Three little notes:

ONE

Last night we held the third high school open house at one of our partner institutions, the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (the previous two open houses were hosted by the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Glassell School of Art). In addition to prospective students and their parents, and Post Oak faculty and staff, there were several staff members from our partner organizations who were present in the audience.

Yesterday before the open house James Moudry and I interviewed a prospective teacher for the Post Oak High School, a candidate who currently teaches at a highly-regarded Houston private school. Here is one of her comments: "My students are very bright and work so hard it makes me tired to watch them – but they are not motivated by the..."
joy of learning, they are motivated solely by getting good grades.”

TWO

Today at lunch I was reading the current issue of Independent School magazine. The article “Teaching Character” was written by Rich Gamble, a school consultant with thirty-five years teaching experience in private schools. I highlighted the following passage: “Increasingly, parents and educators realize that society needs people who are autonomous, trustworthy, socially competent, and willing to take initiative—and that our current education system is not designed to produce these attributes.”

THREE

Just as I finished reading that article, one of our lower elementary teachers stopped by my office. She told me about one of her students, a third grader who is new to Post Oak this year, who left her conventional school frustrated by the educational limitations imposed by its restrictive structure. This morning that student said to her teacher, “Could I talk to you? (‘Of course,’ replied her teacher.) You know I didn’t go to Post Oak during first grade and second grade, so I haven’t had all the lessons the other children have had. Could we make a plan so that I could get all those lessons by the end of the year?”

This is not a student who is “behind” by any measure. She came to us with academic skills comparable to her Post Oak classmates, and we would never have insisted that she “make up” all the lessons she missed during the two years she was in another school. This resolve is hers alone. Her desire is one of sheer joy in learning. And clearly she is demonstrating autonomy, social competence, and initiative.

This is what conventional schools fail to understand: in the attempt to control the results, and to ensure that every child learns a standard curriculum, conventional schools actively work against the development of autonomy, independence, and initiative. This is why college-age Post Oak alums often comment that they are relieved to get to university after four years in conventional high schools, because it feels like they have returned to a Montessori-type education. 

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The Big Build Continues

by James Moudry, High School Director

It continues to be a busy spring for the newest division of Post Oak. It’s a good time for some updates on construction, student involvement, curriculum, and staffing.

The Friday before spring break, the Middle School ventured on their second hard hat tour of the new high school building. With the wall framing up and almost all mechanical systems ready to go, the building was looking quite a bit different than it did during their last visit in early February. Students weighed in on a few open questions, including technology use and science lab equipment needs. Currently, focus is starting to shift to the landscaping and paint colors. We are excited for everyone to see it at the preview event on May 15 from 4 to 6 pm. You can keep up with photos of the work by following the high school Facebook page (facebook.com/postoakhighschool).

Last week, the school took a great step forward in our continued accreditation through ISAS. Upon submission of our plan for expansion, we received a complimentary response from Rhonda Durham, Executive Director: “This is a superb report. I thoroughly enjoyed reviewing it and applaud these well considered and exciting plans.” This week we are continuing our work on our application for candidacy with the International Baccalaureate Organization. We will keep you all posted.

We have hired our math teacher, Jeremy Grisbee has been teaching mathematics (and Spanish!) at the high school level for four years in the Springfield, Missouri area. He holds a bachelor’s degree in math, education, and Spanish. He is also a musician and recently has been working on completing a full-length album of his music. Jeremy brings a dynamic and forward-thinking mind-set to Post Oak. He is passionate about student-centered education and creating classroom experiences that are matched to student skills and interests. Jeremy grew up in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. So in addition to being a (near) native Spanish speaker, he has a life-long passion for visiting new places and cultures. I encourage you to read a bit more about Jeremy in the faculty section of the Post Oak website.

On a sad note, Jamie Lee is relocating to Austin with her family this fall and will not be continuing on in her role with the high school. We are grateful for all she has done in the past year to help get the school open and for her exceptional energy in support of Post Oak and the high school expansion. She will be dearly missed. While there is no ‘replacing’ a person, James Quillin has agreed to expand his responsibilities from only language arts to an interdisciplinary humanities and language arts course incorporating the social sciences. With his doctoral work and research in the classics and many years as the chair of the history department at his current school, he is more than equipped for such work. Additionally, Jeremy Grisbee will take on the leadership in Spanish instruction that was previously going to be handled by Jamie Lee.

Finally, this week we hosted our third Open House, this time at our Museum District partner, the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston. In addition to the overview of the high school program, the full house of families and prospective members of the class of 2016 (about 50 attendees in all) got a first-ever sneak peek at the fall trip for the high school. The Odyssey trip will take students for a marine biology field experience and human history study along the gulf coast in late August. More to come of course!

Be sure to mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 15 to attend the Spring Preview! See you all then!
Congratulations to [redacted] and [redacted] whose photographs were selected to be part of a TEDxYouth collaborative art project. Visit facebook.com/thepostoakschool to like their work and see more entries from other students.

Art Specialist Diana Muñiz said, "I'm absolutely happy and proud that the girls are taking this photography medium and excelling. Both girls have shown me amazing work and I look forward to showing more of their photography in Western-themed portraits as well as their end-of-year self-portraits."

Photos by [redacted] (left) and [redacted] (above). Students were directed to take photos of any x they could find – on signs around town, on a book – or create their own.

Dirt! The Movie
a Spring Environmental Event at The Post Oak School

Thursday, April 19, 2012

Special screening* starts at 6:30 pm followed by a panel discussion with guests:

Monica Pope
Award winning chef & restaurant owner

Kristina Carrillo-Bucaram
Founder of Rawfully Organic co-op

Joe Blanton
Conservation Director at Houston Arboretum & Nature Center

Let's talk food, gardening, and composting!

It's Carbon-Neutral Day at Post Oak!
Walk, bike, or share a ride and bring your refillable water bottles. Let's make it a no-waste day!

*A section will be skipped to make this event suitable for all ages.
Girl Scout’s Donation Drive

by Rennae Henry, Post Oak parent

Post Oak’s fourth grade Girl Scout troop #21282 is conducting a donation drive for local animal shelters and rescue groups. Donations, including cat or dog food, can be dropped off this Saturday, March 31, between 10 am and noon, at Bellaire United Methodist Church located at 4417 Bellaire Boulevard (corner of Bellaire and Newcastle). Please stop by with your donations! There will even be a donation “drive thru” available under the porte cochere at the Newcastle entrance to the church. This coincides with Bellaire United Methodist Church’s Annual Blessing of the Animals event, which the Scouts are also helping with. The public and their pets are invited to attend the Blessing of the Animals event from 10 am to noon. Pets must be friendly and either on-leash (dogs), in carriers (cats), cages (birds, small mammals), fish bowls, or terrariums (fish, reptiles).

The scouts of troop #21282 choose which activities and service projects the troop will do and have always had a special interest in and concern for animals. The scouts have spent the night at the Houston Zoo, Moody Gardens and Girl Scout camps, attended education programs at the Houston Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Matagorda Bay Nature Center, volunteered at the Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation, and earned a number of badges relating to animals. Some of the reasons that scouts gave for why they love to help and learn about animals included, “I love animals because they are someone you can always talk to without a negative response,” and “Animals are just like us and they are really cute and I want to learn more about them… and be around them… AND I really like to HOLD them!” Look for more chances to support troop #21282’s ongoing donation drive in future issues of The Weekly Post.
Orly Kluk’s class held their annual weekend camping trip at Brazos Bend State Park last weekend. Here are some observations from students.

by [Name]

My experience at my first camp out. I had lots of fun. My favorite part was when I found six roly pollyz. Their names were Spot, Roseda, Fally, Alicia, Adventurer, and Elizabeth. Together I call them the rock and rollies. I also found two june bugs that were a couple. The female was named Dureta, the male was named Juny. On the way I saw three deer. At night I had two smores. My tent was next to the playground. I had a good time sleeping in a tent.

by [Name]

Welcome school to my experience at my 2nd camping trip at school. My favorite part was when [Name] dropped his water bottle in the water by accident, with the alligator. The alligator wanted to hunt it. We learned how the alligator hunts it. It gets close to the animal and it waits for it to move, if it doesn’t move by 15 minutes the alligator goes away. If it moves the alligator eats it.

by [Name]

I liked the camping trip because there was a play and the play was called *Update Earth*. It was a lot of fun! We also did some games. One of the games was a rope game. There was one rope for everybody and you had to hold it the whole time, and two big ropes attached to trees and you had to go over it, even the adults! but you could not touch it. My team lost but it was still fun! We also melted straws and made a sculpture. We went on a nature walk, I saw 10 alligators and a lot of different birds. I am sad it’s my last year. I will miss this class!
Bearkats Volleyball Season Begins

*by Coach Tucker*

The Bearkats enjoyed a couple of volleyball matches this week with St. Stephen’s. The Bearkats played three games each on Tuesday and Wednesday, winning all three games. There will be another game next Wednesday also with St. Stephen's starting at 4:15 pm in the gym. Volleyball players include:

BEARKATS

FLAG FOOTBALL

TUES., APRIL 3, 4-5 PM

Everyone’s invited to come out and cheer on the students as they participate in a friendly game of flag football on the back field. Wear your green and support your team this Spirit Day!
Visitors Made Quite a Buzz

Recently The Kazoo Ensemble of The Hampton Post Oak performed for students in Kathy Long’s Lower Elementary class. Tracy Ahrens, Director of Resident Programs, wrote to say thank you for the opportunity for the seniors to share their music: “Being around the students’ energy truly made a difference in our residents’ lives. What a gift. We were impressed with your beautiful school and kind students. You both should be very proud!”

Dad’s Club Poker Night

Thursday, April 26
doors open 7:30 pm

1300 Post Oak Blvd., Ste. 2000
Space is limited

RSVP

POPA Coffee/Work Day

April 4, 2012
8:45 am–1 pm
Everyone’s invited!
Becoming a Love & Logic Parent©

Wednesdays, 1–2:30 pm
April 4, 11, 18, 25, May 2, 9

Discount given to Post Oak parents!

Cost: $175 per couple, $90 per person
Optional: $10 per workbook
Drop-in fee: $20 per class
(free for prior completion of entire series)

Location: Xavier Educational Academy
Edloe at University, near Matthews Market

For more information call Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson at 713-668-6558
or email her at phylistomlinson@gmail.com

We have fun and learn a lot of very effective, tried and true techniques for changing children’s behavior. These classes offer practical and simple techniques for interacting with children, reinforcing concepts learned in Redirecting Children’s Behavior and other parenting programs. The classes are a great way for parents new to Post Oak to really get to know other parents on a very personal level. We do keep confidences, of course!

Not registered? Come anyway, we can always make room for one more.

Do I have to be a Post Oak parent? No, we open our hearts and arms to all who want to learn effective parenting strategies which prepare our children for living in the real world.

What if I can’t attend all 7 weeks? Come to any of the classes, each week new techniques are presented and learning one or all, will bring more pleasure to your time with your child(ren).

Can I take the classes more than one time? Yes, many people find having a “refresher” helps them feel more confident.

Go Bearkers!

Spirit Day

Tuesday, April 3

Catch the Post Oak Flag Football game on the back field!

Put on your spirit wear and support your team!

Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who came out on Wednesday to donate, volunteer, and support our blood drive for Middle School student 41 folks came out to donate and we collected 35 pints for the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center in her honor.
SCENES
from
The Post Oak School

1. Painting in Infant Community.
2. Preparing a snack for the class.
3. Learning grammar with farm animals.
4. Labeling countries of Europe.
5. ASEP dance: make a silly face!
6. Creativity abounds in the art room.
7. Practicing handwriting.
8. Identifying shapes with a right angle tool.
9. Grammar is fun!
10. Setting up work with the stick box.
11. Learning how games work in order to create their own.
CALENDAR
For more, visit www.postoakschool.org

APRIL 1–7

Sports: Exhibition Flag Football game
4:00–5:00 pm

Spirit Day

APRIL 8–14

Mon–Fri 4/9–4/13
MS trip to Blackwood Land Institute

Tue 4/10
Upper EL and MS Parent Dinner and Tour at Blackwood
6:00–8:00 pm

Thu 4/12
No Weekly Post this week

Fri 4/13
Conference day
Classes not in session: only students with expanded year contracts attend
MS in session

NOTICE BOARD
Spelling Bee Airs This Weekend

Watch PBS Channel 8 on Saturday, March 31 at 2 pm to cheer on [redacted] as students compete to represent Houston in the Scripps National Spelling Bee! For more information visit: www.houstonpbs.org/kids/spellingbee/

From the website: The 2012 HoustonPBS Spelling Bee will be televised live from the HoustonPBS/Channel 8 Studios. The top 55 spellers from 1,040 schools in 42 counties, from East Texas to Austin, will contest at the Melcher Center for Public Broadcasting in the University of Houston, Main Campus to win the opportunity to participate in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, the nation’s long-standing educational promotion since 1925.

The final champion of the HoustonPBS Spelling Bee wins an all-expenses-paid trip for two to Washington, D.C. to represent Houston at the Scripps National Spelling Bee during Bee Week from May 27 to June 1, 2012. The grand prize of the 2012 national contest carries a prestigious victory along with over $40,000 in cash and other prizes.

A friendly reminder
Morning arrivals for Primary and Elementary is between 8:15–8:30 am
Also, you can hand in paperwork to one of the people assisting with arrivals and they will put it in a basket that gets taken to the front office every morning.

Leadership Circle Event
SAVE THE DATE
Wed., May 2
invitations will be mailed next week

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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