

Shop Around & Learn More About Brookwood

September certainly went quickly. Fall is underway and we have had a terrific start in every area of the building. One of the events that already took place in September was the Pumpkin Fest in Cooperstown. This is one of a number of community events we participate in during the year, along with others like the Disco in February and BIG RIGS in June. If it weren't for volunteer help from the PTO, we would not have been able to successfully participate in this event. Thank you to Angela Chadwell, Heather Hubbard, Jocelyn Kummer, Shirley Barber, Anne Pawlowski, Chelsea Durham, Jude Ann Tooley, Linda Lofrumento, Lorraine Bissell, Sally Tedesco, Melissa Miller, and Sonia Brauer for coming out and helping children to make Pumpkin Pins and decorating cupcakes.

Coming up are two events that need your help. One is the "Shop Around" on Saturday, October 15th. This event brings in local at-home vendors and artisans to sell their wares in a central location, giving them a venue they might not otherwise have. In return, we "raise" items for our annual "Holiday Auction", which (this year will take place on Friday, December 2nd) is one of the major fundraising events Brookwood has. There are numerous (and easy) ways to participate, which you will hear about in the coming weeks and months.

This year, I thought it would be nice to "introduce" everyone to our Lead Teachers in each program. This way you can get to know the names and faces of teachers your child may not have directly, but who they see every day. We begin this month by spotlighting Barbara Belknap. Barbara has been at Brookwood for many years and keeps within her not only the history of the school, but its spirit as well. We are fortunate that she shares her talents with us and are happy to share that with you.

Brookwood is everyone's school. We say *school* because we feel that children are learning from the Infant program on through our school-aged program and that our programs offer more than a typical care setting including trained teachers, high quality materials, Montessori curriculum and more. We hope that there are lots of reasons for you to get involved and to help us grow all of these remarkable programs.

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Thank you to Dennis Ferguson for building us another bench for the patio!!



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

The "Shop Around" will give you a head start on holiday gifts!

Don't forget the building will be closed on Friday, October 7th for Staff Development.

From the Board - The Shop Around



Fall is upon us, and it is wonderful to see the kids learning and exploring at Brookwood. My son, Brendan, graduated from the Toddler program and started Preschool as a 3 year old this fall. As a parent, it is a pleasure to see how excited he is to go to Brookwood. He is learning so much through the Montessori program, and I know when I pick Brendan up, he will be chattering happily about his day. As a board member, it's gratifying to have firsthand knowledge that our dedicated teachers and staff have such a positive impact on the children of Brookwood.

October is also "Shop Around" time at the Brookwood School. The "Shop Around" is a great community event, held Saturday, October 15th from 11 am-3 pm. Over 20 artists, craftsmen, and at home vendors will be on hand in the Brookwood multi-purpose room displaying their wares. The PTO will have a kid's play corner, so you can shop while your kids play. This is a great opportunity to get a head start on Christmas shopping, as well as support our local community of artisans and businesses.

I appreciate your continued support of the school and its programs, and I truly believe that our children will be positively impacted by their experiences here.

Sincerely,

Marielle Ainsworth

Brookwood's 2011 "Town Hall Meeting"

On Tuesday, October 18th at 6:30

Please plan to join the Board of Trustees, Administrators and Teachers in our own "Town Hall Meeting" to learn about the state of the school today and the direction Brookwood is going in for the future. This meeting is intended for all of our families - Infants on up.

Some of the talking points for this meeting are:

Information on what a Montessori education means, how it is different, and why we value it.

"State of the Organization Address" & an open discussion on the future directions of the organization, particularly childcare.

Summary of the Board of Trustees Annual Meeting.

Calendar of upcoming events

The PTO and what it does.

Childcare for infants, toddlers and preschool will be available for \$3/child, but you must pre-register to insure appropriate staffing.

PTO Page

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All parents, grandparents and guardians of Brookwood children belong to the PTO, and are considered partners in education along with the Brookwood Staff. We encourage everyone to become active, involved members of the PTO and to participate throughout the year in improving the quality of the educational and life experiences of our children. Be sure to pick up your handbook in the lobby at Brookwood.

PumpkinFest was a great success for our PTO!

We had a booth on Sunday during the Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce PumpkinFest event with activities for children that included "Creating a Pumpkin Pin" and "Decorating a Cupcake", also a Cake Raffle. We sold out completely of around 150 cupcakes! Thank you to fellow active PTO members; Gina Reeves, Jocelyn Kummer, Shirley Barbar, Anne Pawlowski, Chelsea Durham, Judd Ann, Linda Lofrumento, Lorraine Bissell, Sally Tedesco, Hillary LaDuke, Sonia Bauer, Melissa Miller for managing our booth. An extra special Thank You goes out to Heather Hubbard for donating the Cake for our Cake Raffle and baking 150 cupcakes!

Shop-a-Round PTO Support is needed.

Shop-a-Round will be held on Saturday, October 15th from 11am-3pm. It's a great time to see all of our local vendors and craftspeople all in one place. Our role as PTO in giving our support to the event, includes hanging up posters, manning the kid's corner and our PTO table. We need volunteers to be at the PTO table and ideas for the PTO table such as an hourly cake raffle or bake sale. Also needed are volunteers to keep children entertained in the Children's Corner. Please contact Angela directly at pto@thebrookwoodschoo.org with questions and/or ways you can lend a hand. Even if you can give just one hour it really will help!

PTO MEETINGS

Meetings are held once a month on the first Wednesday of the month. This month our meeting is on **Wednesday, October 5th** at 6:00 pm.

WE COLLECT BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION!

Box Tops for Education is another simple program to earn cash for our school at no extra cost to you. Please clip Box Tops from hundreds of your favorite General Mills Products. Turn in your Box Tops and we will submit them and get 10 cents for each Box Top. You can also join the Box Tops Booster Club at www.boxtops4education.com and our school earns up to 8% of each qualifying purchase when you shop at over 200 online stores signed up with them. Periodically send your box tops to school with your child.



There are a number of programs that help benefit Brookwood directly by earning points, dollars or vouchers. Tools for Schools at Price Chopper requires that you sign up, but the other programs like Box tops for Kids and Labels for Education are about collecting the labels/box tops and turning them in. Look for a packet of information to come home on these programs and how you can help us acquire things like PE equipment.

"Come participate in this dedicated, energetic group of parents, teachers, board members and staff!"

Barbara Belknap

My name is Barbara Belknap. I am one of the lead teachers at Brookwood in the preschool area. My husband, Brian and I live in Burlington Green and have two children, Soraya (28) and Jonathon (26).

Soraya now lives in Oneonta with her husband and works as a Social Worker in a Hospice Organization, and Jonathon is a Registered Dietician at Bassett Medical Center.

I grew up on Long Island and moved to the Cooperstown area when I was 17. After college I became interested in textiles. I apprenticed with a weaver and began a small business in weaving and crafts.

When Jonathon was 3 years old I began to search for childcare. That's when I found and observed at the Brookwood Montessori School. I fell in love. Jonathon was enrolled in preschool and I started work as a classroom assistant. My first eight years I spent working and studying under Ann Wienke (the founder of the school) in the Montessori Method of teaching. I went on to receive my Montessori certification at the North American Montessori Center teacher training program. I have been involved in continuing education courses in child development and parent/child training classes.

This is my 23rd year at The Brookwood School. As I continue in my career of working with young children, my goal is to foster a love for learning and for them to acquire all they need to become independent and self-confident. Each new year is another fresh start and another opportunity for me to touch the heart of a child.



News You Can Use



Please sign up if your child (Preschool and up) will be here on Monday, October 10 for childcare.

Keep checking the calendar on the website for updates.

Please save box tops and sign up for Price Chopper rewards.

Whenever your child visits the doctor's office for a visit, please have them give you a copy or have them fax a copy of the well-child visit for our records. Bassett has a standard form that they have begun using which satisfies our requirements.

When signing in or out on the computer and you receive a MESSAGE, please read it, click FINISH, then FINISH again to complete your clocking in or out. If you have a problem, stop in the office to have Lorraine help you, or sign the green notebook.

Please do not leave envelopes, notes or financial papers on the main office desk. Give them to your classroom teacher who will make sure it gets where it needs to.

Shop-Around

Saturday, October 15th

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Understanding the Montessori Method

The Human Tendencies: The practical application of the Montessori Method is based on human tendencies— to explore, move, share with a group, to be independent and make decisions, create order, develop self-control, abstract ideas from experience, use the creative imagination, work hard, repeat, concentrate, and perfect one's efforts.

The Process of Learning: There are three stages of learning:

(Stage 1) introduction to a concept by means of a lecture, lesson, something read in a book, etc.

(Stage 2) processing the information, developing an understanding of the concept through work, experimentation, creation.

(Stage 3) "knowing", to possessing an understanding of, demonstrated by the ability to pass a test with confidence, to teach another, or to express with ease.

Indirect Preparation: The steps of learning any concept are analyzed by the adult and are systematically offered to the child. A child is always learning something that is indirectly preparing him to learn something else, making education a joyful discovery instead of drudgery.

The Prepared Environment: Since the child learns to glean information from many sources, instead of being handed it by the teacher, it is the role of the teacher to prepare and continue to adapt the environment, to link the child to it through well-thought-out lessons, and to facilitate the child's exploration and creativity. The Prepared Environment is essential to the success of Montessori. There must be just the right amount of educational materials to allow for the work of the child. However, one thing that has become very obvious in our materialistic society is that TOO MUCH is worse than TOO LITTLE. The basic collection of didactic materials has been thoroughly tested over many years and has been shown to engage the children as much today as it has, as much in the USA as in other countries. Therefore, it is very important to only supplement these materials with essential books and materials that are chosen only by an experienced teacher. The environment is arranged according to subject area, and children are always free to move around the room, and to continue to work on a piece of material with no time limit.

Observation: Scientific observations of the child's development are constantly carried out and recorded by the teacher. These observations are made on the level of concentration of each child, the introduction to and mastery of each piece of material, the social development, physical health, etc. on.

Teaching Method: There are no text books, and seldom will two or more children be studying the same thing at the same time. Children learn directly from the environment, and from other children—rather than from the teacher. The teacher is trained to teach one child at a time, with a few small groups and almost no lessons given to the whole class. She is facile in the basic lessons of math, language, the arts and sciences, and in guiding a child's research and exploration, capitalizing on interests and excitement about a subject. Large groups occur only in the beginning of a new class, or in the beginning of the school year, and are phased out as the children gain independence. The child is scientifically observed, observations recorded and studied by the teacher. Children learn from what they are studying individually, but also from the amazing variety of work that is going on around them during the day.

Basic Lessons: A well-trained Montessori teacher spends a lot of time during training practicing the many basic lessons with materials in all areas. She/he must pass difficult written and oral exams on these lessons in order to be certified. She is trained to recognize a child's readiness—according to age, ability, and interest—for a specific lesson, and is prepared to guide individual progress. Although the teacher plans lessons for each child for each day, she will bow to the interests of a child following a passion.

Areas of Study Linked: All subjects are interwoven; history, art, music, math, astronomy, biology, geology, physics, and chemistry are not isolated from each other and a child studies them in any order he chooses, moving through all in a unique way for each child. At any one time in a day all subjects—math, language, science, history, geography, art, music, etc.—are being studied, at all levels.

The Schedule: There is at least one 3-hour period of uninterrupted, work time each day, not broken up by required group lessons or lessons by specialists. Adults and children respect concentration and do not interrupt someone who is busy at a task. Groups form spontaneously but not on a predictable schedule. Specialists are available at times but no child is asked to interrupt a self-initiated project to attend these lessons.

Assessment: There are no grades, or other forms of reward or punishment, subtle or overt. Assessment is primarily by portfolio and the teacher's observation and record keeping. The real test of whether or not the system is working lies in the accomplishment and behavior of the children, their happiness, maturity, kindness, and love of learning, concentration, and work.

Requirements for Age 3-6: There are no academic requirements for this age, but children are exposed to amazing amounts of knowledge and often learn to read, write and calculate beyond what is often thought usual for a child of this age.

Requirements for Ages 6 and up: Requirements for ages 6-18: In addition to curriculum requirements set by the state, students of K+ age design 1-2 week contracts with the teacher to balance their work, and learn time management skills. The work of the 6-12 class includes subjects usually not introduced until high school.

Learning Styles: All intelligences and styles of learning—musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intuitive, natural, and the traditional linguistic and logical-mathematical—are nurtured and respected.

Character Education: Opportunities for the valorization of the personality is considered at least as important as academic education. Children are given the opportunity to take care of themselves, each other, and the environment—gardening, cooking, building, moving gracefully, speaking politely, doing social work in the community, etc.

The Results of learning in this way: In looking at the results one must be sure they are judging a class run by a fully trained teacher. Using Montessori without this training will not have the same results. When the environment meets all of the needs of children they become, without any manipulation by the adult, physically healthy, mentally and psychologically fulfilled, extremely well-educated, and brimming over with joy and kindness toward each other. Here is an early quote by Dr. Montessori: *When the children had completed an absorbing bit of work, they appeared rested and deeply pleased. It almost seemed as if a road had opened up within their souls that led to all their latent powers, revealing the better part of themselves. They exhibited a great affability to everyone, put themselves out to help others and seemed full of good will.*

— Maria Montessori, MD



PICTURE THIS



Alex Woeppel, our 4th Grader, gives a lesson on the binomial cube to preschoolers! He did an amazing job!



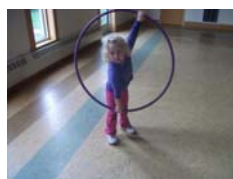
Our Toddlers loved releasing the butterflies they hatched.



Everyone loves PE with Mr. Carey!



Hoops are fun!



Our preschoolers have jumped right into work doing so many amazing things!



Science is in abundance in Lower Elementary



Our infants get outside as much as possible which is especially great during these fall days!



Upcoming Events

Here's what's coming up:

- PTO MEETING - October 5 @ 6PM
- Staff Development Day - October 7
NO SCHOOL or CHILDCARE
- Firemen visit - October 13 @ 10AM
- NO SCHOOL - October 10 (Childcare Is Available)
- "Shop Around" - October 15 11:00 - 3:00
- Halloween - October 31st