

# 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)

## March 2009 CALENDAR of EVENTS

March 2  
School-wide Celebration of Dr. Seuss' Birthday

March 3  
Special Presentation: "Planting the Seeds of Kindness," 6pm (childcare available)

March 4  
Music Hall Elementary Field Trip: "Rosa's Ride: The Life of Rosa Parks," 9:30am

March 12  
"Celebrating the Arts: A Special Evening with the Elementary Class," First Congregational Church of York/Fellowship Hall, 6:30pm

March 13  
Professional Development/No School  
Ann, Heidi and Mary's Class Parent/Teacher Conferences

March 18  
New Parent Orientation, 6:30pm

March 31  
Olde York Historical Elementary All Day Field Trip, 9am



*"Annah Shaheen shares a book with some of her elementary classmates at the York Public Library"*

## *A Note From Alica*

There's a lot of excitement in the air with the snow melting and the songbirds singing. We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of spring and look forward to the chorus of peepers who will soon grace our schoolyard (we have a very vibrant vernal pool!). We will welcome March by celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday on Monday, March 2nd. Each classroom will honor this favorite children's author by reading his books and singing "Happy Birthday!" March is a busy month with lots of special events. Please be sure to check the calendar of events and let the office know if you have any questions. Thank you!

*Fondly,  
Alica*

## **Where Does the Money Come From and Where Does It Go?**

*By Alica Johnson-Grafe, Head of School*

With registration and tuition deposits due back and our biggest fundraising of the year just around the corner, it seemed timely that I write about the school finances. As you know, Brixham is a Not for Profit 501c3, which means that our school receives tax-deductible contributions to help offset the cost of educating your child. Did you know that the true cost of educating a child at Brixham during the 2007-2008 school year was approximately 8.11% higher than the actual tuition you paid? For a five-day morning preschool child, that would mean \$433.32 more than the actual tuition charged. If you benefited from a multiple sibling discount that tuition would have been more, \$700.47 to be exact.

So, how does the school balance the budget with these "lower than actual cost" tuition revenues? By fundraising. In the last fiscal year, the school raised \$32,076 to help cover the shortfall with a variety of different fundraising venues (the Auction, of course, being the biggest event, raising \$29,044). The rest of the money was raised through individual contributions, egg sales, classroom raffles, and community programs like Hannaford Helps. At the end of the year, the school still had a loss of \$20,717 but that was expected with our new classroom start-up costs. With future growth this loss will be recovered over time; but certainly, the school will need to meet its financial goals this fiscal year. We are well on our way to meeting this goal, with current tuition income exceeding our original projections, and a healthy start to our fundraising efforts.

I thought you might be interested to learn how your tuition and fundraising dollars were spent last fiscal year, so I calculated the percentage of income in each expense category:

### **Expenses by Percentage of Income**

69% salaries and benefits  
22% operations  
4% tuition assistance  
3% materials and supplies  
2% special programs  
100% total expenses

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

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

Lightweight scarfs and beanie baby dolls (for yoga classes) – Step up stool  
Plastic shovels and sleds - Standing toilet roll holder - Paper towel dispenser  
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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**Eight Outcomes of  
Montessori Education**  
(extracted from Tim Seldin's  
article on "Hanging in with  
Montessori in Tough Times,"  
The Montessori Foundation,  
2009)

- #1 Intrinsic Motivation*
- #2 Internalized Ground  
Rules & Ability to  
Work with External  
Authority*
- #3 Creativity and  
Originality of Thought*
- #4 Social  
Responsibility*
- #5 Autonomy*
- #6 Confidence and  
Competence*
- #7 Spiritual Awareness*
- #8 Academic Preparation*

## ***"Where Does the Money Come From and Where Does It Go?"*, continued:**

It may surprise you that salaries and benefits contribute to the largest expense category. However, with an average 1:7 teacher-student ratio in our programs, such a percentage makes sense. By comparison, most Montessori schools have a ratio of 1:12, with the exception of toddler programs. In addition, approximately half of our teaching staff is credentialed with a Masters degree or is in the process of completing the degree. I thought you might be interested to know what the average teacher at Brixham earns, assuming they are working full time; so I calculated that information as well.

### **Average Credentialed Teacher Salary at BMFS (2008-2009)**

\$29,558 Bachelors  
\$32,441 Masters

### **Average Non-Credentialed Teacher Salary at BMFS (2008-2009)**

\$25,195 Bachelors  
\$ n/a Masters

Teacher benefits include tuition reduction (50%), professional development and membership in American Montessori Society, professional liability insurance, and health insurance for those who elect it (approximately 80% for an individual). When sharing this information with other Montessori administrators recently (I now sit on the Maine Montessori Association Board of Directors), I was told that Brixham has by far the highest salaries in the state. Of course, I raised my eyebrows given that on a regional level these salaries seemed low. But, at the same time, I was very happy to hear this since I certainly don't want to lose any of our wonderful teaching staff because of salaries and benefits! Continuing to work on improving salaries should and will continue to be a strategic goal for Brixham, as our location in southern Maine is an exception to state-wide averages due to the higher cost of living in the Seacoast area, etc.

I share all of this information with you because I think it is important for families to understand how the school operates financially, and to assure you that every request for every dollar is needed. Perhaps you are considering whether or not you can bid on an item at the auction, or you question the usefulness of a donated item on our wish list. Let me be clear that every contribution you make to Brixham, whether it be a gift in kind, a financial gift, or a gift of time (oh, I didn't even calculate the savings that our committees and volunteers provide the school!), makes a difference--a very big and consequential difference. Thank you!

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

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

Angela Penfold  
Bobbi Slavin Photography

## **2008-2009 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Alica Johnson-Grafe, Executive Director • Don Clark, Chair  
Kate Glasson, Treasurer • Darlene Saltz, Secretary  
Brad Lebo • Karen McCarthy • Stefany Shaheen**

If you are interested in joining any of our committees, please contact the Committee Chairs via email or contact BMFS at 207-351-2700 • [info@brixhammontessori.org](mailto:info@brixhammontessori.org)