

Dear Families,

Our wonderful Muddy Brook PTA will hold the 7th Annual Mud Day on Saturday, May 21 from 12-4pm on the school grounds. From its inception in 2010, Mud Day has connected families with our Berkshire landscape through engaging and hands-on activities with community partners. This year, parents and PTA leaders Heather Boyko, Randi Craft, and Betlinn Young-Taft are working with partners and volunteers to create a wonderful event. Children and families will hike with the Audubon Society, pitch tents with the Boy Scouts, create an art field journal with Ali Benton, learn to tie knots, and much more. There will be a REAL CAMPFIRE with the Great Barrington Fire Department and we will learn campfire safety. Monument Mountain High School students will teach orienteering with a SCAVENGER HUNT. Trustees of Reservation will lead a hike up Monument Mountain, as well. There will still be lots of mud, so bring a change of clothes and a towel. Popcorn and ice cream will be for sale. **Bring a picnic lunch**, as there will not be lunch for sale. Water and lemonade will be free.

Last night, Ann Kinne was honored at MCLA as the Berkshire County Early Childhood Educator of the Year. Ann was chosen from a deep pool of nominees from across the county. We are incredibly grateful for Ann's outstanding work in the district for 26 years, and we are proud of her success too! Ann's father, Richard Louison, was a custodian for Berkshire Hills for 33 years and he served on the Great Barrington select board for 17 years. Ann's mother, Barbara Louison, taught in the district for over three decades and continues to be a "go to" substitute teacher for us. Their individual and collective service to our community is transformative.

All staff thank the PTA for acknowledging our work and thanking us during this Teacher Appreciation Week. It was a truly special week with flowers, a special lunch schedule for May 13th, and notes of appreciation from students and families. Many thanks to all who contributed.

We hosted our second social dance and our first 3rd and 4th Grade potluck last Friday. The dance was warmly received and a positive experience for all. We're excited about continuing to grow this new tradition at Muddy Brook.

This week our first grade went to Hancock Shaker Village. Students, chaperones and teachers had a wonderful time with animals, and learning more about our landscape. Third and fourth grade enjoyed a show at the Mahaiwe Theater last Friday. Today the fourth grade is at the Connecticut Science Museum. Next week Mumbet will visit our third grade. In the coming weeks second grade will visit Mass MoCA, Grade 3 will visit Ashley House and Bartholomew's Cobble, and first grade will go to the Botanical Gardens. Thanks to all parent volunteer chaperones who are helping to make these trips a success. Thanks also to the PTA for funding these amazing educational experiences for our children.

Three wonderful staff members are retiring. They are Sue MacVeety, Susan Ebitz and Jessica Redman. We are grateful for their service. Hiring committees are formed and interviewing strong candidates.

Please keep checking the calendar as concerts, field days and end of the year activities at each grade level are all coming up.

With thanks for all the individual and collective efforts that make us vibrant,

Mary Berle, Principal

MBE UPCOMING EVENTS

MONDAY, May 9

8:00-8:30 a.m.	Chess Club
10:00 am-12:00 pm	Grade 4 Math PARCC
10:00-11:00 a.m.	BRIDGE - Grade 2
12:00-3:00 p.m.	Mumbet - Grade 3
12:00-1:00 p.m.	Magic The Gathering Club

TUESDAY, May 10

8:00-8:30 a.m.	Unicycling
8:30 am-3:30 pm	Kindergarten Screenings
9:00-11:00 a.m.	Grade 4 Math PARCC
12:00-3:00 p.m.	Mumbet - Grade 3

WEDNESDAY, May 11

8:00-8:30 a.m.	Chess Club
8:30 am-3:30 pm	Kindergarten Screenings
8:30-9:00 a.m.	Wednesday Walkers with PTA
10:00 am -12:00 pm	Grade 4 Math PARCC

THURSDAY, May 12

Jim Arnosky (author) visiting all day
9:35-10:35 a.m. PK/EK/K
10:45-11:45 am Grades 3 & 4
1:15-2:15 p.m. Grades 1 & 2
8:00-8:30 a.m. Ukulele Club

FRIDAY, May 13

$\frac{1}{2}$ day of school; No Lunches Served

8:00-8:40 a.m.	YOLK Project
8:00-8:30 a.m.	Unicycling
8:00-8:45 a.m.	Select Chorus
9:15-9:45 a.m.	ALL School

Future Events

May 16—20	Scholastic Book Fair	June 3; 2pm	Grade 2 Spring Concert
May 20; 1:30pm	Strings on Tour throughout MBE classrooms	June 3	Grade 1 field trip to Berkshire Botanical Garden (Kennedy/Groeber)
May 23	Grade 2 field trip to MassMoCa (Scarbro/DiFazio)	June 3	Grade 3 Field Trip to Ashley House & Bartholomew's Cobble (Flynn/Warner)
May 25	Grade 2 field trip to MassMoCa (Lupiani/Finnerty)	June 6; 10am-12pm	Grade 3 Field Day
May 24; 9am	PK, EK, K 1 Concert Dress Rehearsal	June 6; 1-3pm	Grade 4 Field Day
May 25; 1:30pm	PK, EK, K, 1 Spring Concert	June 9; 9am	Grades 3 & 4 Concert Dress Rehearsal
May 26	Last Day of Project Connection	June 10; 1pm	Grade 3 and 4 Concert
May 27; 9am	BTF Grade 4 school performance	June 10; 11am-1pm	Volunteer Luncheon
May 27; 1:30pm	BTF Grade 4 parent performance	June 13; 9am-10:30am	Grade 2 Field Day
May 30	Memorial Day, No School	June 13; 11:30-1pm	PK, EK, KDG Field Day
May 31; 5pm	Project Connection Student Showcase	June 13; 1:15-2:45pm	Grade 1 Field Day
June 1; 8am	School Council Meeting at MBE	June 14	Grade 4 "Stepping Up" Day; Gr. 4 will spend day at MVMS
June 1	Grade 3 field trip to Col. Ashley House & Bartholomew's Cobble (Redman/Guerrero)	June 15; 5pm	Grade 4 Moving Up Ceremony at MBE
June 2; 1:10pm	Grade 2 Concert Dress Rehearsal	June 17	Last Day of School; 1/2 day
June 2	Grade 1 field trip to Berkshire Botanical Gardens (Chamberlin/Silk)		



Muddy Brook Specialist Learning Link

Orchestra Outlook by Mrs. Moran

All string students are busily practicing for our Spring Concert which will be held on Friday, June 10th at 1:00 at Muddy Brook. A special thank you goes out to Maggie Schmitz, our MMRHS intern who has helped with both the string classes and the Kindergarten classes all year. We are thankful for the warmer weather as the string instruments retain their tuning better. Students should remember to keep their instruments safe both at home and in the school. Many students have sized out of their beginner instrument. A call to Gerry's music will allow you to rent a larger instrument at the same price. Contact Mrs. Moran for sizing questions.

Morning Kindergarten classes are learning songs about spring and playing the instruments in the classroom. Do you know, we even made it rain inside using our classroom instruments!! Students are also gearing up for their K-1 Spring concert to be held at 1:30 on Wednesday May 25th. They have been practicing their songs and sing beautiful. I hope you will join us for this wonderful event.



Music Room Update by Mrs. Chirichella

SPRING EARLY CHILDHOOD CONCERT
MAY 25, 2016 at 1:30 P.M.

Dear Parent of a Grade Pre-K, EK, K, 1 student,

Our spring "Beatles" concert is near! Please note the time change, so that we may include Grade Pre-K in our concert! The concert will be about 20-30 minutes in length.

DRESS FOR THE CONCERT:

All students should wear "hippie" clothing! Tie-dyes, jeans, leggings, flowers, etc. If you do not have a tie-dye for your child, please have them wear a solid color top.

All students except Grade 1, should bring in some sort of pool/swimming item: goggles, mask, snorkel, tube, swimmy, noodle, etc. (no fins).

If you have a child in Grade EK, they will have a line to rehearse for the end of the concert. Please go over this with your child so that they feel prepared for their part in the concert.

Thank you and looking forward to seeing you!



Muddy Brook Specialist Learning Link

Notes from the Music Room by Mr. Gillespie

2nd Grade music classes are learning many notes on the recorder! The students have been practicing three concert pieces and will have them performance ready by the Spring Concert! They are also discovering "American Folk Songs" to prepare to sing for the concert.

The 3rd and 4th Grade music classes are learning the songs from "Matilda the Musical". Over the next few weeks they will be memorizing these songs to sing at the Spring Concert.

4th Grade Band parents: Please remind your son/daughter to practice 100 minutes each week (that's only 15 minutes a day!). I am always checking those practice charts for practice totals and parent initials! We are approaching "crunch time" as this great band prepares for a *monumental* Spring Concert performance!

Select Chorus is preparing four songs for the Spring Concert, including one with some challenging two-part harmonies. They're going to be great!

Come join us for the Spring Concerts!

Wednesday, May 25 at 1:15pm - Early K/Kindergarten/1st Grade Spring Concert

Friday, June 3 at 2:00pm - 2nd Grade Spring Concert

Friday, June 10 at 1:00pm - 3rd/4th Grade Spring Concert





Muddy Brook Specialist Learning Link

Greetings from the Art Studio by Ms. Benton

Wonderful learning experiences are happening at each grade level in the studio! PK and EK are making connections through master works and literature to their art making. Students are sharing observations and their questions through "I notice" and "I wonder" statements.

Kindergarten is illustrating the connections of art and the science through the changes of matter and art materials. Artists and scientists explore and experiment. Look for their work on display during the Music and Art Show later this month.

First graders have been working on a Box Town and its nearing completion! You can see their work in progress in the first grade neighborhood. The connections between art, architecture, design, engineering, and math have been exciting. The culmination of this unit will be a celebration of play, when the students get to interact with their creation.

Second graders are learning about Sol LeWitt, his use of math in his work, and conceptual art in preparation for our fieldtrip to Mass MoCA. Thank you to the PTA for generously funding this excellent cultural experience for our students!

Third graders have been eagerly awaiting their clay unit all year and are exploring and experimenting with clay. Students will be mixing their own clay recipes with plasticity, shrinkage, and color in mind.

Fourth grade artists have also been working with earth clay. Students studied the artistry of Acoma Potters and developed their own geometric based patterns. Problem solving how to get accurate patterns on irregular pots was a challenging learning problem! Many pots will be on display for the art show, as students are very proud of their hard work and getting out of their comfort zone with this high level project.



Many grades only have a handful of art classes left for the year. Please encourage art play at home outside of school. Art play allows children time to process ideas, solve, problems, make connections in their world, use their imaginations and have fun!

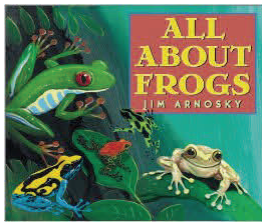
Artfully yours,
Ms. B



Muddy Brook Specialist Learning Link

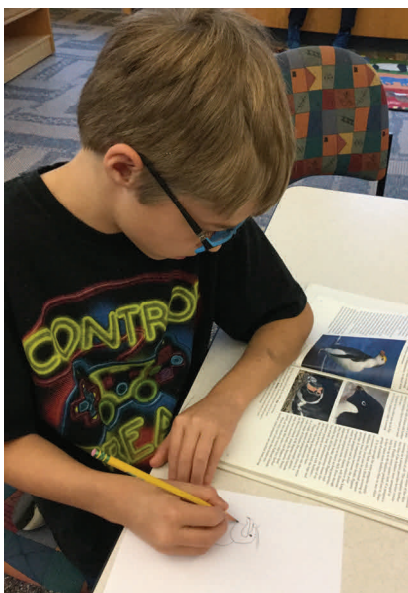
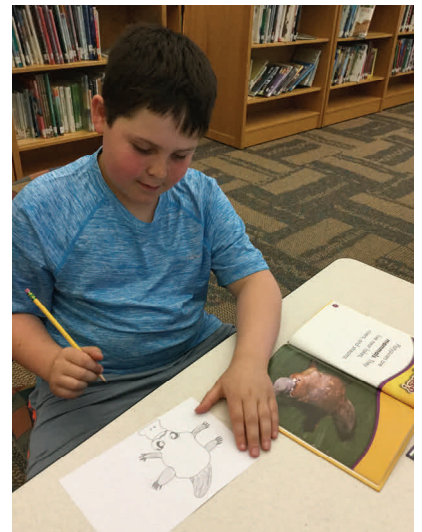
Cover to Cover in the Library with Mrs. Melville

We're celebrating nature! This fall, the library applied for and received a grant from the Berkshire Hills Fund for Excellence for an author visit. On May 12th, we are honored to have naturalist, author, illustrator and musician, Jim Arnosky, come visit all of the students at MBE.



Mr. Arnosky is the author/illustrator of over 100 books for children. These books are marvels in which he shares his love of observing and recording local New England environment (he hails from Vermont), and information about animals, habitats, and nature from other regions of the USA.

I've set up a nature center for exploration filled with items I've collected; nests, shells, seeds, rocks, bones, etc. to generate discussion from students about noticing and then wondering about what they see. I've been introducing our students to his books. This week, second, third and fourth grade students are watching a short video called "Austin's Butterfly" showing how a first grader named Austin made a scientifically accurate drawing of a swallow-tail butterfly after receiving specific and kind critiquing from his classmates, and persevering through several drafts. Our students felt excited and challenged to try this by copying an artifact from



nature, or by scouring the nature section of non-fiction for photograph, and reaching for their best depiction.

We all look forward to an enlightening visit from Jim Arnosky!
<http://www.jimarnosky.com/>





Muddy Brook Specialist Learning Link Physical Education News

From Mrs. Pleu & Mrs. Soule



Greetings Muddy Brook families and friends!
There have been many fun and exciting activities happening in PE lately.

We finished out April with our soccer unit, focusing on the skills of dribbling, passing and shooting. We also enjoyed the 2nd Family Dance Night featuring members of the CDSS (Country Dance and Song Society) as well as live music from our own talented musicians, Michael, Kim, and Rob (and Lukas Swartz).

We are currently working on the skills of jumping, throwing and running with PK-1 working off of a Summer Olympic theme. 2nd-4th graders will be doing the final Fitness gram assessment for the year. We are looking to see growth the students have made over the school year in cardiovascular endurance, muscle strength and endurance, and flexibility.

We would like to make a special "shout out" to the Special Olympians that competed on Wednesday, May 4th, at the Monument High School track.

Congratulations to our athletes:

Karl, Tylar, Abby, George, Quinn and Casey!



Special Olympics



Muddy Brook Specialist Learning Link

MBE Technology Lab

Happy May everyone! I can't believe how fast this year is flying by, only 6 more weeks! This month instead of giving you an overview about each grade's activities I thought I'd address a question that I've received a lot lately that brings up an important topic.

"Do you have any tips for managing screen time?"

I think it's the time of year. After, a bit mild, yet long winter many families have developed some bad habits around using media and are looking for ways to find balance. Yet when the weather report shows rain, rain, rain, it's easy to resort to activities centered around tablets, computer, and TV.

Finding the right balance of screen time for your family can be tricky and very personal. What works for one child might not work for another. I know personally I am always adjusting the rules in our house related to media use. I find it necessary to change with our changing schedules and needs. Sometimes it works, and then there's days that I want to throw out all devices, cancel our cable and go back to a flip phone...anyone else feel like that? It's tough right? But can we really just "unplug"? Technology is an integrated part of all of our lives. We need to accept this and adjust accordingly. Instead of restricting screen time we need to teach our children (and ourselves) the meaning of balance and mindful usage.

The thing is, we are what we eat and looking at media as a diet that sustains us is a wiser strategy than just counting the minutes consumed. This is true for both adults and children.

I read a quote from David Polgar, a tech ethics and digital citizenship expert that really resonated.

"Our aspiration is to sit down and read Kafka, but the cold hard reality is that we consume Kardashian. There is nothing wrong with watching a show about the Kardashian clan, just like there is nothing wrong with eating a cookie – but at the end of the day, you are what you eat. In order to have a media diet that is rich in higher quality information we need to be cognizant of what we (along with our kids) are watching."

Here are a few tips I've gathered that I think are really helpful.

1. Set self-imposed usage **guidelines** - Chat with your children about what they think is a reasonable amount of screen time. Use questions to bring usage times to a range where you feel comfortable.
2. **"What" – Know what your kids are doing** - Do your homework. More than 80,000 apps are labeled as educational, but little research has demonstrated their actual quality. Check out **Common Sense Media** for reviews about age-appropriate apps, games, and programs to guide you in making the best choices for your children.
3. **"When" - Create tech-free zones** - Keep mealtimes and other family and social gatherings tech-free. Recharge devices overnight—outside your child's bedroom to help children. These changes encourage more family time, healthier eating habits, and better sleep.
4. **Use media together** - Whenever you can, watch, play, and listen with your kids. Talk about the content. When you can't be there, ask them about the media they've used.
5. **Be a good role model** - Think about how you use your phone or tablet. When you're using screens, think forward about all the ways you are setting examples for your kid.

- *Do you check text messages at stoplights?*
- *Do you look at Facebook while the grocer packs your items?*
- *Do you leave the dinner table when you hear that ping to check a text message?*
- *Do you play on your laptop or tablet while you talk to your spouse at night?*

I know I'm guilty of all of these things on occasion. When I think forward, though, it really helps me put my mindless actions into perspective, so I can set a better example.

6. Realize that sometimes it rains. When we create strict limits with anything (dieting, exercise routines, meal planning), life tends to get in the way. Instead of providing your child strict limits, teach your kids to assess situations and to be flexible accordingly.

In the end, inspire your child to live offline. Encourage them to spend time outdoors. Introduce them to one of your hobbies or ask them to teach you about something they love. Need some inspiration? Pinterest to the rescue....Here are some ideas to help get you inspired!

Play dough to Plato's LEGO activities



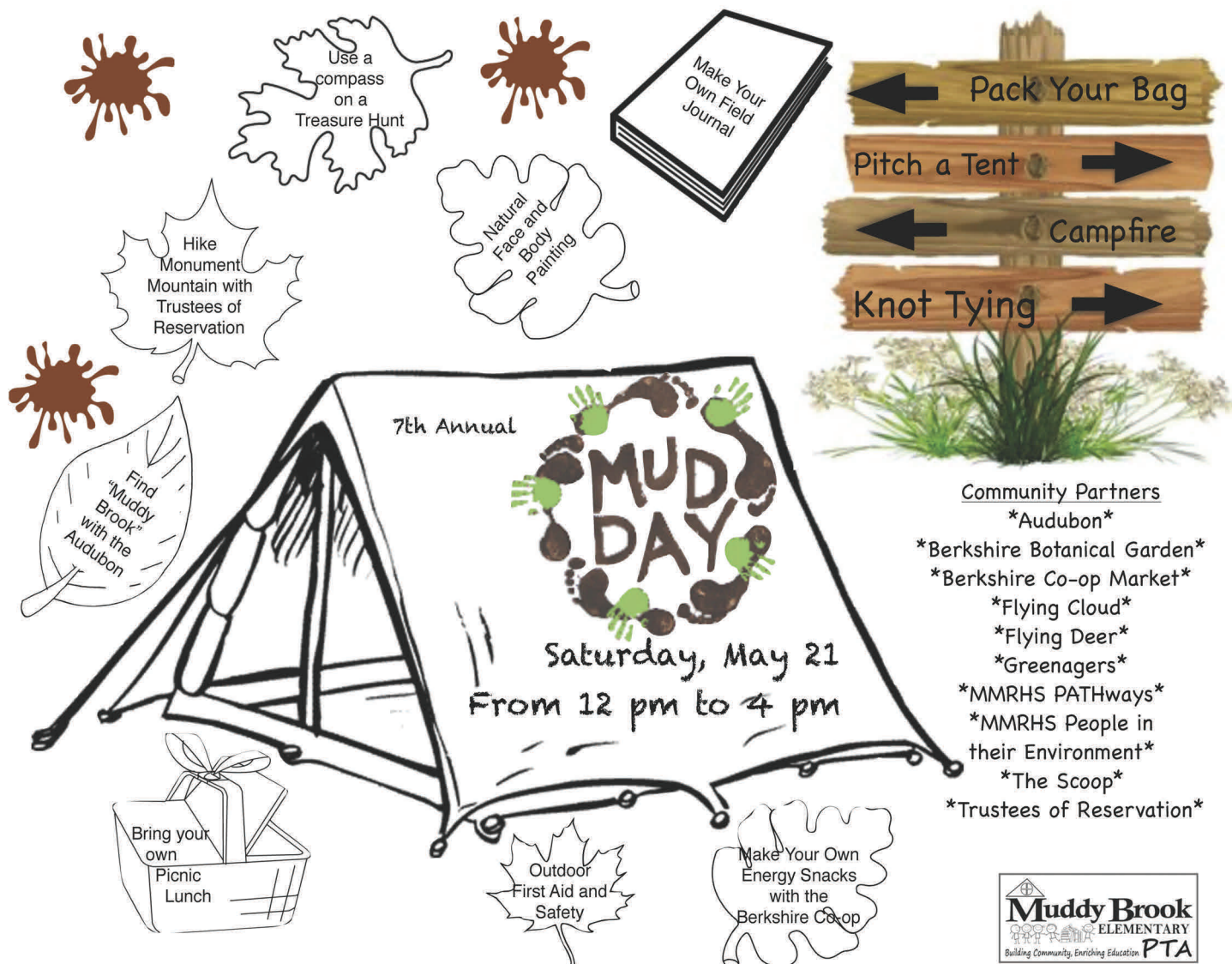
http://www.playdoughtoplato.com/lego-activities/#_a5y_p=3769371

Huffington Post's 30 Parent Hacks To Keep The Kids Busy



http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/15/summer-hacks-for-parents_n_5564805.html

~ Mrs. Candee



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