

## January 2018

<b>Tuesday, January 2</b>	<b>2018-2019 Enrollment Begins</b>
<b>Monday, January 15</b>	<b>Martin L. King Jr. Day - No School</b>
<b>Thursday, January 18</b>	<b>Connections Curriculum Night</b>
<b>Saturday, January 20</b>	<b>Berrybrook Open House 10 am - 12 pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, January 24</b>	<b>Professional Day - No School</b>
<b>Wednesday, January 24</b>	<b>Board Meeting 7:00 pm</b>



### Notes from the Head of School

This month, Berrybrook School celebrates a very important anniversary. On January 2, 1978 Mrs. O'Neil began teaching at Berrybrook. FORTY years ago!! It's hard to imagine anyone in this day and age working in the same environment for forty years, but even more astounding to recognize that this time has been spent in the demanding field of early childhood education. Mrs. O'Neil has been an educator at Berrybrook so long, she has now taught many children of her former students. I told her that her next accomplishment will be having a student who is a grandchild of a former student!

Often when Mrs. Piccuito or I are touring a prospective alum family around the school, they will shyly mention they have memories of Mrs. O'Neil being their teacher and then they are shocked to learn that she is still teaching! Usually, the next step is a remark that there is no way she will remember them and then we are all floored when she will recognize them. She may not recall their name as they walk through the classroom on that tour, but she will usually come to the office later with a tidbit or story of the former student. It's amazing to me each and every time that happens.

Please join me in congratulating Mrs. O'Neil on this amazing accomplishment, and on her life dedication to supporting children and families. She has easily educated hundreds of children in her tenure at Berrybrook, but it goes without saying that her influence goes way beyond the classroom. Mrs. O'Neil has always put Berrybrook as one of her top priorities, and I am personally thankful to reap the benefits of her knowledge and experiences. She has taught me a thing or two along the way, and continues to do so. Thank you, Mrs. O'Neil.

Wishing you a fantastic 2018 ~ Mrs. Watts

# ***Beginners Notes***

## Come Together To The Circle



Perhaps it begins with a song sung by a teacher, a song on CD, a favorite tune on one of the Berrybrook record albums, or a song recently downloaded on the class ipod. Whatever the source, music symbolizes Circle Time to Beginners. Just as a teacher singing the Hello Song at Story Time tells children to come on over to share a story, music at Circle Time announces to children, “It’s time to sing, dance, move our bodies, laugh and be joyful, learn something new, or learn something by remembering and repeating class favorites.

Circle Time for the Beginners Class can involve many different moods and feelings. It develops naturally in response to the children’s energy and may relate to what they are seeing and experiencing around them. There is a lot going on around Beginners. From the moment they wake up, life is about their favorite blanket or stuffed animal, how they get dressed and brush their teeth, what’s for breakfast, how cold or warm it is outside, what they see on the car ride to school. How they feel about saying goodbye to their mom, dad, grandparent or caregiver and thinking about when they’ll see them after we sing the Goodbye Song. What emotions they are feeling that day, whether they feel like building, painting, or exploring with water, and....perhaps most importantly...what they’ll eat for snack! With all of this whirling around the Beginners, songs, movement and fun at Circle Time relate to it all. Maybe we play the “Elevator Song” to practice, again, how to balance as our body rises slowly with each elevator floor sung aloud. Then comes the song “Miss Lucy Had A Turtle” because our hearts delight in laughing together when we make the funny sound with our tongue representing how the turtle sounds after “eating up all the soap”. Songs like “She’ll Be Coming ‘Round The Mountain” test our listening and sequencing skills as we need to remember each part in order and practice the appropriate movement along with the lyrics!

Added activities at Circle Time, such as anticipating what’s in the Magic Pouch, allows for a quiet experience and emphasizes strong focus. The process gradually evolves from everyone getting and holding their own item from the Magic Pouch to each having a turn holding, then passing to each other, only one item. This demonstrates great strides in listening, patience and responsibility. To conclude Circle Time each day, children relax into the reassurance of the Goodbye Song, happily and gently singing along with each of their classmates, teachers and goldfish, knowing their caregiver will soon come through the door and all will be well in their world.

For all of the above to occur one may ask, “How much time is allotted for Circle Time for Beginners?” The range of all these glorious experiences of a Beginner Circle Time in September and October began at a developmentally appropriate duration of 5 minutes, grew to 7 – 10 minutes through late November and most recently became extended to 10 – 12 minutes. As the Beginners return from the Holiday Break and become reacquainted with the daily routine they will be ready for Circle Time to be a little bit longer and to include more movement activities...even added movement activities as a class in the Multipurpose Room! We look forward to it!  
Happy New Year!

~ *Mrs. LaForest*

*Mrs. LaForest teaches in the Beginners, 3 Day room 3, and 4 Day room 2*

# **First Year Notes**

## *Sensory in the classroom*



First year activities include many options for sensory play each and every day. Look in each first-year classroom, and you will find many options for sensory play throughout the room. Sand play, water play, playdough, and finger painting with not only paint, but also mud, shaving cream, and snow are some of the things children can explore with. The water table also lends itself to many interesting sensory interactions.

Just recently, bins of glitter were involved as part of a project. The children were directed to add some glitter to their masterpiece before they were put aside to dry. As I observed the glitter fall through their hands, I noticed some children giggle with delight, others looking pensive, and still others becoming agitated. Each child had an individual reaction to this new sensation.

So why is this important for children to experience? There are many benefits for young children. This type of play enhances children's learning by stimulating their senses. What a wonderful way to explore our world! Sensory play supports language development, cognitive growth, fine and gross motor skills, problem solving skills and social interaction.

Because there is no right or wrong way to play, sensory activities provide opportunities for children to learn make their own discoveries. This allows them to make and create their own conclusions about their play.

Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates your child's senses: touch, smell, taste, movement, balance, sight and hearing. Sensory activities facilitate exploration and naturally encourage children to use scientific processes while they play, create, investigate and explore.

And it's fun!

~ *Mrs. Dunn*

*Mrs. Dunn teaches in the 3 Day room 3 and the 2 Day classes.*

\*\*\*\*\*

***Berrybrook would like to thank everyone who donated to the Kingston Animal Shelter. The animals are more comfortable and content this winter because of your generosity.***

\*\*\*\*\*

# **Second Year Notes**

*January is for the birds*



In the month of January, the second year students learn all about birds. They usually have lengthy conversations about the differences and similarities among bird types, where they live, the sounds they make, the eggs they lay, etc. We have a few projects where we create different birds using various classroom materials such as, construction paper, glue, markers, water colors, scissors, and of course, feathers!!!. The children have to trace, cut, and assemble the birds in regard to the bird's body, head, wings, legs, feet, eyes, and beaks. They really have to take time to think about what the particular bird they are working on looks like and then create their own. What I enjoy most about these projects is how different and unique each child's bird is! No two birds are alike! You really can see how they use their imagination and their creativity.

Some of the bird projects the children make include a penguin (the penguin's body is actually traced from your child's shoe!) and an owl. The students also create bird tracks using pipe cleaners and wood blocks, learn some fun bird songs, and we read some great books about birds. One of my favorite books is actually about a fictitious bird named "Gertrude McFuzz". This is a book by Dr. Seuss which has a great moral to the story regarding liking yourself for who you are, and not trying to be like someone else. Gertrude has one feather on her tail, and her friend has more. She learned that having more feathers on her tail did not make her a better bird and she was perfect with her tail the way it is. The children enjoy the story with Dr. Seuss's silly names of the characters and the sing-song rhyme and rhythm of his words. We follow up this book with a water color project of the character, "Gertrude McFuzz".

Gertrude is portrayed on water color paper. The children select the colors they wish to paint her. They carefully dip their brushes in the water, then in the water color paint, and then use gentle brush strokes on the water color paper to spread the color. They learn how to change colors by washing the color off in the water, then start a new fresh color. When they have completed painting all of Gertrude's body, they add one feather to her tail in a color they choose.

This project, as well as the other bird projects, solidify the information they have learned about birds. They enjoy this unit and enjoy learning and creating their own birds. Look for your child's work as it will be displayed in the hallways, and in our classroom. You will see, as we teachers do, the thought and creativity that your children have put in!

~ *Mrs. Fosdick*

*Mrs. Fosdick teaches in the 4 Day room 1 class*

## **LUNCH BUNCH**

### **Second Session**

**The second session of lunch bunch begins on January 30th. Currently enrolled families have the option to continue. If any spots become available, the office will make the availability known in the middle of January.**

The Berrybrook Staff would like to thank the Parents Association for arranging snacks for our monthly after-school meetings. Each month we have a 2 hour meeting to discuss curriculum and other matters. These meetings are scheduled from 4:15-6:15 and we appreciate having a snack to fortify us. We are thankful for all of the support and encouragement we receive from parents. It is very thoughtful of parents to take time from their busy schedules to prepare refreshments for us.

Thank You Very Much!!

## ***Parents Association Notes***

Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the holiday sing alongs and had a wonderful holiday break!! We wanted to thank the entire Berrybrook community for allowing us to collaborate with Youth Villages for the Holiday Heroes program. The outpouring of support for our giving tree was fantastic. We made many holiday wishes come true! We are also so grateful for your support of this year's all-school holiday gift for our teachers and staff. They certainly deserve to be showered with our praise and thanks for all that they do for our children day in and day out. During such a hectic time of year, the generosity of Berrybrook families made us feel proud and allowed us to reflect on what is truly important! Stay tuned for additional ways to donate to our community in the upcoming months.

We will be working on the details of some enrichment opportunities for the community upon the children's return in January. Stay tuned!

Thank you to those that attended the Mix-It-Up kitchen event and our special day of shopping at Rock Paper Scissors. A special thank you goes out to Kristina Barry and Kate Bean for coordinating these events.

As always, thank you to those that have already paid their BPA dues! If you have yet to do so, it's not too late! We ask for a \$30 contribution per family, which goes directly toward student enrichment in and out of the classroom. Forms are available at the BPA table. A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation!

Thank you!

*Diana Stewart and Jenna O'Donnell* Co-Presidents  
[berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com)

# ***From The Board of Directors***

## ***Berrybrook Friendships***

Happy New Year Berrybrook Families!

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season! As parents we all strive for our children to have happy memorable holidays, and we simply do whatever it takes to make that happen! The effort that it takes can be exhausting but certainly worth it. Now that the holidays are behind us and January is here, it is the time when many of us reflect on the past year, reassess our busy lives and think about what we want to accomplish or do to balance our lives during the next year.

I am in my second year as a Berrybrook Board member, and as I reflect on the past year, I think about how Berrybrook has continued to be a part of my life even past the time when my daughter attended this wonderful school. My daughter, Hannah, is now in second grade, and her time spent at Berrybrook continues to be a positive part of her life that she speaks about often. She'll talk about how exciting it was when Mrs. LaForest came to our house on visiting day, how much she loved playing with the baby dolls in her classroom and how special it was when the classroom celebrated her birthday with popsicles and her special crown. Hannah has a summer birthday so anytime she gets to celebrate her "birthday" with classmates, it's a big deal! Berrybrook was a positive experience from the moment I walked in and was greeted by Mrs. Watts who was nice enough to give me a tour around the beautiful school, and I knew within minutes that this was the preschool for us. I wanted her to have fun, learn, play and develop special friendships. And that she did!

Five years later...what I didn't expect the day that we started at Berrybrook was the special friendships that I too would make and maintain with other families we were fortunate to meet. Every time I would be at drop off, pick up, on the playground, or any other Berrybrook activity, it was a chance for me to meet great families who turned into special, lasting friends to this day. The importance of making friends to feel more connected to the community is as valuable to adults as it is to our kids, and Berrybrook is influential in creating an easy environment for such friendships to start.

I wonder when Katharine Mann founded Berrybrook, if she was aware of how influential Berrybrook would be at starting friendships for children and families that would last for years. As a family, Berrybrook will always be the place where we made our first new friends in our new hometown.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2018,

Cheryl LaLonde  
Berrybrook Board of Directors



### **Colder weather is on its way...**

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Public Schools** are closed due to weather emergencies. Please watch 7NEWS (NBC) for cancellation notices. As the weather changes, be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play, including the Nook. Now is a good time to locate all hats, mittens, gloves, and warm jackets that will be necessary as we head into December. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers, or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom. **Please remember to label all clothing.**



Thank You!

We would like to thank all the families for their generosity this holiday season.

All the notes, goodies, and gifts were very much appreciated.

Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Watts



## **BERRYBROOK OPEN HOUSE**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2018**

**10 A.M. - 12 P.M.**

**SPREAD THE WORD!!!**