



# Friends Corner *Express*

[www.brixhammontessori.org](http://www.brixhammontessori.org)

**BRIXHAM MONTESSORI  
FRIENDS SCHOOL**

18 Brickyard Court, York, ME • 207-351-2700 • [info@brixhammontessori.org](mailto:info@brixhammontessori.org)

**January 2009  
MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

January 15  
New Student Applications Due

January 17  
Preschool Fair at the York  
Public Library, 10am – 12pm

January 19  
Martin Luther King Day /  
No School

January 24  
New Student Interviews

January 28  
Early Release / Staff Meeting,  
12:00pm

Note from the Office:  
Applications for Tuition Assistance are now available in the office for the 2009-2010 school year. If you are applying for the kindergarten or elementary program and think you might be eligible for assistance, please apply on-line **by February 1st**. For more information about our Tuition Assistance program, please see Alica.

**Explore the Possibilities of  
Montessori Elementary  
and schedule your  
observation today!**



## *A Note From Alica*

Welcome back to Brixham! We hope you had a peaceful holiday and that your new year's resolutions include slowing down and living a more simple and connected life with family and friends. As we begin the 2009 year, I am reminded how each day can bring incredible opportunity for change and growth in children and encourage you to spend time quietly together as often as possible. I think you'll be surprised and delighted at what emerges when we simply observe and listen to our children. In this January FC Express edition, I've taken the liberty of reprinting an essay I wrote about the school's name and what it means to be a Montessori "Friends" school. Many parents express an interest in knowing more about the origins of Brixham and ways in which Quaker principles are woven into the fabric of our school community, particularly after the news of the Obama's decision to send their daughters to a Friends school. Principles, such as compassion, respect, integrity, simplicity and trust, as well as an emphasis on service to others and equality, are some of the ways in which Brixham defines itself as not only a Friends school, but also as a Montessori school where such values are embedded in every activity of daily classroom life. I think it is a wonderful and natural fit, and I hope you take pride in knowing that your children are benefiting from a unique combination of Montessori excellence and Quaker ideals.

*Fondly,  
Alica*

## **What does the "Friends" mean in our name?**

***By Alica Johnson-Grafe, founder/3-6 teacher***

***Article reprinted from the March '08 edition of Friends Corner Express***

This question is often asked at Brixham Montessori Friends School. "Friends" is a term used by the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) referring to members of its community. When I first imagined starting a school in the winter of 1996, I drew upon my personal experiences as a Quaker who, as a child, was often quite spirited and quietly rebellious... a child who loved the outdoors, the arts, and caring for all things "great and small." Raised under the care of Monadnock Monthly Meeting, I attended a small one-room schoolhouse in Stoddard, NH in the early seventies. Each Sunday, my sister and I would drive thirty miles with our mother and gather with a handful of other "Quaker minded" children from the Monadnock region. Meeting would begin in silent worship, a time of mostly squirming and hushed giggling for us as young children. But as we got older, this silence became a source of strength and as a consequence, a deep spiritual root grew in me guiding my choices and helping me discern "what really matters."

The experience of attending a one-room schoolhouse, as well as living in the woods of Stoddard, shaped my initial understanding of how children learn: by actively exploring their environment, taking responsibility for their own learning, and learning from peers in a multi-age community. Nature was an integral part of my learning process as I walked the half-mile each way to and from the bus stop, meandering on and off the trails to pause and sit, make-believe, or to spot next year's perfect Christmas tree.

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

***Gently Used Items would be greatly appreciated***

**Hallway carpet runners - Carpet sweepers - Small table lamps - Baby food jars w/lids  
Wicker baskets and trays, any size - Tricycles, Hot Wheels, & other ride-on toys  
Crib sheets and blankets - Dish towels and washcloths - Teacups and saucers**



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## Winter Acrostic Poems Brixham Elementary Class

*S now  
N atural  
O utside  
W hite  
M an  
A wesome  
N ight  
Misha Kastrilevich*

*M etal  
E xciting  
N ight  
O il  
R ed glow  
A wesome  
H oliday  
Lea Solomon*

*S aint Nick  
A gile  
N ice  
T winking  
A ngel  
Hyatt Cook*

*S now  
O vernight  
L ight  
S un  
T rees  
I cicle  
C oldness  
E vergreen  
Noah Szczepanik*

*R ed  
E vergreen  
I ce  
N ick  
D eer  
E lf  
E xcited  
R est  
Phoebe Keenan*

### **What does the “Friends” mean in our name?, continued:**

As I approached my adolescent years, I faced social and academic challenges of the local junior high school, as I attempted to find my place among the “city” kids of Keene. My school experience was a rush set of low expectations as I scurried from one forty-minute class to the next with little regard to kids as people (and really, pre-adolescents can be so trying). I stayed afloat for most of my freshman year, but the pivotal moment came when I visited a Quaker school outside Philadelphia, a school where incidentally my grandmother (and several “grands” before) attended. This pivotal moment was the realization that there were kids like me who “liked” to learn, “wanted” to do well, “cared” about the world, and who were “cool” because of it. The Quaker community embraced me as an adolescent and helped me fulfill my vision of a self that was smart, resourceful, and worldly.

I would return to this myriad of personal experiences as I completed my graduate studies at the University of New Hampshire and began my initial years as a teacher and parent to my children, Dylan and Ben.

I stumbled upon Montessori education as a parent of a toddler. In my sixth month of pregnancy with my second child, Ben, I wanted to find something special for my older son, Dylan, to do that would be fun, engaging, and meaningful. It was not easy. After much exploring and visiting of schools and childcare programs specific to toddlers, I finally found a Montessori school that met my criteria for what I wanted for Dylan. This was the start of a life-altering change for me as a parent and as a teacher.

In many ways, Montessori brought me home to what I intuitively knew about education and how children learn best. I was so excited about the opportunity for Dylan, that my curiosity about the 3-6 year old curriculum led to a summer of Montessori training, followed by another unpaid year of teacher training (mind you, I just finished up graduate school!). At some point in the training, I realized that I wouldn’t be able to go back to teaching public school... Montessori spoke to my heart and life was just too short and too divine to try to “fix” the broken parts and pieces of public education as I had experienced it. In two years’ time, I started my own small preschool in Portsmouth and the journey of Brixham began...

So, what does the “Friend” mean in Brixham Montessori Friends School? It means “to follow your heart” and “speak the truth.” It means “finding that of God in everyone and everything.” It is a Quaker term espousing what I believe Maria Montessori wanted for all our children and for the world at large: a vision of love, peace and hope.

### **Contributions, Donations, and Gifts in Kind**

Thank you for your generous support through the busy holiday season. We received many classroom gift donations some by cash and some by check, and would like to collectively thank you every one of you! In addition, we have received several annual appeal donations and gifts in kinds, as well as donations relating to our school fundraising events: bottles of wine, pie ingredients and wreath supplies. Thank you everyone for the ways you support Brixham!

We would like to thank the following individuals for their annual appeal donations and/or capital campaign contributions:

Kent and Heidi White	The Walenta Family	Frank and Kim Hyer
Kathryn Simonds	Alison Bell	
The Beebe-Jenny Family, MDB Design		

We would also like to thank the following individuals and/or businesses for their contributions and gifts in kind:

Liz and Keith Robinson	Alica Johnson-Grafe	The Golden Harvest
The Meat House	Sarah Patch	Cherie Balakier
Kim St.Cyr, Silpada	Ed Szczepanik, Edward Alexander Designs	