I received the following request today:

Please take a moment to respond to the following important inquiry that the ISAS office has been asked to make:

How does your school teach and promote character development? Please tell us if you have a specific character education curriculum and program in place and, if so, when these initiatives began.

Thank you so much for your care in this matter.

Rhonda G. Durham, Executive Director
Independent Schools Association of the Southwest

All schools teach character development. Some teach it explicitly, others implicitly. Some are
intentional in their instruction; others accidental. In general, private independent schools enjoy much more latitude to include “character development” in their educational programs than do public schools. Even there, however, most schools are only aware of explicit curriculum: lessons given in chapel or instruction using commercially produced workbooks or other written materials. They do not consider the relationship between the adult and the child as part of their “character development program,” nor the relationships among the children, nor do they consider how the very approach to learning molds character. Do children learn to initiate activity and to shape their own learning or is most of their work assigned and directed by the adult? Do children work together cooperatively, learning both to give and to receive help, or is “helping” considered cheating? Do children learn skills to negotiate social conflict or are they expected to rely on the adults to intervene?

Most schools forget the proverb, “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.”

Below is the response I sent to ISAS Executive Director Rhonda Durham.

Rhonda,

What a wonderful question; one that asks me to reflect upon a distinguishing characteristic of Montessori education. Character development in a Montessori school is not a separate and discrete program. It is at the core of what we do. It is warp and weft of our daily work. The goal of Montessori education is the formation of the child’s whole personality.

Of course we have routine proactive conversations with children about the way they treat each other, establishing and teaching ideals of grace and courtesy. We conduct routine class meetings in which children learn to speak out about problems that have come up in their daily lives at school and to solve them respectfully within the context of the classroom community. And we give opportunities for routine community service within the classroom, in other parts of the school, and in the wider community. For example, Middle School students spend every Monday morning serving at one of several sites throughout the city. We are explicit and intentional about our values. We speak them, we model them, and we invite children to live them with us. But there is much more.

While academic curriculum and content are of great importance, Dr. Montessori was very clear that our aspirations are much broader than mere cognitive development. In fact, Montessori observed that the way in which a child learns shapes who they become. Current brain research confirms this observation. Through early experiences children literally construct their brains. Especially during the first six years of life, but in fact up to age twenty-four, the brain is highly plastic and our experiences strengthen particular neuron pathways through activity and repetition while others are pruned through disuse.

Dr. Bruce Perry, a psychiatrist and neurobiologist, describes how patterned repetitive practice shapes the brain and prepares the child for a lifetime of social relations as well as for physical and cognitive skills. That’s right – the same learning process and practice that literally hardwires us to learn a physical skill, such as throwing a ball, or a cognitive skill, such as how to subtract, also shapes our social relations – how we treat others and how we behave in a spectrum of social situations. What does this mean in a Montessori classroom?

Dr. Mario Montessori Jr., then Vice President of the International Psychoanalytic Association, wrote about his grandmother’s work:

The goal of Montessori education is the formation of the child’s whole personality. In the beginning, the child works mainly independently, but it observes what others around it do, especially the older children. Presently, it starts to collaborate with others. The older children participate in the activities of younger ones and help them in a natural way that both enjoy. Instead of competitiveness, there is cooperation. This enhances the children’s feeling of security and stimulates them to further exploration of their world. Respect for others and for the environment comes as a natural by-product of the freedom within a community they experience.

It is interesting to note that several of the characteristics so often exhibited in Montessori schools are considered

continued on page 11
High School Spring Preview

Over 130 people walked through the front doors of the newly renovated High School building on Tuesday, May 15. Visitors included many Post Oak families, trustees, faculty and staff, as well as most of the new High School students and their parents.

In case you missed it, stop by at the next open house on June 20.
2012–13 POPA Leadership
(continued from last week)

Thanks to Kelly Hill and Allison Zapata for agreeing to serve as 2013 Cinco Coordinators for the biennial Post Oak Cinco de Mayo performance.

Travis Crabtree has passed the torch to new Dads’ Club lead Michael Foertsch. Don’t forget Summer Movie Night in June, sponsored by the Dads!

Thanks to everyone who has taken on these leadership roles for next year! 💫

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Eighth Grade Graduation
May 25 at 6:30 pm in the gym

Speeches are being written and processions rehearsed. Mark your calendar for next week’s eighth-grade graduation ceremony for the class of 2012.

This is a wonderful opportunity to hear the students share in their own words about their time at Post Oak. Parents of younger children have appreciated attending the event in the past, providing them with a “portrait of a graduate.”
A Big Year for Girl Scouts

Where can girls … Learn to build a campfire and cook over it? Make the world a better place through service projects? Do fun crafts? Stay in cabins at their very own camps? Make new friends? The answer to all of the above and more is … Girl Scouts!

Three Girl Scout troops are based at The Post Oak School, serving the current second, third and fourth graders. Over the past year, activities for these troops have included planting trees for Arbor Day, earning a variety of badges by learning new things, feeding the homeless, spending the night at the science museum with other Girl Scouts, financing troop activities by selling Girl Scout cookies, service projects for animal shelters and rescue groups, and doing other special activities together. The fourth grade troop also went camping twice at Girl Scout camps and the younger troops held a backyard camp out. As with Montessori education, it’s not just what the girls do, but how they are engaged that matters. The Girl Scouts’ philosophy is that as much as possible, activities are girl-led and emphasize learning-by-doing, and cooperative-learning.

In Girl Scouts, troops “age” with their members, so in the fall, the existing Girl Scout troops will serve the third through fifth grade. The third grade troop will be coordinated by Gerry Waters, the fourth grade troop by Lana Rigsby and the fifth grade troop by Rennae Henry. New members to those troops at those grade levels are welcome. All that is missing is some younger girls for these older girls to mentor. If there is girl and parent interest, it would be wonderful to form a new Daisy troop at the first grade level and a new Brownie troop at the second grade level. Parent volunteers of girls at those respective grade levels would constitute the leadership teams for the troops (dads welcome too!). The Girl Scouts have a comprehensive leader training program and the existing leaders will be happy to help get new troops on their feet. If you are interested, please contact Rennae Henry at [redacted] or [redacted].

This is a great year to be a Girl Scout as 2012 is the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouts and there are special activities in recognition of that milestone.

Finally, to all of the parents and grandparents who have helped with Girl Scouts this year – a HUGE thank you! There is simply no way to have a Girl Scout program without volunteers and the quality of the program at Post Oak is a direct result of the time and energy of all of the parents who support the program.

by Rennae Henry, Post Oak parent
Welcome, Baby Sister!

Primary student [REDACTED] is the proud older sister of Kim, born April 18, weighing seven pounds, three ounces, and measuring 20.75 inches.

Father Eugene wrote, "My wife Hallie and I are tired, but very excited and thrilled." Congratulations Kim family!

Registro Fall Soccer with the Houston Express Soccer Club!

Registration for Fall 2012 is open for West U Rec Soccer (ages 4 to 12) and Houston Express Soccer (ages 8 to 18)

Sign up at www.houstonx.org
(Click on the green REGISTER in the top right corner)

If you are interested in playing on a team with other Post Oak students, specify so in the Special Requests section of your player’s registration application or contact the Registrar at rec.registrar@houstonx.org.

Emergency Release Forms due May 25

2012–13 Emergency Release Forms for each student will arrive soon. These forms must be returned to the school by Friday, May 25.

This information is used to update our database and create the parent directory for next year.

Apex Cheer is holding a second round of tryouts

May 19, 10:00–11:30 am

All ages and ability levels. Apex Cheer will make you a fierce All-Star cheerleader! Don’t miss your chance to be a part of the Apex Nation!

Apex Cheer & Athletic Training Facility
12620 W. Airport Blvd. Suite 170
Sugar Land, TX 77477
(281) 240-8833
www.apexcheer.com
In Williamsburg we went to a lot of places to eat. On the first day we went to this place in the airport. I don’t know the name, but it was like a sports place. Later for dinner we went to a Japanese place called Kyoto, it is kind of like Toyoohana where they cook the food right in front of you. Our chef was very cool. He made a volcano out of onions and set it on fire and started moving it on the stove. He yelled very loud and it scared one of the parents.

The next day we went to this place for lunch in Colonial Williamsburg. The restaurant served sandwiches and soup. For dinner that night we went to Outback Steakhouse, it was pretty good.

The next night we went to a restaurant called Second St. Restaurant. The food there was very good but it was expensive one person spent 42 dollars at that place.

For lunch we went to this place that was on the beach. It was a very cool restaurant. Everybody got pizza or a sandwich. We were not supposed to eat there we were supposed to eat in the merchants square, but we ended up just driving around and we found the restaurant.

That night we went to Christina Campbell’s Tavern, we had to pre-order our food and every one had fried chicken and vegetables, and it was very good.

The first day on our trip in the evening we went for a ghost tour. People said it was really scary. The tour guide stayed in character. The first place we went to was Peyton Randolph’s house. Peyton Randolph was the speaker of the House of Burgesses and the first and third president of the Continental Congress. What happened was we entered the front lawn and the wife came and gave us a story of how she was alone for many years and how in those years she was being haunted. Then she talked about how every time someone enters the house at night they are haunted by her ghost.

The next story was about a young girl, she (the actor) told us about her death and reawakening. She told us that when she was buried in her coffin, she was buried with all her jewelry on. So one cold rainy night two thieves dug into the coffin and took out all the jewelry. Then when they were done they saw a ring on her finger and tried pulling it and pulling it but it just wouldn’t budge. So the greedier thief took a knife from his pocket and chopped off her finger and then she awoke in pain and screamed. The thieves had already run away. When she awoke she did not know if she was dead or alive so then she walked back to her father’s house, in pain of course. On the way her feet got frostbite and fell off so she crawled with one hand back to her father’s house. By the time she reached there she was in so much pain that all she could do is scratch the door and no answer so she died on her father’s doorstep.

The last story was about a young man but was told by a young girl. The young man killed a child. No one knew the reason but the young girl asked why. The man said he was possessed by a demon so he killed him. Everybody in Williamsburg except her thought this man was crazy.

On our trip to Williamsburg we saw many things and went to many places but one of my favorite events was a play called “The Walking Statue or the Demon in the Wine Cellar.” This play goes into the genre of romantic comedy and was very funny.
The play was set in the colonial times and so the costumes were very extravagant and quite beautiful. The play was only put on by eight people but still made high standards. The play itself was performed in a theater called the Kimball II Theater. But the setting was either in houses or outside, changing usually every scene. The play was mainly about an old, rich miser who disagreed with the relationship of his daughter and another rich young man. The miser says the only way they can be together is if the young man can outsmart him, the old miser.

The play was really funny but the type of audience we were made it even better. At the beginning of the play one of the actors told us specifically to express our feelings by yelling “hooray,” “here here,” “huzzah,” “boo,” “bravo,” and the best one, “encore.” When most of the crowd yelled “encore” the actors would literally redo the scene. But even better was when they redid the scene, something was a little different.

At the end of the play we got to talk to all the actors and actresses and most people also got their autographs. The play was very good and I definitely enjoyed it. I would not mind seeing it over again.

BY

On Wednesday, May 9, we went to the Kimball Theater to see Dean Shostak, who played four instruments for everybody. First, he played the glass harmonica. Next he played a song on the glass bells. Next was the glass violin, which was made in Japan. He asked the glass company in Japan to make a glass violin. It took one year to complete. The company likes the violin so much they made another one. So there are only two glass violins in the world.

Next, he played the glass baschet. The glass baschet was made by Francis and Bernard Baschet in Paris, France. It was really cool to listen to all the instruments.

BY

The sixth graders took a trip to Williamsburg, Virginia. While we were on our trip this is what I experienced. We were told that we had to be at the airport at 4:00 in the morning. I was exhausted. I had only gotten three hours of sleep. Our flight was at 6:00 in the morning. We were going to Atlanta, Georgia. On the first night we did a ghost tour which was just three scary stories. The second night we did this program called In Defense of our Liberty. It was a boot camp. We were being trained to be a soldier in the 1700s for the American War for Independence. It was a super fun experience and I am so glad I got to participate in this program. The only thing I did not like was being yelled at so much by grown men. It was really fun though. ✌️
**Where are they headed?**

**Post Oak alumni high school & college acceptances**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 8th graders accepted to:</th>
<th>2008 graduates accepted to the following colleges:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Awty International School*</td>
<td>• Boston University</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Bellaire High School*</td>
<td>• Chapman University</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Episcopal High School*</td>
<td>• Denison University</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Kinkaid School*</td>
<td>• Emerson College</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lamar High School*</td>
<td>• Gettysburg College</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Post Oak High School*</td>
<td>• Goucher College</td>
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<td>• St. Agnes Academy</td>
<td>• Ithaca College</td>
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<td>• St. John’s School*</td>
<td>• Kansas University</td>
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<td>• St. Thomas High School</td>
<td>• Louisiana State University</td>
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<td>• Oklahoma State University</td>
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<td>• Purdue University</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Denotes school attending</td>
<td>• Seton Hall University</td>
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**COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES IN DETAIL:**

**Alexi Beavers** – Southern Methodist University* (Hilltop Scholarship plus a Provost Scholarship)

**Kyle Burke** – Louisiana State University, Texas A&M University, Houston Community College* with plans to transfer

**Jeffrey Davis** – University of Texas at Austin*, Cockrell School of Engineering, honors program (Merit scholarship)

**Hannah Fred** – University of Texas at Austin*, University of Alabama, and University of Mississippi

**Tom Harvey** – The University of Notre Dame*, Washington University in St. Louis, and The College of William and Mary

**Christian Martinez** – Oklahoma State University, University of New Orleans*

**Luciano Posada** – Purdue University, Boston University, Gettysburg College, Goucher College, Seton Hall University, and the University of Houston*

Although currently enrolled at the University of Houston's Cullen College of Engineering for Biomedical Engineering, he is awaiting reply from Universidad CES, a medical school in Medellin, Colombia. If accepted, he will most likely attend there.

**Nikhil Schneider** – Chapman University: Dodge College of Film and Media Arts, Screenwriting program, Denison University, Emerson University, Ithaca College, Kansas University, and University of Houston: The Honors College*

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**Congratulations to our Post Oak alumni!**
Summer Camp 2012 Elementary Classes

If your child is enrolled in any of the summer camp weeks at Post Oak, have them review the list below to select the activities they would like to attend (if not attending the Transition Class.) No action is necessary at this time. On Monday of that week, camp participants will be directed to the class of their choosing. Camp runs from 8:30 to 3:00 pm. For questions, contact Summer Camp Director, Miriam Winton (miriamwinton@postoakschool.org).

**WEEK 1: JUNE 4–8**

**MORNING**
A. Creative writing (Maya Pinto/Errol Pinto)  
   Art: Clay (Diana Muñiz)  
B. Cooking cultural meals (Jessica Samano)

**AFTERNOON**
A. Stamp Collecting (Maya Pinto) / Chess (E. Pinto)  
B. Art: Clay continued (Diana Muñiz)  
The Art of Baking (Jessica Samano)

**WEEK 2: JUNE 11–15**

**MORNING**
A. Poetry (Maya Pinto/Errol Pinto)  
   Art: Hand vases (Diana Muñiz)  
B. Cultural Cooking (Jessica Samano)

**AFTERNOON**
A. Stamp Collecting (Maya Pinto) / Chess (Errol Pinto)  
   Art: Building Vases (Diana Muñiz)  
B. Baking: Basic Techniques (Jessica Samano)

**WEEK 3: JUNE 18–22**

**ALL DAY**
A. Art: Working with Aluminum Sheets (Diana Muñiz)  
B. Fashion Week (Sarah Moudry)  
C. Basketball Camp (L. Williams)

**WEEK 4: JUNE 25–29**

**ALL DAY**
A. Art: Aluminum Sheet Projects (Diana Muñiz)  
   TBA (J. Pel)  
B. Basketball Camp (L. Williams)

**WEEK 5: JULY 2–6**

**ALL DAY**
A. Art: Papier-mâché (Diana Muñiz)  
   Field Trips: Main street Theater, Discovery Green,  
   Museums, etc. – enrollment limited (Jenna Pel)

**WEEK 6: JULY 9–13**

**MORNING**
Art: Wire Work (Diana Muñiz)  
Greek Mythology: legends, myths, and perform a play (Jenna Pel)

**AFTERNOON**
Art: Wire Work (Diana Muñiz)  
Board Games (Jenna Pel)

**WEEK 7: JULY 16–20**

**MORNING**
Art: Painting on Canvas (Diana Muñiz)  
History Week: historical stories explored through arts and crafts (Jenna Pel)

**AFTERNOON**
Art: Painting on Canvas (Diana Muñiz)  
Swimming/ Park (Jenna Pel)

**WEEK 8: JULY 23–27**

**MORNING**
Art: Large Canvas Work (Diana Muñiz)  
Olympic Week: learn history of Olympics, participate in games, get ready for Summer 2012 Olympics (Jenna Pel)

**AFTERNOON**
Art: Large Canvas Work (Diana Muñiz)  
Swimming/ Park (Jenna Pel)

**WEEK 9: JULY 30–AUG 3**

**MORNING**
Art: Dioramas (Diana Muñiz)  
Tennis/Sports/Jump rope (B. Stephenson)

**AFTERNOON**
Art: Dioramas (Diana Muñiz)  
Board Games (B. Stephenson)
Reminder!
Post Oak Annual Fund pledges due

All Post Oak Fund pledges are due by May 31.

Please contact Christina Cantu in the development office if you have any questions. Thank you.

Character Development
by John Long, continued from page 2

basic to human welfare and development by social scientists. In a list of properties of biosocial and sociocultural systems, Eric Trist (Towards a Social Ecology) mentions self-regulation, integration, independence, interdependence, coordination, and cooperation as basic to welfare and maturation. Because these are all properties that are explicitly encouraged by Montessori education, it certainly deserves serious consideration in the search for the best means to prepare tomorrow's citizens. (Education for Human Development, 1976)

Several years ago one of our elementary teachers was thinking about reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic, and asked her students if they knew the three Rs. They immediately identified “respect” and “responsibility” but had a long conversation about possibilities for the third R before settling on “resourcefulness”. I think that illustrates how our students absorb “character development”.

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First printed February 22, 2007

Megan's Tutoring and Babysitting

WHO IS MEGAN ROUTBORT?
I graduated from Post Oak in the class of 2011. I am currently a freshman at St. John's School. I am a Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) Summer Studies Scholar. I recently received the “Outstanding Freshman in English” award from SJS. I am CPR certified and have two years of experience with babysitting and tutoring. As a Montessori student, I have a love of learning that I am excited to share with your children.

SUMMER BRIDGE ACTIVITIES
School stops for summer, but that does not mean learning should. Make sure your child is engaged during the summer. Review last year's material or begin exploring next year's concepts. Plans customized based on individual goals.

LOWER LEVEL ISEE PREP
If your child plans to take the ISEE or a similar test, this plan will help them learn test-taking strategies by practicing analytical reading, synonyms, vocabulary, mathematical reasoning, and more.

BABYSITTING
As an older sister to a 4th grader, I have years of experience relating to young children. I am imaginative and creative; I possess the vivacity necessary to engage young minds, but am also old enough to be an authority figure. I will engage your child in fun and constructive play.

RATES
$13 per hour for individual tutoring sessions. Parents supply necessary workbooks.

Babysitting rates to be determined by age and number of children.

CONTACT
Home Phone: 713-666-9321
Cell Phone: 713-408-9068
Email: meganroutbort@gmail.com

Flyer available in the Post Oak front office.
**NOTICE BOARD**

**Good home for Gerbil needed ASAP**

Marvin, our class pet, cannot stay in the classroom next year. He is looking for a new FOREVER HOME. Marvin is around two years old and is very sweet. He is used to being held by children and does not bite. He has a healing tail injury that is almost gone, though he might need a checkup in the future. Please consider taking Marvin.

If you would like to take Marvin, please inform [Mrs. Roark](mailto:roark@postoakschool.org) or [Mrs. tre] (Mrs. Roark’s class).

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**for**

**Summer Movie Night**

**June 15**

Stay connected at this family-friendly evening on the back lawn brought to you by our own Dads’ Club.

Bring a picnic blanket, popcorn will be provided. More info to come!

Free and open to Post Oak families and friends.

**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)

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