I have strong opinions. I always speak up in literature seminar. I don’t let my voice go unheard.” One of our current eighth grade students made that clear and powerful statement to me. Admission Director Vivian Blum and I interview eighth grade students to prepare them for high school admission interviews. We hope that each of these talented young people enrolls in the Post Oak High School. We know that they are applying to other schools as well. They will have several choices when it comes to high school enrollment.

“I don’t let my voice go unheard.” What does that statement reveal about this student and her class? She has the courage to speak out; to risk expressing her opinion. What’s the risk in that? Think back to your own middle school environment: the social climate of the classroom and among your peers. Was it a climate that encouraged authenticity from every individual?

continued on page 2
Or which suppressed it? Was it an environment that promoted diversity of thought? Or conformity? Was it an environment that supported creative risk-taking, the possibility of being wrong, the awkwardness of not knowing quite how to express an idea coalescing around an experience? Or did “friends”—or teachers—wait to pounce on your every mistake, hesitation, faux pas, or perceived foolishness? And with friends like that, who needs enemies?

Every classroom community at Post Oak, culminating in the High School, actively works to create a social environment that is safe and encouraging; one that supports creative risk taking, personal growth, and authenticity. Students encourage excellence in each other and their academic accomplishments are impressive. Even more notable is the character development revealed by their comments. I’ve put together a composite of the first interviews from this fall. Here are quotations from those conversations and a few comments of my own:

- “I take everything on as a challenge. I like to challenge myself.” In most schools, teachers worry and wonder about how to motivate students—especially in middle schools. As a Post Oak eighth grader said several years ago, “We motivate each other to be self-motivated.”

- “I’m noticing this year that I have a strong sense of leadership. And I’m very competitive.” As an eighth grader did you recognize leadership in yourself? And were you willing to take on that role in a school setting?

- “I’m very self-confident with everyone I meet. I’m talkative and outgoing.” This same student was describing how she handled meeting a new group of peers and adults as she joined a singing group this year. She introduced herself; put herself in the mix. “I didn’t want to be just standing in the corner.” What are the social skills needed to succeed in the adult world?

- “I’m very daring. I’ll take on more work than others. And I always try something new whether it is new food or a new kind of math problem.” Daring. Willing to work hard. Willing to try something new. What are the personal characteristics of an entrepreneur?

- “Algebra is harder for me—I ask for more work so that I can understand it better.” We all encounter subjects or situations that are harder for us. Do we avoid it? Simply say, “I’m not good at math?” Or are we comfortable on the steep part of the learning curve and recognize that hard work leads to success?

- “I like challenges. That’s part of the reason I like math so much. It’s complicated.” We talk about students taking responsibility for their own learning. That sounds so serious. Can you hear the sheer joy in this student’s voice when he says, “I like challenges!”?

- “You really understand something when you can teach it.” This week a Post Oak parent sent me a YouTube speech by a high school valedictorian who said that schools do not promote learning; they promote test taking skills and focus on grades. For many schools that must be true.

- “I’m very curious. I ask so many questions all the time.” International creativity guru Sir Ken Robinson documents the precipitous decline in the number of questions children ask every day. For the average five-year-old it is hundreds. For the average fourteen-year-old it approaches zero. How does Ken Robinson explain that? Years of schooling. Really?

- “I love the Universe; space and the planets. It really blows my mind.” For many middle school and high school students, this is their first question: “Is this going to be on the test?”

- “I’m studying French on Saturdays. I want to be fluent in Spanish, French, Mandarin and Arabic.” As Robert Louis Stephenson wrote, “The world is so full of a number of things, we should all be as happy as kings.”

- “I’ve read every book in my house three or four times... I’m currently reading A Class Apart about Stuyvesant High School in NYC.” I know that’s not on the middle school curriculum, but then, Post Oak students are expansive in their interests. In fact, I’m reading the same book right now. ➡

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First printed October 20, 2011.
The Post Oak Fund Continues

JUST A REMINDER
The Annual Fund is an important part of the school’s finances. It supports many things including:

- financial aid,
- teacher professional development,
- improvements to the facility such as redoing the Primary gardens and all the new cabinet work in Middle School.

Each class level has received direct benefits from the Annual Fund, and so we ask that everyone at every level participate in this annual campaign.

The public phase of the campaign will come to a close on Friday, November 16. Please consider showing your support for your school.

TO CONTRIBUTE
1. Go to the online form accessible on the homepage of our website (www.postoakschool.org)

2. Send your pledge in an email to the development office (christinacantu@postoakschool.org)

3. Fill out the form and drop it off at the front office (forms available online or at the front desk).

4. Set up a monthly charge with the development office.

Questions? Contact your class captain or Post Oak Fund Chair, Paula Mey.

Thanks to everyone who has generously contributed to date!
All gifts are truly appreciated.

Join the Next Project with Post Oak’s Kids Care Club!

The Post Oak School Kids Care Club, a service organization for kids of all ages and abilities, has an upcoming project at Volunteer Houston on November 17 at 10:00 a.m. We will be making holiday cards for people in hospitals, nursing homes, etc. At noon following the card-making, there will be picnicking and playing in the adjacent park for those who would like to bring a picnic lunch. Compassionate curriculum information will be posted to Post Oak’s KCC’s Facebook group.

Please ask to join the group: www.facebook.com/groups/278032742310211/ or contact Audra French at [email protected] for more info.
Book Fair 2012!

Book Fair was a tremendous success! Event chairs Mary Stephens and Hillery Hugg (photo on right) planned an evening full of fun activities for kids of all ages. A master puppeteer, readings, and sing-alongs delighted the younger children, while the older students and parents jammed to tunes played by the Middle School band, Summer Street. In addition to Lego building and robotics, the crafts were a hit! Students decorated their own bookmarks, created books and stories of all kinds, and made wish scroll necklaces while parents shopped for books for the classrooms and library. Thank you to the Book Fair chairs for their work in planning such a special day, and also to Elise McClain who did a fabulous job organizing the volunteer effort. Thanks to all of the volunteers and, of course, to everyone who purchased books in support of the Post Oak library!
Montessori Journey

Each year, current parents, prospective parents, and employees of The Post Oak School have the opportunity to explore the world that students experience each day. Thank you to all our participants for taking the time to enrich your understanding of the Montessori method, and thanks to the facilitators for giving your time and talent in support of the journey.
Tracking Weather at the High School

Post Oak High School has a weather station! Installed two weeks ago, we now have our website up and running. The weather station is associated with a Weatherlink website and connects anyone who owns one of their stations. You can access the microclimates of almost any city in the country by accessing its map and enlarging the area you are interested in. Comparing smaller areas of the city over time can show that each neighborhood has its own microclimate—either cooler or warmer or which gets more or less rain than the “average” stated by a weather specialist on the local station, which generally takes its information from one station.

You can access the weather of the microclimate at Autrey and Montrose at www.weatherlink.com/user/postoakhs. Students at the High School will be using the information to learn how to track weather conditions and analyze weather data. Part of the project involves the student use of digital probes and sensors to measure the fairly constant wind effect created by traffic on U.S. Highway 59 between Shepherd and Montrose. After collecting this data, they will analyze it to see if there is enough wind energy in the Highway 59 corridor to drive a small wind turbine. Students will also measure the wind speed and direction on the roof of the school to see if there is enough wind energy to support an urban, low-wind turbine.

This is part of a multi-year-long project of testing wind as an alternative energy source. We are having the students test different alternative energies in order for them to gain real-world experience about one of the major issues affecting the planet at the moment.

by Janet Ott, PhD, High School faculty

Ambassadors’ Gathering

The Ambassadors’ group is focused on spreading the word about Post Oak High School. Whether or not your child is getting close to high school age, we invite you to learn more about this unique program, so you are able to answer questions from friends about Post Oak High School. It also happens to be a very fun group!

The next social is WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28. We’ll talk about a day in the life of a Post Oak High School student, along with more detailed information on the IB program. For more information, please email christinacantu@postoakschool.org.
FRIDAY NIGHT FEVER

GALA UNDERWRITING for Cool Cats

DISCO INFERNO $10,000
HOT STUFF $5,000
CELEBRATION $3,000
FUNKY TOWN $1,000
GOOD TIMES $500

For details on underwriting benefits, got to our website: www.postoakschool.org/postoak/gala_2013.asp

Whether you decide to UNDERWRITE INDIVIDUALLY or to SPLIT A TABLE, it all goes to support the school and this major fundraising event.

If you’d like to split a table and don’t yet have someone to split it with, call the Development Office (281-822-8024). We can help match you with another “split table couple.”

Underwriting opportunities begin at $500 per couple. $1000+ underwriting levels are invited to an Underwriting COCKTAIL RECEPTION in January.

DEADLINE to be listed as an underwriter in the invitation is Nov. 9. So be a “COOL CAT” and become an underwriter today!

Download materials on the gala page via a link on our homepage!
Post Oak alums Stephanie Styles ('06) and Becky Bereswill ('05) are currently roommates at University of Michigan. Stephanie sent us a photo of them decked out in game gear on the field of the Big House! She writes, “We love Post Oak and think of our time there together often!”

**Alumni Night**

**Best Night of the Year!**

Join us for Post Oak Alumni Night on Thursday, January 10, 2013 from 6:30–8:30 p.m.

We are excited to welcome back the high school students, college students, and young professionals who attended The Post Oak School as they reflect on their experiences in Montessori. How did their education at Post Oak help prepare them for their subsequent education and for life?

Parents of our current students as well as prospective parents are encouraged to attend this event.
Middle School Math Comics

"Omm... I'm so sad... "Ya, these brackets are so annoying."

"La, la, la. It's a wonderful day. Oh, no maybe I should go and help those sad folks!"

"What to do? What to do? I know I'll distribute my happiness."

"La, la, la. It's a wonderful day! Hey!"

"But what just happened?"

"I know, I distributed my happiness and it went to both of you. That's called the distributive property!"

---

I'm so full! How do I get simplified?

Let's at it, go! All letters to simplify:

\[ a(b + c) \]

And the King lived happily ever after.

by [Name]
Post Oak Mock Election

by [Name] Middle School student

On November 6, 2012, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School, and High School students voted in the Middle School mock election. Each classroom was treated as a state with one electoral vote. The results were something of interest to most of us, considering that, in the real election, both of the candidates, Mitt Romney and Barack Obama, were virtually tied in most current polls at the time.

THE RESULTS

Three classes voted for Romney, and six classes voted for Obama, making Obama the winner. In our election, some Romney supporters still had hope that he might win the popular vote. However, Obama won the popular vote with 53 percent to Romney’s 47 percent. Obama also won both the popular and the electoral vote in the United States. All in all, Obama ended up being the winner for both our school election and our country’s.

Left: Earlier in the week Middle School students did a short presentation for each Elementary class about the election process. Each student was then issued a voter registration card. (See page 14 for more photos.) On election day, the students came to the Middle School to cast their ballots.

TEDxYouth@ISAS

The Post Oak School will be participating in the third annual TEDxYouth@ISAS event in Houston. We have three Middle School presenters and three Middle School reporters.

The event will be at Emery/Weiner School, 9825 Stella Link Road, 77025 on Sunday, November 18 from 1:00–5:00 p.m.

View it live-streamed: www.ted.com/tedx/events/6014.

EVENT PRESENTERS & TOPICS

Endangered Animals and the Environment

How the media’s image of a ‘perfect girl’ affects and influences girls today

The harnessing of the Electric Solar Wind Sail

EVENT REPORTERS (live tweeting & blogging)
Ironman

Post Oak Parent, Susan Hardwick-Smith, will soon be bound for Arizona to compete in the Ironman triathlon on November 18. Susan reports that she uses this event to promote the West Africa Fistula Foundation (WAFF), which is a charity surgical organization operating out of Sierra Leone in West Africa, caring for some of the poorest women in the world.

She writes, “If anyone is interested in following my progress at the Ironman event, Complete Women’s Care Center will be posting updates on our Facebook page throughout the day on November 18, so if you have not done so already please LIKE us on Facebook and follow our news! Go to www.completewomenscarecenter.com and click on the Facebook link.”

The Post Oak community wishes Susan the best of luck! ❥
Happy Thanksgiving
School closed November 21–23

Volunteers Needed:
Grandparents’ Days Chaperones

Nov. 19 or 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Contact Kathryn Murphy
(kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org)

Still Need Invitations?
Do you still need an invitation emailed to a relative or friend for this year’s Grandparents’ Days? Contact Kathryn Murphy (kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org) with their details.

Grandparents’ & Friends’ “Day-of Tips”
Monday, November 19 & Tuesday, November 20, 9–11 a.m.

Dear Post Oak parents,

If you have relatives or friends attending the coming event on either Monday or Tuesday, here are a few of things to note:

- We are limited with space and ask that parents not attend. We promise to take good care of your guests!
- The event starts at 9:00 a.m. and concludes around 11:00 a.m. Breakfast will be provided.
- There will be parking on the Bissonnet campus. All employees will be parking elsewhere, so it might look like there is no parking because of cars on the street. Use the complimentary valet parking in the Peace Circle.
- For guests coming to see Infant and Primary students, they will view the students from the observation window.

We do this to give grandparents and friends a true example of a Montessori classroom in action. Guests of older students are invited into the classroom to work with those students.

- If grandparents or friends plan on taking the student home, we must have permission from the parent, as is the normal policy.
- Even if an RSVP has not been sent in, we welcome all visitors on both days.

Thank you,
Christina Kopanidis-Cantu
Development Director
1. Building language skills in Infant Community by identifying objects necessary in the care of babies.

2. Matching farm animals to the sound represented on sandpaper letters.

3. *Día de los Muertos* presentation by an Upper Elementary student.

4. & 5. Middle School visits in Elementary for election presentations and to register students for a mock election.

6. High School students divide into teams for their election party games.
Dads’ Club
POKER NIGHT

THURS., NOV. 29
BBVA Compass Bank
Penthouse, 2001 Kirby

DOORS OPEN 7:30
Cards dealt 8:00

Space is limited.
To join in, contact
Michael Foertsch

Picture retakes
Picture retakes will be on Wednesday, November 28, for those children who were absent on picture day. If you would like to have your child’s picture retaken, please note the following options:

- You must turn in the original picture by Tuesday, Nov. 27, and accept the retake, even if it does not turn out as well.
- You may keep the first picture and pay for a second package at the cost of $20, which must be paid in advance.

If you choose to have your child’s picture retaken, please contact Debbie Henderson at debbiehenderson@postoakschool.org to ensure that your child is added to the list distributed to the teachers on Nov. 27, so we will know to get them from their class.

Coffee with the Elementary Director

Wed., Nov. 28 at 9 a.m.
in the common room
(was scheduled for Nov. 14)

Transition from Primary to Lower Elementary

New Infant Community Parent Gathering
Thursday, Nov. 29
9–10 a.m.

DATE CHANGE!!!
### CALENDAR

#### NOVEMBER 11–17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td><strong>Veterans Day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>Birth of Bahá’u’lláh begins at sundown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td><strong>Veterans Day (observed)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Standardized testing (CTP-4) for 3rd graders and Upper EL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon–Fri</td>
<td>Middle School to Blackwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>Diwali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>No Weekly Post this week</td>
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#### NOVEMBER 18–24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>TEDxYouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>1–5 p.m. Emery/Weiner School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon–Tue</td>
<td>Grandparents’ &amp; Friends’ Days at Post Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/19–20</td>
<td>9–11 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed–Fri</td>
<td>Thanksgiving break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21–23</td>
<td>(school closed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat</td>
<td>No Weekly Post this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/24</td>
<td>Eid al-Adha begins at sundown</td>
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Check out our calendar online or download a copy at www.postoakschool.org

### NOTICE BOARD

WE NEED YOU!

50th Anniversary Committee
Looking for Parent Volunteers

Contact Kathryn Murphy at kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org.
(2013–14 is our celebration year)

### Bearkats Basketball

**FRI., 11/30 & SAT., 12/1**
Tournament @ Lutheran Memorial

**TUES., 12/11**
vs. St. Stephens

**WED., 12/12**
vs. St. Stephens

**WED., 1/16**
vs. St. Stephens

**WED., 1/23**
vs. St. Stephens

Home games start at 4:15 p.m.

MORE TO COME!

### 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