Skinna-ma-rinky-dink, skinna-ma-rinky-do...I love you...

The two-year-olds sang and swayed, waved their arms, and curled their fingers. Most were seated; some just had to be on their feet to move with the music and when they got to the “I love you,” hugged each other.

Later in the song, they raised hands over their heads and shaped circles like so many moons.

The Absorbent Mind, her book about the first six years of development, Dr. Montessori included a chapter titled “The Importance of Movement.” The next chapter is titled, “Intelligence and the Hand.” Full body movement. The work of the hand. Dr. Montessori saw these not as separate and discrete facets of the child’s development but as integrated functions of the whole person. She said, “In fact, it is only by movement that the personality can
“The hand is the cutting edge of the mind.”  
by John Long, continued from page 1

express itself. The greatest of philosophers must use speech or writing to convey his ideas, and this involves muscular movement. What would be the value of his thoughts if he gave them no expression? And this he can only do by making use of his muscles.”

Regarding the hand, she wrote, “The skill of a man’s hand is bound up with the development of his mind, and in the light of history we see it connected with the development of civilization.” I watched in a Primary classroom the children at work, observing the use of the hand.

• The first one I saw was a child listening to music on headphones. Where were his hands? Cupping the head phones, not to hold them in place but as if to bring the hands into an otherwise auditory experience.

• Looking elsewhere, I saw two children at the snack table drinking apple juice—the hands lifting the full glasses with grace and control.

• Several children were writing, using the refined pincer grip with the thumb in apposition to the index and middle fingers.

• Another child, using the same grip, was painting with watercolors on a tabletop.

• Sometimes younger children will paint with tempera colors at the easel using the less refined power grip, the full-fisted grasp used by our Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon predecessors with hammer stones, the most primitive of stone tools.

• Two three-year-olds were being given a lesson on the sandpaper letters. With the first two fingers, they would trace the shape of the letters, setting that shape in their muscular memory.

• Some older children were working with the moveable alphabet to write stories. This is a throw back to the days of print shops full of moveable type. It raised the question of why we don’t use computers in the Primary classes for the children’s writing. As I watched the complete process, the reasons became clear. For this young author, writing with the moveable alphabet is a full body experience as she stretched to the left to reach the next letter she needed, then stretched to the right to place the letter in place. Each new letter involved a full body stretch. At the same time, she was using the pincer grip to pick out, transport, and place the letter. Then, after the story was written, she walked across the room, got a pencil and paper and a writing board to copy the story down. Not only was the sensorial experience very different from that of the electronic media, but the use of the full body and the refined three finger grip engaged much more of the brain and made the learning experience more complete.

This reminded me of Jacob Bronowski’s book, The Ascent of Man. In the chapter “The Grain in the Stone” he writes, “We have to understand that the world can only be grasped,” (notice the verb ‘grasp’ which implies both the hand and the understanding of the brain) “by action, not by contemplation. The hand is more important than the eye...We are active; and indeed we know, as something more than a symbolic accident in the evolution of man, that it is the hand that drives the subsequent evolution of the brain. We find tools today made by man before he became man. Benjamin Franklin in 1778 called man ‘a tool making animal,’ and that is right.’

I went into an Elementary classroom to observe the hand in action. Clearly these were children who had made great progress in their skills and confidence – both in full body movement and in the work of the hand. While many of the activities required similar movements as in the Primary, the children were much more sophisticated in their skills. Every work involved the hand in some way.

• Two children were working on long division that required the manipulation of small beads.

• Authors were using pencils and glue sticks.

• Other math work with fractions involved the manipulation of metal pie pieces – very much like the pictures shown in traditional math books. (Recall Bronowski’s comment that the hand is more important than the eye. Children who have the opportunity to physically manipulate the metal pieces learn fractions more profoundly than children who just look at pictures to illustrate certain problems.)

• Children were doing grammar work, analyzing sentences into subject, verb, and direct object. To do so they were manipulating wooden arrows and circles; they were writing the sentences on little strips of paper and cutting them apart to put each portion of the sentence in its place.

• And then, at the end of the work period, one student walked over to a shelf, grasped the handle of a striker with the pincer grip, slowly slipped it from its case, and gently struck a tone bar, sending a barely audible note through the class which caused everyone to turn and listen to the announcement that it was time to end the morning’s work. His hand control was nearly as impressive as the response of the class to such a low-level stimulus. The one represented a high degree of hand control; the other represented a high degree of control of the will. Together I witnessed children who are mastering themselves.

continued on page 4
Dear Parents,

If you have contributed to this year’s Post Oak Fund—our sincere thanks! You are making a difference in the life of Post Oak students.

If not, Annual Fund Chairs Lloyd and Amy Kirchner, Head of School John Long, Board Chair Bob Harvey, and Development Chair Adam Forman will be reaching out to you via phone calls in the next two weeks to ask you to help us reach the $250,000 goal by November 15.

We still need to raise over $55,000 to reach this year’s goal. All gifts are appreciated, and we ask you to consider the role Post Oak School plays in your family’s life as you make that decision.

Please be generous in your support.

Current total: $194,000.

Overall Goal: $250,000

Campaign ends: November 15th.

To pledge or with questions, please email Christina Cantu (christinacantu@postoakschool.org).

The Toddler Dining Experience

Enjoy a social hour filled with encouragement and tips from our faculty.

TONIGHT! October 28, 7:00–8:30 pm

Hor d’oeuvres and beverages provided

RSVP to Mirani Smith (miranismith@postoakschool.org)
Grandparents’ Days
invitation mailing

Grandparents’ Days will soon be here! If you would like your child’s grandparents or other relatives/friends to be invited to this year’s Grandparents’ Days (November 22 & 23), please go to www.postoakschool.org and submit mailing information. (Grandparents select the most convenient day to attend.) Please feel free to include anyone who you feel would like to observe and/or interact with your children in their Montessori environment. Invitations to Grandparents Days will be mailed directly to those individuals in early November.

Bronowski goes on, “I have described the hand when it uses a tool as an instrument of discovery; it is the theme of this essay. We see this every time a child learns to couple hand and tool together—to lace its shoes, to thread a needle, to fly a kite or to play a penny whistle. With the practical action there goes another, namely finding pleasure in the action for its own sake—in the skill that one perfects, and perfects by being pleased with it. This at bottom is responsible for every work of art, and science too: our poetic delight in what human beings do because they can do it. The most exciting thing about that is that the poetic use in the end has the truly profound results. Even in prehistory man already made tools that have an edge finer that they need have. The finer edge in its turn gave the tool a finer use, a practical refinement and extension to processes for which the tool had not been designed... The hand is the cutting edge of the mind.

Civilization is not a collection of finished artifacts, it is the elaboration of processes. In the end, the march of man is the refinement of the hand in action.”

For the child under six, Dr. Montessori said, “Never give more to the mind than you give to the hand.” At all levels she understood the importance of the hand in education, in the shaping of the brain, of the personality itself. I invite you to come in to observe the work of the hand.

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Bearkats place 3rd in cross country meet

The Post Oak Bearkats finished their cross country season last week with a great showing in the Dolphin Dash hosted by AOS at T.C. Jester Park. The eighth grade girls’ team comprised of Devina and Jahnnavi Schneider and Nora O’Neill finished third overall with many private schools from the Houston area in the competition. The Bearkats also had runners in the sixth-grade races with Natalia Salgado in the girls race and Larson Moye and Matthew Sanders in the boys’ race. We are very proud of all our runners this year.

—Coach Tucker

Coming up

Nov. 3 – Wednesday
Soccer game
@ Feld Park, 4:15 pm

Infant Community & Primary Parents

Please join us for this month’s F.I.S.H.

Conversation about language formation from birth to six years.

Presented by Karol Musher
Internationally Renowned Speech Pathologist from Texas Childrens Hospital

Thursday, November 11
9:00–10:30 am
Dancing across Cultures
The 2011 Biennial Gala of The Post Oak School | Feb. 4, 2011

wanted: dragon dancers
If you have any information about a dragon dancing troupe, please contact Annette Gregory at

advertising in the gala program
If you would like to buy an ad for the gala program, there is a wide range of price options available. Contact parent Renée Locklar or drop by the development office to pick up an advertising form. Individual family ads are welcome!

Support the gala through program advertising with:
- family ads
- business ads
- commercial ads

Your ad will be seen by 500 families and friends of Post Oak in the program and online on the gala page.

calling all hosts
Are you creative? Do you like to entertain?
This year’s gala needs 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), food and/or beverage. Entertainment optional. Events can be for adults, children, or family, and will be sold on a per-person basis with all proceeds going toward the gala fundraising total. You set the number of attendees.

Home parties have been very successful in the past. Partner with another family, a Post Oak staff member, or a friend. Make your planning as fun as the event and raise big money for The Post Oak School at the gala!

For adult events, contact: Amy Lee
For family/children’s events, contact: Paula Mey

international wine & cheese pairing

Wednesday, November 10 6:00–9:00 pm
The Tasting Room @ Uptown Park

Tickets available at www.postoakschool.org
Ticket proceeds go toward the purchase of a wine collection which will be auctioned at the gala.

*Limited number of tickets remaining.*
Visit the World’s Fair at the 2010 Post Oak Book Fair

Thursday, November 4, 2010 • 9:00 am–9:00 pm
Barnes & Noble • 3003 W. Holcombe Boulevard

The Book Fair is a fun, family event and an excellent opportunity to purchase books for your child’s class, the school library and your friends and family. This annual event is designed specifically to support and enhance our school library. In addition to the books that we purchase for the teachers and library, a percentage of all purchases (books, music, games, toys, DVDs, etc.) made that day will go directly to our school. So be sure to bring your gift lists and get a head start on holiday shopping. In addition, during the evening, Barnes & Noble’s friendly neighbor Chick-fil-A will host a “Spirit Night” for Post Oak during which a percentage of all purchases from 5:00-8:00 pm will benefit our library!

Thank you for your support,
Jennifer Chavis and Jessica Gregg, POPA Book Fair Co-Chairs
Book Fair Activities

10:30 am   Jackie Dryden speaks! Be educated and entertained by this former Post Oak parent and Just Me author Jackie Dryden

12:00–8:00 pm   Create colorful & moveable crafts

4:00–7:00 pm   Construct the City of Tomorrow at the LEGO Creation Station

4:00–8:00 pm   Design, build, and showcase your own innovative remote-controlled robots with American Robotics

6:30–7:15 pm   Experience the magic and illusion of Carter Blackburn

5:00–8:00 pm   Spirit Night at Chick-fil-A

Sing, listen and laugh during story time with Post Oak teachers!

4:15 p.m.   Erin Smith (sing-a-long)
4:30 p.m.   Sarah Moudry
4:45 p.m.   Laura Roark (Spanish)
5:00 p.m.   Hifa Sobhani
5:15 p.m.   Errol Pinto

The Book Fair serves as a fundraiser designed to specifically support and enhance our school library. In addition to the books we purchase for our teachers and library, a percentage of all purchases made that day will come directly back to our school.

Friends of the Library
these funds directly support the Post Oak library

“Friend of the Library” Name(s) ______________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________________________
City/Zip ___________________________ Phone ___________________________
Donation Amount: $ ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Please make checks payable to “The Post Oak School” and write “Friend of the Library” in the memo line.

For Credit Card Payments:
Circle: Visa Mastercard AMEX Discover
Card #: ___________________________________________________________ Expiration Date ___________________________
Name (as it appears on card): ____________________________________________
Signature: ____________________________________________________________
CSV # (typically the last 3 digits on the back of your card) ____________________________

Please turn in this form, or donate online by clicking on the Book Fair link on the left side of the website homepage.
Field Day 2010 fun!

A sun-filled, fun-drenched day was had by all at this year’s Field Day! Thanks go to our fabulous Field Day chairs: Amy Garrou and Teri Bair. They did a terrific job of bringing in new events to liven up the day. Thanks to everyone who purchased Mystery Box tickets to help pay for this community event.

Thanks, too, to the many volunteers!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Mystery Box Theme</th>
<th>Winner (small)</th>
<th>Winner (medium)</th>
<th>Winner (large)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basham Tamara</td>
<td>Imagination Toolbox</td>
<td>Courtney Callahan</td>
<td>Casey Carter</td>
<td>Rudy Haddad</td>
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<td>Full-Day Infant Community</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Julian Zumbado</td>
<td>Katie Busby</td>
<td>Mark Mey</td>
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<td>Hacker Barbara</td>
<td>Rainy Day Fun</td>
<td>Madeline Garrou</td>
<td>Chloe Styles</td>
<td>Jeronimo Zbrilla</td>
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<td>Love Our Earth</td>
<td>Sutton Walsh</td>
<td>Ian Neblett</td>
<td>Charlie Lu</td>
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<td>Kluk Orly</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Ana Luca Loya</td>
<td>Chloe Madden</td>
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<td>Zoo Animals</td>
<td>Danny Rafati</td>
<td>Niko Cantu</td>
<td>Mariano Hess</td>
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<td>Long Kathy</td>
<td>Ocean Life</td>
<td>Carter Green</td>
<td>Sonsino Family</td>
<td>Matthew Lee</td>
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<td>Moudry Sarah</td>
<td>Everything from A to Z</td>
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<td>Games of Strategy</td>
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<td>D'Andre Bergt</td>
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<td>Nature</td>
<td>Jonah Meyer</td>
<td>Rafael Onofre</td>
<td>Chavis Family</td>
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<td>Mystery Box</td>
<td>Samantha Pulaski</td>
<td>Anson Moore</td>
<td>Jorge Cortes</td>
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<td>Pinto Maya</td>
<td>Fantastic Family Fun Activities</td>
<td>Thalie Waters</td>
<td>Kate Mey</td>
<td>Elena Loya</td>
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<td>Sports</td>
<td>Nicholas Kapusta</td>
<td>Erin Smith</td>
<td>Sloan Stefanakis</td>
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<td>Sobhani Hifa</td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Andi Groudan</td>
<td>Eli Saldaña-Kowlachuk</td>
<td>Jodie Daik</td>
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<td>In the Garden</td>
<td>Elise Sanders</td>
<td>Victor Phan</td>
<td>B.R. Simon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winton Miriam</td>
<td>Endangered Animals</td>
<td>Lauren Schank</td>
<td>Carly Gregg</td>
<td>Sacha Waters</td>
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We celebrate United Nations Day on October 24, because the United Nations came into existence on the same day in 1945. This year will be the 65th anniversary of it coming into being as a collection of nations. The purpose of the United Nations is to bring peace to all the countries of the world. Originally, after the First World War, a group of countries came together as the League of Nations. That was to prevent any more wars and bloodshed. But, they were not successful because the Second World War broke out.

The United Nations has helped millions of people around the world with its programs through the 65 years of its work.

There are 192 member countries who participate in the United Nations. They all have delegates who sit in the General Assembly Hall in New York in the United Nations building. The land and the building does not belong to the United States, but to all the 192 member nations. The United Nations has its own flag, post office and postage stamps. There are six official languages spoken in the United Nations. They are, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish.

and I are participating in the Post Oak Montessori Model UN program. Last year, I was a delegate representing the country of Jamaica in the Third Committee at the General Assembly. Other committees we participated in were the World Food Program, the Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNEP, and the United Nations Development Program. There were 24 delegates and 17 chaperones including our teachers. The program is held at the Brooklyn Bridge Marriott Hotel.

In preparation to go to New York for the MMUN program, we first learn about the United Nations. Then we prepare our country research. After that, we study the topics being discussed this year by our countries in the committees, and we prepare a position paper on that topic. Following that, we prepare our speech on the position paper we write. Then we present our speeches in committee in New York, and we debate our topics. In the committees, we have a president, a vice president and a rapporteur, who together help us with our discussions.

This leads to us joining with other countries who agree with us to join together and make a draft resolution. We vote on the resolutions in the actual United Nations building, which is very exciting. Our resolutions are presented to the secretary general of the United Nations as the voice of Montessori students.

This year we are a group of 33 students. We will stay in New York for four days. This year I am a delegate of the United Kingdom, and is a delegate from Kenya. We are both really looking forward to our experience in New York along with more than 800 other Montessori students from North America and other countries, who will be coming to debate with us April 13–16.
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston relationship sprouts for High School

by James Moudry, Middle School & High School Director

As you already know, the Post Oak High School will feature innovative partnerships with Museum District organizations that allow Post Oak faculty and students to extend the “classroom” beyond the school walls. These are key relationships that are at the core of a unique curriculum for the High School. Since our conversation with the Houston Museum of Natural Science (see The Weekly Post from Sept. 24, 2010), we have also begun talking with Deborah Canal, the CEO and president of the Houston Zoo, and Peter Marzio, the director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

The goals of these partnerships is to provide faculty and students with a broad array of options in creating an engaging school experience unlike anything else. We anticipate the curators, educators, and professionals at the Museums to function as adjunct faculty for the Post Oak High School. They will provide expert resources for staff and direct, engaging research connections for students. Post Oak will work closely with the museums to support their approaches in education, particularly for middle school and high school students.

Two weeks ago, I had an encouraging meeting at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston with the Director, Dr. Peter Marzio and attended by Post Oak board member Windi Grimes, Head of School John Long, and Development Director Christina Kopanidis-Cantu. This week, I hosted Dr. Victoria Ramirez, the education director at the MFAH. As she toured the school with me, it was clear that the partnership was going to be mutually beneficial beyond just the High School students. After seeing the Infant Communities and Primary environments, Dr. Ramirez asked Early Childhood Director Mirani Smith how the museum could be helpful and how she could find out more about the programs at Post Oak.

My follow-up conversation with Dr. Ramirez provided ample time (before the fire drill!) to brainstorm some ideas and considerations for the partnership between the two organizations going forward. In the coming weeks, I'll visit the MFAH again and meet curators and conservationists who we anticipate will be joining the Post Oak community as adjunct faculty members for the high school.

Race to Nowhere

Screening in the Post Oak gym on Friday, November 12 at 6:30 pm

Make your plans to attend this eye-opening film.

Post Oak School will host a screening of this thought-provoking film about the pressures faced by American schoolchildren and their teachers in a system and culture obsessed with the illusion of achievement. The film will be followed by a panel discussion. Every parent should have an interest in seeing this film and being a part of the conversation.

For more information about the film and to see the trailer, go to www.racetonowhere.com/about-film

Childcare available for Post Oak Primary and Elementary students. (Limited space: call the front office to reserve space - $5 per child).
Honoring Susan Tracy as she moves on to be head of school at St. Catherine’s

best wishes!
Middle School students construct a drip-irrigation system while visiting Blackwood recently. The students had to determine the best method by working together.

Lost & Found box to be emptied at the end of the week

Parents: please come and have a look for your children’s things in our Lost & Found box in the front lobby. The box will be emptied at the end of the month and its contents will be donated to charity.

Middle School visits Blackwood Land Institute

America Street
A multicultural anthology of stories

This book has a collection of many different amazing stories about challenges, triumphs, friends and enemies, and about having different cultures in the life of teenagers. It shows how, even with a different culture and ways of doing things, that there are some things that never change. These stories teach many lessons that we sometimes forget. I would recommend this book for everyone, especially students. — Grade 7

Edited by Anne Mazer

Lost & Found box to be emptied at the end of the week
**CALENDAR**

For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

**Annual Fund Month! (Oct. 1–Nov. 15)**

**OCTOBER 31–NOVEMBER 6**

- **Sun 10/31**  
  Halloween 🎃

- **Mon–Fri 11/01–05**  
  CTP-4 Standardized Testing for Middle School & Upper El

- **Mon 11/01**  
  Dia de Muertos 🎃

- **Wed 11/03**  
  POPA Coffee/Work Day  
  8:45 am–1:00 pm

- **Thu 11/04**  
  Post Oak Book Fair at Barnes & Noble  
  3003 W. Holcombe Blvd  
  9:00 am–9:00 pm

- **Fri 11/05**  
  Diwali 🎆  
  Montessori Journey, Pt. 1  
  6:00–9:00 pm (reg. req’d)

- **Sat 11/06**  
  Montessori Journey, Pt. 2  
  8:00 am–2:00 pm (reg. req’d)

**NOVEMBER 7–13**

- **Sun 11/07**  
  Daylight Saving Time ends  
  set clocks back 1 hr at 2:00 am

- **Mon–Fri 11/08–12**  
  CTP-4 Standardized Testing for Third Graders  
  Middle School  
  Texas Odyssey Trip

- **Thu 11/11**  
  Veterans Day 🇺🇸

- **Fri 11/12**  
  Birth of Bahá’u’lláh (Bahá’í)

**NOTICE BOARD**

**Dad’s Club Poker Tournament!**

Monday, November 15 at 8:00 pm

Hosted by Alan Ying 🎲

All Post Oak dads are invited • Space is limited

**RSVP: [email protected]**

**NANNY WANTED**

I am looking for a nanny for my 22-month-old child. If you or someone you know has an understanding of the basic Infant Community Montessori principles, and/or has worked with a family who had children attend The Post Oak School, please contact Birgit Kamps at [email protected]

**PARENT BASKETBALL WEDNESDAY NIGHTS**

If you are interested in joining this informal Wednesday pick-up game for parents and employees from 8:00–10:00 pm in the Post Oak gym, contact Travis Crabtree at [email protected]

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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).

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