



March 2021

March 19

Enrollment Contracts Due



## Notes from the Head of School

My family has just starting dipping our toes into the college process . . . . my oldest son has been convinced for a few years now that he wants to go to Clemson University however we are encouraging him to explore lots of schools in addition to CU. He knows he wants to go into biology but he's not exactly certain in what area. He's sixteen and shouldn't know exactly what he wants to do with the rest of his life. When I think back many, many years ago to when I was sixteen obviously what was important to me then are mere memories now. It's amazing what perspective will do.

Yesterday I received an email from the Director of Guidance at his school. I had never received anything from her before, and just thought that maybe we had graduated into that clump of emails now that he'll be moving into his junior year. I figured I would read it later, but for some reason it kept calling to me from my inbox. The gist of the article she sent was about a college admissions counselor who after 30 years in the field was rethinking his approach. His own daughter, who was starting her college application process, was doubting herself and her abilities to succeed in being accepted at a "respectable" school especially with all the opportunities missed this past year due to COVID. He reflected on all the students he has counseled in the past about taking the most challenging courses and overloading in extra-curricular activities. His wife, who had also worked in

admissions, calmly said to their daughter: “Just Do Your Best”. I couldn’t agree more. I am not advocating for people to slack off, but in fact I hope that as we approach the one-year mark of COVID people know that doing their best is okay. It’s better than okay, in fact it is great. As we approach the height of what I think of as Pandemic Fatigue, know that your best is just that. Saying that it’s enough makes it seem like we’re settling (is ‘enough’ greater or less than ‘good’? Should I strive for more than ‘enough’?) so as long as I know I’m doing my best, I will sleep well at night. Again, it’s no excuse for slacking but give it a try - know you’re doing your best. Then translate it to your children and look at a them through the lens of their best. It’s pretty freeing and helps take the stress off trying to be THE best.

This parenting thing can be hard, from babyhood to beyond. DO YOUR BEST.

~ Mrs. Watts



***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.***

## ***Teacher's Notes***

I'm sure many of you have seen the exciting sounds and images coming from NASA's rover, Perseverance, as it explores the planet Mars. It's such a remarkable accomplishment, even more so considering it was done during a world-wide pandemic. This mission didn't just demonstrate what amazing things science can accomplish, it also demonstrated what we as humans can accomplish if we persevere. The literal definition of perseverance is the continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. That's exactly what's happening here at Berrybrook.

So much has been asked of Berrybrook children, parents and staff over the past year and I'm very proud of how much we've all been able to accomplish. How we've worked together and persevered. I do however admit, it's not always easy to stay positive, to feel at ease, to maintain hope for a return to normal. When things get tough I try to remember these thoughts:

1. The way things are today is NOT the way they will always be.
2. I know so many who have survived difficult times. COVID pales in comparison to what they've gone through. If they can survive, so can I.
3. Be intentional. I need to remember why I'm doing what I'm doing; focus on the end goal.
4. Give myself permission to not be perfect.
5. To not be afraid to lean on those around me. We are stronger when we work together.
6. Practice gratitude. Sharing kind words and positive thoughts can lift both the giver and the recipient.

It was almost a year ago that Covid closed our Berrybrook doors. I am thankful that school is open and the hallways are filled with children. I am thankful that Berrybrook still feels like Berrybrook, from the projects decorating our walls to the songs that fill the air. I am thankful to the families that returned and entrusted us with their most prized possessions. I am thankful for my co-workers who are always there supporting me and ready to help. And I am thankful to the children who come to school happy, masks on, socially distanced, and excited to see what the day holds. None of us have ever lived through what we're experiencing today, and I predict we will always remember what it was like to live with COVID. My wish for you, for your children, and for me is that we will continue to persevere and look forward to the day this is all a distant memory.

*~ Mrs. Rosen*

*Mrs. Rosen teaches in the Beginners, 3 Day room 3 and 4 Day room 1 classes*

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

Same, different, together.

Since the world changed last March, I've tried my best to keep some of our family routine basically the same as it was before the pandemic (bedtimes, meal times...that's pretty much it). At the same time, some of the differences from the "before" are joyful. My husband has newfound sympathy for the years that I worked in our home office, where he now works, that has mysteriously inadequate heating. My children have found a lot of creativity in their boredom when not in school. And we are all together.

Aspects of Berrybrook have also comfortingly stayed the same: the centering routine of pick up and drop off, and Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Watts' unwaveringly gentle helpfulness. At the same time, many of the differences have been welcome. I've been able to share Berrybrook with my children's grandparents and friends who live far away, through the exceptional emails home describing the school week. Every week, I learn more about Berrybrook, and more about my own children. I know it's a lot of extra work for the teachers. But it has shown me how remarkably they adapt to challenges, while keeping us connected together.

I'm struck each time my daughter brings home something from her 5 day program that focuses on "same, different, together." Mrs. LaForest reminded all of us about this idea in the October newsletter. It's an extraordinary thing for me to know my daughter is learning this concept, and a wonderful reminder that no matter what, the Berrybrook community is the same. And different. And together.

*~ Lucy Weilbrenner  
Board of Directors*