Steve Hughes, President of the American Academy of Pediatric Neuropsychology, is an advocate for Montessori education. He spoke at the recent Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) conference in Fort Worth and told the audience that we need to collect data to demonstrate the impact of Montessori schools. He personally observes that Montessori students develop more advanced social skills, creativity, self-control, intrinsic motivation, executive functioning, and moral reasoning than do their counterparts in conventional schools – without sacrificing academic performance. However, he chided the Montessori teachers and school administrators in the room for not collecting the data to tell the story persuasively.

That was the beginning of a report I gave the Post Oak School board of trustees two weeks ago. Afterwards, trustee Mario Kapusta asked me for

continued on page 2
more detail about Dr. Hughes’ proposed research project. My response is included below.

At the same time, my journey to the AMI refresher course reminded me of the range of professional development activities recently completed by Post Oak faculty and staff. Ongoing, career-long professional development is one of our core values. It improves our professional skills; it fosters a growth-oriented faculty culture; and because of that, it passes through directly to the children, impacting their attitudes and their learning.

Following my story about Steve Hughes’ talk are thumbnail sketches from various faculty and staff regarding workshops they have attended in the past month.

Mario:

There is some research comparing Montessori education to conventional education. The Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) may be the best laboratory for such comparisons for several reasons: (1) its Montessori program has been in continuous operation for almost 40 years; (2) it is of high quality – in the AMI tradition; (3) MPS has kept good longitudinal records of students; and (4) students are randomly selected for the program by lottery. This creates a perfect “control” group: students who applied for the Montessori program but were not selected vs those who were selected.

In one study of MPS students, (another article, same study) this is the summary result:

“A significant finding in this study is the association between a Montessori education and superior performance on the Math and Science scales of the ACT and WKCE. In essence, attending a Montessori program from the approximate ages of three to eleven predicts significantly higher mathematics and science standardized test scores in high school.”

In another study of MPS students reported in Science magazine (a rare venue for school research), this was the summary finding for 11 year olds:

“At the end of elementary school, Montessori children wrote more creative essays with more complex sentence structures, selected more positive responses to social dilemmas, and reported feeling more of a sense of community at their school.”

And although the Montessori program did not have the “test culture” of conventional schools, the 11-year-old Montessori students’ test scores were equal to or better than those of students in the conventional schools. Equal to or better than. Not the resounding “Montessori students blew them out of the water,” which would have unequivocally demonstrated superiority. This finding is consistent with Post Oak students’ performance on the annual CTP-4 achievement test. On the national norms, our average student scores at the 90th percentile. However, the private school norms are more of an apples to apples comparison, and on that measure, the average Post Oak student performs as well as or better than the average student in private independent schools across the country – despite the fact that we are playing on their home court: multiple choice standardized tests.

Here’s Steve Hughes’ hypothesis: Montessori schools can demonstrate that their students develop more advanced social skills, creativity, self-control, intrinsic motivation, executive functioning and moral reasoning than do their counterparts in conventional schools – without sacrificing academic performance.

Background: unlike conventional schools, Montessori schools care about more than test results. Yes, Montessori schools do care about cognitive development and academic learning; but their first aim is to create positive learning communities in order to develop creative, self-motivated young people who are kind and compassionate, who demonstrate high levels of self-control and self-management, and who work well with others. Just like academic achievement, growth in these areas can be measured. The instruments are out there and are used all the time by neuropsychologists, developmental psychologists, cognitive psychologists, educational psychologists, and educational researchers.

Dr. Hughes is launching a national research project to collect this data over the next five years.
Here are some examples of norm-referenced assessments of social skills, creativity (or this alternative), internal vs external motivation (locus of control), executive functioning, and moral judgment. These are examples of the skills that Dr. Hughes suggests we test over the next 5 years in order to confirm what we know: that Montessori students do better in these areas than students in conventional schools. That is why parents often say, “Montessori kids are different.” This will tell us HOW they are different... and measure it in ways that can be described.

If you want to view Dr. Hughes’ presentation at the AMI conference, you can find it here (“Montessori outcomes in preparation for adulthood”). [http://vimeo.com/37229084]

Deidre Lodrig, Infant Community Teacher: Educateurs sans Frontiers (EsF), AMI teachers, and administrators who desire to broaden the scope and reach of AMI Montessori education, met for two weeks to hear of the success of like-minded organizations and to brainstorm ideas for AMI’s effort to bring Montessori education to all children. Hearing the stories of challenge and triumph from organizations such as Save the Child served as an inspiration to many of us present. Since our assembly, one AMI public school special education teacher has joined with AMI training directors to trial an AMI teacher training for teachers of special needs children!

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is planning its 25th annual People of Color Conference (PoCC), to be held here in Houston. We are all invited to participate in what will surely be a delightful and culturally rich experience, as students from local private schools, (including Post Oak) will be present to perform an international, multicultural dance. Various professional speakers and local celebrities will share the unique experiences of persons of color in private school and how we might continue to nurture inclusion and diversity. Last year, the conference drew approximately 3900 students, teachers, and administrators from around the country. Stay tuned for more details!

Kathy Long, Elementary Teacher: Thanks to the generosity of Post Oak parent, Tanya Gec, I was invited to attend a luncheon and talk by Dr. Leonard Sax, M.D. Four of us from school attended. Honestly, I enjoyed the talk by the author of Boys Adrift almost as much as the conversation with my peers and the other interesting folks with whom we shared the table. We rarely have the opportunity to talk, relax, and share a meal together. Dr. Sax had many dire statistics about boys and their lagging academic achievement. Since I’ve been working with students for more than 30 years I also see the changes that he is documenting. Thank you, Dr. Sax, for reminding me of ways to make school a boy and girl friendly place.

Robin Lunsford, CPA, Director of Finance and Facilities: Last week I spent an exciting four days in Seattle, WA “threading the needle” at the National Business Officers Association (NBOA) annual symposium. NBOA is an association of over 1000 member schools across the U.S. and a number of foreign countries. Our three keynote speakers focused on the impact of technology on our schools from the aspect of the students and learning, to the potential dangers associated with unintentional content being broadcast over the internet. While all of the sessions are valuable, it is the interaction with other business officers that creates true value for me. Being able to discuss all the issues facing the business office and compare notes about what is going on in other schools around the world is priceless. I always come back from this conference with a renewed sense of energy and purpose as I look to implement new ideas in the way our business office serves the school.

Simran Sood, Elementary Teacher: I strongly believe in the power of stories, but had always thought of these as largely fictional; designed to emphasize and bring forth a moral quality that would appeal to the increased moral consciousness of the elementary child. I learnt, however, during the AMI Refresher course that these stories and gems do not always have to be fiction based. They can be literally about anything and that has opened up the world for me! In collaboration with the ongoing curriculum work these stories (and songs!) can be about the wind, or the work of water, or even why the Horse Latitudes are named what they are. It brings home the fact again that to be effective and lasting, education also needs to be enjoyable!

Christine Peterson, Human Resources Specialist: I attended an Abuse Risk Management Seminar which included
In support of one of our own classmates and friend, The Post Oak School and the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center are teaming up to host a mobile blood drive on the Post Oak campus on Wednesday, March 28 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. continues to courageously battle neuroblastoma, a form of cancer that affects young children.

If you would like to donate, please schedule an appointment through the front office or online at www.giveblood.org by registering as a Digital Donor and entering our sponsor code (UU59). Be sure to eat a hearty meal at least one hour beforehand, drink at least one 16 oz. bottle of water and bring a picture I.D.

We are also in need of parent volunteers to staff the donor tent. If you'd like to volunteer, donate blood, have questions regarding donor eligibility or would like to schedule your appointment time, please contact Mary Vaeza-Lopez or Kathryn Murphy (kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org).

Keep fighting, ! We’re all in your corner!

BLOOD DRIVE Benefiting

Matt Thompson and I attended The National Playground Safety Institute sponsored by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). This course (the only one of its kind) prepares participants to take the examination to become a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. Having school employees well versed in playground safety guidelines helps Post Oak keep its playgrounds in top condition, and aids in the development of new play areas.

BR Simon, Librarian: I attended a webinar on an aspect of our ProQuest database for research with our students: eLibrary Curriculum Edition offers search topics including websites, news articles, books, transcripts and audio/video sources. It covers literature and 1400 years of history. You can do a Google comparison, look up Curriculum Standards by grade, as well as create your own slideshows and timelines.

Matt Thompson, Facilities Manager: The playground course covered all aspects of properly building and maintaining a safe play area for children. It really highlights the features that can be easily overlooked, which create a variety of hazards if not identified and corrected. There was a tremendous amount of information covered in a short period of time. Lots of details that may seem small, but in the attempt to be safe they are huge. It emphasizes the importance of preventive maintenance and regular inspections. After attending this course I don't think I'll ever look at a playground the same again.
2013 Gala Chairs Announced

What a night we had one year ago at the 2011 Post Oak Biennial Gala: Dancing Across Cultures. The drama of an ice storm the night before really got people excited. Annette Gregory, who chaired that gala, did an exceptional job of bringing it all together. It's a wonderful memory and the school benefited greatly from the generous outpouring of support at the event.

It's time to start the planning for next year's gala and the first thing to do is introduce our chairs. I am so pleased to announce that Jian Short and Erin Stus have agreed to co-chair the 2013 Biennial Gala.

Jian’s family has been at Post Oak since 1998. Her daughter, Emily, graduated in 2011 and her son, is in sixth grade in Errol Pinto’s class. Jian has worked on countless events at the school either as a chair or as part of a subcommittee. Her exquisite eye and talent for graphics gave her a major role as the Invitations and Graphics Chair at the last gala. Her IT background keeps her committed to staying on task and checking off every last item.

Erin’s family has been at Post Oak since 2007. Her son, who is currently a third grader in Kathy Long’s class. Erin has been a chair of POPA Dinner, has almost single-handedly produced our last two yearbooks (and worked with Jian on previous ones), and served as POPA Chair for two years. As an accomplished photographer, Erin also spends time taking pictures of our school life to use in The Weekly Post, the yearbook, on the website, and in other school publications. Erin knows Post Oak!

Erin and Jian are both superstar volunteers, and their level of commitment to Post Oak is inspiring. The 2013 Gala will be the kick-off to Post Oak’s 50th anniversary celebration, and we will for the first time have a high school to include in the gala planning. It will be a BIG year! I hope you will step up and offer your help to Jian and Erin as they start this monumental project.

Be on the lookout for volunteer signups, and mark your calendar for Friday, February 1, 2013 for the Post Oak Biennial Gala.

Christina Kopanidis-Cantu,
Development Director

Leadership Circle Cocktail Reception

Those who have contributed $2500 or more to The 2012 Post Oak Fund will be invited to the annual Leadership Circle cocktail reception.

Look for an invitation in the mail soon!
Open House

Join us to learn more about what makes Post Oak High School an excellent choice.
Bring a friend!

Tuesday, March 27, 7–9 pm

at our Museum District partner
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
5216 Montrose Boulevard

Keep up with all the latest news by liking us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/postoakhighschool

(and don’t forget www.facebook.com/thepostoakschool)
Bearkats Lose Final Game in a Thriller

by Scott McGill, Post Oak parent

In one of the bigger upsets in recent memory, the St. Stephen’s Bulldogs defeated the Bearkats 31–30 on February 28 to close out the season for both teams. The game came down to the final seconds, with _____ scoring the winning basket for the Bulldogs with only seconds left on the clock. It was a fitting end to a game full of exciting action and clutch play.

The Bearkats came out with a confident and effective starting five, which quickly built an eight-point lead at 10–2. _____ led the scoring with six points and contributed assists on the two other baskets. This, however, was a game of runs and droughts for the team. The second and third stringers would score only two more baskets over the next ten minutes, while the Bulldogs, led by the indomitable _____ cut the deficit to one at 14–13. A buzzer beater by the Bearkats pushed the lead back to three points at halftime.

By this point, a sense of unease had crept over the home crowd and the Bearkats’ cheerleaders alike. It was clear that the Bulldogs had come to play, and that Lady Momentum, that most moveable of mistresses, had sided with the squad. The Bearkats came out of halftime aiming to take back the advantage and built a comfortable cushion at 28–21. Once more, though, the Bulldogs showed resilience and, with their stout defense and strike-force offense, came back to take a 29–28 lead.

It was at this juncture that the game became a classic. With about thirty seconds to play, _____ was fouled and went to the line to shoot two free throws. As we have come to expect from him, he calmly sank both shots to give the Bearkats a one-point advantage. The Bearkats then hounded the Bulldogs into a missed shot, but lost a mad scramble for a loose ball. With five seconds left, _____ found herself open at the right baseline and drained the jumper. The Bearkats then missed a desperation shot at the final buzzer.

No one hopes to end the season with a loss. But if it must be, a team will at least want to be a part of a game that is played on an almost epic canvas and that makes us remember why we follow sports in the first place. This contest was just such a game, and was a stirring end to an inspiring season. ✏️
Nanny Class

Deborah Fry, Redirecting Children’s Behavior instructor, will lead a series of four classes designed for nannies. The class will be taught in English, however, the workbook is available in Spanish if requested.

The class will meet on four Thursdays:

March 31, April 5, 19, and 26*

from 9:15–10:45 am

Upon completion of the class the nanny will be able to:

• Practice a consistent set of guidelines which harmonize with the approach your child experiences at school everyday
• Use positive language to redirect children’s behavior
• Encourage your child’s self-care skills and sense of responsibility
• Reduce sibling rivalry
• Interact to build self-esteem

The cost of the class is $150 per person. The class will be limited to 12 participants with a minimum of 8 for the class to be held.

To register call Deborah Fry at 713-840-8663

*The class does not meet on April 12.

Toddler Parenting Classes

for prospective parents

Experienced AMI Montessori teacher and mom, Deidre Lodrig, helps parents learn techniques for effective toilet-training, positive discipline, language development, socialization, and more!

Monday, April 2–May 21

Afternoon classes available at The Post Oak School from 2:00–3:00 pm.

Evening classes available at The Motherhood Center (3701 W. Alabama 77027)

Cost is $200 for the entire session (8 weeks)

To register go to www.postoakschool.org > For Parents > Parent Education and select Montessori Toddler Parenting Classes or visit www.motherhoodcenter.com.

For more info email deidrelodrig@postoakschool.org or call 713-661-6688 ext. 140

Save the dates! March 30–31 | 2012

TELLURIDE MOUNTAIN FILM is coming to HOUSTON

This 2 day event will include short films, documentaries, adrenaline flicks and discussions with panel guest speakers on issues that matter, www.mountainfilm.org/Houston

cultures worth exploring, environments worth preserving and conversations worth sustaining.

MOUNTAIN FILM IN TELLURIDE is recognized as one of the most distinguished film festivals on the planet and we are NOW bringing this festival to HOUSTON for 2 evenings of outstanding films, receptions, foodie socials, engaging discussions and more!
Blocks find home

You may remember the block-making station, which was a big hit at Field Day earlier in the school year, and maybe you even rolled up your sleeves and helped in their creation. The blocks have a new home, as do the family they have gone to. The block box was presented to the Camero family on behalf of The Post Oak School. The Cameros recently moved into their new home along with their three children. Paula McKenzie, Corporate Development Manager of Houston Habitat for Humanity, wrote:

“I’ve had the pleasure of getting to know this family while they have been earning their 300 hours of ‘sweat equity’ in our program and can assure you this special gift is going to a great home! Thank you again for this meaningful gift.”

We are grateful to Field Day Co-chair Jamie Lee who was the driving force behind the project and we hope to continue a relationship with Habitat for Humanity in the years to come.

CORRECTIONS & OMISSIONS

We regret forgetting to acknowledge Julie Styles as the co-planner of Barbara Hacker and Norma Paulin’s tree planting ceremony. Thank you, Julie, for all your great work—it is much appreciated!

CLASS PICTURES

Wed., March 28
starting at 8:30 am

Please see that your child arrives at school on time. We will not be able to re-take photos if someone is late.

Infant Community Parent Education Event

Thurs., March 29, 7 pm

School Counselling Services

Did you know that the school has counselling services? Our counsellor Phylis Tomlinson sees students regularly during class meetings, individually (per request of the student, parent or teacher), and meets with parents in groups, conferences, and as requested. She facilitates effective communication, conflict resolution, and provides support through transitions. She also regularly presents the Becoming a Love & Logic Parent® Series (see the school calendar for dates and times.) Her hours are Tuesday 9 am–5 pm and Thursday 9 am–3 pm. You can reach her by phone at 713-661-6688 ext. 176, or by email at phylistomlinson@postoakschool.org.
1. Putting puzzle pieces in place.
2. Developing hand and eye coordination with wooden sticks.
3. Helping out with the ironing.
4. Learning to recognize leaf shapes with the botany cabinet.
5. Building fine motor skills by spooning.
7. Creating a story with friends.
8. Gathered together for a Spanish lesson.
9. Studying fundamental needs of humans.
10. Learning about United States history.
**CALENDAR**

For more, visit [www.postoakschool.org](http://www.postoakschool.org)

### MARCH 11–17

**Mon–Fri**

3/12–16

Spring Break

only students with expanded year contracts attend

### MARCH 18–24

**Wed**

3/21

Coffee w/ the EL Director:

PRI to EL transition

9:00–10:00 am

Nav roz/Naw-Ruz

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**Thu**

3/22

No Weekly Post this week

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**Fri**

3/23

Conference Day

Classes not in session: only students with expanded year contracts attend

IC in session

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### MARCH 25–31

**Tue**

3/27

High School Open House

at CAMH (see our ad)

7:00–9:00 pm

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**Wed**

3/28

Class pictures

starting at 8:30 am

Blood Drive

in Post Oak parking lot

8:30 am–2:30 pm

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**Thu**

3/29

Infant Community Parent Education Meeting

7:00 pm

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**NOTICE BOARD**

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**Coffee with the Elementary Director**

**March 21, 9–10 am**

Join Elementary Director Jeff Schneider & Early Childhood Director Mirani Smith as they present:

Primary to Elementary Transition

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**SIGN UP!**

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**Carbon Neutral Day, April 19**

Join us at 6:30 pm for the movie "dirt!" and afterwards for the panel discussion with our featured guests, Chef and Post Oak parent Monica Pope, and Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram of Rawfully Organic Co-op. Get all your organic gardening questions answered and more!

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**Test your knowledge of Houston’s recycling participation.**

See if you can answer this question:

**Houston recycles what % of its waste?**

A. 50%  
B. 30%  
C. 10%  
D. 2.6%

Are you part of the % that recycles? If not, start today and do your part!

[Source: eHealth. The answer is D.]

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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 Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@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 Elaine Schweizer 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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