



Friends Corner *Express*

www.brixhammontessori.org

**BRIXHAM MONTESSORI
FRIENDS SCHOOL**

18 Brickyard Court, York, ME • 207-351-2700 • info@brixhammontessori.org

Fall 2016 CALENDAR of EVENTS

October 7
Staff Development Day/No School

October 10
Columbus Day/No School

October 13
Parent Education Night: Language and Practical Life, 5:30pm

October 14
Grandparent's Day and Special Friend Day for Extended Day and Elementary, times vary

October 14
BMFS Family Pumpkin Hayride, 3:30pm and 4:30pm

October 18
School Day Open House, 9:30am

October 26
Early Release/Staff Meeting, 12noon

November 5
BMFS Fall Fest and Open Classrooms, 10am-12noon

November 11
Parent and Teacher Conferences/ No School

November 17
Parent Education Night: Sensorial And Mathematics, 5:30pm

November 23-25
Thanksgiving Break/ No School

November 28
Holiday Wreaths and Poinsettia Sale

***Our Mission
To honor each child's
individuality, creativity,
and intellectual potential
through an enriched
Montessori educational
program***

A Note From Alica

Welcome to the 2016 fall edition of the Friends Corner- a quarterly newsletter published for our wider Brixham community to include Brixham grandparents, alumni families and staff, and friends of Brixham. We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and encourage you to stay in touch by "Liking us on Facebook" and reading our monthly blog post on the Brixham website, www.brixhammontessori.org. As always, we look forward to hearing from you; so please send us a note or email. We love to hear from you!

Cheers,
Alica

The Playground Continues to Evolve

Over the course of the past four years, Brixham has transformed the school's playgrounds into a nature lover's paradise. Twin Cedarworks slides have been upcycled and installed on a hill, the grand oak tree now provides support for the first of three platform levels (making a perfect stage for impromptu dances), and the old climbing gazebo lives again as an enchanted tree house. Each year something different emerges, providing opportunities for parents, teachers and children to collaborate on the "next great idea." Special thanks to Steve Chmielnicki, Shaye Robbins, Robin Stauble and Shannon Palace for their leadership on playground projects, as well as Dana Anderson of York RTS, for his generous support to remove the giant oak, and Shaye Robbins' father, Brian, for power-washing the old playground structure and making it like new, again.

Lower Elementary Teacher, Michael Stone, Wears a New Hat

Michael feels like one of the luckiest teachers ever! On Fridays, he gets to step out of the classroom and into the garden! Our year around school garden needed leadership and what better way to meet this need than to assign a veteran teacher to its cause! Michael is now our school garden coordinator and every Friday he leaves the lower elementary classroom to work outside with children from each of the programs. From planting seeds to pulling weeds, Michael is helping to create a curriculum that is not only fully integrated into the Montessori curriculum, but also meaningful and hands-on for every child. Thank you, Michael! To read a blog posted by Michael on the garden, please visit www.brixhammontessori.org/blog. You'll also see a post about the first ever Seacoast School Garden Day initiated by Brixham alumni teacher, Allie Fitzgerald.

"Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight"...BMFS WISH LIST:

fall bulbs	plastic sleds	plastic snow shovels
bunny food	aspen shaving	wild bird seed
		CD player



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Mission Accomplished: Dual-Accreditation

We are pleased to announce that Brixham has achieved accreditation with not *only* the American Montessori Society (AMS), but also the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). This achievement of dual accreditation highlights the enormous work and dedication of the Brixham community to think deeply and collaboratively about the school, and has helped establish and prioritize strategic goals for the future. Brixham is currently the only dual-accredited Montessori school in Maine and New Hampshire! Congratulations, Brixham!

Pinwheels for Peace is a special celebration where children around the world celebrate an International Day of Peace. It's also a day when butterflies are released!



2016-2017 ANNUAL APPEAL

Each year we ask Brixham parents, teachers, alumni, and grandparents to support the school with a donation to the Annual Fund so that Brixham can continue to offer excellence in its programs. Your support to the Annual Fund makes it possible and ensures that Brixham:

- attract and retain the highest qualified teachers and staff
- provide a curriculum that is rich in the arts and sciences
- maintain low student to teacher ratios and small classroom sizes
- care for its building and ground and make continuous improvements
- offer financial based tuition assistance for school-age children

As a not-for-profit school, tuition and fees alone do not cover the full cost of educating a child at Brixham. In fact, only 94% of the school's expenses are covered by tuition and program fees. We depend on our parents, teachers, alumni, grandparents and friends of the community to fill the gap by supporting our annual fund and by participating in our fundraising events, such as the holiday wreath and poinsettia sale and the benefit auction.

Please consider making an annual fund donation by the end of our fiscal year on June 30th. All gifts, great and small, are important and essential to our success. As a not-for-profit 501c3 school, your annual fund donation is 100% tax-deductible. Thank you for your generosity and support!

***Your annual fund donation will be recognized in our fy17 Annual Report
Thank you!***



Enjoying recess on "the bridge," an up-cycled Cedarworks playset from 1999 that's been reinvented to still have purpose and fun on the playground—thank you, King family, for this 2001 donation!

Brixham Welcomes New Teachers and Staff

We are so pleased to welcome two new 3-6 teachers to our staff: Barbara Mansfield and Jenifer Weaver. Barbara is a retired Montessori teacher who moved to Kittery last year only to find out that she misses the classroom! Barbara is supporting Leigh and Whitney on the two days that Leigh is not in the classroom. Jenifer returns to teaching after three years of gardening and her own artistic endeavors, and will support Meg in the afternoon four year old classroom and will work with Sarah O'Callaghan in late aftercare to provide a fun and creative nature-based, arts-enriched after school program for children, ages 2-11 years. Welcome to Brixham, Barbara and Jenifer!



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Positive Discipline in the Classroom *by Heather Ewing, 6-12 teacher*

Ewing, 6-12 teacher

Community meetings are an indispensable part of classroom work. When conducted on a regular basis, the meeting time can be used to create a structured forum for problem solving as a group. This consistency allows for students to know that problems will not be forgotten in the busyness of the week. Students feel confident that their concerns will be addressed even though they may have to wait until the next scheduled meeting day. Topics can range from managing the noise level during lunch time, to how to give and receive a compliment, to learning how to productively express strong feelings.

Community meetings provide an atmosphere unlike any other time of the day. It is a calm and neutral time to hear opposite points of view. Assembling in a circle allows everyone to see each other and everyone to be seen. The focus of the meeting is isolated, or limited to one item, and this creates a mindfulness and therefore a more productive experience.

Continued on back

2016 Class Gifts Brings Joy to the School

A very big thank you to the 2016 graduating classes of extended day/kindergarten and the elementary 3rd and 5th grades for their class gifts. The extended day/kindergarten students and their families gave Brixham a wonderful collection of early readers for their extended day/kindergarten classroom, the graduating third year students and their families designed and commissioned Andrew Wallace to build a beautiful wooden “buddy” bench for the playground, and the graduating fifth year students and their families gave two new Chromebooks to their upper elementary classroom, and helped out with the buddy bench gift- thank you, everyone, for your generous gifts!

Fall Fest Attracts New, Old, and Prospective Brixham Families

3-6 Teacher and Admissions Administrator, Heidi Salisbury Finley, is thinking of creative and fun ways to reach out to our community, and spread the word about Brixham! In its second year, the Fall Fest, is a morning of old-fashioned games and fall-themed crafts for children of all ages. This year we'll feature pony rides and a puppet show by local puppeteer, Lindsay and her Puppet Pals. Upper elementary students and recent graduates will help Heidi plan games and crafts, and make the afternoon a success. The fall fest is open to everyone and is held at school on the playground from **10-12noon on Saturday, November 5th**. Please bring a canned good or nonperishable food item to contribute to our basket of thanks. Also, volunteers are needed to help with set up and clean up- please let Heidi know if you can help out at gdf35@cornell.edu.

Parent Education Opportunities

Elementary Teacher, Heather Ewing, is gifted in helping children talk through everyday problems, and she would like to share this gift with parents by offering a series of parent workshops on Positive Discipline, an approach to discipline that provides kind but firm support for parenting to raise children who are confident and capable. For more information about these parent workshops to include dates and fee, please email the office at bmfs@brixhammontessori.org, or call 207-351-2700. To learn about how Positive Discipline works in the classroom, please read Heather's article in the sidebar.

Brixham will host two Montessori curriculum nights on **October 13th and November 17th** to learn the continuum of how practical life, sensorial, language and mathematics evolves from program to program. This journey through the curriculum is remarkable as it shines a light on Maria Montessori's brilliance at creating a curriculum that truly meets the child's needs from birth through adolescence.

2016-2017 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Angela Penfold, Chair Mark Rosen, Secretary Kelly St. Pierre, Treasurer

Michelle Sico Elisa Marhue Alica Johnson-Grafe, Head of School

Alison Bell, Business Administrator Heidi Salisbury-Finley, Admissions

Interested in serving on the Board of Directors or in a board advisory role? Please let us know!



Community Meetings, *continued*

Each idea presented is respected and finding solutions together is the goal as opposed to implementing consequences or casting judgement.

As the students gain more experience, they are able to more fully participate in the actual running of the meeting. This kind of investment is empowering and ultimately strengthens the community and allows it to run smoother. At the class meeting, all are welcome, all are respected, and all have the opportunity to play a role in piecing together solutions which work for the whole group.

Note: In this article, Heather describes the process Brixham uses to support children and adults when social problems come up in the classroom, as well as in the world at large. Here is a great link to thinking about more about punishment and its role with bullying, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/09/07/why-punishment-wont-stop-a-bully.html?cmp=eml-eb-popweek-09162016webmch>. The commentary is written by Alfie Kohn, a leader in educational thought and practice.

Staff and Alumni News

Marlane Bottino, retired 6-9 teacher, writes that she is happy to return to Brixham to teach Spanish in the lower elementary class this year and has added the Museums of Old York to her schedule, teaching groups of school children the traditional arts of fireplace cooking, wool dyeing, and preparing flax for spinning and weaving. Marlane continues to enjoy gardening, painting, writing poetry and children's stories, and traveling with her family.

Alison Bell, business administrator, returned to the classroom this fall, working with the toddlers in the morning. The new (old) position is a special treat for Brixham as now we get to see Alison most every day of the week! Alison continues her role as our business administrator in the afternoons.