



## October 2013

<b>Saturday, October 5</b>	<b>BPA Harvest Festival 10:00-1:00</b>
<b>Monday, October 14</b>	<b>Columbus Day, No School</b>
<b>Thursday, October 17</b>	<b>Parent Volunteer Orientation 7:00pm</b>
<b>Friday, October 18</b>	<b>BPA Fun Friday at Bog Hollow</b>
<b>Tuesday October 22</b>	<b>BPA meeting 7:00 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, October 23</b>	<b>Berrybrook Board meeting 7:30 pm</b>
<b>Monday, October 28</b>	<b>Professional Development Day, No School</b>

### Notes From the Head of School

Berrybrook teachers utilize many professional Development tools to stay current with the latest research in many areas of child development. There are 3 professional development days per year for attendance at trainings and workshops, we attend child development speaking engagements through the Parent Connection and South Shore Therapies, and we subscribe to periodicals such as *Young Child*, published by the NAEYC. In addition, the staff purchases many books on various child development and parenting topics. Last year, teachers wrote reviews of several different titles for our monthly Newsletter and we will continue sharing books this year.

This past summer, on a recommendation from my daughter who works with high schoolers, I read ***Breaking Into the Heart of Character / Self Determined Moral Action and Academic Motivation*** by David Streight. We often talk together about our profession and how similar high-schoolers and pre-schoolers are! According to the author, Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness are basic human needs that schools must fulfill to promote internal motivation, academic success, well-being, and character in their students. Mr. Streight assures readers that his premise is supported by experts: "The material here is the consensus of over four decades of research carried out by committed professionals under conditions open to the critical eyes of exacting peers." (p.10)

I agree with the author and his research because I have seen his theory in action at Berrybrook. We believe children should have a voice and a choice (autonomy), should have daily opportunities to master skills (competence), and should be accepted, supported and respected by teachers and peers (relatedness).

*“Autonomy is about having choices. It is about an individual’s perception of having a certain amount of control over his or her life and significant issues in it. Decades of research have shown that people who feel their actions are autonomous are more interested, more excited, and more confident about what they do. They are more persistent in their efforts, their performance is better and as a bonus, creativity is enhanced.”.....“The more choices teachers offer - in areas where choice is appropriate, of course - the more autonomy students feel, the higher the quality of work they produce, and apparently, the longer they remember what they have learned.” (p.26)*

Berrybrook teachers support autonomy by offering choices and allowing children to have input into decision making in the classroom. An autonomous classroom actually calls for more structure, not less. Berrybrook teachers know the difference between structure and control. They offer students structure and support to help children develop self control.

*“Competence refers to an individual’s sense of being able to meet, and have success in the challenges of life. Like autonomy, competence is more than just a good idea; it is a basic human need. People who do not perceive themselves as competent are frequently reluctant - often resistant - to try new things or to put themselves in a situations where others might notice their inadequacies. When the competence need is not fulfilled, the psychological, social and academic consequences range from unfortunate to disastrous.”*

At Berrybrook, Teachers believe children are capable, and they are encouraged to do for themselves. Separating from caretakers, washing hands, putting on their own coats, choosing their own activities in the classroom, all develop competence in children. Phrases teachers use - “You must feel proud of yourself,” “How can we solve this problem?” You concentrated very hard on that creation,” help children realize how capable they are. Children who feel competent take risks, are creative and enjoy healthy friendships.

“Relatedness is the loop being closed as the student senses an adult’s personal interest and involvement in a way that makes him or her feel both special and important.” (p.45)

There are skills to building relationships. Young children develop socially and emotionally by first being able to identify their own feelings, then being able to identify feelings in others and respond appropriately. Once these skills are in place, children can move on to building friendships. Berrybrook teachers help children through this process. Relationships between children and teachers are based on trust and responsiveness. We trust children to make good choices on their own, but we are there when children need assistance. Teachers care for children, and they know how important it is that *children feel* that they are cared for.

In my opinion, David Straight’s book is a worthwhile read for educators and parents. His suggestion to foster autonomy, competence and relatedness is right on track. I believe that giving children choices, building their self confidence and truly caring for them will result in children who are motivated, successful and happy members of the community.

**Pat Keeley**



## Beginners program

The new Beginners class has begun and we are off to a wonderful start. The traditional half class days, shortened hours and home visits were helpful in making every one feel comfortable during our first few weeks together. We see friendships developing and trust levels building as we go about our morning.

Our focus in September was “Me”. Who am I? How do I fit in? We focused on each child being recognized for who they are and how they fit into this class. Also the children are developing a sense of pride in who they are among their peers.

We have worked on group projects and individual projects. By doing this the children gain a sense of their own importance and the value of being part of a group. They are learning to wait their turn and show respect for others. Many are speaking up with their own thoughts and ideas! The children sang songs, played at the water table, sand table and playdough table. They are beginning to grasp the daily routine of the class and what is expected of them.

In October we move on to “Feelings”. How do I feel? What do others feel? Are feelings important? Stay tuned.

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. LaForest and Miss McNulty



## First Year Program

Our school year is off to a smooth start. Parents, students and teachers are striking up friendships and relationships that will last all year long and beyond. The traditional half classes, shortened days and home visits all playing an important part in making for a smooth transition from home to school.

The children have begun to explore their classrooms, become familiar with the daily routine and are beginning to make new friends in their classroom and on the playground. They are experiencing a successful goodbye to caregivers as they venture off on their own to discover the wonders of Berrybrook. Some of those discoveries include new songs, finger plays and movements, painting rocks, gluing seashells, and making grape jelly! And of course discovering the answer to the daily question...”What is in the water table today?”

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 safety at home too, and to agree on a safe a meeting place. This month, children will have a visit from the Duxbury Fire Department and explore fire safety.

Also In October, we will be discussing the changing of the seasons. Nature projects will be part of our days. We will be learning songs, hearing stories and playing games around these topics. October wraps up with a friendly celebration for Halloween. We will carve a class pumpkin and make a special snack in school. **Because of 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.

Parent conferences for first year families begin this month. Teachers will be in touch with parents to set up a time to discuss each child's progress.

We look forward to getting to know you and your child as we venture together into this exciting school year. A year filled with learning and exploring while having fun!

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



Parents interested in volunteering their time at Berrybrook School should join us for...

**“Parent Participation  
In The Berrybrook Environment”**

**Thursday, October 17, 2013  
7:00 pm**

This evening program will focus on parent involvement at Berrybrook. It will include expectations for volunteering in your child's classroom, and ways you may help from home.

We encourage you to join us for an informative and pleasant evening.

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn and Mrs. LaForest

## Second Year Program

The month of September is a time of year when many children begin a new school experience. They are adjusting to a different environment (classroom space, teachers, classmates). Their growing independence becomes more evident each day as they walk into the classroom by themselves, decide which activity to start with, when to eat snack, and are able to dress themselves for outdoor play. Some children adapt easily while others need more time to feel comfortable. To assist with this transition from unstructured summer to school routine, the classrooms and activities have been set up to ease children into the schedule. Home visits and shortened days help children become familiar with their new environment. One way they are learning classmate's names is through music. At Berrybrook we sing a special song with a catchy clapping rhythm.

### Hello

Hello (name)

And how do you do?

Who's that sitting

Next to you?

Since we live near the coast, beginning activities relate to the sea. It is important to start with a topic that may be familiar to children, thus giving them the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences of shells, sand, fish, etc. The children have been busy watercoloring paper fish for a classroom display. They have been examining and identifying various shells by comparing sizes, textures, and colors and have learned a song about a little fish.

### Little Fishy

Little fishy went out to play,  
wiggled his fins and swam away.  
Down he went in the water bright,  
opened his mouth and took a bite!

Mmm, Mmm,  
Tastes good!

The children will have the opportunity to experience the process of making jelly. They will wash and sort the fruit which is then cooked and strained resulting in juice. This juice is then mixed with other ingredients and cooked again until it becomes jelly which is poured into small jars. After setting, the jelly is ready to eat. Each child will have a jar to take home and at times jelly will be served with snack. The children participate in a classroom survey comparing red and green grapes by tasting and then choosing the one they like best.

Another fruit we will be studying is apples. Some activities will include; watercoloring, learning to make a paper apple by cutting a square piece of paper into the shape of an oval or circle, making apple sauce, tasting various kinds of apples, singing songs, and listening to a special story.

Watch for the grape and apple surveys, displayed on the classroom door, showing which kind of fruit your child likes most.

October is Fire Safety month. Children will be learning about fire safety through books, class discussions, art projects and dramatic play. Reading "**The Fire Cat**," starring "Pickles," is a long time Berrybrook tradition. Each month the children will practice the classroom's emergency evacuation drill to help them feel comfortable and knowledgeable about this procedure.

The study of the life cycle of pumpkins will begin this month. Children will utilize all their senses to explore and learn about this autumn vegetable; touching the outside textures of various pumpkins, visually comparing different sizes and shapes, estimating weights, observing pumpkin seeds germinating in baggies in our classroom windows, smelling the inside of

a pumpkin, and tasting the roasted seeds. They will also learn about shapes as their

pumpkin is carved into a Jack O' Lantern. After listening to a story, "Mousekin's House", the children will find a place outside to put "Jack O' Lantern" where they can watch throughout the year as it slowly decays and goes back into the ground.

#### PUMPKINS

Pick-a-pick-a-pumpkin from the pile.  
We can give him eyes and a great big smile.

Pick-a-pick-a-pumpkin round and clean.  
Then we'll be ready for Halloween.  
Halloween, Halloween,  
Then we'll be ready for Halloween.

As the end of the month approaches, children will be making Halloween decorations for the classroom, as well as, learning some facts about bats and spiders. At circle time they will be learning songs about Halloween, listening to non-scary stories, and participating in a play, based on the story, "The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid Of Anything." Hopefully these activities will help make Halloween an enjoyable and memorable experience for everyone.

To celebrate Halloween at Berrybrook, there will be a pizza party. Each child will make an individual pizza for our group snack on Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. We are asking that Halloween costumes remain at home for this celebration.

On a Halloween night,  
when the moon is bright,  
Mr. Owl goes  
"Whoooooo"(repeat)

Please feel free to visit our classroom after your child has been signed out to see what the children have created.

Have a safe and happy Halloween!

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

## Arrival & Dismissal

Please remember the front door will be locked 15 minutes after arrival time. 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.**
- **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. One parent can watch younger children in the cars, while the other parent walks Berrybrook students to or from school. Please remember anytime you have an emergency or need help at arrival or dismissal, you may call the office and we will assist you!

### **Please check your cubbie!**

Berrybrook children share their cubbies. so it is important for children and parents to check cubbies at sign out time. We want to be sure that projects, notices and clothing go home with the right owner. Families are welcome to stay and play on the playground after school, but please remember to empty out your cubby before you start your fun!

## From the Office

Tuition payment #3 is now due.

Annual tuition is divided into 10 equal payments. Payment #1 is due at time of enrollment and Payment #2 was due in September. Families have received an electronic invoice for payment # 3 due October 1.

Please contact Mrs. Watts with any questions about tuition accounts.

Also, please contact the office with any changes in your contact information.

Thank you.

### **“Say Hello to Mrs. Keeley!”**

I enjoy arrival time. I think it is important to greet every child each day and it gives me the opportunity to meet and to get to know the entire family, including younger and older siblings. Saying hello to everyone is a favorite aspect of my job, and I am not offended in the least if a child does not say, “Hello Mrs. Keeley” in return. I notice many parents encouraging their child to return my greeting, but please know that I understand that some children, especially our first year students may not feel ready to return a greeting just yet. I know from experience that soon, children will feel very comfortable giving me a hello at arrival and a goodbye at the gate. It is such a thrill for me the first time a child says, “Hi Mrs. Keeley!” spontaneously. Berrybrook teachers model and encourage polite behavior and we know through working with your children, that parents do the same at home. So, feel free to encourage your children to “Say Hello to Mrs. Keeley” but please know that I do not consider it a requirement!

Mrs. K

## Parents Association News

Fall is in the air and it's been wonderful to see new and familiar faces as the school year gets underway. The BPA has been very busy planning for the 2013 Harvest Festival. We are so thankful for the volunteers and the generous donations that have already come in. We have an exciting calendar of enrichment activities planned for this year.

### ***Harvest Festival. October 5th***

We are in great shape for the annual Harvest Festival next weekend! We are excited to welcome all families to the Harvest Festival on Saturday, October 5th from 10-1. I know it will be a great event because of the help we have received from so many of you! A big thank you to Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Watts, BPA officers, classroom parents and other volunteers who have come together to make this day a success. This event is our largest fundraiser and all funds raised go to pay for enrichment activities for our children.

### ***Family Fun Fridays***

Mark your calendars for the 3rd Friday of each month for Family Fun Fridays. We hope you can make the first one at Bog Hollow Farm on Friday, October 18th at 1:30. There will be a hay ride, games,

pumpkin patch and cranberry picking. Be on the lookout for more information and a sign up sheet at the BPA table. As always siblings are welcome.

Every Berrybrook parent is automatically a member of the Parents Association and welcome at all BPA meetings. We encourage you to join us at the monthly meetings to share ideas and volunteer to help in any way you can. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, October 22nd at 7pm.**

Each year we ask parents to support us with \$30 in dues. Checks can be made out to the BPA and placed in the dues basket by the BPA table.

Thank you for your support and participation. We are looking forward to a great year.

Karoline Martin & Donna Hillary

[berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com).

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

By Mrs. Delano

Berrybrook strives to provide a positive, nurturing and open environment for children, parents and staff. Day to day interactions provide an opportunity to address questions and concerns and starting later in October, parents will have the opportunity to schedule individual conference time with one of their child's teachers.

Conferences are an essential ingredient for quality early childhood education. They provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss a child's progress, identify concerns and to set future goals. If possible, it's nice to have both parents attend and parents are encouraged to prepare in advance thoughts, questions or concerns.

Through open communication a strategy can be agreed upon. Children respond best when they receive similar responses in both their school and home environments. Teachers and parents should agree on a plan to follow-up on any school/home approach discussed at the conference.

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

## Berrybrook Board of Directors

### Giving Back

For the past four years, I have had the pleasure of taking the winding curve down Winter Street to drive both of my daughters to Berrybrook. Along the way, we would look for chickens, cows, turkeys, and all the other creatures that call Winter Street their home. Finally the trees clear, and their school, their happy place, would appear. It has always been a happy place for me as well, because regardless of what was going on in the broader world, it always felt so safe and secure to leave my children in the care of such capable teachers and experiences each day.

Ironically enough, this, my first year as President of the Board of Directors, I do not have the comfort of walking into the warm smiling building on a regular basis. My daughters are both off in the big wide world of elementary school, and I have a year before my youngest will begin his first year here. And as much as I know my daughters have both been ready to move forward and onto the next chapter, I think the female in our family who may have most benefitted from their time at Berrybrook was myself. You see, as child-centered as our wonderful school is, it is truly a place where the entire family is supported and loved.

In the purest sense, our teachers stay true every day to the mission Katherine Mann established many years ago, “celebrating childhood and nurturing the whole child.” But the hustle and bustle of modern life sometimes makes it difficult for busy parents to uphold our end of the bargain. I know I find myself struggling to find balance each and every day between letting my kids “just be kids” and questioning whether or not they should already have a basic grasp of Mandarin Chinese. (Not really, but you get the idea). There are many days where I try to channel Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Rosen, Mrs. Neal, and all the other soothing, calming voices I had reassuring me along the sometimes harrowing path of early childhood with my girls.

I worried that this year, as I was charged with heading a group of individuals committed to ensuring that Berrybrook stay true to its mission, I wouldn't be influenced daily by the people who embody it at its core. But I do find myself, more often than not, being able to drill down to the philosophies I have learned and built upon from my years of being involved at Berrybrook. When I enrolled them here, I hoped that my children would be taught to practice kindness, patience, determination and compassion. The benefit that I didn't necessarily expect to gain was that I would be taught a thing or two along the way.

When I was asked to take on the role of President, I had a few naysayers around me telling me, “It's too much work”, “That's a lot of responsibility for a volunteer job”, “You don't even have a kid there this year”. What I found myself coming back to 100% of the time was that I couldn't think of a place or an organization that was more valuable where I could give my time. Berrybrook has influenced our family in the best sense of the word, and for that I am very grateful.

Lauren Brown



President, Berrybrook Board of Directors