Dear Parents,

I have great news to announce. James and Sarah Moudry will be joining the Post Oak team in August. James Moudry has accepted my offer to become the founding director of the Post Oak High School. For the past three years he has served on the leadership team of the Montessori High School in Cleveland. This makes him uniquely qualified to assume the lead role in the development of the Post Oak High School, a two-year process to develop curriculum, establish Museum District

**One More Step Forward for Post Oak High School**

by John Long, Head of School

July 19, 2010

Above: construction of the new Upper Elementary classroom where the library used to be.

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partnerships, acquire property, design facilities, recruit students and faculty, and raise the funds to pay for it all. There is much work to be done before we can open the doors to a freshman class in August 2012 and clearly James will not accomplish this alone. It will take many hands to bring forth the high school, and it will be James’ role to provide leadership.

Previous to his experience with the development and start-up phases of the Cleveland project, James worked for six years as a Montessori Middle School teacher and team leader. In addition, he has written and spoken about the Montessori adolescent, and served on the faculty of the NAMTA Summer Orientation to Adolescent Studies. He consulted with the Post Oak Middle School during our last two AMI accreditation cycles (2006 and 2010) and his reports were observant, insightful, and encouraging. At the same time, he helped us set a clear agenda for growth.

Because of this experience I’ve asked James to assume responsibility as Middle School director during the start up phase for the High School. This will help him to become more deeply familiar with the Post Oak Middle School program, students and families, a knowledge that will serve him well as we develop the high school and recruit the first classes of students. This shift of responsibility will also enable Jeff Schneider to focus completely on the Elementary department. Given the growth of our Elementary program over the past three years, this is important — especially in the upcoming year as we open a new Upper Elementary classroom and have three teachers in new positions.

James’ academic background prepares him well for the work ahead. He has an AMI Primary Diploma from the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota; an M.Ed. from Loyola University Maryland; and a B.A. in psychology, philosophy, and mathematics from the University of Minnesota. Just as important, he was a Montessori child all the way through eighth grade at The Lake Country School in Minneapolis.

Sarah Moudry will also be joining the Post Oak faculty. Many of you met Sarah Moudry two years ago when she came here to film NAMTA’s video about the Infant Community. Sarah will become our pinch hitter, assuming the position of full time substitute teacher. Sarah is trained at the Infant Community level (Denver) and Primary (Minneapolis). She has an M.Ed. from Loyola University Maryland and a B.S. in environment, textiles, and design from the University of Wisconsin. She has classroom experience at all levels from Infant Community to Middle School, has directed a parent-infant class, served as the Primary training course assistant to Molly O’Shaughnessy in Minneapolis for seven years, and has spoken and written about Montessori in both home and school settings.

We’ll also be joined by the Moudry’s three children: , , and . The family is planning to relocate to Houston in August and to join us for the start up of the new school year. I invite you to give the Moudrys a warm welcome to the Post Oak community.

John

A letter from James Moudry:

I am excited to join the Post Oak community for the great undertaking of the Post Oak High School. Having worked with the Middle School faculty and talked with students at POS over the past three years, it is easy to see that the graduates are ready for incredible work and how prepared they are to make their mark in the world. The anticipation of the Post Oak High School brings with it wonderful opportunities to develop together an environment that builds on the foundation and preparation already in place to create a capstone for the school.

For my part, I am glad to join such a positive, grounded, and forward-looking school community. Everyone I have encountered at POS and in Houston has been gracious and warm—though the warmth may have just been the heat of the summer! As my family gets our feet on the ground in August, we are ready to embrace the POS community and to orient to our new hometown! Thank you to the Post Oak faculty and staff for welcoming us to the school.

—James Moudry, Middle School Director & High School Principal
Admission director completes AMI training

by Vivian Blum, Admission Director

I did it!

You may have heard your child say those words after accomplishing a task he set out to do. That is a magnificent thing to see; eyes light up, smiles go from ear-to-ear and they seem to grow another inch! The intrinsic satisfaction a child feels when he himself accomplishes something on his own is something we see at The Post Oak School every day. As a child chooses an activity or works with materials he has been given a lesson on and sits down to work with the material, he begins to concentrate and focus and work until he has “done it.”

I experienced this satisfaction as an adult the moment I received my AMI Primary Diploma this summer. In the summer of 2008, I set out on my own Montessori Journey to the Montessori Training Center of St. Louis, one of only 10 AMI primary training centers in the United States. I was a bit anxious starting out—certain I was going to be the oldest student in the class (or worse—the other students would be the same age as my own children), or the only non-teacher taking this course, and wondering if I would remember how to take a final exam after more than 25 years! As it turns out, none of my concerns were justified. There were seven students older than me (and only one was the same age as my daughter) and several teachers who received their AMI training many years ago and since opened their own schools and realized that they wanted the AMI diploma, understanding the tremendous value of that diploma. And no, you don’t ever forget how to study for or take a final exam.

The purpose of taking the training was not to become a Primary guide. Montessori teachers are an exceptional group of people for whom this is their life work. So why did I go through this process? I chose to take on this work so I could do my work at Post Oak with a deep understanding of the Montessori method and to successfully relay the message to prospective (and current) parents. The training was hard, but satisfying, and a different kind of work than I was used to. More importantly, it is something I accomplished and I can proudly say, “I did it.”

Montessori prenatal classes

Attention expectant parents!

Current and prospective parents: join Post Oak’s Half-Day Infant Community Teacher Deidre Lodrig for this prenatal parenting series.

Montessori Prenatal 1: Discussion topics include how to support prenatal development of language and movement, attachment and separation at birth, the mother-child relationship, the role of the father, and other psychological aids to your child’s prenatal and postnatal development. Tue. Sep. 14–Nov. 15 (10 wks) 1:30–3:00 pm, $250

Montessori Prenatal 2: Discussion topics include physical aids to your child’s development including clothing, furnishings, and developmental materials. Learn how to prepare the ideal Montessori environment for your child’s prenatal and postnatal development, and custom design and make materials that benefit your child’s development. Thurs. Sep. 16–Dec. 9 (12 wks) 1:00–3:00 pm, $300 +$50 fee

Contact Deidre Lodrig for more information: (713) 661-6688 x140 or deidrelodrig@postoakschool.org. Classes can be taken in any order. Look for online registration in the coming weeks at www.postoakschool.org.
Spotlight on Alumni
Ryan Cunningham, ’06

by Shannon Neufeld, Communication Coordinator

When a group of faculty and alumni parents created the “Portrait of a Post Oak Graduate” they included these characteristics: Comfortable in his own skin. Independent thinker. Lifelong learner. Explorer. Enthusiastic. Open-minded. Responsible. Compassionate. Good steward. Loves a challenge. Resourceful. Ryan Cunningham is a 2006 Post Oak graduate who attended Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School and is about to begin his freshman year at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Look for those characteristics in his story.

Ryan began in Miran Smith’s Primary class at Post Oak and has fond memories of that time. “What do I remember besides Monarch butterflies, milkweeds, and Miss Mirani?”

He also remembers his love of life science beginning in Lower Elementary. “I remember writing four little pamphlets—they were short,” he said. “I was interested in a lot of life sciences, which explains my motivation to become a doctor.” (Ryan will major in neurobiology and economics at Georgetown.)

“Back in Lower El,” he says, “my pamphlets were about animals and their anatomical patterns, subatomic particles, genetics, and DNA and RNA.”

Middle School experiences gave him many opportunities for growth—including the challenge course at Artesian Lakes. Ryan remembers first climbing the pamper pole as a seventh grader; he remembers his fear and not making the jump at the end to grab the gold ring. “Then in eighth grade, I came back and I didn’t even hesitate—I just jumped and grabbed it—that showed a lot of growth,” he said.

Other formative experiences from his Middle School years were the MS150 and community service. “I like to lead an active lifestyle,” Ryan says. “I did the MS150 for five years—that pretty much shows that.” Ryan first heard about the ride when he was in grade six. “For the longest time I thought it was a race between two cars that all the Middle School kids would pile into and we’d have to get somewhere first,” he said.

“When they told me we’d have to ride to Austin on a bike, I thought, ‘What are you, crazy? I can’t do that.’ Well, yeah, I can. I finished my first MS150 when I was 13.”

It was hard the first time, but got easier each year. “This year, my final year on the MS150, for now at least, I did 100

Above: Ryan Cunningham on a recent visit to the Post Oak Middle School science lab.
miles on the first day—which I had never done before, a century in one go. On the second day, I got to Austin before 1:00 pm. In addition to cycling, Ryan wrestled on his high school team for two years. He recently earned the Eagle Scout badge from Boy Scouts, an organization he joined at age 12. He had no interest in scouts until attending a meeting with his younger brother, Robert. "I had to go to a meeting with him because we didn’t have a babysitter that day," he said. "They were making pancakes on a propane stove. I was like, ‘Hey, I want to learn how to do that.’ So, I joined Boy Scouts. To learn to make pancakes. Not a very good story, but that’s how I joined.”

Years and lots of hard work later, Ryan earned the rank of Eagle Scout. "Once I joined, I wanted to see it to the finish," he said. "But I didn’t know how long that would actually take. And it took forever.”

The culmination is the Eagle project. Each scout must identify a project, write it up, speak with all the parties involved, and do fundraising to cover the costs. "They require you to take your time in order to make sure that it’s absolutely perfect and everything goes as planned (which it never does)," he said.

Ryan chose a renovation project at Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School. "Basically what I did is improve an area near the three giant oak trees in the front," he said. "I dug up the mulch around them and replaced it with red cedar-chip mulch. It looked good. And I built three benches around it. These were cedar benches that we put together onsite. It went very well. We were able to finish it within a week. Most of it on the first week and then the final adjustments on the second weekend." The project cost about $900; Ryan raised $1,440 and donated the balance to Cristo Rey.

Ryan’s community service work began at Post Oak. "You racked up about 200 hours in Middle School doing community service at various places,” including Gordon Elementary School, Small Steps Nurturing Center, Meals on Wheels, and Star of Hope. He continued doing community service at Strake—a National Honor Society requirement. He tutored students at Holy Ghost Middle School in Bellaire, and served at Loaves & Fishes soup kitchen downtown near Minute Maid Park.

"Georgetown even pointed out to me in their acceptance letter that my community service record was what really made me shine compared to other applicants," he said.
Class of 2009
Joshua Brenner attends St. John’s School. He is volunteering at the Houston Zoo this summer.

Hailey Heck is taking summer classes at Episcopal High School. She is also taking a trip to Sweden this summer.

Class of 2008
Tom Harvey has an internship this summer at a small medical firm called Vivante. He will be the junior class president at St. John’s School in the fall.

Class of 2006
Jayme Edwards graduated from Oak Park River Forest High School in Illinois and received an $18,000 cheerleading scholarship to Baylor University this fall.

Michael Harvey attends University of Notre Dame, and has entered their Honors Program.

Jamie McDonald is a Camp Ozark counselor this summer. She plans to attend Clemson University in the fall.

Class of 2005
Allison Bereswill is a rising sophomore at Southern Methodist University. She received the title of “Most Valuable Member” of her sorority. She has also been accepted to a fashion program at Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Rebecca Bereswill lives near Detroit, Michigan, and will attend University of Michigan this fall while she trains as a pairs skater in a facility with skaters from around the world. She is also picking up the Russian language.

Stephanie Styles is entering the Musical Theatre program at University of Michigan in the fall. She is also playing the part of Shelley Parker in Bat Boy: The Musical with the Generations Theatre Company.

Class of 2004
Kelsey Caton is looking forward to her junior year at The University of Texas at Austin. Her major is biomedical engineering.

Will Duin is a graduate of Episcopal High School, and attends The Citadel–The Military College of South Carolina, in Charleston. His major is business administration.

Matt McDonald is participating in the Texas Music Festival at University of Houston this summer, and played the drums for in the Generations Theatre Company production of Bat Boy: The Musical.

Christina Moser completed her sophomore year at The University of Texas at Austin and is a design major. This program only accepts 18 students per year. She also earned a scholarship. She is living in Austin and taking classes this summer.

Whitney Moore is in her junior year at Southwestern University, majoring in environmental studies. She has an internship with Houston Zoo over the summer.

Bethany Sharp is a graduate of Bellaire High School, and attends Boston University as a graphic design and drawing major. She enjoys singing in an a cappella group. She spent a year abroad, studying in Germany. This summer she was a lifeguard at the Jewish Community Center of Houston. Bethany and her mother are traveling for a choir tour in England and visiting Scotland.

Class of 2003
Sam Boyar attends The University of Texas at Austin’s Jackson School of Geosciences. This summer, he is participating in a six-week field study with research in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Idaho, mostly camping out in remote areas. He has received academic scholarships and is a member of the Kappa Alpha fraternity. Last year, he was selected to be a “Silver Spur,” a fraternity at UT that takes care of Bevo the longhorn, the school mascot.

Nicholas Wallace is working full time on Bill White’s gubernatorial campaign.

Kellen Burke attends London School of Economics and Political Science.
Lindsey Moore attends Southwestern University and was accepted to New York summer conservatory for play writing. Last year, she spent a semester in London.

**Class of 2002**

Nicholas Hetherington graduated with honors from the communications program at The University of Texas at Austin and is currently looking for a job. He is interested in sports broadcasting.

Joshua Tobin graduated this spring from Davidson College with a B.A. in theatre, and a minor in Spanish. He received the Rawley Turner Award for “Outstanding Male Performance” for his portrayal of Jack in Leading Ladies. This summer, he is playing the title role in Bat Boy: The Musical, with Generations Theatre Company. In the fall, he will attend the Professional Actor Training Program at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to begin earning his M.F.A. in acting.

Jonathan Ward is working on the set of a film in Los Angeles. He will graduate in December from Brooks Institute, and has been doing freelance work producing films, television shows, and music videos. He enjoys life in Los Angeles. He has pitched features to independent investors, studios and film festivals, including The Four-Faced Liar.

**Class of 2001**

Travis Caton graduated with a B.B.A. in business honors from the McCombs School of Business and a B.S. in biology/neurobiology both from the from University of Texas at Austin. In August, he will be attending medical school at Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. He is also spending a bit of time vacationing in Morocco this summer.

Amlinda Melanson graduated from Texas A&M University in 2009 and is a packaging engineer for Frito Lay in Dallas where she modifies machines. She plans to visit Belize to go S.C.U.B.A. diving, as well as travel to Saigon and Cambodia.

Adam Podet graduated from Tulane University magna cum laude with a major in cell biology. His work was named “best thesis” and he was named “second most valuable all-around student.” Next year he is pursuing a masters degree in biology.

**Class of 1999**

Justin Boyar is an MBA candidate at the University of Houston (expected 2011). He is interested in city design, and has been since his days at Post Oak.

**Class of 1997**

Caroline Sharp is keeping busy with her acting career. She is currently playing the role of “Cecily” in The Importance of Being Earnest with the Ark Theatre Company in Los Angeles.

**Class of 1996**

Allison Dryden is in her last year as a level 1 trauma resident at Vanderbilt Medical Center. She was chosen for a staff teaching award out of 285 residents. She looks back fondly on Montessori education.

Lyndsay Kian graduated from the University of Houston in 2004 with a degree in accounting and finance. She works as accountant/public C.P.A. Lyndsay married in 2005, and now has a three-year-old and a baby due in August.

**Class of 1990**

Darryl DaVera became engaged last November, and is currently a dentist at Dental Smiles. He graduated from University of Texas Dental Branch in 2005.

**Class of 1981**

Stephen Marchione was married in Rome to Monica Posoli, who taught at The Post Oak School. He is a full time luthier, and his business can be found at www.marchione.com. His daughter, Isabella, was born in 2001.

**Other Alumni**

Victoria Aguilar attended Post Oak for three years in Primary, and now her daughter will start Primary classes this year with the same teacher: Barbara Hacker. Her brother, Gabriel Aguilar is now a junior at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS. He attended Primary for two years (Bill Zajic’s class).
A summer of fun at Post Oak

by Miriam Winton, Summer School Director

This summer has been a very busy one here at Post Oak. Construction has been going on to create a new Upper Elementary classroom and a new space for our library. While the construction has been happening, summer school classes have been in session.

At the infant level, the full-day classroom has been open and bustling with activity. Deidre Lodrig served as the lead teacher for weeks 1 through 6 and our new full-day infant teacher, Farah Rilees, assumed the lead role for weeks 7 and 8. Splash Day on Fridays has been a huge hit with the infant children. They have enjoyed running through the sprinklers and eating watermelon outside of their classroom.

At the Primary level, we were able to offer one Spanish Immersion class and one regular Primary class during the month of June. The Spanish immersion class was under the direction of Nina Strane. The children thoroughly enjoyed learning new Spanish vocabulary and having the opportunity to practice speaking Spanish in the classroom. Julie Parraguirre led the regular Primary class during the month of June and Rozina Mohamed and Debbie Nickerson directed the Primary classrooms in July. The Primary children have been involved in lots of baking activities and sewing activities this summer. They have also learned about the earth and planets, Africa, dinosaurs and ocean life. And, of course, it wouldn’t be summer without Splash Day Fridays out on the field with watermelon and fruit popsicles.

We held our annual Fourth of July parade in the gym (due to rain) on July 2. Primary and Infant Community students marched in a procession around the perimeter of the gym waving their flags and shaking their “tambourines.” Parents, office staff, and Elementary summer camp students cheered them on. We concluded our celebration with watermelon and popsicles in the dismissal area. The rain did not spoil our fun!

At the Elementary level, the transition class ran during the first six weeks of the summer for rising first graders. The students were bubbling with excitement each morning as they hopped right out of the car and hurried into the transition classroom led by Kathy Long (weeks 1 & 2) Debbie Nickerson (weeks 3 & 4) and Hifa Sobhani (weeks 5 & 6). Students enrolled in the regular Elementary summer camp classes have been involved in a variety of activities including word craft, art, stamp collecting, chess, photography, poetry, Spanish culture, theater arts, mythology, scrapbooking, history, creative writing and soccer.

Maya and Errol Pinto, Luiza Grandchamp, Jenna Pel and Kimberly Magill have been the lead instructors at the Elementary level.

Upper Elementary girls had the opportunity to participate in 4 weeks of IT Girl’s Technology camp, led by Post Oak alumna, Sara Mitchell. Topics covered...
included podcasting, graphic design, digital storytelling, digital photography, and digital scrapbooking.

This summer, for the first time, we were able to offer a basketball camp here at Post Oak. Middle School Coordinator Shekkola Gray planned and carried out a very successful camp for elementary students that included trips to Rice University and the Toyota Center and appearances by guest coaches from Rice. She was assisted by Coach David Howard and together they helped the students develop basketball skills, condition their bodies, and play basketball scrimmages.
Congratulations, graduates of 2010!

More photos are available online in the parent community.
Word craft: creativity with writing

Alliteration (uh-lit-uh-rey-shuhn): the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables.

Acrostic (uh-kraw-stik): a series of lines or verses in which the first, last, or other particular letters when taken in order spell out a word, phrase, etc.

Terrific Todd tasted Tanya’s tasty tarts on Tuesday. Todd fed one tart to Tony the Tiger, who lived in Tennessee, on Thursday. Tony and Todd were great great friends and traveled to Texas together all the time. They met Tucker the tan toad. Tucker told a very scary tale about a tarantula who loved tea.

Kristen the kind captain carefully caught the crystal cake of the Caribbean cavern. But Chris the cook gave her a crystal candy cupcake. “How creatively cool this cake is,” said Kristen the kind captain.

Color Poem

Christian Gray: “Red”

What is Red? The color of red / Is plenty of friendship / It’s loyal and true / To itself and others / It dances in fire / It plays in the sun / It brings heat when needed / And cools down when done / Red smells of burning oak / And sings in sunsets to come / Red is the first color / On a Valentine’s card / Red is the blood spilled / For one’s glory / How can it be that / Red stands for love and for hate / Red roses in bushes / and cherries in trees / Red are cardinals / Flying in the breeze.

Green

Green smells beautiful / Green looks great / Green is the kiwi I ate / Green feels like many strands / Green is never on my hands / Green is like the air we breathe / Green is like the wonderful breeze / Green is like the grassy fields / Green is everything here to there / If I could taste green, it would be lime, kiwi, lettuce, and pickles, too / Green is earth / Green is help / Green is wonderful in and out / I like green the best / Green is heavy / Green is music / Green can be sad but happy / Green is the world / Green is every person, place, and thing / Green can be great / Green can be bad or good / Green is strength and courage / Green is the best you can be for everything.
Nature Word Craft

I came from grass. I am magenta and very dark green. I have a part of me where I was bitten by a bug. I have bright green dots on me. My veins are very hard to see from far. I have a different color on the inside and the outside of me. I have three triangular leaves on me. I'm a compound leaf. I am soft and velvety. I have a long, beige petiole, lighter on the top and bottom, darker in the middle. When you spin me, I look like a fan. On top of me, I have three little dots attaching my three leaves. I smell like grass. I look like an over-large clover. I look more like a flower than a leaf. Which leaf am I?

“Dusty Miller”

I came from a bush. I'm green and my fuzz is white. My fuzz is my pride and joy. It makes me feel unique. I am what scientists call an ovate leaf. My petiole has a whitish channel. My margin is lobed and crenate. I have a pastel-ish blade but my fuzz covers my color. You could only see my veins if you turned me over. I am simple. I am smooth on both sides. I make food for my colony. I love being a leaf, especially the fuzzy, lovely, beautiful leaf that I am.

Diamante Poems

Life
Wonderful, Bright
Growing, Learning, Living
Love, Family, Care, Relative,
Helping, Grieving, Forgetting
Dark, Lonely
Death

Dusty Miller
Fuzzy, Soft
Winding, Flowing, Flying
Fuzz, Cotton, Leaf, Snow
Tearing, Howling, Whispering
Smooth, White
Dusty Miller
CALENDAR
For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

AUGUST 8–14
Mon 08/09 Teachers & assistants return
Wed–Fri 08/11–13 Middle School Goal Setting
Thu 08/12 Ramadan begins
Fri 08/13 Parent Work Day

AUGUST 15–21
Mon 08/16 Orientation Day for grades 1, 4, & 7 and new students
8:30 am–12:00 pm
8:30 am–12:00 pm
Elementary before- and
aftercare begins
Tue 08/17 All Elementary & Middle School students attend
8:30 am–12:00 pm
Wed 08/18 Elementary & Middle School students attend full day
Wed-Fri 08/18-20 Middle School at the Retreat at Artesian Lakes

NOTICE BOARD

Birth announcement
Jeremy and Heather Spell (Maya Pinto’s former assistant) are thrilled to announce the arrival of their son Spell, born June 3 at 9:20 pm. He weighed 6 lbs, 4 oz and was 20.4 inches long. He arrived almost a full month early, and was admitted to the newborn ICU at Texas Children’s Hospital. They are now home and doing well.

ERFs & Health Inquiry forms due now
Your child(ren) cannot start school if we do not have them on file.

ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST
The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year.
You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.
Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday before publication to Communication Coordinator Shannon Neufeld (shannonneufeld@postoakschool.org). If publication is on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 pm on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Shannon Neufeld unless otherwise noted.
The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)
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