

April 2017

Friday, April 14

April 17 - 21

Wednesday, April 26

Wednesday, April 26

Thursday, April 27

Good Friday - no school

Spring vacation week

Board meeting 7:30 p.m.

School Photos 3, 4, and 5 Day

**School Photos 2 Day and
Beginners**



Notes from the Head of School

Some of you may know that my dad, Mike Hogan, passed away last month. I am an only child and grew up in Vermont before coming to Boston for college and then stayed in the area. My parents met in Boston in the 60s and decided to return to my dad's hometown to raise their family but as soon as my parents hit retirement age, they sold their home and headed back to this area to be closer to the grandchildren. It's a family joke that when they moved here in 2012, they only signed on to care for two grandsons....we laugh that they got a bonus when Maya arrived in 2014!

My dad had cancer for the first time in 1997 when he was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. I was in my senior year of college and had just turned twenty-one so needless to say, I don't remember much about his treatments. Right after graduation I moved to South Boston so the treatments, doctor's appointments, and all that were never in my day-to-day routine and quite honestly it didn't directly impact my daily schedule. In remission since 1998, it seemed like a small blip in our family history.

My boys never really knew that Bampa had cancer, maybe in passing it was mentioned when we knew of someone who had been impacted by a cancer diagnosis, but it was never something I felt they needed to know about. Last March, at a regular doctor's appointment my dad's doctor felt a mass in his abdomen. It was right around when Mrs. Keeley's retirement and my new role as Head of School was announced, and we had a lot going on in our lives. But this time, the impact was a direct hit on our family. My parents picked up the boys after school each day, where they brought them to their house to work on their homework. They were shuttled to their after-school activities by my parents, who also took care of Maya two days a week. With this mass, all of a sudden words were introduced into their vocabulary that I had hoped they wouldn't ever

intimately know words like chemo, PET scan, oncology, Neulasta shots. For a while before we really knew what we were dealing with, we just said that Bampa was at a doctor's appointment or something along that line. When it was determined that his Lymphoma had indeed returned, we sat the boys down and told them as much as we could that was age appropriate for them. I did my research and found children's books about cancer on Amazon. I told them that they could ask any question, and if we didn't know the answer that I would do my best to find the answer for them. They were aware of the chemo schedule, and knew when Bampa wouldn't be feeling his best. They enjoyed having Daddy take a day off to pick them up at school when it was a Dana Farber day and I drove my parents to Boston for his PET scan and checkups. At one point one of them asked, "Can Bampa die from this?" And my response was that the medication that Bampa was having would hopefully take care of all of the yucky cancer cells and that we all hope to live a long life.

August arrived and it was determined that my dad was in remission. Yahoo! As much as we had almost "over-talked" the cancer back in the spring, one day my oldest, Brady, asked me if Bampa still had cancer because he didn't have as many doctor's appointments as he previously had. Oops. We had completely dropped the ball on letting the boys know that Bampa was in remission.

Then the Tuesday of February vacation my mom called to say that she had taken my dad to the ER with stroke-like symptoms. It was a long two weeks, and a short two weeks if that makes any sense. We spent some time at Beth Israel Plymouth and waited three days to get a bed at Brigham and Woman's Hospital. During that time, it was determined that my dad had new mass in his abdomen, but that the cancer had also hopped onto his central nervous system and went to his brain, hence the stroke-like symptoms. Each day I would drop the boys off to school and pick my mom up and we'd head into Boston. We spend all day there and return to the South Shore after the nurse shift change around 7:30 pm. I'd swing by Berrybrook to check my desk and grab work to tackle while we were bedside the next day. My children's schedules and routines went out the window, as my husband took a lot of time off to do the running around that my parents normally did. Intrathecal chemo and a round of high dose chemo didn't produce the results the oncologists were hoping for and so when it was not looking so good for my dad, I sat the boys down and this time when they asked if Bampa would die from this, my teary answer was yes.

So, how do we talk to kids about sickness and death? My husband and I tried to make sure we were doing "all the right things" but clearly forgetting to tell them that Bampa was in remission last summer wasn't on that list. Nowadays, grandparents are living longer and seem to be more involved in their grandchildren's lives. By the time I was twelve, I had lost three of my four grandparents. The fact that my oldest is twelve and is just losing his first grandparent is a foreign idea to me. To be completely frank, I have no surefire way to talk to children about death. What was the most important thing to me was that I wanted my children to know that I was being honest with them, and that it was okay to be sad. The difficult part was allowing myself to process my loss, while being strong for the kids. I thought that the older ones were comprehending the loss, but one day my middle child, Jameson, told me that a friend of his had told him that if

you pray hard enough, your loved one will “get alive” again. I teared up as I told him that as much as I’d want that to be true, it wasn’t going to happen. He got upset and told me that he knew that it wasn’t true, he was just telling me a story. I’m sure he was hoping that I would tell him that the friend was right, even though he knew that wasn’t the case. Jameson is the quieter of the two boys and emotionally perceptive is not a descriptive term I would be quick to use for him. My dad’s wishes were to be cremated, which is something my children hadn’t known before so the day after he passed I was explaining to them how the service for Bampa would be different from funerals they had previously attended. Jameson turned to me and quietly said “Can I have some of Bampa’s ashes?” I burst into tears because a request like this was unlike him. I wanted him to know that he didn’t do anything wrong, but I was crying because I wasn’t expecting him to ask that and it was just so thoughtful. Later in the day he asked if he could take his ashes to Show and Tell because his classmate Stella had brought her dog’s ashes in the week before. This time I burst into tears laughing, because I knew my dad was appreciating this.....he had a wicked sense of humor and would have laughed hysterically! (For the record, I will be checking with Jameson’s teacher before I send in the mini urn we have.....) As for Maya, she’s the hardest. She celebrated her third birthday days before my dad passed away. The first time she walked into my parent’s house and asked where Bampa was, we all just froze for a second. It hurts a little when she asks where he is, but I know it will hurt more when she stops asking for him. We told her that Bampa was now in heaven. She repeated it and kept on playing with her toys. She has a little routine every night she goes to bed; she calls them her questions. Her first question was always “Where’s Nana and Bampa?” We’d ask her the question back and she’d say “At home in Kingston”. Some nights it varied and she’d ask where Miss Jen was, or where Mrs. LaForest was, or her friend Evan. The first time after my dad passed and she asked about Nana and Bampa, we asked where Nana was and she replied Kingston; when we asked her Bampa was she said, “He’s at Heaven’s”. I wonder if she thinks Bampa is at Evan’s house, and for now that’s okay. Just one more thing my dad would get a kick out of!

“Time heals all wounds” is a trite saying in my opinion. It’s not so much the passage of time that heals, but what you do with that time that helps. For our family, we are talking about Bampa and laughing about the things he would have found funny. We’ll remark on something that we know Bampa would have appreciated. In time, I will show the kids to look for signs of Bampa, although not being overly spiritual I’m not sure if that is my dad’s thing. The other night I was watching TV in our bedroom and behind me the door closed on its own, then slowly opened. I honestly thought my dad’s spirit was messing with me, which would have totally been something he would do. It was actually Maya, who had gotten out of bed and thought she was being funny. Later it struck me as amusing that my dad’s spirit was my immediate go-to explanation, rather than one of my children rambling through the night. Looking at Brady, he is the spit of my dad who stood 6 feet, 7 inches and was a string bean. After growing more than four inches in one year, I’d say Brady will be the one who takes after my dad (obviously the height gene skipped me!) Jameson has the dry humor of my dad and Maya has his mischievous side. My mom always joked that she was not taking care of the two she agreed to when they moved down here - her four charges were Brady, Jameson, Maya, and my dad who was the biggest kid of them all.

I don't know the answer to how to best talk to children about sickness and death. It is inevitable that you will have to deal with the topic at some time, if it hasn't impacted you already. Each family is different and your spiritual beliefs, customs, traditions, and familial relationships all play a part. I do know that in my family we are all trying to adapt to our 'new normal' and I'm not sure if I would have been able to be as present for my children if I hadn't had all the support that I had, and continue to have - from friends, coworkers, the Board of Directors, Berrybrook families, my parents' friends, and more. I believe it's important for children to grieve and express their emotions and to see adults doing the same. There's no one way to grieve, just like there is no one way to parent. We all learn from each other and I'm hoping our family's experiences can help someone else along the way.

~ Mrs. Watts

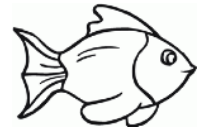


Ready, Set, ... Smile!!
Berrybrook class photos are coming!



Wednesday, April 26th
will be picture day for both 3 Day classes, as well as 4 and 5 Day classes

Thursday, April 27th
will be picture day for 2 Day and Beginners



Beginners Notes

Volunteering in the Beginners Class

There's an old saying, "What I'd give to be a fly on the wall to see that!" Well, the opportunity is here to be like a fly on the wall and experience all that goes on in the Beginners Class! As mentioned in the bulletin we sent home recently to all Beginners' families, our Volunteer Sign Up sheet is now up on our bulletin board and is filling up with names. Here are some of a few things you can look forward to when you volunteer in the classroom.

You will be able to

- see classroom materials and activities through your child's eyes.
- join us for Story Time and see how they are learning to be part of a group.
- perhaps help with a special project with each of the children.
- read a book to one or two (or three or four!) children when a child asks, "Can you read this to me?"
- watch as children build creations in the block area.
- join them for a "meal" in the Dramatic Play Area as children "cook" for you.
- sit at the play dough table and chat as children create with dough and tools.
- ask open ended questions about what they are exploring with in the water table.
- observe their paintings at the easel as you notice colors and brush strokes.
- learn more about how children your child's age play together, learn to take turns, begin to learn about their feelings and the feelings of others.
- observe teachers and how they speak to children in positive, respectful ways.
- learn how to empower your child to be more independent.
- notice how children approach daily art projects with creativity.
- HAVE FUN!

*****In the Beginners Class, volunteers stay from 9 – 10:30 as it can be hard for children to "share" their family with others all morning. *****

We look forward to seeing you in our class and, as always, thank you for your help and support all year long!

~ Mrs. LaForest

Mrs. LaForest teaches in the Beginners and 4 Day classes



**Congratulations
to the Reed Family!**

Welcome Baby Jesse !!



First Year News

Spring is officially here and hopefully warmer weather is soon to follow! We will be enjoying the themes of weather, spring holidays, butterflies, and flowers in our classrooms. Painting eggs is a long standing tradition at Berrybrook that all have come to love, but starting this year we will be providing the eggs for the first year students. (Although we encourage those who will miss blowing the eggs to continue to enjoy that as a family at home!)

Our first day of spring project was blooming flowers! We created these works of art with a few simple items. The children first decided how many flowers they would create, and took the appropriate number of construction paper stems and leaves, cupcake liners and foam shapes for the inside the flower. This step engaged the child in planning and one - to - one correspondence. Some of the children decided to make a pattern (pink flower, yellow flower, pink flower) others categorized (blue flowers with blue middles), some counted all the same number (3 flowers, 3 insides, 3 leaves, 3 pieces of grass), and others just added what they pleased. Other ways we extended the concept was by reading Eric Carle's *The Tiny Seed*, a book with wonderful illustrations that describe the life cycle of a flower. Also at circle time, we discussed various flowers, the parts of a flower which emphasized new vocabulary that was discussed in the book, and sang flower related songs. Now, we are just waiting for all the flowers to pop up in our yards so we can talk about them with our families!

~ Mrs. Barlow

Mrs. Barlow teaches in the 3 Day Room 3 class





Second Year Project Notes

Spring has arrived...in the air, in our songs, in our step and in our activities and projects. At Berrybrook children discover and observe buds blossoming, birds nesting and the babbling brook at the Nook. They wonder "Where did all that water come from"?

One of the traditional springtime activities is painting eggs. Some classes paint wooden eggs, some classes paint artificial eggs and some classes paint real eggs. Classroom Two will be painting real "blown" eggs. Over the years a technique has evolved for painting these fragile eggs. We call it "drip art" and it results in each egg being a one-of-a-kind "work-of-art".

Years ago each classroom had an "egg tree" on which to display these eggs. This "egg tree" was forced forsythia with eggs hanging from the branches by pieces of yarn. Needless to say, damage did occur similar to that which Humpty Dumpty experienced when he fell off the wall. Nowadays the eggs are safely packaged for the journey to their next destination, wherever that may be. Many of these "works-of-art" are gifts from the children to family members/relatives or someone else special in their lives. If you are planning on keeping all these eggs for yourself...think again! The children truly enjoy painting these eggs for gifts. They think about the person they are giving it to and the colors that person may like and those are the colors they use on the egg. Painting an egg for someone special to them gives purpose to their work. It has been observed that without purpose children lose interest after painting one or two eggs. With purpose they paint any number up to twelve eggs and beyond. The joy in their hearts is evident on their faces as they paint with anticipation of the moment when they will present their gifts to loved ones. Handled carefully, these precious works of art will last forever. Remember to date them!

The egg which symbolizes "birth and new life" has long been part of the Berrybrook history. At one time chickens were kept in the hip-roofed building near the exit to the street. For many years the building was called the "goat house" because Mrs. O'Neil kept goats there. Originally it was the "milk house" for "Molkiah Farm" home to prize-winning purebred Guernsey cattle. The word "Molkiah" stands for Molly Hezikiah Bradford. She was handicapped and the only child of Hezikiah Bradford, direct decendent of Governor Bradford who came on the Mayflower. Her given name was Mary, but because there were several Mary Bradfords she was called "Molly".

Elizabeth Stephanie, long time Berrybrook teacher brought chickens from her home to the "milk house" for the children to enjoy. Each day a child was chosen to collect the eggs. The child accompanied by a teacher would carry the basket to the "milk house", gather the eggs and carry them back to school. The child could choose an egg to take home. The remainder of the eggs went into the refrigerator where they were kept until there were enough to make scrambled eggs for snack!

Each year Mrs. Stephanie brought to school her incubator (a wooden box with light bulb and piece of glass to cover the top) and some fertile eggs. The eggs were marked on four sides with numbers 1,2,3,4. The eggs had to be sprinkled with water and turned throughout the day. The children would start by turning the eggs to #1 and continue to turn them in consecutive order. In the absence of children, teachers took over the job. At last they hatched! The chicks stayed at Berrybrook for a few days and then Mrs. Stephanie took them to her chicken coop back home.

Another springtime tradition was dying eggs. Teachers boiled a pot of eggs for their class, letting the eggs sit in hot water until it was time to “perform magic”. Four colors of dye were put in cups. The teacher wrote the child’s name on the egg using a white china marker and carefully put it into the color of choice. The child would turn it with a spoon until the desired shade was reached. It was magical for them to see their name appear. The teacher removed the egg and put it to dry in an egg carton. The child’s job was to remember the color of the egg and recognize their name. The next day the children went on an egg hunt in the block room. After all the eggs were found, children and teachers sat at the tables. Each person removed their own shells and ate hard boiled eggs with salt and pepper. They were in awe! It was a fun time for all. We laughed and laughed and laughed!

The following are traditional Berrybrook springtime songs.

Spring, Oh Spring, is coming
Away will go the snow
And we will sing together
Hi le, hi le, hi lo.

Spring is coming!
Spring is coming!
How to you think I know?
I saw a pussy willow
And that is how I know.

~ Mrs. O’Neil

Mrs. O’Neil teaches in the 5 Day class

FROM THE LUNCH BUNCH TEACHERS

Thank you to parents for carefully packing lunches that are safe for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation, understanding and your attention to checking ingredient labels.

Thank You!



Parents Association Notes

Spring is here! Let's cross our fingers that the some warm weather will allow us to pack lunches and enjoy extended time on the playground!

Enrichment

April is always a busy month for enrichment. Miss Kim will continue the student's yoga exploration. Plus school pictures will take place and the staff from Soule Homestead will make their annual visit after April vacation. During Soule Homestead's visit, first year students will learn about farm animals and participate in an exciting craft. Later in May, second year students will have a special visit from Annawon.

Family Fun Fridays

Family Fun Fridays are still going strong thanks to our enthusiastic enrichment coordinators! For our next Family Fun Friday, join us on April 7th from 1:30-2:30. We will head to Alley Kat Lanes in Kingston for some bowling fun. They will set up the bumpers so that our little bowlers can enjoy themselves. The cost for this event is \$5/child. Please sign up at the BPA table and indicate how many children you will be bringing so we can be sure to arrange for the correct number of lanes.

Spring Fling

Each year the BPA sponsors a casual end of year celebration for all the families. Please save-the-date for this special event on Wednesday, May 17th from 4-5:30 p.m. with a rain-date of Thursday, May 18th. Be on the lookout for additional details regarding this fun afternoon!

Berrybrook Parent Night Out

The Parent Night Out has been rescheduled for Thursday, April 27th at 7:00! We hope many of you can join us for a relaxing night out at Station Eight, in Marshfield. This is a great opportunity to meet parents in other classrooms, chat about upcoming events and share some of your favorite Berrybrook stories. The BPA will provide appetizers to munch on. If you are interested in attending please rsvp to berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com or at the BPA table.

BPA Officers 2017-2018

The BPA is looking for new officers for the 2017-2018 school year! New faces bring new ideas and your commitment can be as little or as much as you like. If you are interested please reach out to the BPA or Mrs. Watts/ Mrs. Piccuito.

As always thank you to those that have already paid their BPA dues! Each contribution provides great school enrichment and subsidizes many of our Family Fun Friday events. If you have yet to contribute it is not too late. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback email us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

Thank you! Jill Cooney & Danielle MacKinnon Co-Presidents



Conversation Connections

Tuesday, April 11 at 9:15 - 10am

Join Mrs. LaForest and other families to discuss common challenges when raising young children.

Children are welcome as play materials will be available.

Hope to see you there!

~ Connections



**JOIN THE CONNECTIONS TEAM
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2017**

7-8 PM

We invite you to join us for a conversation about transitioning to new Berrybrook programs as well as kindergarten.

Families who have already experienced these transitions with their children will be joining us to share their successful tips.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU.

Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. LaForest



From The Board of Directors



We have all heard the saying “April showers bring May flowers” and in our case, let’s all hope they are rain showers and not snow showers! According to the Farmer’s Almanac flowers, herbs, and trees all have different meanings.

Red roses symbolize love and desire, but different colors have different meanings.

Dark red rose: unconscious beauty

White rose: purity, innocence

Pink rose: grace, happiness, gentleness

Yellow rose: joy, friendship, promise of a new beginning

Orange rose: desire and enthusiasm

Lavender rose: love at first sight

Coral rose: friendship, modesty, sympathy



Here are some more, for the whole list check out almanac.com:

Aloe: healing, protection, affection

Arborvitae: unchanging friendship

Basil: good wishes

Chives: usefulness

Crocus, spring: youthful gladness

Daffodil: regard

Geranium, oak-leaved: true friendship

Holly: hope

Lilac: joy of youth

Mint: virtue

Morning glory: affection

Peony: happy life, happy marriage

Tulip, yellow: sunshine in your smile

Violet: loyalty, devotion, faithfulness, modesty

Source: The 2009 Old Farmer’s Almanac

Molly Hollister
Board Member





The Berrybrook Summer Nature Program is offered during June and July on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 – 1:00. Children must be 4 by September 1st , (or Berrybrook Beginners!) to register. We also welcome siblings up to 7 years of age. Check with the office for specific week availability.