Parent/teacher conferences are coming up. We know that you want to know how your children are doing; and we want to communicate well with you.

From Infant Community through High School, we aim to help students move from emerging curiosity, to deepening interest, to developing talent, to emerging expertise. The students’ work makes this happen; work that begins from curiosity and interest, and necessarily involves initiative, activity, experimentation, repetition, creativity, errors, failures, successes, attention to quality, and ongoing improvement.

In his book Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us, Dan Pink identifies the three most important elements for motivating people, both adults and children: autonomy, mastery and purpose. “All kids start out as curious (and)
self-directed... But many of them end up as disengaged (but) compliant. What’s going on?”

Autonomy: independence or freedom. Can a student have autonomy? Yes, within limits. At Post Oak, we give students more autonomy, more freedom, more choices than conventional schools do. With autonomy comes accountability, responsibility. Post Oak alumnus Nick Hetherington spoke at the recent POP A dinner about his work at ESPN and how his Post Oak education prepared him for success. He identified accountability as his most important take-away.

How do Post Oak students learn accountability? Those lessons evolve over time as the child passes from one stage to another. For Middle School and High School students, they join parents and teachers in conferences about their academic progress. In fact, they lead the conference. They take direct responsibility for their work, for their actions. Talk about personal accountability. Would you have been ready to lead such a conference at the age of 13, 14, or 15?

Below is the letter from High School Director James Moudry, inviting parents to sign up for conferences. His letter is followed by an excerpt from Nick Hetherington’s comments about accountability.

High School Families,

Just a quick reminder to login to the school website this week and schedule your son or daughter’s conference for later this month.

The conferences are student-led meetings that are similar to an employee-led performance review. Each student has an opportunity twice a year to reflect on his or her work, personal strengths and challenges, and set goals for him- or herself. We hope you find the meeting to be a helpful glimpse into their current work and how your son or daughter is planning for success in his or her future work.

Students are sometimes nervous about such meetings. We work to support their success at school and the conferences are a part of this work. This week, students are completing a self-evaluation and meeting with their advisors to plan for success at the conference. We know that you also may have questions about your son or daughter’s work. We encourage you to ask those at any time during the year and not wait until a scheduled conference.

The conference facilitates a dialogue that includes the student, parents, and teachers. It supports student independence, self-reliance, and self-confidence while reinforcing for students that their work is their own and they are in charge of it.

Since students generally have a clear idea of how their work is going (and so does the faculty!), there are rarely surprises at the conferences (this is reassuring to the students). The meeting is an important moment for each student to share his or her reflections on how they are doing with their work and what goals they are setting for the future. There is time in the conference for faculty and parents to contribute as well, including asking questions.

If you have any questions or concerns about your son or daughter’s work before the conference, please reach out to your son or daughter’s advisor in the next week, in advance of the conference.

Thanks for your support!

James Moudry, High School Director

Excerpt from Nick Hetherington’s talk at the POPA dinner. (For the full text, see the September 28, 2012 edition of The Weekly Post.)

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...
STOP!
BEFORE YOU DONATE, LET US EDUCATE!

by Paula Mey, Post Oak Fund Chair

This week launched the 2013 Post Oak Fund for the parent community. That’s not to say we haven’t started the campaign. By the time school started this year, we already had every employee and almost all Board members contribute to the fund. WOW! That says a lot about the dedication of those who provide an outstanding learning environment for our children.

Before you make your family’s donation this year, please take time to educate yourself about the annual fund. We have answered 14 commonly asked questions in a new brochure that was included in your mailed packet and can also be found online. Find answers to such questions as:

“Why doesn’t the school just charge more tuition?”
Answer: If tuition were increased many families could not afford to send their children to our school. This could mean a drop in enrollment resulting in a steeper tuition increases and discretionary spending cuts which would ultimately affect your child’s education. Additionally, charitable contributions would be even more difficult to obtain.

You’ll also find a listing of the WAYS TO GIVE. This year you can DONATE MONTHLY. Make it easier on your budget and earn some miles by making a tax deductible donation monthly on your credit card.

Need more information? Please ask your Class Captain or contact me directly. Asking for money is serious business and we’re serious about getting you the answers.

Your Class Captain is found under the class of your eldest child.

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

Accountability
continued from page 2

Kids Care Club

The Post Oak Kids Care Club had its first volunteer outing benefitting Food for Life on September 16. The families assembled sack lunches of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and juice boxes for children too young to receive school lunches. The project ended early because everyone worked so quickly! Among the participants were families Brenckman, Colunga French, Factor, Janda-Thomas, Kebriaei-Ravandi, Lopez, and Wykoff. A big thank you to you all!

NEXT PROJECT

The Kids Care Club is getting together on Sunday, October 28 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Nature Discovery Center (NDC). Our theme for this project is caring for the environment. NDC will assign us activities, such as picking up garbage and/or weeding. For more information on this and other projects, please ask to join POS KCC Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/278032742310211/. Additional information, including KCC’s compassionate curriculum, is posted to the group. Please post to the group or email Audra French at [email protected] if you plan to attend.

Boychoir

Congratulations to Upper Elementary student on his acceptance to the Houston Boychoir Chamber Choir for the 2012–13 season, which marks the institution’s 50th anniversary.

From the website: The musical repertoire is widely varied, drawing from all periods of music history and representing many styles and languages. Through the mastery and public performance of their music, boys develop discipline, confidence and a loving understanding of art. (houstonboychoir.org/)

Best wishes to in his practices and performances for another year with Boychoir.
Get Ready, Get Set: It’s Almost Time for Field Day Fun!

The countdown is on for Field Day 2012: Healthy Mind, Healthy Body! In addition to the always popular Earthball games, cake walk, bounce houses, and dunk tanks, a deejay will be spinning family-friendly music to lead kids and parents in creative movement and dance, and Houston Symphony principal trombonist Allen Barnes will play “name that tune” with songs from *The Baby Elephant Walk* to ones by Bach and Bacharach.

Also, everyone will love the Instrument Petting Zoo as well as the Veggie Pals, a troupe that puts the fun in learning about nutrition.

This Field Day is especially significant with the presence of our first group of High School students and their families. You’ll meet each of the High School students during the Mystery Box drawings—they will pick our raffle winners!

This is the one day out of every school year that the whole Post Oak community gets a chance to come together to picnic and play, and we always leave with a refreshing sense of closeness and camaraderie. *We are excited to see you all at Field Day on Saturday, October 20, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

Bernadette Verzosa & Mary Vaeza-Lopez, Field Day Co-Chairs

REMINDER!

**INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PICTURES**

**MON., OCT. 22 TO THURS., OCT. 25**
Something Special Here

from Head of School John Long’s blog, Education by Design

Check out this video (vimeo.com/album/2035535/video/47967715) created by four elementary-aged children. Then read the project description from Post Oak mom Katie Orr – Post Oak kids stand out. They are creative: incredibly so. But there is more: “To drive home the point, she grabbed my arm and said, ‘Really, please listen. You need to understand that there is something special here and that you need to be very, very proud of your child and these children.’” Read on:

Michelle asked that I answer your question regarding the video that our boys produced. Several Post Oak School boys (redacted) participated in Aurora Picture Show’s Filmmaking Boot Camp this summer. (collaborated on a different, equally amazing film.) The week-long day camp is part of the education outreach (“Popcorn Kids Series”) of the Aurora Picture Show, a Houston based non-profit that supports emerging filmmakers and artists in our area. Please see their website if you are interested. (aurorapictureshow.org/pages/popcorn_kids_158.asp)

The children were guided in their first-ever filmmaking endeavor by the organization’s Media Arts Instructor, Camilo Gonzales, as well as a high school art and media teacher from a nearby school district that was working with the organization through a grant (I can’t remember her name.) In addition, a couple of local filmmakers stopped by to offer some consultation during the process.

It was a fantastic hands-on experience for the children, one that fit beautifully with their Montessori experience and the Montessori approach to learning. In fact, when I was able to finally visit with the instructors at the end of the week (parents were not allowed to interrupt or corrupt the artistic process!), the instructors were effusive in their compliments of the Post Oak boys’ work. They were thrilled with the artistic outcome, but they seemed most impressed, almost shocked, at the group’s strong vision for the film, and how well the group worked together to realize that vision. They noted that they were worried that our boys’ group contained a much younger girl that the boys had never met, and that this young girl might feel left out of the process; however, again, they were amazed at how quickly the boys integrated her into the process and allowed her talents to shine among this group of friends.

To underscore their pleasure, the teacher pulled me aside again and reiterated that this was an amazing group of children and that this process and their product far exceeded their expectations. To drive home the point, she grabbed my arm and said, “Really, please listen. You need to understand that there is something special here and that you need to be very, very proud of your child and these children.”

I am answering your question in the long form, because this experience is not atypical of what I see every summer when Bob and I, and other Post Oak families, send our children out into the world of special interest camps and activities in the summer. I don’t write you a note every summer as I easily could, but given your question, I can’t ignore the fact that Post Oak helped guide these children in the process of making this film as much as the talented filmmakers and educators at Aurora. I do believe our children are different and that there is something, actually everything, going on in the school year at Post Oak that makes these children stand out when they go out into the world. So, yes, the Orrs, the Lus and the Reddings are proud parents when we see our children’s work and hear the compliments, but we think The Post Oak School should be proud as well. ☝️
MORE Vegetables & Fruit EVERYDAY

by Aimee Taylor, Healthy Lifestyle Consultant, ACSM Certified Personal Trainer, and Post Oak parent

It takes approximately one month to form/eliminate a habit. I propose that you focus on just one healthy habit each month of the 2012–2013 school year and you will make significant improvement in your family’s health in one short year. Some months will be harder than others, depending on your current habits. But instead of feeling like you have to do everything at once or nothing at all, just take it one step at a time. At the beginning of each month, I will give you information and tips to help you get focused and motivated. Are you ready to take the first step to a healthier life? Here WE go!

There are so many reasons why increasing the amount of vegetables and fruits in your diet is important:

- We receive the majority of our vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants from fruits and vegetables and there is just no supplement for the real deal. Not only do we need more, but we need to increase the variety as well. Every fruit and vegetable offers a different mix of nutrients and the only way to guarantee that we get what we need is to eat a wide variety.
- Vegetables and fruit are some of the very best at providing both the soluble and insoluble fiber that our bodies so desperately need. Fiber is important for keeping your digestive system in good working order and also critical to a healthy heart.
- Finally, vegetables and fruit are the jewelry of our plate. We all eat with our eyes and vegetables and fruit bring amazing color and texture—they make it interesting to your eyes and your taste buds. Meats and starches taste great, but they certainly do not make a very colorful plate. Add some sweet potatoes, broccoli, red peppers, etc. and you have not only more vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, but also more flavor, texture, and COLOR!

HOW TO ADD MORE VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

- Put MORE on the plate. For better or worse, most of us eat what is on our plates. Let’s use this habit to our advantage and make sure that what is on our plate is more of what we need. Instead of putting one serving of your broccoli on your plate, put two. You may need to put a little less of something else to make room, but that is the point, right? I have had many clients who did this with their entire family and found amazing results.
- Serve multiple veggies at a meal. Instead of the norm “one protein, one starch, and one veggie” at each meal, add an additional veggie and watch the magic. Instead of just offering raw carrots and dip, offer tomatoes, cucumbers, and carrots and you will be amazed at how much more you and your kids eat. Instead of just broccoli with your chicken and rice, offer a side salad too. Just like what happens at the Thanksgiving buffet, when there are more food items, you tend to eat more. Let’s make the MORE another vegetable and just see what happens.
- Available and within sight and reach. It is not usually that difficult to get adults or children to eat fruit, if we just remember to do it. With good intention, you buy some at the store, but once home it’s shoved in the crisper not to be seen again until you are searching for that smell. You do have to make the effort to purchase fruit, but more important is to make sure that everyone knows where it is and can see it if possible. I keep a big bowl of fruit on the counter and when something starts to get too ripe it goes...
to a designated crisper drawer. The kids know where that drawer is and that they can get their own snack there.

- **Make it snack.** There is nothing better for a snack than some fruit or fresh veggies with a small handful of nuts or a piece of string cheese. However, we have become accustomed to grabbing a salty or sweet quick snack like chips, goldfish, cookies, candy bars, ice cream, etc. Fruits and vegetables may require a little more forethought; however they can be just as quick and convenient as the bag from the vending machine.

- **Who says you cannot have dessert every day?** If you train yourself to prefer the sweet taste of fruit over desserts with added sugar, you can treat yourself more often. Plain fresh fruit makes a delicious treat, but heating to caramelize sugars or adding a little dark chocolate or chopped nuts are quick and easy ways to elevate that piece of fruit to “dessert”.

- **Wake up to fruits and veggies.** By just adding a piece of fruit to your breakfast every morning you can make a big difference. If you can’t imagine eating an orange or a banana, then maybe slice some strawberries or a banana into your cereal or add some dried fruit to your oatmeal. Trying to figure out how you add veggies to breakfast? How about adding some sautéed bell peppers to your scrambled eggs and wrapping it all up in a whole grain tortilla? Use plenty of fresh tomato salsa and you could get two servings of veggies already.

- **Stealth Vegetables.** I am not a fan of hiding vegetables to get people to eat them, however I do love to add extra any time that I can. You can add grated, shredded, or chopped vegetables such as zucchini, spinach, and carrots to lasagna, meat loaf, mashed potatoes, pasta sauces, and rice dishes. One of my favorites is to add a frozen bag of peas to a rice dish after the rice is finished cooking. Remove the pan from the heat; pour the frozen peas on top, replace the lid, and let the rice sit for about five minutes.

- **Meatless Monday.** One of the very best ways to add more vegetables to your diet is to make at least one meal a week meatless. Of course, that means that you actually have to eat vegetables and not just replace the meat with cheese.

If you are onboard and committed to adopting one healthy habit a month in 2012, please email me at aimee@greenpeasandblueberries.com so that I can send you recipes, answer your questions, and offer you support throughout the year.

Together we can achieve better health in the 2012–2013 school year! ☺

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### Alumni on Facebook

We are pleased to announce the launch of the new Post Oak School Alumni Facebook page! If you’re connected to former students and families then tell them to head over for a look and like to stay up to date on the latest alumni news and events!

[www.facebook.com/PostOakSchoolAlumni](http://www.facebook.com/PostOakSchoolAlumni)

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**Parent Volunteers Wanted for Post Oak’s 50th Anniversary Committee**

Sign up through the link on homepage or contact Kathryn Murphy at kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org. (2013–14 is our celebration year)
High School Admission
OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, October 9, 7 p.m.
1102 Autrey St., Houston 77006

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

GRAND OPENING
TUES., OCT. 16, 4–6 P.M.
1102 AUTREY ST., HOUSTON 77006

Join us for food truck fare (mmm, grilled cheese!) and fun festivities

The entire Post Oak community is invited to the official Grand Opening of the High School in just over a week! This marks a significant occasion in the life of our school and we want you to come to the celebration. It’s time for some food truck fare, fun, and festivities!

The Admission Open House is open to the public and all parents and students are invited to attend this informative evening. Bring a friend or neighbor.
AlertNow Notification System

by Mirna Andrade-Salgado, Technology Director

The AlertNow notification service allows the school to send a message to all of our students’ parents on all of their contact numbers and emails within minutes. We anticipate using AlertNow to notify you of school delays or cancellations due to inclement weather. In the event of an emergency at school, you can have peace of mind knowing that you will be informed immediately by phone.

What you need to know about receiving calls sent through AlertNow:

- Caller ID will display the school’s main number when a general announcement is delivered.
- Caller ID will display 411 if the message is a dire emergency.
- AlertNow can leave a message on an answering machine or voicemail.
- If the AlertNow message stops playing, press 1 and the message will replay from the beginning.

The successful delivery of information is dependent upon accurate contact information for each student, so please make certain that we have your most current phone numbers. If this information changes during the year, please let us know immediately by emailing Vivian Blum at vivianblum@postoakschool.org.

We will be launching a test call on Monday, October 8. You will receive a phone call and an email message from Head of School John Long. This is only a test of the system and will help us verify our contact information for all Post Oak parents. All phone numbers will be called simultaneously.

We sincerely appreciate your cooperation, and if you have any questions, please contact me at technology@postoakschool.org or 281-822-8063.

Montessori Journey

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

Only a few spaces remain! Register online now via a link on the homepage. This two-day (adults only) workshop is a powerful, hands-on approach to understanding how and what your child is learning. Current Post Oak parents are encouraged to attend, whether for the first time or for a chance to take the journey again. Cost: $30 per person.

Will this influence your relationship with your child? How?

“Absolutely. I will…apply the concepts of letting her lead more often.”

What value do you feel you have derived from this experience?

“The satisfying joy of discovery.”
1. Beading work in Infant Community helps the development of fine motor skills needed for writing.

2. Primary students improve spatial awareness while running, jumping, and skipping in PF.

3. A Lower Elementary class learns about vertebrates and invertebrates.

4. Studying fractions in Lower Elementary.

5. High School students watch the first presidential debate at the school.
CALENDAR

OCTOBER 7–13

Mon
10/8
Columbus Day (school closed)
AlertNow testing

Tue
10/9
High School Admission
Open House
7:00–8:30 p.m.

Wed
10/10
Mystery Box Wrapping Day
9:00 a.m.–noon
Boxes on display in Front
Lobby until Field Day
Bearkats soccer @ Feld Park
vs. St. Stephens
4:15–5:15 p.m.

Thu
10/11
No Weekly Post this week

Fri
10/12
Conference day: reserved for
students new to class
Classes not in session: only students
w/ expanded year contracts attend

OCTOBER 14–20

Tue
10/16
High School Grand Opening
4:00–6:00 p.m.

Wed
10/17
PSAT/NMSQT for HS
students
Coffee w/ the EL Director
9:00 a.m.
Bearkats soccer at Feld Park
4:15 p.m. vs. St. Stephen’s

Thu
10/18
Bearkats Dolphin Dash at
TC Jester Park
4:00–6:00 p.m.

Fri
10/19
Conference day
Classes not in session: only students
w/ expanded year contracts attend

Sat
10/20
Field Day!
10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Buy your mystery box raffle tickets
from 10/10 to 10/20.

NOTICE BOARD

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.

Bearkats

SOCCER

WED., 10/10
4:15 p.m., Feld Park

WED., 10/17
4:15 p.m., Feld Park

CROSS COUNTRY

THURS., 10/18
AOS Dolphin Dash
TC Jester Park
4–6 p.m.

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)
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