Service is at the core of our mission. In my Weekly Post letter two weeks ago, I quoted Post Oak alumnus Nikkil Schneider who said simply, “That’s just what we do.” Service is baked in to Montessori kids from the earliest age. For us, service to others is more than a food drive at Thanksgiving. It is a character trait whose roots are nourished in the Infant Community classroom when one two-year-old helps another put on a sweater.

Montessori kids learn to give help and to receive help in matters of practical life, and in their studies as well. What do you call it when one child helps another in class? Cheating? That’s what most
schools call it. We call it the ideal. Business writer Steven Covey agreed. He said that the traditional American ideal has always been to move from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood. While self-mastery is essential, Covey identifies an even higher state of development: interdependence—the skills required to work with others.

“Certainly, independence is vital; however, the problem is that we live in an interdependent reality. Our most important work, the problems we hope to solve or the opportunities we hope to realize require working and collaborating with other people in a high-trust, synergistic way—whether at home or at work.”

Once again Dr. Montessori was ahead of her time. In the Montessori elementary curriculum we present a chart entitled “Interdependencies” when we study the organization of society. That is an academic model, an intellectual construct, one that becomes a lens through which the Montessori student views the world. On a more concrete and practical plane, helping each other from the earliest age is augmented by service to the classroom community, to the school as a whole, and then service to the wider community as the child matures and their world view expands.

Montessori graduates understand that their work is a part of the network of interdependencies that comprise our society. In that way, all work is service. Beyond that, Montessori graduates have learned to give and to receive help. They have learned that this is a core value of community, and so they look to serve. As Post Oak alumnus Lt. Will Treadway said when I asked him to connect the dots between Montessori education, West Point, and a career in the military, “Leadership and service.”

And so I am pleased to see that the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is promoting service. Read about its “One Million Hours of Service Initiative.” NAIS Executive Director Pat Bassett frames service as one dimension of the “public purpose” of private schools.

I would like to contribute our voice to this dialog, telling some of the stories of service at Post Oak, and so I’m asking for volunteers who are willing to work on this project. Please let me know if you are interested.

John Long

In response to this invitation, I received a note from Bob Harvey, Chair of the Post Oak Board of Trustees. Here is Bob’s note and my response. —JL

John

My only caution is that we should be careful about subscribing to the NAIS view of community service, which as we have discussed on occasion is all about “counting hours” and treating community service as an exogenous activity. While, unfortunately, many college admissions departments seem to view it the same way, I have always been pleased that we treat it as a normal part of the Montessori experience – part of education, sure, but more importantly, part of everyday life.

Bob

………………………………………………………….

Bob.

Yes, we are an NAIS member school, but we do not subscribe to the view point you describe...and though I suggest that we contribute our story to the NAIS effort, Post Oak’s approach to service is qualitatively different...just as our approach to “character education” is qualitatively different. Both service and character education are part of the fabric of daily life at Post Oak...not extracurricular activities.

Thanks for urging clarification.

John  

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Update: MIDDLE SCHOOL RAINWATER PROJECT

by Shekola Gray, Middle School Coordinator

I must begin this note with thanks and gratitude for all of the Post Oak community members who have made the Middle School Gala Legacy Project a reality. We appreciate the monetary contributions you have made, the information and suggestions you have provided to the students as they were planning their work, and the inspiration for this big work.

As you have read and heard, the project involves capturing rainwater and using this water for our outdoor garden and lawn areas. The water will be collected in various vessels on campus—one 300 gallon cistern, and five 55-gallon barrels. The water will be gathered from the barrels and the cistern using hoses and watering cans. Once painted, the watering cans will be distributed to each classroom.

Each rainwater vessel will be placed on a level foundation. The smaller vessels will be placed on top of garden quality rubber tiles. These tiles will be placed on leveled ground. The large cistern will have a foundation of clay, limestone, concrete blocks, plywood, and garden quality rubber tiles. The foundation will serve to eliminate sinking or shifting of the tank. The design of the foundation duplicates that of the metal water recovery tank at Blackwood Land Institute. The material of construction for our tank, however, is plastic. Use of plastic as a material of construction for the same capacity tank reduces the need for a poured concrete foundation. We are confident that the larger tank and the smaller barrels will be stable and safe for use by children of all ages.

Small barrels have been placed in Julie Parraguirre’s outdoor area and near the gymnasium door. We have calibrated a level indicator for the smaller barrels. We are now calibrating the level indicator for the cistern. By tomorrow, we will have put the cistern in place. Vogler Sheet Metal will be consulting with Middle School students on connecting the barrels to the gutter downsputs.

Each vessel will contain crushed marble which will act to remove any trace metals which may be present in the water. The water in the barrels will be potable, but should only be used for watering or rinsing off outdoor equipment. In the future, students will be able to conduct quality tests on the water in the barrels. We will share the results with the community.

I am very hopeful that the installation and training will be completed before our group leaves for Washington, D.C., this May. I know you share in my excitement about this project and are anxious to see the final product. If you have any questions along the way, Gala Project Managers Carter Green and Akshat Sood are happy to talk with you about the project. You should also feel free to talk to any of the Middle School students or lead teachers about the project.

Important dates for the 2011-2012 school year

Watch The Weekly Post and our website for more information about next year’s academic calendar. Here are a few dates we have already determined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 15–19</td>
<td>First week for Elementary &amp; Middle School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 22–26</td>
<td>First week for Infant Community &amp; Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 10</td>
<td>Columbus Day—school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 23–25</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break—school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday—school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>Presidents Day holiday—school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 12–16</td>
<td>Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 6</td>
<td>Good Friday—school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Last day of school</td>
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What is The Post Oak School’s Cinco de Mayo Presentation?

The Cinco de Mayo presentation was begun in 1990 by the classroom assistants as a part of the Spanish program. This regional dance and musical performance combines Spanish, history, cultural appreciation and the arts into one dynamic program.

This year, the presentation will feature our extended-day Primary students offering them the unique opportunity to develop stage confidence and expressiveness.

The performance will be held in the Underwood Theatre at Episcopal High School on Friday, April 29 at 6:30 pm. The classroom assistants and the children have been hard at work preparing and practicing for this performance. So come, invite your friends and family to join us as we enjoy the extended-day Primary classes’ Cinco de Mayo 2011!

Elise McClain & Ann Lee
Cinco de Mayo Co-Chairs

Cinco de Mayo celebrates the Mexican Army’s victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

Cinco de Mayo!  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-shirts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student's name: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class (of oldest child): ____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone number: ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of t-shirts: ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total $ enclosed($15/ea): ________________</td>
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Deadline is Monday, April 4, 2011

Pre-order a Cinco de Mayo performance DVD online at: www.jhphotographyonline.com/clients/postoakschool

DVD $30
Blu-Ray $40

Orders will be shipped on Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

Looking for old pictures!

For part of our 20th anniversary celebration of Cinco de Mayo, we are looking for previous Cinco pictures for our slide show. We would like to include students from all classes. If you have any that you would like to share or know someone who has pictures, please submit them via the link on the left side of the homepage (if they are digital or have been scanned in), or for hard copies, please bring them to Norma Paulin here at Post Oak. Please label all photos, both digital and hard copies, with your name and the year. We will return hard copies as soon as possible.

Cinco de Mayo celebrates the Mexican Army’s victory over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.
Join us for this documentary film at this year’s Post Oak 2011 Annual Spring Environmental Event
Wed., April 20, 7:00 pm in the gym

movie: free and open to the public

bag it
is your life too plastic?
plastic is disposable...
just throw it away...
but, where is away?

there is no away.
1. Discussing health, advertising, and the Internet in Upper Elementary.
2. Finding balance in Primary PE.
3. Goodbye to old friends before moving up.
4. Bake Sale to benefit Houston SPCA.
5. Showing friends around the butterfly garden.
Redirecting Children’s Behavior

The Gentle Art of Parenting

Pre-register for this 15-hr. course designed to guide parents to use discipline as a process of teaching children self-control and responsibility. This class is a positive, powerful, informative and fun training course that will give you a system to handle every situation in which adults and children interact, from infancy to adolescence. Visit www.deborah-fry.com for more information.

**Dates:** June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (five Wed. evenings)
**Time & Place:** 6:15–9:15 pm at Post Oak
**Cost:** $225 per person, $325 per couple
**For registration, call 713-840-8663.**

Deborah Fry, PhD is a certified instructor for the International Network for Children and Families. She gives talks and seminars for parents, teachers, and people involved with children and families, as well as teach at Westminster Weekday School.

Infant-Parent classes

at the Motherhood Center

The Infant and Parent classes offered at the Motherhood Center are facilitated by Post Oak Infant Community teachers Deidre Lodrig & Sarah Moudry.

**Learn about:** Montessori principles; preparing the home with the child in mind; how to encourage independence; language development; movement; weening; toileting; active learning & concentration

**Class A:** Birth-Crawling
Mondays & Thursdays for 10 weeks (1:30–3:00 pm) Mar. 21–May 19, 2011; $500/child or $900/sibling price

**Class B:** Crawling-Walking
Tuesdays for 10 weeks (1:30–3:00 pm) Mar. 22–May 17, 2011; $250/child or $450/sibling price

**Note:** $10 non-refundable registration fee added at checkout.


Toddler Parenting classes

at Post Oak

“How to Parent a Toddler” an adults-only class for prospective parents taught by Infant Community teacher Deidre Lodrig

**Dates:** Mondays, March 21–May 9 (8 weeks)
**Time:** 2:00–3:00 pm @ Post Oak, Deidre’s class
**Fee:** $160

**Topics will include:** working with your child in a Montessori way; discipline; grace and courtesy; peaceful households/dining with toddlers; play dates; choosing developmentally appropriate toys; supporting independence for your child; parent/child activities

To register, visit www.postoakschool.org and go to: “For Parents” —> “Parent Education” and click on the link for “Toddler Parenting Classes”
CALENDAR
For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

APRIL 3–9

Mon-Fri 4/4-8
Middle School to Blackwood Land Institute

Tue 4/5
Upper El & Middle School parent dinner & tour at Blackwood Land Inst.
6:00–8:00 pm

Wed 4/6
POPA Coffee & Work Day
8:45 am–1:00 pm
Parent/Employee Basketball
8:00–10:00 pm

Fri 4/8
Conference Day; classes not in session—only students with expanded-year contracts attend

Middle School is in session
No Weekly Post this week

APRIL 10–16

Mon 4/11
Primary & Elementary Conference Day
Infant Community Teacher In-Service Day
Classes not in session; only students with expanded-year contracts attend

Middle School in session

Wed 4/13
Parent/Employee Basketball
8:00–10:00 pm

Wed-Sat 4/13-16
Montessori Model United Nations in New York, NY

Check out our online calendar—or download a copy of the printed calendar at www.postoakschool.org

NOTICE BOARD

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

Becoming a Love & Logic Parent©

This parenting course series is designed to give you practical skills that can be used immediately for enjoying parenting and giving children opportunities to grow into wisdom. Open to all parents and grandparents in the greater community.

To join the Love & Logic© Insider’s Club and receive emails on Love & Logic© topics, please visit www.loveandlogic.com.

Spring Parenting Classes

Wednesday evenings, 6:30–8:00 pm, March 31, April 6, 13, 20, 27, and May 4
Cost: $150 pp for the series, plus $10 workbook.
($100 for spouse, discounts given if previously attended classes)
Drop-ins welcome, $30 per class

Thursday mornings 9:10–10:30 am
March 24, 31, April 7, 14, 21, 28, and May 5
No charge for Post Oak parents
Cost: $20 per person for the series (includes workbook).

April 8 & 11

Classes not in session
(except expanded-year contract students and Middle School)

Welcome Baby Bollinger
Welcome to baby Bollinger, recently born to Post Oak Alumna Allison (Dryden) Bollinger, M.D., and her husband Blake in Nashville, Tennessee. Allison is the daughter of Jackie Dryden, local author.

April 8 & 11

Classes not in session
(except expanded-year contract students and Middle School)