led to many conversations about feelings. Making friends and working through conflicts are such important skills to learn, the teachers used this month to read books and have group discussions about friendships and working out problems. The classes enjoyed a delicious Valentine snack and worked diligently to pass out special valentines to all their classmates. We also had our first field trip - the post office! An opportunity for them to mail a handmade valentine to their family.

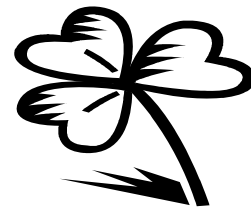
The week back after vacation, the classes were learning about bears. Bear caves and masks were some of the projects that were made. Other activities that were enjoyed by the various classes included a teddy bear picnic, bear obstacle course, and a bear hunt.

Looking ahead to March, it will be another busy month. We will be celebrating Dr. Seuss, learning about dinosaurs, and about all forms of transportation. We will be looking forward to our next field trip - the grocery store. The students will get the opportunity to enjoy a tour of the store. We also will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day and painting blown eggs – a project that we will need your help with!

March is also the time to have a second parent-teacher conference, so please be on the lookout for sign-

up sheets. Teachers are amazed at how much the children have grown since the fall conferences and are eager to share all of the wonderful developments.

You have brains in your head  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself  
Any direction you choose  
~Dr. Seuss



## *4 & 5 Day Classroom Activities*

The month of March will be filled with many exciting activities for the 4 and 5 day students. We will be continuing our study of birds. Children will look for bird tracks outdoors.

St. Patrick's Day will be celebrated with music, dance and art projects. The children will explore the color green, learn some facts about Ireland and on the 17<sup>th</sup> enjoy Irish Soda bread for snack.

Although winter is winding down the playground is still windy and chilly. Please continue to send winter clothing (jackets, snow pants, boots, mittens and hats) so that the children can stay warm while participating in outdoor activities. On March 20<sup>th</sup> spring will finally arrive. The children will be observing the change in the

trees and will be watching for some signs of nature growing from the ground. One sure sign of spring is the arrival of the American Robin. The following is a special song that we sing and sign when we see them bob bob bobbin' along.

***When The Red, Red Robin Comes Bob, Bob Bobbin' Along***

When the red, red robin comes  
bob, bob bobbin' along, along.  
There'll be no more sobbin' when  
He starts throbbin' his old,  
Sweet song.

Wake up, wake up you sleepy head.  
Get up, get up, get out of bed.  
Cheer up, cheer up the sun is red.  
Live, love, laugh and be happy.

What if I've been blue,  
Now I'm walking through  
Fields of flowers.  
Rain may glisten but still I listen  
For hours and hours.

I'm just a kid again,  
Doin' what I did again.  
Singin' a song.  
When the red, red robin comes  
bob, bob bobbin' along.

When the nights are cold and the days begin to warm up above freezing the Maple Trees will be ready for tapping. Buckets will be attached to the trees to collect the sap, which will then be boiled down to make delicious syrup. At the end of our busy month, after enough sap has turned into syrup, the children will enjoy a special treat with a sugar on snow party.

**Reminder from the  
4 & 5 Day Classes!**

Daylight saving time begins on  
March 14<sup>th</sup> at 2:00am (EST)



Check for the full moon this month  
on the 30<sup>th</sup>

***Parking Lot Safety***

Please remember that the parking lot gets busy at drop off and pick up. Thank you for parking in marked spaces and leaving spaces closest to school for families with infants.

- Turn engines off.
- Bring siblings with you.
- Hold hands in the parking lot.
- Lock the gate behind you.
- Supervise your children once you have signed out.
- Children must never be left unattended in cars

**Thank you!**

The Berrybrook staff would like to thank the BPA for arranging snacks for us at our monthly after school meetings. It is so thoughtful and so appreciated! We are grateful to all of the parents who have contributed the delicious food that keeps us going until 6 o'clock!

## *Parent's Association*

We hope that everyone had a fun and relaxing February break. The month of February flew by and we now look forward to longer days and hopefully warmer weather!

During the month of February, we kicked off the **BPA fundraiser**. This year we chose KidsArt Inc. where children have the opportunity to design their own stationary, stickers, and notepads! We have extended our deadline! All orders should be returned by **Friday, March 5**. Please remember that all drawings should be done in marker only and that each card will need its own order form. Extra forms and cards are available at the BPA table. Thanks in advance to all the families who participated in this event. The proceeds from this fundraiser will help fund the enrichment programs for our children.

During the month of March, Hop, Skip, Jump (a Berrybrook favorite) and storyteller Lady Laura come to visit. Some of you may have seen Lady Laura perform during Holly Days in Duxbury. As the month comes to a close, Jennie Mulqueen, director of Metro Music Together will visit the classrooms. In April, we look forward to the wool spinner and Bonnie the Snake Lady coming.

Please save the date for the BPA's annual **Spring Fling**. It is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>** with a rain date of Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. This event is held in the late afternoon and is a free family event!

Thanks to all who attended last month's BPA meeting. Our next **BPA meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, March 23 at 7pm**. Please join us to get involved in the planning of the BPA's Spring Fling as well as the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon scheduled for June.

Jane Redman,  
BPA President

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## *Tag Sale Cancellation*

The Berrybrook Tag Sale, originally scheduled for March, will be canceled. The decision was made after discussing concerns about recalled products. A new law, the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, holds resellers responsible for assessing all items and ensuring their safety. Although all necessary steps would have been taken to remove harmful items from the sale, the Berrybrook Board of Directors feels the risk is too great that an item could slip by us and end up in the hands of a child – potentially causing harm.

Families who have already graciously donated items are invited to pick up your items if you wish to do so. Items that have not been retrieved will be donated to the Pilgrim Area Coalition for the Homeless. A trained representative of the Coalition will assess each item and accept the safe donations on the morning of Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Unsafe items will be disposed of. Tax deduction forms will be made available to all who have donated.

We appreciate your generosity and apologize for the inconvenience.

The Berrybrook Board of Directors

## *Berrybrook Board of Directors*

### **Sometimes a “Winter’s Day”**

Sometimes a “winter day” is just another really cold day. Let’s be honest, winters are often long and challenging when you have young children housebound for 3-4 days in a row. Sniffles turn into late night coughing fits, Matchbox games turn into squabbles (squabbles turn into crying), toys that used to be “awesome” are now “boring”, and even the old standby children’s shows turn monotonous. It’s winter. And sometimes winter days are like that.

But sometimes a “winter day” can be a really helpful and powerful reminder of what is beautiful and wonderful about childhood. It can be a tool to help us remember and re-live certain things about life you can only know as a child. A winter’s day can be transformative. It can take us back to a special place or time. A winter’s day, if even for a moment, can let us glimpse the world through a child’s eyes. And that is a rich and cherished gift – yet a gift so simple – that I am often guilty of overlooking it.

As an example, during this past week’s school vacation, we took our family skiing. As I went up the chairlift with my 3 year-old son (who continued to refer to it as the elevator), I realized something...this must seem like magic to him. As we road up he scoured the trees for animals, he watched the skiers zig-zag below, and he looked off in the distance at the other mountains jutting up along the skyline. He was entranced. I suddenly realized that I was briefly, and somewhat vicariously, experiencing things with the same innocence and purity that you can only feel when you’re a child.

Similarly, I watched my 5 and 7 year-olds ski by themselves for the first time. My 7 year old carved turns as he cautiously made his way down the mountain; in control the entire way. My 5 year old rejoiced with pirate calls as he sped down the mountain, full steam ahead, not always in control, but enjoying the thrill of the speed. I actually felt the same pride and exhilaration that they displayed on their faces as they ‘conquered the mountain’. I was seeing and feeling their experience and loving every moment of it.

Later, we played soccer in the snow because my 7 year old loves the sport so much. “Why can’t we play in the snow?” He asked. I didn’t have an answer, so we played. It turned out to be one of our most memorable soccer games yet. The snow presented its own challenges and really added to the complexity of the game. As each boy scored a goal, the jubilation and pride was so contagious you just had to smile and laugh. It was my 7 year old who challenged us to ‘step out of the norm’ and we were all rewarded for that.

This past week offered me a chance to remember that each day is an opportunity to take a step back from the chaos and take an earnest look at the world through my children’s eyes. That sometimes, just sometimes, if I look past the laundry, the groceries, the fighting, the crying, and (fill in the blank here), a “winter’s day” can be a special “moment”. I just need to remind myself to embrace these precious opportunities.

*Christina Rouleau, Berrybrook Board of Directors*

## *Berrybrook Board of Directors II*

*(In last month's newsletter, the following article was printed, but its author's name was inadvertently omitted. Please enjoy this reprint. The message is definitely worth repeating!- Mrs. Keeley)*

"Can you love me as I am or will socks keep us apart?" This quote is from one of my favorite parenting books and it seems particularly relevant in the cold winter months. As we struggle to make sure that our preschoolers are appropriately dressed for the weather we are bound to hit an obstacle or two. For some children it is the "puffiness" of their coat, others an itchy tag, and for many it is the wrinkle in their sock that can ruin their day. At some time or another you have probably been late for school, work, or play dates because of a wardrobe dilemma.

The quote comes from the book "Raising your Spirited Child" by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka. When I read it for the first time, I thought the author had a spy camera in my house and that she had witnessed some of my family dilemmas. It is a guide for parents whose child is more intense, sensitive, perceptive, persistent, and energetic. The quote is from a story about a father and son who are performing their daily ritual of checking the child's sock for wrinkles, lint, and any loose thread. The father was impatient and frustrated with the child and yelled at the child to get his socks on "right now!" The child did not respond with anger but rather stated that he **needed** his Daddy's help. Can we love our children without condition? Getting dressed can be a challenge not because the child wants to be stubborn and uncooperative but because of their temperament and sensitivities. The author has some great suggestions for predicting dilemmas, organizing the setting so that there are minimal distractions, limiting the child's choices, and working together to avoid power struggles.

The author also has a wonderful chapter on labeling the characteristics of children so that they are positive rather than negative. The boy with the sock dilemma can be described as demanding, stubborn, and picky OR he can be described as a child who holds high standards, persists in the face of obstacles, and is selective. We can all teach ourselves to use new labels when we talk about our kids. When we hold positive thoughts it changes our behavior. The same qualities that often frustrate us as parents of young children are the same traits that will propel our children into successful adult lives.

Check it out the next time you are faced with a wrinkled sock, a twisted strap, an itchy hat, or a tight turtleneck..... Happy Winter!

*Betsy Davenport, Berrybrook Board of Directors*

## *A springtime Tradition*



Painting “blown eggs” is a spring tradition at Berrybrook. Children have been creating these beautiful works of art for many years. It is a precious project that requires help from families. Classrooms need “blown eggs.”

If you are interested in donating a few eggs (brown or white) that you have “blown” at home we would appreciate it very much. It is tricky but easy to do. Simply poke a hole in both ends of the egg. A turkey skewer or push pin work well. Each hole should be about the size of a paper punch hole. If you break the yoke it is easier to blow. Blow into one hole and the egg comes out the other. Please rinse egg shell inside and out. Berrybrook teachers will spray the eggs with a bleach solution before children paint them.

Experienced Berrybook parents will tell new parents that the end result is worth the effort. **Please bring eggs into school by Monday, March 22nd**

**Thank you!**

## *Parents Discussion Group*

The **February discussion "Are You Helping Your Child to Become Helpless"** was held Thursday, February 25th. We discussed concerns and strategies for dealing with our challenges as parents and teachers. We touched on appropriate ways to work with children regarding, getting dressed, solving conflicts, appropriate expectations from children, validating needs, eating healthy, making choices, setting limits, showing respect, playground behavior, etc. We also recognized the adults responsibility to be consistent, flexible, and understanding.

The **March discussion "Defiant Behavior in Children"** is scheduled for Thursday, March 18th. We have received numerous requests to address this topic. We welcome your questions and input. Please join us.

Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. LaForest and Mrs. Delano



## *Sitting Pretty*

by Babbie Swan

One important component of teaching at Berrybrook is observation of the children. Teachers observe how children work, play, interact, move, stand, and sit. Believe it or not, there is a lot going on in their bodies when children are just sitting! When their legs are crossed in front of them, or when their legs are straight out in front of them while sitting, they are developing abdominal and trunk control. While sitting in these positions children also have to maintain balance, and will be building on their skills for reaching across the body (mid-line crossing). These skills are needed for developing fine motor skills, and even hand dominance and hand preference.

One sitting position that should be avoided by children is the “W” sit. This occurs when a child sits with the thighs forward, rotating at the knee towards the back, creating a “W.” Using this position during the growing years can lead to problems with posture, hips rotating forward, or hip dislocation. When children W sit their muscles don’t need to work at all. They play with the toys in front of them. Pick up toys on their right with their right hand, and toys on their left with their left hand. In doing so, they may not develop hand preference.

At Berrybrook, teachers let the children know that they may sit however they want as long as their feet are in front of them. Or teachers may say “Crisscross applesauce!” as a rhyming reminder to have their legs in front of them while sitting. At home, parents can help prevent the W sit from becoming a habit. They could remind children to “fix your legs” or come up with their own rhymes.

Another muscle inclusive posture to encourage at home is the “superman” or “superwoman” position. If children are doing puzzles or listening to or reading books, children can lie prone on the floor and then come up on their elbows. This position engages the muscles in the hamstrings, spine, trunk, hips and helps with balance.

It is obvious that three, four and five year olds are working hard when they are creating masterpieces or running on the playground, or mastering the outdoor climbing structures, or pumping hard on swings. It is important to remember that children’s bodies are working hard even when they are sitting or lying still.

*(Mrs. Swan teaches in the 4 Room 2 Day Class)*