The internet was abuzz last week celebrating Dr. Montessori’s birthday. To all of us at Post Oak, it seemed like just the right touch to begin a new school year. *PC Magazine* reported, “Google on Friday honored Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori with a homepage doodle celebrating her 142nd birth anniversary.

“The drawing features some of the tools that form the basis of Montessori’s educational methods, which emphasize hands-on, individualized learning within mixed age groups in a child-friendly setting.”

Googling Maria Montessori that day took you to a flurry of stories about the educational innovator. A *Christian Science Monitor* article led the list, titled provocatively, “Is the Montessori method any good?” The author reports on several recent research projects comparing Montessori to conventional schooling and 

continued on page 2

Service takes many forms at Post Oak, one being the tradition of Upper Elementary students helping new Primary students at arrivals.
concludes, “The evidence tilts in Montessori’s favor,” adding with a note of frustration, “So if the Montessori method is so effective, then why are most American students still getting 12 years of standardized, test-driven, teacher-centered, school-bell-interrupted pedagogy?”

The Monitor ran a related story featuring ten famous Montessori graduates, beginning, of course, with Google’s Larry Page and Sergei Brin. Connecting the dots between Montessori education and Google’s development, the author says, “Google may have never taken off if Brin and Page didn’t keep asking themselves: What else can I do? What do I find interesting? How can I make that happen?”

The Monitor is not People magazine; it does not simply name-drop famous Montessori graduates, but rather, looks for personal characteristics common to those grads. Quoting The Wall Street Journal, it asks, “Is there something going on here? Is there something about the Montessori approach that nurtures creativity and inventiveness that we can all learn from?”

Entrepreneurs, inventors, actors, singers, musicians, authors, and chefs, from Sean Combs, Dakota Fanning, and Julia Child to Will Wright, Jeff Bezos, and Jimmy Wales make the list. My only disappointment is that there are so many notable, accomplished, and creative Montessori alums, people who continue to make an impact on the world around them while actively shaping our culture, that a list of only ten leaves off far too many.

And what of Post Oak alums? At last year’s Alumni Night you met Sam Geer, a young Los Angeles film maker who is currently collaborating with fellow Post Oak grads William Wawro and Jonah Ward on a movie project. In the upcoming Annual Report, you’ll meet Sam’s former classmate Ben Jawdat who is pursuing his PhD in physics at the University of Houston’s Texas Center for Superconductivity. And if you join us at this year’s POPA dinner, you’ll hear Nicholas Hetherington speak about his television production work at ESPN. We’ll continue highlighting the stories and successes of Post Oak alums in future editions of The Weekly Post.

The Monitor quoted Colombian Nobel prize winning author Gabriel García Márquez, “I do not believe there is a method better than Montessori for making children sensitive to the beauties of the world and awakening their curiosity regarding the secrets of life.”

Happy birthday, Dr. Montessori.
Welcome to a new school year, children.

© John Long and The Post Oak School

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ASEP Private and Small Group Music Lessons

ASEP Private and Small Group Music lessons will be coming to Post Oak, beginning the week of September 17, 2012.

Lessons will be offered Monday and Wednesday afternoons, beginning at 3:30 p.m., in half-hour time slots. One morning time slot will be available, at 7:40 a.m. Monday through Thursday. Small group lessons will be limited to three students. To enroll your 2nd grade and higher student for private lessons on an instrument or for more advanced vocal prep, please contact me via email at jameswinslow@postoakschool.org for more information and rates. (Lessons which begin at 4:30 or later will be assessed a $130 After-care fee for the semester for each student not currently enrolled in Elementary After-care.)

—James Winslow, Music Specialist
Artesian Lakes

Whenever I first heard about this retreat, I’ll admit it: I was a tad bit frightened and very excited. Being a new kid myself, I know about the fear that comes with being new. However, in the few days we spent at the retreat, my fear vanished because throughout the retreat friendships were formed, people were introduced, and people once known as strangers were now known as friends. All in all, the Retreat at Artesian Lakes was a fun, learning experience that allowed us, the students, to not only learn about overcoming fears, but also about overcoming the obstacles within one’s self.

When we got out of the bus that day, I looked outside to see a beautiful slice of nature. Before my very eyes was a tranquil peace that was soon disturbed by the sound of voices and the scraping of suitcases as they came out of the trunk.

Once bags were gathered and each of the groups were in their own cabin, we were all introduced to each other. Throughout the next few days, we would learn about each other in more ways then we would have ever guessed during that first moment of silence in the cabin. We learned about others' lives, how my fellow students had been shaped and formed. Of course, I first needed to learn their names. To be honest, if we had not had that retreat, I would still be clueless about everyone’s names. This trip made me face the thing I had never dared to confront before: myself.

The first day of low ropes activities was fun, and a great experience. It was even educational, if you count learning who had good balance and who did not. Team building games were played that had a bright, energetic vibe to them. By that, I mean that in each game we played, there was an urge to accomplish our goal. The low ropes activities were built to help us accomplish our inner goals by realizing that we had the potential to complete them. It is amazing how much the mind controls who we are – a simple, positive thought could change the way we look at something and open us up to a solution.

The seminar taught us many things that we did not know about ourselves. It taught me that I was afraid of getting hurt, and it let me overcome that fear. My fellow classmates shared something that was related to the book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens*, whether through an experience we could relate to, a definition of the chapter, or something else. To be honest, it was nice being able to open up to what this book did for us. It was fun seeing who was a grape and who was an orange. But if you really want to have some fun, you should have seen us at the pool.

continued on page 7
Hey Dads, Join the Team!

Congratulations to Lenny Golub, the most recent winner of the Post Oak Dads’ Club on-going Regional Poker Tournament in Galveston!

Sign up to join this great group of fun-loving, Post-Oak-supporting dads! Contact Michael Foerstsch at [email protected]

Lend a Hand with the Kids Care Club

Post Oak School’s Kids Care Club has a service project coming up on Sunday, September 16 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. We’ll be working with Food For Life (FFL), making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for children who would qualify for school lunches, but aren’t old enough to be in school. FFL wants to know how many of us are coming, so please contact Audra French at [email protected] or ask to join Post Oak School Kids Care Club on Facebook if you’re interested. POS KCC is open to all ages. Bring the whole family (and friends, too) to volunteer together!

Montessori Journey

Nov. 2, 6–9 p.m. & Nov. 3, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

Registration for the Montessori Journey is now available on our website. This workshop is a powerful, hands-on approach to understanding how and what your child is learning. We invite and encourage current Post Oak parents to attend, whether for the first time or for those desiring a chance to take the journey again. Space is limited, so sign up early to reserve a spot. Cost: $30 per person.

What other parents have said:

What was your most memorable experience of the day?

“The joy of learning – everything!”

Will this influence your relationship with your child? How?

“Absolutely, I thought I was giving her respect before, but now I know the unlimited abilities that are within a young child. I am truly inspired.”

THE POST OAK FUND

TOGETHER WE CAN!

Post Oak’s environment, professional development, facilities, technology enhancements – all are supported by your gift to the Annual Fund. It takes everyone working together to maintain the level of excellence you expect from Post Oak.

Be among the first to make your contribution and show your support for Post Oak!

Donations for 2012–13 can be made online at any time.

The Annual Fund campaign runs from Oct. 1 to Nov. 15.
Get MORE This School Year

by Aimee Taylor, Post Oak parent

Here we are at the beginning of another school year, so my question is “What do you want more of in the 12–13 school year?” MORE energy, MORE time, MORE patience, MORE love, MORE health? It is tough to say no to any of those, but how do you get MORE? I believe that you get MORE by clearing away the clutter and focusing your efforts on things that can really make a difference. How many times a month, a week, a day do you say “I should not eat this,” “I should really start eating healthier,” or quite possibly, “I should really start working out.”

Getting MORE could be yours if you stop talking about what you should do and start doing it. There is no better time than right now to start focusing on your health and the health of your family. Being too busy or tired cannot be your excuse because you are not going to be any less busy in a week, a month, a year, and you certainly are not going to feel less tired unless you focus on your health.

Scientific studies continue to demonstrate that among all lifestyle factors, no single factor is more important to our health than the food we eat. The World Health Organization recently noted that by 2020, and for the first time in history, non-communicable chronic preventable diseases such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer will constitute more than half of all diseases on a worldwide basis. This means that over half of the diseases are preventable through lifestyle changes such as the food we eat and exercise. If this is not motivation enough for you to make a change, then maybe some facts about the cost of an unhealthy lifestyle will motivate you. Health care costs have risen from $3,468 per person in 1993 to $8,160 in 2008, and costs continue to rise. It is estimated that in the next five years health care costs will rise 50% to $13,100. These costs would make sense if we were actually getting healthier, but sadly, we are just treating diseases with all of this money and are far less healthy. To lower your own health care cost, you must focus on health promotion and disease prevention.

We have become a nation addicted to foods high in sugar, salt, and fat – to foods of convenience rather than health. Each year, the average American consumes 600 cans (56 gallons) of soda, 150 hamburgers, 200 orders of French-fries, 175 pounds of sugar, and 180 pounds of meat. We purchase, on average, 125 take-out meals each year. Even more concerning, 90% of foods Americans purchase every year are processed foods lacking in essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants; in 1940, this statistic was only 10%. The number of people eating five servings of fruits and vegetables declined in the last 18 years from 42% to 26%, even as fruits and vegetables are more readily available year around.

Nutrient-poor processed foods are overly refined, overly stimulating foods, which are not satisfying because they are lacking in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and the plethora of phytonutrients found in unprocessed foods. These “foods” are rich in sugar, salt, fat, and often cause us to unknowingly consume more calories than our bodies require. Because these products contain so little of the nutrients our bodies need, these unhealthy foods are not only addictive but harmful, causing undernourishment and nutrient deficiencies that, over time, damage our bodies and impair our health. They are the primary cause of low energy, insomnia, fatigue, and poor memory, shortly followed by insulin resistance and unwanted weight gain, leading to obesity and all the chronic preventable diseases that plague us, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some cancers.

THE GOOD NEWS

The good news is that healthy foods do not necessarily have to cost more than their unhealthy counterparts; in fact, a review of data by the USDA published in 2008 found that refined grains, added sugars, added fats, and processed foods were not the way to go in developing a low-cost, yet still nourishing food plan. The only way for the meal to remain both nourishing and low-cost was to emphasize nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. The USDA found that the strategy used to keep food costs down at the level of 10% of earnings was none other than nutrient-richness (determined by comparing the number and amount of nutrients a food contains in relationship to...

continued on page 6
its caloric content). The USDA researchers concluded that “For many American households, achieving an affordable, healthy diet will require moving nutrient-dense foods, such as fruits and vegetables, to the center of their plates and budgets.”

If the cost of healthy food is not your main concern, then I would bet that it is TIME. You may say, “I barely have time to get food on the table, I certainly cannot spend time making food that starts with whole, fresh ingredients like vegetables, grains, etc.” I can assure you that healthy and delicious food does not have to be complicated and you CAN get fresh nourishing food on the table just as quickly as you can go pick up dinner or toss together a processed prepackaged meal. You do not have to love to cook; you just have to have the right information and the desire that you and your family live a healthier lifestyle.

Is your MORE in 2012 that you want your kids to eat more healthy foods? I hear multiple times a week that people would be happy to cook more often if my family would eat it. I specialize in getting kids to eat more healthy foods, such as fruits, veggies, and whole grains. By addressing the food aversions you are not going to create food issues, in fact by NOT addressing the problem you are allowing food issues to grow. For the first time in history, our children will have a shorter lifespan than we do, which of course is caused primarily by a “kid food” diet that so many children are now consuming, as well as a significant decrease in levels of physical activity. Your children do not have to be victims of the epidemic.

This is your year to achieve the health and fitness that you and your family deserve. In the new school year be a little selfish and put your health and that of your family’s on top of the priority list!

Here’s to MORE in 2012–2013! •

For more information visit Aimee’s site: www.greenpeasandblueberries.com/

References
DeVol R and Bedroussian A. An unhealthy America: the economic burden of chronic disease. Executive summary and research findings. 2007, The Milken Institute, Santa Monica, California.

WHFoods Website by George Mateljan


Artesian Lakes  
continued from page 3

Splash! That's all we did as we swam about the lake and pool. There is a huge slide that has six different outlets for people to go through that leads into the lake. Having been on there myself, I know for a fact that it is fun and, to newcomers, a bit intimidating. But even so, it was so much fun that the intimidation might as well have been nonexistent. A few steps away lay the pool, and fun was occurring there too. Water volleyball games were being played, people were talking, some were fake singing... it was a mix of enjoyable activity. What did I do? I participated in volleyball and hung out with a couple of people. I even learned how to skip a rock! Which, for me, was actually a big breakthrough, considering I have been trying to complete this task all of my life. Speaking of completed tasks, did I mention that I climbed a 30 foot pole?

“Artesian lakes was fun, and it helped me learn more about my classmates. Along with this, I think everybody there developed teamwork skills,” said [Name] when asked to summarize his experience at Artesian Lakes in two sentences.

I'm pretty sure my fellow classmates learned my fear of heights as they saw me shake as I did the high rope course. I must say, it was thrilling, but I was half afraid of falling because I was shaking so hard. I was the only one who finished this task and did it without ease, but I am pretty sure most people don't do a rope course because they are afraid of it. Doing that high rope course allowed me to face my fear and, in the end, conquer it. You would think I would have decided I had done enough, but I went on to climb a 30 foot pole and stand on it. It took me five minutes to muster up the courage to stand on top of that pole. And once I stood up, I jumped and won the prize – a golden ring. A whirl of emotions flew through me as I completed the task. But you know what I felt the most? Control. I felt like the physical obstacle that I had just conquered had led me to conquer the one inside of me.

In conclusion, I must say that the Retreat at Artesian Lakes was one of the most brilliantly nerve wracking experiences I have to claim as my own. Throughout my journey of self discovery, I was able to face my fears. The farther we got along, the more I settled into the group and, as a result of that, I was able to learn how to work with my fellow students. I have always been scared of facing my fears let alone conquering them, so whenever the activities came along I had gained enough confidence to go out there and do it. The Retreat at Artesian was a fun, educational trip that not only built upon our team working skills but also built upon us as a whole.

Join Cub Scouts

Boys entering grades 1 through 5 (Fall 2012) can join Cub Scouts now. Pack 34 meets at St. Mark’s Episcopal on Holcombe and has families from Mark Twain Elementary, St. Mark’s Episcopal School, Post Oak School, and several others.

Our first meeting is at 7:00 p.m. at St. Mark’s on September 12.

To join or learn more visit www.pack34houston.org

or contact Sean O’Connor, Pack 34 Cubmaster, 713-202-1810 oconnorhook@gmail.com
Redirecting Children’s Behavior
_The Gentle Art of Parenting_

Tuesday evenings, Sept. 25, October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, from 6:30–9 p.m.

This six-week, 15-hour course is designed to guide parents to use discipline as a process of teaching children self-control and responsibility. Redirecting Children’s Behavior is a positive, powerful, informative, and fun training course which will give you a complete system for handling every situation in which adults interact with children, from infancy to adolescence. You will see it working and bringing positive changes to your parenting and your family from the first class onward.

FREE Introduction Talk open to all
Wednesday, September 12, from 7–8:30 p.m.

The course will be taught by Deborah Fry, Ph.D. She is a certified instructor for the International Network for Children and Families.

Deborah gives talks and seminars for parents, teachers and people involved with children and families, as well as teaches three-year-olds at Westminster Weekday School. With her enthusiastic speaking style and her sense of humor, Deborah helps make the art of parenting and working with children enjoyable. To register, call Deborah at 713-840-8663 or visit www.deborah-fry.com.

Course fee: $235 for one; $335 per couple includes book, workbook, and 15 hours of class time.
“Friday Night Fever”
Post Oak Gala Kickoff Coffee

“If (We) Can’t Have You”
we can’t put on a gala!

Gala Chairs Jian Short and Erin Stus
invite you to be part of the production!
Socialize and sign up!
Friday, September 14, 9 a.m.

Shop & Support Post Oak

There’s an easy way to help raise money for our school – when you go shopping! Whether buying groceries at Randalls, back-to-school items at Target, or catching a great deal on MamaSource, your purchases can benefit Post Oak! Grandparents, alumni, and friends are all welcome to participate in the programs.

When you shop at Randalls, Post Oak can receive 1% of total purchases. Just link your Remarkable card to the school by visiting www.randalls.com › Community Caring (link at the bottom of page under Company Info). From here select the Good Neighbor Program link on the right and complete the short Good Neighbor Charity Addition form at the bottom of the page. Be sure to include Post Oak’s charity number 2531.

Have a Target REDcard or Target Visa Card? Through their Take Charge of Education program, cardholders can designate Post Oak to receive 1% of all Card purchases made at a Target store or at target.com. Target also donates 5% of all Target Visa Credit Card purchases made outside of Target. To link Post Oak to your card, go to target.com/tcoe, enter the school’s ID (1510) or search by city and state, and click on the Select This School to enter your card information. You can also check the school’s progress any time.

For great deals on clothing, toys, magazines, courses, and much more, shop with Mamasource by Mamapedia (deals.mamapedia.com/). When making a purchase, select The Post Oak School and they will send send 5% to us! Easy peasy!

We truly appreciate all your support! Happy shopping! ☺️
The Post Oak Parents Association invites you to attend the annual Welcome Dinner

Tuesday, September 11, 2012
6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Pre-reception at 6:00 p.m. for new parents, faculty, board, & room parents

Cohen House Faculty Club, Rice University
6100 Main Street, Entrance #2, Houston, Texas

POPA Dinner Chairs | Jenny Mohr & Nikayla Thomas
POPA Chairs | Laura Citardi, Jessica Gregg & Whitney Walsh

Business attire
Attendants will be on hand to direct you to complimentary parking in the Lovett Lot.
This is an adults-only event.

With another school year just beginning, it’s the perfect time to bring together the Post Oak family for an evening of dinner, drinks, and getting (re)acquainted. Please join us for The Post Oaks School’s annual POPA Welcome Dinner on Tuesday, September 11th at the Cohen House Faculty Club at Rice University, where cocktails will be served, followed by a seated dinner. Whether this is your first year at the school or your tenth, whether you’re forming new relationships or reconnecting with old friends, you’ll find a fun, relaxing evening with plenty of lively conversation to go around. We hope to see you there!
Welcome new families!

Amid the flurry of back-to-school activities, the gym was home to the New Parent Welcome Coffee hosted by Post Oak’s administration and POPA leadership for all new Post Oak School parents. Join us at the POPA Welcome Dinner on Sept. 11 to connect with friends old and new.
School Action Plan: West Nile Virus

From Head of School John Long
September 6, 2012

DATA
• There have been more than 1,000 cases reported in Texas – a record number.

• Harris County has reported 37 West Nile cases and three deaths. Eighteen of the cases have come in the last 10 days, the Houston area’s peak period historically. (Houston Chronicle, 09/05/2012)

• Here is a link to general information from the Texas Department of State Health Services. (www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/arthoviral/westnile/information/special/schools/default.asp)

WHAT IS POST OAK DOING TO CONTROL MOSQUITOES IN AND AROUND THE CAMPUS?
• Matt Thompson and his crew are patrolling the grounds (including classroom gardens) every morning to eliminate standing water – where mosquitoes breed.

• Primary and Infant Community teachers are patrolling their gardens as well – also with an eye to eliminating standing water.

• The school’s pest control contractor is spraying the garden areas every two weeks – on Friday evening after children and faculty have gone home for the weekend. He is using Riptide, a pyrethrin-based insecticide.

• We are utilizing mosquito dunks* in the rain barrels to eliminate mosquito larvae.

WHAT ABOUT MOSQUITO REPELLENT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY?
For Infant Community and Primary students:
• Teachers will spray children upon parent request, based on an addendum to the medication dispensing permission form. (www.postoakschool.org/images/postoak/PDF/Forms/Health/POS-MedicationDispensing.pdf)

• All teachers will use ‘California Baby Bug Repellent.’ It is deet free. Ingredients: citronella, lemon grass, cedar (100% natural).

• The children who might need to be sprayed are the following groups:
  Full Day Infant Community
  Primary Home Environment
  Extended Day

• For morning children who leave at noon, parents can spray them at home, before school. Bug repellent lasts 6 to 8 hours.

For Elementary and Middle School students:
• The school will not provide insect repellent for older students. If parents wish, they may send the insect repellant of their choice to school, labeled with their child’s name, along with a note to their child’s teacher giving permission and any special instructions.

• Teachers will store the repellant here at school and take it with them to recess or other outdoor activities where it can be applied under their supervision in the open air. Help will be provided as needed.

*Mosquito dunks: made with Bt-iresaelensis (Bti), a highly specific biological pesticide, this product represents a major breakthrough for people and the environment when compared with the traditional toxic chemical approach to mosquito control. It will NOT harm people, pets, wildlife, or fish. To learn more about Bti, click here for reference information from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/mosquitoes/larvicides4mosquitoes.htm)
**SCENES**

from

*The Post Oak School*

1. Learning practical skills with the buckle frame in Infant Community.
2. A Primary student paints outdoors.
3. Using water colors to fill in shapes of countries of the world.
4. Piecing together parts of a tree and flower.
5. Listening to the resonance after playing a sound.
6. Math fact memorization in Lower EL.
7 & 8. Students sign up for Bearkats and Intramural sports.
9. Upper Elementary hears the story of the creation of the universe.
10. MS students using their new laptops.
11. High School students put their iPads to use in a class-wide project.
CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 9–15

POP A Welcome Dinner
Cohen House Faculty Club
Rice University (see ad)
6:00 p.m. Pre-reception
6:30–9:30 p.m. Dinner

Intro to Redirecting
Children’s Behavior
7:00 p.m.

Parenting the Love and Logic
Way (1 of 7)
9:10–10:30 a.m.

Gala Kickoff Coffee
9:00 a.m. (see ad)

SEPTEMBER 16–22

Rosh Hashanah begins at
sundown

All-school photo
F.I.S.H. (Families Integrating
School and Home) event
6:00 p.m.

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

Fall Equinox

NOTICE BOARD

Conference Registration

The online parent/teacher conference
scheduling is now open. Conference
days are October 12, 19, and 26
(Infant Community is in session on
the 26th). To sign up for a conference
go to www.postoakschool.org ▶ For
Parents ▶ Schedule/View a Parent-
Teacher Conference and have your
login information ready. If you are
having problems, please contact the
technology director, Mirna Andrade-
Salgado, at technology@postoakschool.org
or 281-822-8063.

Nanny Available

Wonderful full-time nanny available
starting October. She has worked for
families in the inner loop and Post
Oak for years. She has experience
caring for newborns through
elementary-aged children and is
skilled with all ages.

Please contact Joyce Rafati at
for more information.

PAPERWORK DROP-OFF
AT ARRIVALS

If you have paperwork to drop off,
you can hand it 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. No
need to park! There are drop-off
baskets in both the Primary and
Elementary arrival lines.

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 p.m. 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 p.m. 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

Check out our calendar
online or download a copy
at www.postoakschool.org