

December 2013

Thursday, December 5	BPA Shopping at Rock, Paper, Scissors
Wednesday, December 18	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
Thursday, December 19	4 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
Friday, December 20	Beginners, 2 Day & 5 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
December 23 - January 3	Holiday Break
Monday, January 6	2014-2015 Enrollment begins



Notes from the Head of School

“Do you know what saying you’re sorry means?” I often ask this question of children when they are offering an apology. It is interesting to hear the responses. One in particular I remember is, “It means it was an accident.” As adults, it is important to remember that unless we explain to children what “sorry” means, they may not know! At Berrybrook, teachers let children know that when they say that they are sorry, it means that they are going to change their behavior, that when you tell someone you are sorry for doing something, it means you won’t do it again. Daily, in our classrooms, teachers model respect and caring and provide opportunities for children to practice being respectful. Simple activities like waiting patiently for a turn, helping to clean up, and sharing classroom materials help children become respectful and caring. More complicated activities such as listening to classmates and talking through interpersonal conflicts happen every day. Teachers spend a major portion of their time facilitating discussions with children that will eventually help them become caring and compassionate individuals. But of course, how would children know these things unless the adults in their lives tell them what certain words mean and also give them opportunities to let their actions speak louder than their words. Children will learn to be caring and respectful by doing caring and respectful things, and at Berrybrook they have plenty of opportunities every day in their classrooms. In addition, children were able to help out the animals at the Kingston Animal Shelter last month and in December, our Parents Association will give children an opportunity to think about children who are less fortunate and help them learn to be compassionate and caring by collecting items for the Carolina Hill Shelter. Spending time helping others helps children develop tolerance and gratitude. It also builds self-confidence and breaks down stereotypes. The holidays are a perfect opportunity to explain to children the meaning of the words “kindness” and “generosity.”

Best wishes for joyful holidays, Mrs. Keeley

Beginners Program



In November, our Beginners class learned about family, just in time for Thanksgiving. Our class projects began with houses and the people that make them into homes. After some chilly weather, we helped our class turkey keep warm by gluing feathers onto his body. Inspired by some student conversations, our next project involved putting feathers on baby turkeys. Our most recent project is making a collage of food onto a class "plate", as well as individual student plates.

We made a change to our daily routine, and moved our circle time to the large multipurpose room. It has helped with working on transitions, and the children have done well with the new activities.

Thank you for making time to see us for conferences. Families are an important part of Berrybrook. The family photos that we received have helped to reinforce this idea to the children. They enjoy looking at the photos and talking about their family with others.

We are looking forward to December and holiday preparations. Please remember our Holiday Sing-a-Long and Gathering will be December 20, the last day of school before break. All families are welcome to join us at 9:00 for merriment and refreshments!

Happy Holidays!

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. LaForest, Miss McNulty

First Year Program News

November was a busy month at Berrybrook. First year students learned about different kinds of animals. The children sang songs, heard stories and made projects related to animals. Each class also talked about wood working and tools. Children learned about different kinds of tools that construction workers and carpenters use. We talked about safety rules, such as "always wear a hard hat and goggles"! The children even had the opportunity to use real hammers and nails, with adult supervision, to nail into Styrofoam blocks. This was a very popular activity.

As Thanksgiving approached we turned our focus to families. Children were asked to bring in a family picture. This is an on-going activity, so if you have not sent in a family picture please do so at your convenience. These pictures are posted on a family photo board in the classrooms. The children enjoy finding each other and looking at everyone's families. Another project was creating feathers at home for our class texture turkey. It was wonderful to see unique ways each child decorated their feather. All of the turkeys looked fabulous! We ended the month with our traditional feast. Children made corn bread in class. Of course our favorite part was making our own butter. While shaking the cream the children sang...

Shake, shake, shake the cream
Watch it jump and flutter
Shake, shake, shake the cream
Turn it into butter!

We hope you all enjoyed a happy Thanksgiving.

Happy Hanukkah! December begins by learning about some Hanukkah

traditions. We will read stories, sing songs, play games and even taste latkes! The children will also begin to prepare for our Holiday Sing-a-Longs.

2 Day Class - Friday, December 20, 9:00. Our Sing-along will start as soon as everyone arrives.

3 Day-Rm 1 Wednesday, December 18, 9:00. Our Sing-along will start as soon as everyone arrives.

3 Day-Rm 3 Wednesday, December 18, 10:45. Children arrive at 9:00, parents return at 10:45 for our Sing-along.

Please watch for an invitation in your child's cubbie. Our classrooms will be busy as your children create some special projects and bake cookies for our get togethers. Be prepared to see lots of glitter! Each child will also create a watercolor candle to place on our Berrybrook Tree. Please be sure to take a look at the tree in our multi-purpose room during the month of December. We would like to thank all of our families for your support and for sharing your children with us. We wish you a joyous holiday season!

Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. LaForest and Mrs. Piccuito.

Thank you so much to all of the families who donated items for the Kingston Animal Shelter. Mrs. O'Neil will be bringing your generous gifts to the shelter. There will still be a box and a jar for pennies through December.

Thank you again for making the animals very happy!



Enrollment 2014-2015

During the holiday break, all current Berrybrook parents will receive re-enrollment information for 2014-2015. January is the month reserved for current and alumni families to submit an application. Starting February 1 we start enrolling new-to-Berrybrook families.

Tuition Assistance 2014-2015

The Berrybrook Board of Directors sets aside funds for tuition assistance through the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. Families should not be prevented from attending Berrybrook because of financial constraints. **Starting with the 2014-2015 school year, The FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment system will be available for families to apply for tuition assistance.** Families will be able to apply online quickly and easily on the FACTS web site that is completely safe and secure. More information about tuition assistance procedures will be included in the re-enrollment mailing. Families with any questions about tuition assistance are encouraged to speak to Mrs. Keeley.

Cold Weather Tips

Now is the time to locate all snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens that have been packed away. One of these mornings we will wake up to a snowfall!

Children should come prepared for the outdoors. Please remember to have your child arrive with boots, hat, mittens, jacket, and snowpants. We know that some days it is hard to tell what the weather conditions will be at the end of the session, so when in doubt, you could pack snowpants and boots in a tote bag to have in the cubby. Even when there is no snow, these extra clothes allow for warm, comfortable outdoor play. Please mark each item with your child's name.

Second Year Program News

The four and five day teachers would like to start off the November recap with a thank you to all the chaperones who took part in our Plimoth Plantation field trip at the beginning of the month. The sun was shining, and the temperature that day was very mild - a perfect day to explore the grounds at the plantation. Throughout the month the classes reflected on their trip and created their own personal Plimoth Plantation, which required many days of hard work!

The month of November also was busy for the students with the creation of musical instruments such as drums and shakers. They created headbands which they could wear on the last day before Thanksgiving break. The classes ended the month with a Thanksgiving feast. The children helped to make the feast by making butter out of cream to go along with corn bread or pumpkin bread, depending on the class.

Heading into December, the classes will be learning about many holiday songs and traditions. Different classes will be working on different projects, so it will vary from room to room. Although children will be busy, the teachers also strive to let them have time to relax. The pressure of the holidays can be felt by children as well! They will be working on special gifts to give their families and they will also be working on their holiday program to which all the families are invited to join on the last day of school. We hope to see everyone there!

The holiday get-togethers will be at the following times:

5 Day Room 2 - Friday
December 20 at 9:00 a.m.

Our Sing-along will start as soon as children are ready.

4 Day Room 2 – Thursday,
December 19 at 1:00 p.m.
Our Sing-along will start as soon as everyone arrives.

4 Day Room 1 – Thursday
December 19 at 2:30 p.m.
Children arrive at 1:00, families return at 2:30 for our Sing-along.

At the conclusion of the sing-along, there will be a holiday snack which the children have prepared. After we have enjoyed our snack together our day will end and the holiday break will begin.

Happy holidays to you and your families. Enjoy your time together.

Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. O'Neil,
Mrs. Neal, Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Rosen,
Mrs. Swan and Mrs. Worley

Simple Gifts

'Tis the gift to be simple,
'Tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down
where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves
in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley
of love and delight.



Parents Association News

We hope all of you and your families had a Happy Thanksgiving! We hope you find this month's update helpful, and as always please let us know if you have comments, suggestions, or areas where you would like to become more involved.

HOLIDAY CHARITY

Each year the BPA sponsors a charity drive to help celebrate the holidays. This year we are collecting on behalf of the Carolina House, located in Marshfield. Check out our giving tree near the BPA table, each ornament features a gift a child or family has wished for. Together, we can make all of their wishes come true. To participate, simply choose an ornament(s), purchase the requested gift(s), and return the unwrapped gift with the ornament attached to Berrybrook by December 19th. If you would like to make a monetary gift there is a box near the tree and the funds will be used to purchase additional gifts. Thank you for the support, and a special thanks to Erin Martin for taking the lead on this year's charity campaign.

ENRICHMENT

Enrichment activities will begin after the new year, beginning with 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. Also, Eddie Sorrentino (a.k.a Eddie Spaghetti) will be making an appearance during the month of January too!

FAMILY FUN FRIDAY

Thanks to all the families who came out in their pajamas to hear Big Ryan in November. We hope you had as much

fun as we did! December is such a busy month that there is no formal program scheduled, but keep an eye out for an email if weather permits for an impromptu sledding/hot cocoa get together!

HOLIDAY SHOPPING EVENT at Rock, Paper, Scissors and West Winds Book Shop!

Please mark your calendars and plan to join the BPA for a day of shopping on **Thursday, December 5th** at Duxbury's Rock, Paper, Scissors. Not only is the store opened all day, but, it will be open from 7-9 pm for those can not make it during the day. Rock Paper Scissors will give 10% of sales back to the BPA to help support enrichment and special Berrybrook needs, and you get 10% off your total purchase as well! So get a jump start on some holiday shopping. Look for an email and flyers with all the details! Again, we would like to thank Karen Gallagher for helping organize.

BPA DUES

It is not too late to contribute dues to the BPA. We ask for a \$30.00 per family donation, but are thankful for any you can contribute. For those families who have paid your dues, you are eligible to be entered into the holiday raffle. What's this? Well there were a few unclaimed baskets left over from the Harvest Festival, so the BPA decided it was fair to raffle the items off. The raffle will take place in early December, so there is still time to get those dues in! Dues can be left in the basket at the BPA table.

Thank you and Happy Holidays,
Donna and Karoline

berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

Berrybrook Book Review

Cynthia Dunn

Growing Up Brave, Expert Strategies for Helping Your Child Overcome Fear, Stress and Anxiety, by Donna B. Pincus, PhD

When our children are afraid, stressed or fearful, often our first instinct may be to draw them in closer to us and tell them everything will be all right. Almost instantly, we adults feel better. We have taken action. Our little one may cuddle up for a few moments and feel better. Problem solved.

However, what children learn from these moments is that adults will solve their problems for them. As time goes on, children may feel less and less capable and more and more out of control. They have not had a chance to learn how to deal with stress or anxiety. Their fears may increase and they may feel unable to manage normal childhood activities and may begin to avoid them.

In the book *Growing Up Brave*, Dr. Pincus acknowledges that some stress, anxiety, and fear in children is normal but when it becomes frequent or unreasonable, it could interfere with a child's quality of life. Throughout the book, she lays out practical strategies to use with children - lifelong techniques to help manage some of the stressful and anxiety-provoking emotions we humans have. These strategies include "bravery ladders" a technique that breaks down a fearful situation into smaller steps that children can learn to manage one at a time.

Dr. Pincus describes what is normal and what is not. She shares how different parent-child interactions affect anxiety. She also discusses ways to accept physical feelings and ways to change avoidant behavior. She also address how to find professional help and when or if to discuss the use of medication. Anxious people can be caught up in a cycle of anxiety. As our lives rush faster and faster by, Dr. Pincus teaches us how to learn to be brave in a society, which is moving at the speed of light.

Whether your child is afraid of the dark, avoiding school, or experiencing anxiety that interferes with daily activities, Dr. Pincus offers some practical suggestions for parents to help a child overcome anxiety, fear and stress. This book is well written, and easy to put into practice.

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



Snow Cancellation

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Schools** or the **Silver Lake School District** close due to a snow emergency. Please watch channel 7 for cancellation notices, sign up for "WHDH Closing Bell," or call the school for information about a snow cancellation.

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Happy Holidays!!! 

I love the holiday season it is precious time of year, it is a time for family and friends. A time where every media outlet is rushing me. Everyone I encounter is asking if I have started my holiday shopping, on the outside I am smiling calmly, turning my head slightly to the side, what the person is taking as assurance. What they don't know is that the thought of a mall or grocery store sends me into a small anxiety attack, there is no acknowledging turn of my head but rather a small nervous twitch, dry mouth and small beads of sweat rolling down my neck.



Then I calm down and remember the true meaning of the holiday season...KINDNESS! Making a friend feel included, acknowledging that my family is not perfect but they are all mine, I need to celebrate them. I also remember that no matter how stressed I may be, how worried I am that my kids may not get exactly what they want. That is NOT the point, the true essence of this fabulous season of lights, smells, tastes and true beauty is recognizing how much you have to be thankful for and how easy it is to make another's day full of life and love.

Do you know that when a child is ill over the Christmas holiday specifically at Boston's Children's Hospital each and every child receives several gifts from Santa and staff? Santa's team starts to let the entire hospital know of his whereabouts, announces when he is leaving a nearby town and then suddenly he arrives on the rooftop of the hospital. You then hear the bells and the elves coming towards your child's room and he appears. Santa speaks to the ill child as well as their sibling, every child gets a gift! It is a wonderful thing! No parent wants their child in the hospital over the holidays; however you and your family can help Santa! Pick up a toy for a boy, a truck or lego set, something for a girl, a Barbie or stuffed animal. You do not need to wrap them, simply drive them into 300 Longwood Drive in Boston, you do not need to even park your car, just drop the gifts off to the front desk. If you have 20-30 minutes park your car and have a snack at Au Bon Pain and see the looks on the children's faces. YOU can make a difference for \$20.00 and a round trip 75 minute car drive. You will feel fantastic and your kids will experience the fact that other children are fighting some pretty big battles. It is better than Elf on the Shelf and I guarantee you it will become a positive and powerful Holiday tradition. I can also express from a very personal point of view that it makes the 2 day stay or in our case the 40 day stay bearable and even magical.

Happy Holidays,

Jan Holt-Kerns, Berrybrook Board of Directors

Professional Development at Berrybrook

At Berrybrook, the Board of Directors provides for the continual professional development of teachers and staff. All staff receive training in CPR and First Aid and all staff are members of the NAEYC and receive its monthly publication *Young Child* which provides articles about current best practice in early childhood education. Three days are set aside during each school year for teachers to improve their skills in areas that will have a direct impact on their work with children. On our first professional day, in October, we had in-house trainings on Sensory Integration, and Fine Motor Skills and Handwriting provided by South Shore Therapies. The development of a proper pencil grip is important for writing efficiency. Curriculum expectations that exceed the child's level of hand development may interfere with development of handwriting skills. Requiring a child to write with a pencil before shoulder, arm, wrist and small finger muscles have developed may interfere with normal hand development.

A child's hand develops in predictable steps. Each step allows for more control of the fingers and will lead to the Dynamic Tripod Posture, resulting in efficient, cramp-free writing.



1 - 1.5 years



2 - 3 years



3.5 - 4 years



Dynamic Tripod Posture 4.5 - 6 years

Berrybrook teachers offer many activities in the classroom to develop the Dynamic Tripod Posture. For example, painting and writing at the easel develop the writing muscle patterns in the proper order - shoulder, arm, wrist, and lastly fingers. Cutting with scissors develops wrist stability. Children start with short straight lines and move to following curves and turning corners. Eye droppers placed in the water table or on windowsills for watering plants increase strength in the small finger muscles. Teachers offer a variety of fine motor activities including puzzles, playdough, Legos, and carefully offer a range of writing instruments to promote proper hand development and handwriting.

Our Professional Days give staff the opportunity to enrich our understanding of child development. Thank you to the Board and our families for their support of our professional development efforts. The more we learn as educators, the more we can share with parents and enhance our interactions with children. We are privileged to work in an environment where personal and professional development is so valued.

Mrs. Keeley