



May 2021

<b>*Tuesday, May 11</b>	<b>4 and 5 Day Class Pictures</b>
<b>*Wednesday, May 12</b>	<b>3 Day Class Pictures</b>
<b>*Thursday, May 13</b>	<b>2 Day and Beginners Class Pictures</b>
<b>Monday, May 31</b>	<b>Memorial Day - no school</b>

**\*Rain dates will be scheduled as needed**

### Notes from the Head of School

A few weeks ago I was listening to a podcast about intermittent fasting and the guest speaker was a former NFL player. I thought about skipping that episode, believing that what he had to say might not be meaningful. A few minutes in I heard him say "Choice - that's a superpower. Our choices are our superpowers." Wait, WHAT?!? How could I have almost missed hearing one of the most profound phrases I've ever heard?? Studies show we are faced with up to 35,000 choices each day. We don't tend to think of "how much toothpaste should I squeeze onto my toothbrush" as a major choice but who knows which of our 'small' choices will have larger impacts on our lives? I'm not sure about you but it's exhausting just thinking that we make that many decisions every day!

I started this newsletter on a Saturday morning while my oldest was at an appointment and I took up my usual spot in the waiting room. I was trying to reflect on how many choices I had made already; at 10:05am, I couldn't have made that many choices right? But then I thought about it . . . . my son has his driver's permit and just the drive alone to the appointment was an abundance of choices. First, do I even let him drive us here? Do we take the back roads or the try the highway for the first time (😬)? When do I tell him that he's too close to the mailbox? Am I setting a bad example catching up on some emails while he's

driving since he's doing well, or will that set a bad example? Should I tell him when he can go a bit faster, or should he learn that on his own? WHEN DO I TELL HIM THAT HE'S TOO CLOSE TO THE MAILBOX?!? After the appointment was over (and my blood pressure returned to baseline) we got to do this all over again - with the added choice of: drive-through or carry-out for the traditional after appointment milkshake stop at Chick-fil-A? After that two hours, it was easy to see how quickly opportunities for choices can grow exponentially.

I try to teach my children that life is all about choices, even when you may not think you have any. It's also important to remember that by not deciding, you are deciding to do nothing; to quote philosopher William James "When you have to make a choice and don't make it, that is in itself a choice." I try to give them confidence-traction with smaller choices before they are faced with bigger life decisions. I also want them to know that all choices have consequences - both positive and negative. You chose to study longer and then you earned a higher grade than you expected? Wise choice! You decided to stay up later than your bedtime and now you're falling asleep in your cereal? Not so-good-choice. When they make a not-so-great choice, I often ask them later if they would have made a different choice if they could. Hopefully such scenarios will help mold their later-in-life choices, as they have these earlier experiences to reference. Our superpower of making choices is unique to us, as only we can make choices for ourselves (but must learn to live with the consequences). We're responsible for modeling good-choice making until our little ones have the experience to make their own but for now, help give them the confidence and allow them choices along the way. If you have time, let them choose which way to go home. Let them choose to take a left or a right turn to get to your house, and see which way might take longer if you choose to head in a direction different than you usually take. Just make sure that both choices will lead you where you need to end up and don't get too close to the mailbox!

~ Mrs. Watts

For the record, I decided that I wasn't brave enough yet for the highway OR for him to maneuver those tight drive-through lanes!!

# ***Teacher's Notes***

## Transformation

As the buds on tree branches are now leaves, the blossoms of flowers now open to reveal beautiful colors, and the grass all around us now a luscious green...so have your children grown and changed! Our spring parent-teacher conferences allowed for great conversations describing in detail the many ways in which your children have progressed throughout the school year, reaching several milestones of development.

Remember when you wondered what their school day would be like? Especially this challenging year with covid?

Remember when there was concern if they would be able to say good-bye to you at the door?

Remember when they first began to mention some of their classmates' names to you?

Remember when they shared with you when they first found a friend?

Remember when you first heard them singing a song they learned at school?

Remember when they first told you something new they learned how to do?

Remember when they described to you all about our classroom celebrations such as Halloween? And Thanksgiving?

Remember when you would watch together their Holiday Sing A Long video over and over again?

Remember when they showed you all their treasured valentines they received on Valentine's Day?

Remember how proud they were to show you the eggs they found?

It didn't happen overnight, but rather each and every day a little something occurred ~ sometimes maybe even going unnoticed ~ until, all of a sudden, one day in spring, it happened!

You can now see it!

Your child...

is taller...appears older...has an even more uncanny sense of humor... holds new interests in things... notices important character traits in their classmates... is proud of themselves.. tries new things... has more determination and perseverance... is more responsible... and simply finds joy in the little things ~ which to them, are the big things.

This month, as a tradition, some very special visitors will arrive at Berrybrook.

Caterpillars!

We will observe them as they grow and change. We will practice patience as they reside in their chrysalis for a time. We will wonder what is going on in there, preparing

them for such a transformation as the one they are about to embark on. Then we will get to see the magic...

Butterflies!

This beloved tradition is the culmination of the entire school year. Your children have prepared, practiced, grown and graduated to another developmental level that encompasses every bit of who they are and who they are becoming. Once again, we thank you for entrusting us with them so that we could be a part of it. What an honor it has truly been.

Very soon they will fly!



*~ Mrs. LaForest*

*Mrs. LaForest teaches in the 5 Day and the 4 Day room 2 classes*

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

The tantalizing sounds, the stunning visuals, and the heartwarming story of a little boy who repairs his family's unshakeable discord with music make Disney Pixar's "Coco" a family favorite. It is a tale of a boy growing up in Mexico who struggles to find the balance of following his passion for making music and honoring his family who forbids it. He experiences a fantastic journey through the worlds of the living and the dead to figure out who he is and where he comes from. Every time we watch it there are laughs, there are tears, there is tapping of the feet. It never fails.

The movie came out in 2017 and this probably seems a little late for a movie review. So it is not. But we watched it the other night during school vacation week and I thought a lot about my family – my larger family, including my grandparents and great grandparents and the countless ancestors I have, nearly all of whom I know so very little about. That we are living through a global pandemic and how difficult it is seeing the family that we do have and do know so much about plays a poignant role in my reflection.

I'm in my mid-thirties and I am beyond lucky and blessed to still have two grandparents alive and firmly in our lives. They live in Pennsylvania but we typically see them two or three times a year for an extended visit – mostly around the holidays. It's amazing for our children to have engagement with very healthy and active great grandparents. But since the world has changed so dramatically, we just haven't seen them (other than on a screen) in way too long. And of course I watch "Coco" and think of all my grandparents and great grandparents who are no longer with us. It's a tidal wave of both sadness as well as gratitude for the time we did have with them.

Before "Coco" delved very thoroughly into the rich traditions of Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), I admittedly didn't know too much about the holiday. But it's a sensational concept to keep our ancestors alive in the afterlife by remembering them and honoring them in the world of the living, passing along their stories to each generation so they are not forgotten.

Right before our 8-year-old was born, my husband and I spent a considerable amount of time on genealogy and ancestry and building a family tree. We ultimately found hundreds of relatives dating as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. We found amazing connections to Sir Isaac Newton, to George Washington's official mapmaker (whose drawings are in nearly all grade school history books), and even to the Plantagenets Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. My children and I have found my husband

insufferable when he insists we refer to him as “Your Majesty,” or “Your Royal Highness” ever since we made the discovery on his side of the tree.

Among the very few surprising revelations, however, is a seemingly anonymous list of relatives that sadly carries no personal stories. We don’t know about these women and these men that are responsible for our lives, our DNA, our personality. Beyond two or three generations, all we have are names and dates. Lost and gone forever are their tales, their adventures, their flaws, their dreams.

Some day, hundreds of years from now, I may merely be a name and some dates to a future generation. I can be okay with that so long as I’ve made a positive impact on my immediate family and those who will be willing to hang up my picture and tell a tale or two about me (only the good ones, obviously). This most recent viewing really made me think about how little time we have to do a lot for the ones we love.

If you haven’t watched “Coco” yet, you should. If you have, I hope you enjoyed it as much as we do. And whether you have or have not, hang up some pictures of some people who are no longer with us. Learn their stories and retell them. Though they may no longer be in the world of the living, they are very much alive in our hearts, minds, and souls.

Laura Picard

Berrybrook Board of Directors