Weighing pencils? Two almost eleven-year-old girls are using a single-arm balance to determine the weight of pencils and other objects from their classroom. Measurement: is it math or science? Perhaps it is applied mathematics, or an introduction to the tools of science. As you can see from the photograph, these girls are focused sharply on the task at hand: they are paying attention to the details, aiming for precision and accuracy in their measurements.

What you cannot see is that they chose the work itself. Why would two Upper Elementary girls choose...
Buon giorno!

The Post Oak Parents Association invites you to mangia at Maggiano’s.

Whether you are new to Post Oak or have been here for years, please join us at Maggiano’s Little Italy on September 14 for an enjoyable evening at this year’s POPA Dinner. The evening includes cocktails followed by a seated dinner served family style upstairs in Maggiano’s homey parlor setting. This unique dining style not only promises heart-warming delicious food, but also provides opportunities for lively table conversations among the “old and new” members of the POS family. For those of you new to Post Oak, we invite you to come and meet other parents in this relaxed atmosphere. Been a while since you last attended a POPA Dinner? We’d like to welcome you back.

If you have already responded, thank you. Otherwise, please respond by dropping off the reply card and payment at the front desk by September 8.

antipasto: stuffed mushrooms & bruschetta
primo: chopped apple & walnut salad with tomato caprese
secondo: bowtie pasta with asparagus paired with rigatoni chicken, mushrooms and marsala
terzo: oven-roasted pork, salmon with lemon & herb, or eggplant parmesan (vegetarian option)
dolce: apple crostata with ice cream & chocolate zucotto cake
At the New Parent Welcome Coffee this week, Head of School John Long quizzed people on the numbers pictured above.

The following are the answers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.44</th>
<th>Post Oak total acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>number of classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>age of The Post Oak School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>number of new students this year (so far)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>number of birth countries represented by Post Oak families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>number of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>378</td>
<td>number of students at Post Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Post Oak High School to open this year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"The mathematical mind," by John Long, continued from page 1

this work? Why would they pursue it with such obvious interest?

We have a mathematical mind, according to Dr. Montessori. It is one of the characteristics of all humans, adult and child. That many adults have "math phobia" does not contradict Dr. Montessori's observation, but it is a powerful indictment of the way mathematics is usually taught in schools.

This week a five-year-old boy was counting the "six chain," one of 10 "long chains" in the classroom. The six chain is a string of 36 bead bars, each containing six beads. There are 216 beads on it altogether. This boy was counting out each bead, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6" and at the end of each bar, placing a number tag: here’s the six. "7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12." Here’s the twelve. "13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18." Here’s the eighteen.

He brought his teacher the number tag that said: 6³ and asked, "What’s this?"

His teacher said, "Bring me the cube."

There are six bead squares and one bead cube that go along with the six chain. The cube is comprised of 216 beads strung together into a perfect cube. It is the cube of six. When his teacher pointed out that the little “3” means “cube,” he smiled and said, "That’s cool!"

I myself was a good math student in the traditional classroom of my childhood. When I encountered 6³ I knew to read it six-cubed, and I knew that it equaled 6 x 6 x 6. But I had no idea it was actually shaped like a cube. I guess I missed that lesson.

Montessori students do not miss that lesson. They see it from the earliest age. They encounter mathematics as a physical reality leading to abstraction.

Yes, we do have a mathematical mind.
The new faces of The Post Oak School

Marisol Benner joins Post Oak as an assistant in Primary Home Environment and has seven years’ experience in education. She was born in Mexico City, and went high school in the States. Marisol earned an academic scholarship to University of Houston, where she received a B.S. in interdisciplinary studies in 2003. Later, she worked in Switzerland and around Europe as an au pair, teaching the children English and Spanish. She also worked in Mexico City for an American company training call-center employees in an English-accent reduction program, and worked in a Cancun hotel teaching staff English and Spanish as part of their HR programs. Marisol has a daughter and recently moved back to Houston to be closer to her family.

Yolanda Bucio joins Post Oak as an assistant in the Half-Day Infant Community with Sarah Moudry and has five years’ experience in education. She graduated from Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI (2000) with a B.A. in the liberal arts (English literature major with supports in professional communications and business and management), and immediately began teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) abroad in Spain. Yolanda’s experience includes ESL, Bilingual Education (SP/EN), and Waldorf education. She has taught people of various ages, but finds that she most enjoys the toddler community. Yolanda is delighted to have recently learned about Montessori education and is excited to continue pursuing her goal of becoming a certified Montessori teacher for the Infant Community.

Dinah Chetrit joins Post Oak as the lead teacher in Primary Home Environment. She has a B.A. in modern languages and international relations from Beloit College, and continued her studies of linguistics in at Université de Paris VII, with a specialization in bilingualism and the early acquisition of two languages. Her interest in and appreciation of Montessori grew when her children were young, and she received her Primary certification while living in London with her family. Upon returning to France, she worked as a lead teacher in both English-speaking and bilingual Montessori schools. She was also program coordinator in a newly established Montessori school that placed great emphasis on nature studies. In 2007, after a 27-year stint overseas, she returned to the U.S. and served as a lead teacher in a Montessori inclusion classroom in New York, working closely with special needs children and Special Education teachers.

Kelly McNamara joins Post Oak as the Middle School lead science teacher, coming from Houston Independent School District’s Wilson Montessori where she taught at the Middle School level. She has four years’ experience in education. In preparation for a change in careers to teaching from auditing, she obtained a B.S. from the University of Houston in biology, and further studied at the University of St. Thomas to obtain her state teaching credential. She studied with the Houston Montessori Center to enhance her knowledge of teaching and to incorporate a Montessori paradigm into the Middle School classroom at Wilson Montessori. Kelly shares her life with a teenage daughter who attends Post Oak in the Middle School.

Sarah Moudry has taken the lead in the Half-Day Infant Community classroom vacated by Susan Tracy as Susan fulfilled her goal of becoming head of school at St. Catherine’s this year. Sarah has 14 years’ experience in education. In addition to her role as lead teacher in a classroom, she teaches infant-parent classes at the Motherhood Center. Sarah Moudry received her AMI Assistants-to-Infancy Training (prenatal to three years) at The Montessori Institute in Denver, Colorado and her AMI Primary Training (three to six years) at the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota. She has worked with children from birth to 14 years and is the mother of three children.
at Post Oak. Sarah is also known for her work on the *What is the Montessori Toddler Community* video filmed at Post Oak in 2008 for the North American Montessori Teachers’ Association.

Sarah holds an associate of applied science from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, a B.S. in environment, textiles, and design from the University of Wisconsin, and a master’s degree in Montessori education from Loyola University Maryland. In addition to her experience in the world of Montessori education, Sarah is an experienced clothing designer. In her most recent work at Arborwear, she was tasked with “making sure your pants fit and your witty t-shirt is baby-skin soft.”

**Diana Muñiz** joins Luiza Grandchamp in the role of art specialist this year and has 12 years’ experience in education. Diana has a bachelor’s degree in Christian education from Twin Cities University. She is both an artist and an arts educator who has taught visual art for children in kindergarten to twelfth grade through Multicultural Education and Counseling Through the Arts (MECA) since 1998. She has represented MECA as an artist-in-residence for the Texas Commission on the Arts and has been a creative writing teacher for elementary students through Writers in the Schools (WITS). Among other local dynamic arts organizations where she has worked are: The Contemporary Arts Museum (CAMH), where she has been a gallery teacher; and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH), as a mural artist and parent workshop facilitator. She has also worked as a visual artist for Children’s Prison Arts Project (CPAP), an arts education project for incarcerated youth within the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

Diana will be finishing her master’s degree in marketplace chaplaincy from Liberty University Seminary this fall and completed one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) while working as a chaplain intern at Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital. She has also worked as a volunteer in the Spiritual Care Department at Texas Children’s Hospital. One of her passions is the fusion of the arts with the sacred and the spiritual.

**Farah Ricles** joins Post Oak as the lead teacher in the Full-Day Infant Community classroom, and has 19 years’ experience in education. She has a B.A. in English literature and psychology from the University of Karachi, Pakistan, and also holds three AMI diplomas: Assistants to Infancy, Primary, and Elementary; as well as one AMS diploma (0-3). After receiving her bachelor’s degree, Farah took the Primary training and fell in love with the Montessori method, leading her to take the Elementary training from Washington Montessori Institute. Farah then taught at the Elementary level (ages 6-9 and 9-12) for three years. When she became the mother of twins, she decided to work with much younger children and completed the AMS (0-3) certification from the Montessori Institute of Barrington, IL. In 2005, Farah received her AMI Assistants to Infancy diploma from Denver, CO.

**Anita Taj**, who grew up as a Montessori child, joins Post Oak this year as a Lower Elementary assistant in Maya Pinto’s class. She has eight years’ experience in education. Her passion for teaching as a teenager motivated her to pursue an career in it. Anita has a B.A. in education and sociology from Northeastern Illinois University as well as Montessori paraprofessional training. Her future plans are to earn a master’s degree in education. Anita also taught for six years at a Montessori school in Chicago, Illinois, as and for a year in kindergarten and second grade enrichment program at a Chicago public school.

For more information on Post Oak faculty, visit our website under About Post Oak—> Our Community—> Faculty.

Look for a second installment of introductions in next week’s newsletter.
Emergency notification system test Sept. 10

The AlertNow notification system is a service that allows the school to send a message to parents’ phone numbers and emails within minutes. If an emergency happens, you would be informed immediately.

We will be performing a test of the notification system on Friday, September 10. The delivery of the message is only as successful as the contact information we have, so please update your contact information by emailing vivianblum@postoakschool.org by September 3.

Important: If the call is an actual emergency, your caller ID will display 411, but will not display a name. If the call is not an emergency (relaying inclement weather or information messages), your caller ID will display the school’s name and main number.

When the notification system contacts you by phone, there will be a pause after the phone is answered. Please stay on the line. The system needs to detect a few seconds of silence to determine if a live person or answering machine has answered. Do not keep saying hello. The system can leave a message on your voice mail or answering machine. The system is set to ring each line six times. If your answering machine is set to pick up after the sixth ring, a message will not be delivered to your machine. We encourage you to set it at five or less rings.

If you have features like TeleZapper or Privacy Director on your lines, you may not receive the call. (Privacy Director reroutes callers to identify themselves. Because the AlertNow system is automated, the call will not get through.)

The AlertNow system can only accept direct dial numbers.

If the AlertNow message stops playing, press any key from one to nine and the message will replay from the beginning.

Montessori prenatal and parenting classes

Current and prospective parents: join Post Oak's 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.

**Tues. 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**

**Montessori Parenting Classes – “How to Parent a Toddler”:** Participate in discussions of how to best parent a toddler in each and every situation and/or environment. Learn how to integrate education, discipline, and lessons in grace and courtesy with your parenting. Topics include: how to shop together peacefully; sharing and play dates; choosing appropriate toys; and supporting independence with toileting. This class is for adults only.

**Wed. Sep. 14–Nov. 17 (10 wks) 1:30–3:00 pm, $250**

Contact Deidre Lodrig for more information: (713) 661-6688 x140 or deidrelodrig@postoakschool.org.

Classes can be taken in any order. Register online at www.postoakschool.org — For Parents — Parent Education.
happy birthday, Maria Montessori!

The excerpt has been taken from the Monday, August 31 edition of The Writer’s Almanac with Garrison Keillor from American Public Media.

It’s the birthday of Maria Montessori, born on [August 31] in Chiaravalle, Italy (1870). She was a bright student, and she wanted to study engineering. So when she was 13, against her father’s wishes, she entered a technical school, where all her classmates were boys. After a few years, she decided to pursue medicine, and she became the first woman in Italy to earn an M.D. degree.

As a doctor, she worked with children with special needs. And through her work with them, she became increasingly interested in education. She believed that children were not blank slates, but that they each had inherent, individual gifts. It was a teacher’s job to help children find these gifts, rather than dictating what a child should know. She emphasized independence, self-directed learning, and learning from peers. Children were encouraged to make decisions. She was one of the first to use child-sized tables and chairs in the classroom.

During World War II, Montessori was exiled from Italy because she was opposed to Mussolini’s fascism and his desire to make her a figurehead for the Italian government. She lived and worked in India for many years, and then in Holland. She died in 1952 at the age of 81. She wrote many books about her philosophy of education, including The Montessori Method (1912) and The Absorbent Mind (1949).

Join the Green Team!

Dear Parents,

If you have an interest in environmental issues related to the school, I invite you to become a part of Post Oak’s Green Team. In past years, the Green Team has worked on a variety of projects including: recycling, the outdoor nature learning center, a magazine exchange, lighting efficiency, green IT ideas, and reviewing Post Oak’s cleaning products. We have a board of trustees-endorsed “Green Principles” document in place, and we hope to continue the good green work again this year. If you have an interest in participating, please let me know by responding by email (christinacantu@postoakschool.org). Meetings will be held once a month.

Thanks!
Christina Kopanidis-Cantu,
Development Director
New Parent Welcome Coffee

A warm welcome was given this week by Post Oak’s administration and POPA leadership to all new Post Oak School parents.
Becoming a Love and Logic Parent®

Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson presents “Becoming a Love and Logic Parent®” curriculum for Elementary age and beyond. The class will be given Wednesdays from 9:00–10:30 am in the Post Oak multipurpose room (formerly called the reading room) on the following dates:

- September 16, 23, 30, & October 7
- Continuing October 21, 28, November 4 & 11

Get the answers to:
- How can I get them out of bed in time?
- How can I stop my children from bickering and fighting?
- How do I get my children to help with the chores without an argument?
- Is there a way to discipline my toddler in public without creating a scene?
- How can I get my teenage daughter to come home at the agreed-upon time?
- How do I get him to stop spitting his peas and whining at dinner?
- And many other day-to-day parenting challenges...

These classes require pre-registration by calling Phylis Tomlinson at 713-661-6688 ext. 176. Classes will be open to parents from outside the Post Oak community starting on September 7. Please call early. Cost for workbook: $10.00.

Field Day t-shirts for sale!

Order deadline is Thursday, September 16

Get into the festivities on Saturday, October 16, by wearing the official 2010 Field Day t-shirt! Order your t-shirts early to get one of these awesome hand tie-dyed custom designs done by our very own Post Oak students! Orders are due by Thursday, September 16, so be sure to hand yours in early. Shirts are $15 each—get one for each member of the family!

COST: $15 each

Student’s name: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________

Class (of oldest child): ____________________________

Number of shirts ordered: _______

Total enclosed: $ _______

Please return this form, with your check, to the front desk by Thursday, September 16.

Please make checks payable to “The Post Oak School” and write on the memo line “Field Day t-shirt.”

Indicate t-shirt sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUTH</th>
<th>ADULT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XS (2-4)</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S (6-8)</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>M (10-12)</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XXL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are all excited to learn about our child’s day at school.

Ineffective questions: How was school? What did you learn today? Who did you play with? What did you do on the playground? What happened with? and? What did you have for snack? Did you eat all your lunch?

To increase the possibility of hearing your child’s perspective and learning what is important to your child consider the following: upon entering the car, buckled and ready: “Hi honey, I am so glad to see you. I have been looking forward to seeing you this afternoon.”

Then let there be silence: Whatever your child talks about is most important to your child. Your child may open up right away or an hour or more later. If you just can’t stand it, it is helpful to tell about your day: “Today I got some work done at my desk.” “Today I enjoyed lunch with my friend…” “I had a great idea for dinner.” (This may also work really well with your spouse.) Keep in mind, after we have ‘worked’ all day it is difficult to talk about work as soon as we are home.

All the best, Phylis
1. Reading together.
2. Learning about washing up.
3. Taking out objects for sound games.
5. Math magic in Middle School.
7. A tour of the new library.
8. Reading Spanish books.
9. Consulting with the teacher.
10. Caring for plants.
11. Solving the puzzle.
12. Reading puzzle words.
13. Watership Down in the window.
14. Quizzing a friend on division.
15. And what's this one? A sphere!
16. Learning animals’ names.
17. Reading animal stories to match with pictures.
Barbara Hacker’s green tip of the week

We all need toilet paper, right? But does it have to be “extra soft?” A recent article from the National Wildlife Federation highlights the cons of manufacturing extra-soft toilet paper. This type of toilet tissue requires pulp from virgin timber, some harvested from old-growth boreal forests, and greener options are becoming available. The article, titled, “Why Soft Paper Is Rough on Forests,” by Mike Rotide was published July 14, 2010, and can be found on the NWF website here: www.nwf.org/News-and-Magazines/National-Wildlife/Green-Living/Archives/2010/Why-Soft-Paper-Is-Rough-on-Forests.aspx

Coffee with the Elementary Director

**Topic**: The First “Great Lesson” in Elementary

- September 8
- 9:00–10:00 am
- Multipurpose Room

Learn about Post Oak’s Elementary and Middle School with Elementary Director Jeff Schneider over coffee at 9:00 am (unless otherwise noted) on the following additional dates:

- Sept. 23 (7:00 pm) “The Post Oak Middle School Experience”
- Oct. 14 (7:00 pm) “The Post Oak Upper Elementary Experience”
- Nov. 10 “Transition to Lower Elementary / Session 1”
- Dec. 8 “An Introduction to Physical Science in Lower Elementary”

Keep track of school events with our online calendar—or download a fresh copy of the school’s printed calendar, all at http://www.postoakschool.org