An introduction from John Long, Head of School:

Former Post Oak parent Jackie Dryden is the mother of Allison Dryden, Post Oak class of 1986.

Allison is in her third year as a level 1 trauma resident at Vanderbilt Medical Center. She was chosen for a staff-teaching award out of 285 residents. She and her husband are expecting their first child and are looking for a Montessori school in Nashville.

In this story, Jackie describes some of the personal characteristics common to Montessori graduates: independence, self-direction, personal goal setting, and resilience. She also describes a wonderful opportunity for skillful parenting, an approach described in detail in the book *The Optimistic Child* by the psychologist Martin Seligman.

The following are Jackie Dryden’s words from the POPA Dinner:
The very first time that I visited Post Oak Montessori, it was located way out west. I had heard about the school and I was going to drive however far it took me to get there. When I went to the school, I saw these children with what I would describe as one word on their faces and exhibited in their bodies, and that was joy. I said, “Whatever that is, I want to bottle that up, and I want some of that.” And it’s not really any coincidence that when I wrote the book, Just Me: What Your Child Wants You to Know about Parenting, it’s really what I would call an “ode to Montessori.” It is following the child; it’s listening to the child.

There is Chapter 17 that says “lose the labels.” And it was really my attempt to hear what children had to say…. I will tell you that I am a substitute speaker tonight—that the first person that was asked to come and speak was our daughter Allison. And that’s a great honor, because she is a product of 12 years of Montessori and I’m going to tell you what happened after Montessori. We get a lot of questions, and when we were in Middle School, I remember talking to Elementary parents who were trying to decide what to do with Middle School. What happens in High School? You know, all the angst we have as parents....

So we were in Middle School and talking to some Elementary parents, and they said, “You know, I don’t know about going to Middle School for Montessori, because I kind of understand that those kids are sort of weird.” And I said, “Hello? Did you know my daughter is in Middle School? I’m here! I’m in the room.”

And what I discovered is that if that’s weird, bring me more of it. Because there is something very magical about these kids. So what happened for Allison was that she planned where she wanted to go to high school—it did not come from me. She looked at high schools, she did an analysis, and she looked at what high schools had the most National Merit finalists. She found out that was Bellaire. She said, “That’s kind of big—going from a class of eight to Bellaire—maybe not.”

She also did research, since she liked math and science—to find out where girls could excel in math and science. She chose St. Agnes Academy. She said, “You can be at an all-girls school, and you can be smart in math and science and nobody’s going to point and laugh at you.” So she applied to St. Agnes, and we didn’t know...we went through the whole Montessori experience just on faith. Just saying, “She seems happy. She can put a sentence together.” It was all going pretty well. And she took the entrance test.

We got the phone call that said, “We’re so happy to welcome Allison into St. Agnes Academy.” We said, “That must be a good thing—she got in.” And she got into honors chemistry. So we said, “Well, that’s a good thing. She must have learned some science and math at Post Oak.”

The very first real test that she ever took was in honors chemistry. And I will tell you that she made a 67. She came home devastated. She was crying, boo-hooing, it was trauma time. And I said, “Well, look: what went wrong? What are you talking about?” She said, “I made a 67 and life is over. I’m going to get kicked out of honors chemistry and I probably won’t get through chemistry. I’m not going to graduate high school. Which means
I can’t go to college. I’ll never go to medical school, and I can’t be a doctor.”

I said, “Wow, that’s intense. We need to lather up because this is big news.” But being a Montessori parent, I did not say what most parents are tempted to say, which was, “I am so disappointed in you. I thought you were smarter than that. You better get down that hallway and get in that room and study and bring up those grades.”

Something in me said: devastated child—that’s not the right conversation. Fortunately, God was on my shoulder and I said, “You know what? Honors chemistry is pretty hard. And this is the first big test that you’ve ever taken in your life. And you know what? You know 67 percent of that material, and it’s not easy stuff. Why don’t you show me the 67 percent that you got right?”

She looked at me and said, “Oh, okay...” So we sat down and we went through it piece-by-piece, and she told me all the pieces that she knew, and I said, “This is good stuff. I don’t understand half of it—it must be really good!” So then I said, “Now let’s look at the percentage that you don’t know, yet.” Not, “...that you’re not smart enough to get.” Not “that you’ll never know in your whole life.” So we sat down and we figured it out, and we still had about five or ten percent of it that we just couldn’t figure out between the two of us. Well, between the one of her, and me watching. So I said, “Here’s the deal. I want you to go back to school tomorrow and go to your chemistry teacher, and say, ‘I didn’t do so well on this first test, but I’ve gone through and I’ve figured out the parts that I didn’t get correct. But I need help on two or three pieces. I was wondering if I stayed after school today, if you could help me with those pieces?’

That teacher was so surprised she had to sit down. She was like, “Are you kidding me?” And Allison said, “Well, yeah, I just don’t know it yet...so that I can move forward. Her teacher said, “Okay...”

The second test that she took in that class, she made a 99. Now was she any smarter the second time around? No. It was just a difference in the way that she was approaching it. The first time had fear. She didn’t know what to do about it. So fortunately, we had a great Montessori moment... (to be continued)
Please join us for Field Day on October 16, 2010! The Earth Ball will be there along with lots of other fun activities! The Earth ball is a huge six-foot diameter canvas ball that can be used in a variety of games including:

**Keep It Up** - One team works to keep the ball airborne by passing to the team players, the other team works to get it down. Play in 10 minute increments, then switch sides. Points awarded for the longest time each team keeps the ball in the air.

**End Zone/Soccer** - Two opposing teams play to defend a goal at each end of the field, using hands only (no kicking). Each team earns a point by getting the ball into the opposing goal.

**Circle Time Trial** - The whole group lays down in a circle with heads at the center and feet toward the outside. The earth ball is placed on the participants’ stomachs and passed around the circle in a timed trial. Spotters stand outside the circle to prevent it from rolling outside the circle. See how fast you can get it around the circle!

**Earth Ball Pass** - The whole group forms a single line or circle while standing up and tries to pass the ball overhead. The goal is to see how long you can keep the ball in the air without touching the ground in a timed trial.

There are lots of activities and games to play with the Earth Ball, and it is sure to be a lot of fun! We will have some coordinated games going on with a schedule posted during Field Day, so please come join us!

**Field Day Tip**: Plastic water bottles will not be sold. Bring your own water bottles, which can be refilled at the event.

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**Kroger Neighbor-to-Neighbor program**

*directs a percentage of your purchase to Post Oak*

Parents: in order to participate in the Kroger Neighbor-to-Neighbor donation program, please print the letter from the forms page on our website (under For Parents -> Information Center -> Forms and Publications). Take the form to a Kroger grocery store to connect your customer card to Post Oak. That way, Post Oak can receive funds from Kroger. Thanks!

**Randalls Good Neighbor program**

*directs a percentage of your purchase to Post Oak*

Fill out the form for Randalls on the Grocery Store Rebate form on our website to donate a percentage of your purchase to Post Oak. **The Post Oak School number is 2531**. You can find the form online under For Parents -> Information Center -> Forms and Publications.
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 Thursdays from 9:00–10:30 am in the Post Oak multipurpose room (formerly called the reading room) on the following dates:

Sept. 16, 23, 30, & Oct. 14*
continuing Oct. 21, 28, Nov. 4 & 11

*Only the October 14 class will meet in the Tile Room—this is a change of date from October 7.

**Topics include:**
- The Two Rules of Love and Logic®
- Delayed or “Anticipatory” Consequences
- Using Empathy and Love and Logic One-Liners to Neutralize Arguing
- How to get more information about Love and Logic

This parenting program is designed to give you practical skills that can be used immediately.

These classes require pre-registration by calling Phylis at 713-661-6688 ext. 176.

Only costs: $10.

**Asking Open-Ended Questions of Children**

When we ask direct questions of children we greatly increase the possibility of getting a one word answer. If we want more information it is helpful to ask open-ended questions, giving some information before asking the question. EX.: Today I passed a school playground, the children sounded like they were having so much fun. What was it for you outside today? Other suggestions for starting a conversation:

- I was thinking about you in school today and would love to hear more about your day.
- I wonder about...
- I am curious to hear about...
- I just love to hear your voice, please tell me about some fun you had/work you did
- Sometimes it’s like this for me, what’s something that didn’t turn out so well for you?
- Tell me about something you felt really good about doing today. (Parent can share an experience as well.)

international wine & cheese pairing
save the date
Wed., November 10, 2010
6:00–9:00 pm
The Tasting Room (at) Uptown Park
friends and family all welcome
more information to come

calling all hosts

Are you creative? Do you like to entertain?

This year’s gala is looking for you! We need hosts, cooks, wine connoisseurs, or entertainers. Be creative and organize your own theme and event. Your donation will need to include the location (typically your home but we’re open to all ideas), food and/or beverage. Entertainment is optional. The event can be for adults, children, or family, and will be sold on a per-plate or -seat basis with all proceeds going to the gala. You tell us how many people to invite.

These events have proven a HUGE success in the past as home parties. Partner with another family, a Post Oak staff member, or a friend. Make your planning as fun as the event and raise big $$$ for the gala!

For adult events contact: Amy Lee
For family/childrens events contact: Paula Mey
1. Primary spelling: nest, step, bend
2. “Alpha, beta, gamma, delta, epsilon...” learning the Greek alphabet in Middle School humanities.
3. Relaxing with a book in the reading corner.
4. Preparing carrots for snack.
6. Sketching images of Galveston Bay in art.
7. Enjoying snack in Infant Community.
9. Learning animal names.
10. Addition with the stamp game and a friend.
12. PF board game: sprint to roll the dice, return to your team and perform the exercise from the space on which you landed!
13. Getting some water to carry.
14. Reading words and matching them with veggies.
15. Modeling a Pueblo mask replica.
We got the First Great Lesson and our follow-up was to research the Earth. We did a report on the layers of the Earth, and decided to make a model. We went home over the weekend and covered a styrofoam ball with different colors representing the layers—the inner core, the outer core, the mantle, the crust, and the atmosphere. We cut out the continents and put them on when we got back on Monday. We cut a slice out of the Earth to show the layers. Then we went from class to class presenting the report. It took a while but it was fun.
The Post Oak Parents Association
Annual Welcome Dinner
Creating partnerships: HMNS loves the idea!

Post Oak High School has begun establishing Museum District partnerships fundamental to its mission, and is enjoying a positive response from area institutions. This component of the high school pairs professionals inside world-class cultural and scientific organizations with Post Oak students in meaningful collaboration. This creates an engaging environment in which students have opportunities to develop skills and pursue interests in real-world settings. This network of partnerships, we believe, makes Post Oak High School unique among Houston’s top private high schools.

One of the first institutions to express interest in Post Oak’s program is also one of the most popular museums in the country (among the top five in annual attendance based on total ticket sales): the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Following discussions with High School Director James Moudry and Head of School John Long, HMNS President Joel Bartsch is enthusiastic:

“I see great potential,” Bartsch says, “for students to benefit from focused relationships with curators and staff at the Museum—building on their coursework through real, behind-the-scenes experience with top professionals in the country. Working closely with students also benefits the Museum, furthering our mission to enhance in citizens an interest in natural science.”

“I have always envisioned the existence of a high school based here in the Museum District so that students could easily access all various resources that the museums here have to offer,” Bartsch says. “Now Post Oak High School is making that a reality. Our collaboration will support the Museum’s goals in innovative ways and provide an approach we can share with our other visitors.”
**NOTICE BOARD**

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**Bearkats Cross Country**

Sept. 25  Saturday  
@ Houston Christian High School

Oct. 2  Saturday  
@ Pin Oak Middle School

Oct. 5  Tuesday @ Hershey Park

Oct. 9  Saturday @ Buffalo Bayou

Oct. 21  Thursday  
@ AOS Dolphin Dash

We will take our school bus to all the meets except the Saturday meets; parents will be responsible for getting students to those meets.

Coach Tucker

Go Bearkats!!!

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**Barbara Hacker’s green tip of the week**

**Little things count!**

If every home switched from polyester dryer sheets to paper dryer sheets (which are recyclable and compostable), we could keep 640 trucks from U.S. landfills each year!

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**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)

4600 Bissonnet, Bellaire, Texas 77401 • Telephone: 713-661-6688 • Fax: 713-661-4959 • www.postoakschool.org