

November 2024

November 11

November 13

November 27 28, 29

Veterans Day - no school

4 and 5 Day field trip

Thanksgiving Break - no school

Notes from the Head of School



Is “tolerance” a negative word? At first listen, it conjures up wisps of pessimism. Merriam-Webster’s definition:

tolerance (noun) tol·er·ance

1: capacity to endure pain or hardship : ENDURANCE, FORTITUDE, STAMINA

2 a: sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own

b: the act of allowing something : TOLERATION

3: the allowable deviation from a standard

especially: the range of variation permitted in maintaining a specified dimension in machining a piece

4 a(1): the capacity of the body to endure or become less responsive to a substance (such as a drug) or a physiological insult especially with repeated use or exposure

developed a tolerance to painkillers

also : the immunological state marked by unresponsiveness to a specific antigen

(2): relative capacity of an organism to grow or thrive when subjected to an unfavorable environmental factor

b: the maximum amount of a pesticide residue that may lawfully remain on or in food

When we are helping children learn social lessons in the classroom, we help them to recognize and feel sympathy and empathy for others. By the definition above, it would almost seem as if we were teaching them tolerance. If I phrased it that way during an admissions tour “At Berrybrook we teach tolerance” vs “At Berrybrook, we are helping teach empathy for other”, I think I’d get some strange looks since it might imply a negative.

During November, the month of feeling thankful, I believe our empathies, tolerance, and certainly patience are tested. It goes without saying that this time of year is explosive with widely varying political views. The election is less than a week away, and while I’m confident in my political views but don’t share them freely, I will say

that I am nervous for our country regardless of who is declared the President. I hope that everyone not only *tolerates* a person's right to their political views, but that everyone also shows respect, a key value we model each and every day at Berrybrook. Years ago Mrs. O'Neil, who taught at Berrybrook for 40 years, wished something along the lines like "if only we could run the country how we model respect at Berrybrook, the world would be a better place". That sounds like utopia to me.

~ Mrs. Watts



Colder weather is on its way.....

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 November. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots with them every day. 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 WITH
YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**



Teacher's Notes

Understanding Food Allergies

As the leaves change and we prepare for Thanksgiving, I find myself reflecting on gratitude and community. During this festive season, when food plays a central role in our celebrations, food safety is a top priority for me and my family. Our oldest daughter has a severe peanut allergy. We are grateful that we live in a community where there is a high level of awareness for people with food allergies. Berrybrook has made a commitment to making sure that our classrooms, building, and grounds are safe for all of our children. If you are fortunate enough not to think about food allergies every day, my hope is to raise your awareness and share a few insights from my personal and professional experiences.

A food allergy occurs when a child's immune system reacts to a specific food as if it were a harmful substance. This can lead to a range of reactions, from mild symptoms like hives and stomach aches to severe life-threatening reactions known as anaphylaxis. Peanut and tree nut allergies are among the most common food allergies, affecting approximately 2-3% of children and representing a very real, life-threatening condition.

My husband and I found out the hard way that our daughter is allergic to peanuts. When she was a little over a year old, I gave her peanut butter for the first time - she immediately broke out into hives. A few hours later, once the Benadryl wore off, her reaction returned and she went into full anaphylaxis. I administered epinephrine and we had our first (of a few) ambulance rides to the hospital. With no family history, it came as a shock to me and my husband that our daughter had a life threatening allergy.

When she was little, she quickly learned to ask adults if food "was safe for her". Some well meaning people would say "yes", not understanding cross-contamination risks or how to read a food label. I was always scared she would unknowingly have an accidental exposure - especially when I wasn't with her. We lived in Pennsylvania at the time and picked a preschool based on our comfort level with their food policy. (It was a policy very similar to the one at Berrybrook.) Now that my daughter is in middle school, she is very responsible about what food she eats. She knows how to read labels, she understands the risk/reward calculation (it's not worth the risk!), and knows the signs of a reaction. But when she was young it was paramount that the adults around her helped her navigate a potentially dangerous situation.

One of the key measures implemented at Berrybrook is maintaining a "nut-free environment". We also make accommodations in specific classrooms if a child has another food allergy beyond peanuts and tree nuts, ensuring that every child's needs are met. It's important to remember that young children have not yet learned all the skills necessary to advocate for themselves, so it is crucial that as responsible adults, we shoulder some of that responsibility. When you pack a lunch or after school snack to be enjoyed on the playground, the simple act of checking ingredient labels or substituting a sun-butter sandwich for a PB&J makes a big difference.

Even if your child doesn't have a food allergy, your support can make a significant difference. By being mindful of the foods we bring to school, we can help prevent accidental exposures that could be harmful to others. Teaching our children to be kind and thoughtful towards others is one of the greatest lessons we can impart. A simple gesture—like checking labels, avoiding sharing snacks, or discussing allergies openly—can go a long way in creating a safe and welcoming community for everyone.

~ Mrs. Fagan

Mrs. Fagan teaches the 2 Day class

Parent Association Notes

Hello Berrybrook Parents!

Earlier this month we had our first Mom's Night Out at the Cross Street Flower Farm in Norwell. The weather turned out to be beautiful, the company was great and the dahlia fields were a sight to see! Thank you to everyone who came out to connect!

We would also like to thank everyone who contributed to this year's Flower Project. Last week the children and the teachers successfully planted 200 bulbs throughout the raised garden beds on the playground. We are so excited to watch them bloom this spring!

We had a very productive meeting this past Tuesday as we begin planning for May's Spring Fling. Although it's still several months away, we are looking for volunteers to help make this school fundraiser a success. Please keep an eye out for an email in the upcoming weeks to volunteer to help us plan!

We're looking forward to connecting with you this month as we support our local community through our Giving Tree initiative as well as a super fun Family Fun Friday event!

UPCOMING BPA DATES:

- November 4 - Berrybrook Apparel goes on sale
- November 8 - November Family Fun Friday Registration Deadline
- November 11 - Giving Tree begins for Plymouth Family Resource Center
- November 15 - FFF @ Strive Fitness, 3-4 pm and 4-5 pm

Seeking Class Parents: Are you interested in volunteering at Berrybrook during this school year? We are seeking one more class parent for the Beginners and 2 Day classes. Class Parent volunteer duties include organizing teacher gifts 2x per year (holidays and teacher appreciation/end of year) and collecting funds, emailing communications to families, purchasing and presenting gifts to teachers. You can email the BPA at berrymomparentsassociation@gmail.com to sign up. Keep an eye out for an email from your class parents as we head into the holiday season!

Berrybrook Apparel: We're introducing our new Berrybrook apparel just in time for the holidays! Apparel will be available starting Monday, November 4th at the apparel table inside Berrybrook. Be sure to take a look before or after your upcoming conference!

Family Fun Fridays: Our Family Fun Friday at Sauchuk Pumpkin Patch & Corn Maze had a great turnout! Thank you to all who attended.

We're excited for this month's Family Fun Friday at Strive Fitness on November 15th! [Sign up](#) today to join fellow Berrybrook families as the kids engage in an hour of fitness and fun.

Please reach out to Michelle at berrymomparentsassociation@gmail.com if you'd like to be added to the waitlist for our December Family Fun Friday at Edaville.

Community Outreach: Join the BPA in helping make this holiday season an especially memorable one by sponsoring a child of the Plymouth Family Resource Center. A Giving Tree will be set up inside the school entrance starting November 11th. Each ornament tag will feature a child's age and gender along with their wishlist. All gifts will be due, unwrapped, no later than December 12.

Enrichment Updates: The planning for this year's enrichment programming is already underway. Yoga with Miss Kim began for the 4 and 5 Day classes last month and will be introduced to the 3 Day, 2 Day and Beginners in January. Miss Kim has been visiting Berrybrook for many years and is always well-received and enjoyed by the students. We also have Jesse Stiglich returning this spring to engage the 4 and 5 Day students in a few fun drumming classes.

BPA Dues: Thank you to everyone who has already paid their annual BPA dues. If you have not already done so, the suggested \$40 contribution goes directly to our student enrichment program.

**[CLICK HERE FOR A FULL CALENDAR
OF BPA EVENTS](#)**

We're excited to connect throughout the busy holiday season!

Stephanie McGarry, Emma Kender and Michelle Crowley

berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com



From The Board of Directors

September and October have truly flown by! Although we've still had ample sunshine and warmth in October, fall is in full swing with countless red and gold leaves piling up on our lawns. For our family, November usually marks the time when we feel a little more settled into our school year routines. We've had some time to adjust to all that is new: new teachers, new classmates, new activities, and new expectations. This year was an especially big adjustment for us, with our youngest (Berrybrook graduate) heading off to kindergarten.

"New" can bring all sorts of worry and discomfort, and I find, a longing for what "was". After some foot stomping, some tears, and a fair amount of wishing we could just freeze time, we see that our son is loving his new routine, and carries so much of Berrybrook with him. We see it in his smile, in the way he talks with his friends, and the way he explores his world with such curiosity. Berrybrook will always be our anchor. The thing that stays the same in the midst of all that is new. Once we had some time for *new* to become *normal*, we started to see all the beauty and joy in watching our youngest "grow up". This year we've been able to play card games as a family; we see a newfound interest in writing as he asks us how to spell various words, and we see bravery in trying new activities and learning new skills.

As we step into November, and begin to think about Thanksgiving, we know that we are so thankful for our time at Berrybrook.

Bethany DeCollibus
Berrybrook Board of Directors



Snow Days/School Cancellation

It is our policy to cancel classes whenever Duxbury Public Schools are closed due to weather emergencies. Families should watch Channel 7, WHDH for a school cancellation at Berrybrook. Every attempt at notification will be made through email messages, text messages, phone calls via OneCallNow and/or social media.

****In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a one hour delay, Berrybrook will have the usual 9 am arrival time.****

*****In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a two hour delay, the AM session will be cancelled as well as Lunch Bunch.****

A Season of Giving

Kingston Animal Shelter Donations

The month of November, as everyone knows, is traditionally the start of the holiday season. Here at Berrybrook, it is the time of year that teachers share yet another meaningful tradition with the introduction of a Berrybrook Community Service Project that was started many years ago. Families may bring in donations of supplies needed to benefit the Kingston Animal Shelter. To receive these donations, boxes will be decorated by the children in each class with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals. These boxes will be placed near the front door to collect items brought to school. There will also be “Pennies For The Pound” jars in the classrooms for the children to add their coins brought from home. There will be class discussions about “what is an animal shelter?”, “adoption of pets”, and “being respectful of all living things.” It is important for children to develop empathy and practice kindness. Taking care of pets and other animals is a meaningful way for children to develop these traits. Any and all donations will be appreciated by the animals and the shelter. Thank you for your help!



