Birth is beautiful. Birth is exhilarating, transformational, and beautiful. Of course also tiring, but that feeling is wonderfully (almost totally) erased by the daily joys of a new life.

Birth is also a moment. It’s that pivotal point that follows creative investment and precedes a longer period of even greater work!

This fall, the Post Oak High School emerged and it is beautiful. Each day, the freshman class bounds in, full of freshness and energy. I’m not kidding. The students are connected and full of anticipation. They are, on various levels, conscious of their role in this expansion of Post Oak.

They are First Class; our first class. The class of 2016. Collectively, they bring the final piece

continued on page 2
that we’ve been waiting for. After three years of planning—including two years following our “nesting” instinct to prepare—they have arrived.

We started with food (of course) when the first class gathered for lunch on a day late in August. This was the first meeting for the students. As they walked in, there were the requisite introductions and within minutes, as if at a business convention, cell phones were out and contact information was exchanged.

We were off.

Following three days of orientation and a week-long delay due to Hurricane Isaac, the fall Odyssey departed for Louisiana and Mississippi.

The primary destination was Ocean Springs, home to the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory of the University of Southern Mississippi. During our second day there, we were out on the Mississippi Sound in the GCRL research vessel. The smell of the ocean mixed with the smell of ocean animals as the trawl net spilled its contents onto the stainless steel table: catfish, spadefish, spotted croakers, and striped mullet (Biloxi bacon!). “See the spot? What’s this one?” yelled the marine educator over the roar of the boat’s engines. Students gathered around for rapid fire taxonomy lessons that ended with each animal’s release back into the sea.

After the trip, campus life in the Museum District rolls on with history excursions to the Houston Museum of Natural Science, science experiments utilizing local traffic, and physical fitness classes using Hermann Park as the field for the ultimate frisbee unit.

“It’s mature here. It’s preparing us for the real world,” says one of the first class. “I’m glad I’m here; I feel ready for this. It’s a really good school.”

We’re glad you’re here, too.

You can come, too! Join us Tuesday, October 16 from 4 to 6 p.m. for the Grand Opening celebration. And though you might think of it like a baby shower, no gifts please. :-) ☺️

—James Moudry, High School Director
Head of School John Long’s comments from this year’s POPA Dinner

Today is September eleventh. Most of our current students were not yet born in 2001. Our High School freshmen were three years old. Our alumni speaker tonight, Nick Hetherington, was an eighth grader at Post Oak in 2001. He was one of the students who stood with me around the flag pole in front of the school on September 12, 2001. I said to them at the time, “We have witnessed an incredible act of DE-struction. Your work in this world is to counter that with acts of CON-struction.” (See Nick Hetherington’s speech on page 7 for more details.)

I’ll introduce Nick in a few minutes.

Before that, I have a little astronomy lesson…which I present with great humility—because that is the only way to present astronomy lessons, and because I know we have more than one NASA scientist in our parent body—so I begin with a bit of trepidation.

Dark Matter.

Astronomers have used telescopes for 400 years to identify and study the stars and planets and moons and other objects in space. Our solar system has its sun and eight planets and numerous moons and comets and other stuff flying around in orbit.

Our sun is one small member of the Milky Way galaxy, a spinning cluster of 300 billion stars—and who knows how many planets orbit those stars? And how many galaxies are there in the known universe? Nearly 200 billion. However, it seems that these billions of galaxies and quintillions of stars don’t move the way astronomers predict they should. The current best theory says that the universe also includes dark matter, which is invisible—even through telescopes. In fact, calculations suggest that 84% of the known universe is made up of dark matter. So those quintillions of stars represent only 16% of what’s out there—the rest is invisible dark matter.

So how does this connect to school? This Friday, the radio show This American Life, referring to the idea of dark matter, will “ask a question so big it sounds crazy: just what are we teaching our kids?—No, seriously.—And what is missing?”

What leads to success in life, they’ll ask? Good grades? High test scores? Most people believe that. Turns out good grades and high test scores are like the visible matter in the universe of adult success—only 15% of what’s there. We’re missing the dark matter. The 85% of the universe that explains the way the whole shebang moves. What is the dark matter that we’re missing? Character. Personal characteristics. Grit, and perseverance and curiosity. Self discipline, self management. Focused attention. Things most schools don’t teach.

I spoke to one of our parents today whose son is in a local scout pack. Last Sunday 30 boys, nine- and 10-year-olds, and their dads went on an outing to a downtown courthouse.

Two of the boys are from Post Oak. The other 28 come from two other local schools, one private, one public. All the boys come from the kinds of homes where one parent could arrange to open a court house on a Sunday, and have a judge come speak about “How to be a good citizen.”

Here’s the story of what happened in the Post Oak dad’s own words:

Two hours of chaos. Screams, pushing, running, silliness.

The two Post Oak boys remained calm, did all the chores (learn about the flag, how to be a good citizen, how the court works, etc.), rarely became distracted, were respectful of the teachers. They answered questions, asked questions, and completed all the preliminary work.

The difference between our kids and the rest left me speechless. And happy to be at The Post Oak School.”

That is Dark Matter. Unlike astronomy, it is highly visible. And clearly developed by students at Post Oak.
High School Odyssey

by High School students

ORIENTATION DAY
On the 22nd of August, a Tuesday, we all flocked to the Post Oak High School for orientation. We got to meet each other, then went outside for a group picture along with taking individual pictures. Next was our first meal together around our temporary plastic tables. Lunch was Jason’s Deli wraps and cookies. After some good lunch conversation, we all hopped on the two Post Oak activity buses and headed over to the Chase Tower. There we traveled up to the 60th floor to look out at the growth of Houston and our campus. We headed back to the high school and everyone felt ready for the first day of school.

DAY TWO
On Wednesday we headed over to Glassell School to make our tobacco box art journal. Next we walked to the Houston Museum of Fine Arts to look at the first of our main partners. In the morning we looked around, got some Cajun food for lunch, and headed back. We went to view the MFA’s library. The moving bookshelves were a favorite.

DAY THREE
On Thursday it was time to head over to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to look around and talk to people that worked there. We viewed a few fossils in the process of being dug out of the rock. Then we made our way to the Cockrell Butterfly Center to meet the people in charge and got to walk around with one of them.

DAY FOUR
On an overcast Friday we jumped on the Metro to make our way to the Houston Zoo. While we were in the bus it began to rain and as soon as we got off we ran for cover. After waiting a while, the rain subsided and we walked around to the front of the zoo and entered. We met with the education director and he gave us an idea of what we could do at the zoo. Once we finished talking we took a few minutes to look at the meerkats and their enclosure to see what they did. That was all for the zoo and we headed back to the school to finish the day off with our first Friday community meeting.

WEEK TWO
For our second week of school, we were supposed to go on our odyssey trip, but due to Hurricane Isaac hitting the coast of Louisiana and Mississippi, we had to postpone the trip. So for the second week, we had an orientation into our high school curriculum. For Monday, we had one of our first seminars on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina which we were learning about in the information given to us for our odyssey trip. That day we also did an activity called the Marshmallow Challenge in order to work together in groups. In it, we had to build a structure and try to have the highest marshmallow, but all we received was string, two feet of tape, uncooked spaghetti sticks, and a marshmallow.

Tuesday, we began our major project of the week which was creating timelines on the windows of the building. Tuesday, we learned the history of the universe, so our science teacher took twenty minutes to tell us about the entire history of the universe starting with the big bang and ending with homo sapiens. We were broken into groups and were given a time period in the history of the universe.

Wednesday, we learned the history of humans from cavemen to the twenty-first century. As before, the teacher told it to us in only twenty minutes, then we were split into groups and were given a time period. Once we captured enough information we put it on the window to show history through time.

Thursday, we learned about the history of math in twenty minutes and were split

continued on next page
into groups for specific periods. It started with the beginning of numbers, which were just notches in wood, to modern mathematics.

During the week, we also had an assignment to choose a period of history that you were interested in or passionate about and then produce a creative visual for a presentation. We presented those on Friday which was our first presentation by the students for this year. There were subjects from history of movies to Native Americans to photography to transportation. I felt that with the timelines and working in groups, we got to know each other. It was our first time to work on academic projects with others. I think that I learned more about people and got to speak with everyone. I felt the second week of school really helped us to know each other, work together in groups for the first time, and gave us a look into what we will learn freshman year and for the four years at Post Oak High School.

THE ODYSSEY
The students were itching with anticipation on the long ride to New Orleans. Each bus had eight students and two teachers, but we kept busy—homework, singing (Bohemian Rhapsody), and talking. This was a great bonding time for students, since we met only three weeks ago.

The first stop was the Laura Plantation. Students were brought back to 1805, when the plantation was built. We learned about a normal day on the sugar plantation. We saw the side of the owner and the slaves. Stephen was an amazing tour guide, helping our understanding of the 1800s Creole Louisiana.

If the students had a boring trip in mind, they thought wrong. Next on the list? A spooky ghost tour in New Orleans. “Bloody Mary” took us through New Orleans and told us the history, and about the spirits that still loom there. Students’ minds were boggled at the horrific stories we were told. It was an incredible experience that we will never forget.

After a relaxing stay at the Omnia, students got to try some delicious beignets at Café du Monde. Then hopped on the bus with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Rose for a tour of New Orleans based on Katrina. We saw the Make It Right Foundation’s work, an abandoned Six Flags, and the ninth ward’s hurricane damage.

Then off to the World War II Museum. We learned about the life of a soldier in WWII. We learned about the gliders, the Higgins boats, and atomic bombs. We got a chance to build a model dam buster to learn how the different weapons work.

Back on the bus, it was time to head to Ocean Springs, Mississippi to the University of Southern Mississippi Marine Education Center. We got settled into our dorms, enjoyed a nice dinner, and went straight to bed, for the long day ahead of us. In the morning, we were supposed to go kayaking, but weather crashed the party, so we settled for lab work. We got a chance to classify fish and look at them under a microscope. Luckily, the weather cleared up, so we got to go kayaking after all. But not before we all got a try at fishing and cast netting. and  both got a catch.

Then, two per kayak, we got to see the ecosystem of the fish we studied. It was a fun afternoon, with a game of kayak tag.
High School Odyssey
continued from page 5

For the perfect ending to the perfect day, we took a nice beach walk. The beautiful moon, the rushing water, and the feel of sand beneath our feet. We got a chance to reflect on the trip, bond with classmates, and get a break from the busy schedule.

Horn Island was next on the agenda. We took a boat to Horn Island to learn about the ecology of the barrier islands. We caught fish using a trawl. We identified the different types of fish and got to hold them.

Once we arrived at Horn Island, we got to scope out the island, picking up debris along the way. We had the opportunity to ask our guides any questions that we had. Then we got to use a yabbie pump, cast net, and a pole net. Then back on the boat.

We all had a great last meal at Margaritaville. Entertainers on stilts made us balloon animals. And after a great dinner, we went to the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Biloxi. We saw musician collector's items. And we had Ben and Jerry's ice cream. Yum.

When the trip was coming to an end, we hopped back on the buses and prepared for the long journey back to Texas.
Alumnus Nick Hetherington’s speech from the 2012 POPA Dinner on September 11

It is great to be back at Post Oak and in my hometown of Houston, Texas. I never in my life thought I would say I miss the Houston traffic, but I really do miss the hustle and bustle of life in Houston. Being in Bristol, Connecticut, for the past two years… life moves a lot slower up there. I mean, a big night on the town in Bristol is at the local Chili’s.

I am very proud to say I am a lifelong Post Oakian. I went up the ranks from Infant Community through Middle School and graduated with the class of 2002. I then attended Episcopal High School and the University of Texas where I graduated with a Bachelor of Journalism. I am currently a content associate at ESPN where I have had the awesome job of cutting highlights for SportsCenter and am also a staff member on the show College GameDay. I still can’t believe they’re paying me to watch sports, but back to Post Oak…

I have so many fond memories of The Post Oak School. From the many years of Cinco de Mayo (which I just realized probably should have made me a better dancer) to the school plays, to getting to travel around the U.S. in Middle School— to places like Washington D.C., Crow Canyon, and even Blackwood—I quickly realized when I got to Episcopal that not many kids my age had the experiences I did because of Post Oak. This community truly was my second family for the first 15 years of my life.

In Middle School, we traveled together, worked together—we were a close-knit family and team. I will always remember Coach Tucker constantly reminded me there is no “I” in team, to which I would quickly respond with, “but there is an I in Nicky.” But the camaraderie I felt in this community has served me greatly at ESPN where I am part of a team on every show I work for. Whether it is being on a conference call with Chris Fowler and Kirk Herbstreit every Monday for GameDay, or even prompting for Chris Berman when he does his two-minute drill segments, one of the first things I learned at ESPN is not to try and be a hero on a show… it is all about the team.

Post Oak taught me a lot of valuable lessons that I carry with me to this day. First and foremost, it gave me the foundation to be an independent thinker. Even at the lower levels of my education like Lower Elementary, where we got to choose our own topics for book reports. Little did I know that allowing me to read every book written on dinosaurs for these reports would turn into an addiction for reading that helps me to this day coming up with story ideas for show meetings.

Post Oak gave me enough freedom within limits to let me learn at my own rate. The teachers cultivated such a loving environment for us that we genuinely loved coming to school. Wanting to go to school and learn was something Post Oak instilled in me at an early age, which helped me especially at the collegiate level, where at such a big university like UT, attendance wasn’t taken in a majority of my classes. It takes a strong-willed individual to want to go to class and succeed. I apply this to my work as well, where for the past year I worked on a one o’clock a.m. to noon shift, from Monday to Friday, to recut the overnight highlights for the morning SportsCenter. Were there times when I just wanted to sleep through my alarm that would ring at midnight? Everyday. Did I enjoy living

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Volunteers Wanted!

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE WANTS YOUR HELP!

We are in the planning stages for the 50th Anniversary school year of 2013–14 and we would like parents to get involved. You can sign up through a link on homepage or contact Kathryn Murphy (kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org).

Sign up online via the link on our homepage!

MORE OPPORTUNITIES & CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Fair</td>
<td>Hillery Hugg &amp; Mary Stephens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grandparents’ Days</td>
<td>Kathryn Murphy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bienniel Gala</td>
<td>Jian Short &amp; Erin Stus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>B.R. Simon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinco de Mayo</td>
<td>Kelly Hill &amp; Allison Zapata</td>
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Do you have an alumni story to share? Please contact kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org or update your information at www.postoakschool.org/postoak/alumni.asp

Spotlight on Alumni continued from page 7

the life of a vampire for a year, sleeping through the day? No. But this ‘want’ to show up and succeed no matter what I am doing, whether learning or working, has been with me and I have Post Oak to thank for that.

One of my favorite aspects of Post Oak was that I really developed my own voice. Freedom of expression was always encouraged at every level. I remember 11 years ago today, when the planes hit the Twin Towers, I was in eighth grade ... we all were told what had happened. The chaos and confusion of what happened that day was hard for any 14-year-old to grasp. But we were allowed to talk about it, we were encouraged to journal about it. We were asked to choose a word, paint it on a brick, then we all gathered around the American flag, as a community, to lay our bricks down. It is something I will never forget. We weren’t told what we should think that day; we were allowed to write down exactly how we felt. To be allowed to freely express our thoughts like that is something a lot of children don’t get. This has also carried me a long way at ESPN because Post Oak made me realize I have a strong and unique voice that I can creatively express through my work with highlights.

However, of all the traits that I learned at Post Oak, accountability has carried me the farthest in my career at ESPN. From a very early age, whether in the classroom or in the general community, you are required to take accountability for your actions. What school gives you chores you have to perform each day? How I got stuck on trash duty for multiple years, I have no idea, but it taught me no matter how big or small a task is, to always maintain our environment/community for the good of the group. In such a large work environment at ESPN, a lot of young individuals are trying to move up through the ranks and they don’t care how they get there. It is a cut-throat environment where a lot of people will throw you under the bus. In my evaluations at ESPN, one thing producers and coordinating producers both have said about me is that it is refreshing to see an individual take accountability for his work. That is what I was taught growing up and is something greatly respected by upper level management at ESPN.

This school has meant a great deal to the Hetherington Family. We have forged relationships with teachers, parents, and classmates that we will carry with us forever. I know if either of my sisters were up here speaking, they would be echoing the same sentiment I am about this community. Workwise, I don’t know what I want to do for the rest of my life, I don’t know if I will ever end back up in Texas, but I do know when I have a family I want to send my kids to a place like Post Oak. I do know for a fact I am the person I am today because of the strong independent foundation Post Oak instilled in me at an early age. I do know that I am proud to say I am a lifelong Post Oakian.
Field Day Mystery Box Tickets & Wrapping

Field Day is a festive and free family event, paid for by ticket sales for the Mystery Box raffle. Room Parents will be wrapping the Mystery Boxes on October 10 in the common room.

Thanks to all families who have contributed to the box contents! Look for raffle ticket sales in the coming weeks. Below are the Mystery Box themes for each class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deidre Lodrig</td>
<td>Texas Treasures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Moudry</td>
<td>My Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoebe Yeager</td>
<td>Staycation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamara Basham</td>
<td>Puzzles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danielle Dalsey</td>
<td>Outdoor Explorers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Hansen</td>
<td>Butterfly Garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Parraguirre</td>
<td>Around the World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamara Townsend</td>
<td>Dinosaurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam Winton</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orly Kluk</td>
<td>Legos and Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Long</td>
<td>Mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Smith</td>
<td>Carnival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hifa Sobhani</td>
<td>Imagination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Nickerson</td>
<td>Gift Cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errol Pinto</td>
<td>Mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maya Pinto</td>
<td>Games and Toys</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Around the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>A Healthy Night’s Sleep</td>
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</table>

Bearkats Athletics

by Mark Tucker, Bearkats Coach

The Bearkat athletics teams started a couple of their seasons the past few weeks. Soccer and cross country have been working out since early September and both got their first contest in with our soccer team coming out on the winning side against friendly rival St. Stephen’s by the score of 5–1. Our next game was Wednesday of this week at St. Catherine’s, resulting in a 7–1 victory for the Bearkats. The games were well played by both teams. The Bearkats looked great in their new uniforms of green, white, and black.

Members of this year’s team are: [names]

Last Saturday at Faith West High School our cross country team had their first meet. Our team of boys and girls ran a course of 1.6 miles around a small lake with several turns and hills. With their parents’ support they all finished well and enjoyed the new experience. Cross country team members are: [names] and [names]. Look for news on all our Beakats in the next Weekly Post.
1. Friends interact with a familiar material in a new way.
2. Learning about even and odd numbers.
3. Tracing with the metal insets to develop fine motor skills for writing.
4. Focusing on cylinder blocks. Notice the pincer grip which is also used in handwriting.
5. Concentrating on work with the addition snake game.
7. Observing particle attraction in physical science.
8. Drawing the solar system in Upper EL.
9–10. MS students demonstrate activities to increase their understanding of different math concepts.
11. Testing the calorie content of foods in the lab of the High School.
12. High School and Elementary students meet in the nature center.
## CALENDAR

**SEPTEMBER 30 – OCTOBER 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon–Fri</th>
<th>Middle School trip to Washington D.C.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 10/3</td>
<td>POPA Coffee/Work Day 8:45 a.m.–noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed–Fri 10/3–10/5</td>
<td>Upper Elementary trip</td>
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</table>

**OCTOBER 7 – 13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon 10/8</th>
<th>Columbus Day (school closed)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue 10/9</td>
<td>AlertNow testing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee retreat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 10/10</td>
<td>High School Admission</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open House 7:00–8:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mystery Box Wrapping Day 9:00 a.m.–noon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boxes on display in Front Lobby until Field Day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bearkats soccer @ Feld Park vs. St. Stephens 4:15–5:15 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 10/11</td>
<td>No Weekly Post this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 10/12</td>
<td>Conference day: reserved for students new to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Classes not in session: only students with expanded year contracts attend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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## NOTICE BOARD

### Double Welcome!

Congratulations to Renee and Milton Morris, parents of Deidre Lodrig’s class, on the birth of their new twin girls! Here is the report:

“The girls [redacted] 5 pounds, 14 ounces, born on September 6 at 8:01 a.m., and [redacted] 5 pounds, 7 ounces, born at 8:03 a.m., and mom are all resting well. Father is shopping online at shotgunz.com.”

### Grandparents’ Days invitations

Grandparents’ Days will soon be here! If you would like your child’s grandparents or other relatives/friends to be invited to this year’s Grandparents’ Days (November 19 & 20), please visit www.postoakschool.org and submit their mailing information. Please include anyone you think would like to observe and/or interact with your children in their Montessori environment. Invitations will be mailed directly to those individuals in late October.

### 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