When Post Oak alumni think about themselves and reflect on their experiences here, what words come up most frequently? Emeritus trustee Pat Mitchell is working on a project through the National Center for Human Performance to assess the development of “life tools” in Montessori students. As a part of this project, she combed through...
interviews with Post Oak School alums. What did they say about themselves?

Here is the list:

- Curiosity – 16
- Critical thinking – 8
- Teamwork/collaboration/community – 17
- Sense of purpose – 12
- Self-empowerment – 12
- Creativity – 10
- Self-confidence – 17
- Resiliency (likes challenges) – 13
- Respectful communication – 6

Adaptability – 10
Time management – 8

The other “words” that kept reoccurring in the interviews were:
- Acceptance/tolerance
- Follow your interests
- Independence
- Community service
- People trust you (in the context of responsibility)

Why is the National Center for Human Performance interested in this kind of project? Because they recognize that conventional measures of school success are poor predictors of success in life. So if test scores, grades, and class rank are poor predictors of success outside of school, what should we be looking at? The center is searching for clues in studies of leadership, creativity, and innovation. The personal characteristics that show up in these studies have been labeled “life tools.” And the center is looking for schools that aim to develop “life tools.” That’s where Montessori comes in; that’s where Post Oak comes in. That’s what we do.

We’ll keep you up to date as this project goes forward.

© John Long and The Post Oak School
is envisioning her first triathlon race day. She will have a protein shake, fruit and crackers for breakfast. She will put baby powder in her sneakers to hasten the transition from swimming to biking. She will relax and enjoy.

“I’m excited and a little bit nervous,” says the 11-year-old girl from Bellaire who is one of more than 1,700 athletes registered for the 2013 Houston Kids Triathlon this Sunday, April 14, at the University of Houston campus.

“I wanted to sign up and see what it was like because my mom did a lot of tris,” she says. Mom Sara Binau is a former fitness instructor who has done more than 50 triathlons over lifetime.

Binau says this Houston event is the perfect first triathlon for her daughter, “It’s exactly what we were looking for – a friendly, safe, supported and non-profit triathlon,” she says. “What I love about tris is it doesn’t have to be competitive. It’s about your own cross-training in three different sports, fitness and nutrition.”

YMCA & PROPER TRAINING

Binau volunteered to help run the Kids Triathlon Training Clinic at the Weekley Family YMCA on Stella Link Boulevard. For the seven weeks leading up to the Houston Kids Triathlon, YMCA Centers around Houston offered free clinics so participants condition properly and families know what to expect on race day.

“I got involved to share my love of tri training and tris with my daughter and kids,” says Binau. “There’s so much take away from this. I hope experiences this organized chaos with an open mind and learns to quiet her mind in the storm, stay focused and trust her training.”

Sixteen YMCA Centers from Katy to Fort Bend to Cypress Creek offered the clinics. About 570 kids and their families committed to the weekly program. “Practice and training allow kids to develop physically, socially and emotionally while learning new skills. It clarifies expectations and walks them through what to specifically expect during the triathlon,” says Dione Booker, Community Associate Director at the South Montgomery County YMCA. “When families participate in this sport there is the opportunity to come together around a common goal. It gives them memories to share and an experience that unifies them toward an accomplishment.”

KIDS TRIATHLONS & HEALTHY FAMILY LIFESTYLE

According to USA Triathlon, more than 63,000 kids participated in triathlons in 2012. The popularity boom among

Post Oak students give the Houston Kids Triathlon a try. Photos submitted by Sara Binau and Hannah Golub.
families is leading to a growing number of triathlons for youth. Kids Triathlon, the non-profit organization presenting the Houston Kids Triathlon, is hosting events in nine other cities this year from Washington, D.C. to Denver, Colorado.

“Our mission is to help build a generation of healthy, active and responsible kids,” says Kids Triathlon founder Tom Gildersleeve. “We are one of very few endurance events that is designed exclusively for kids. We want to motivate them to take responsibility for their own health and wellness, and we have found that once the kids are motivated, the parents will follow.”

Gildersleeve’s group is working with schools and communities to emphasize the fitness and discipline benefits of triathlons. “We love the sport of triathlon for many reasons. It provides a different sense of accomplishment than any single sport does on its own. You can see it in the faces of the kids as they cross the finish line,” he says. “We are firm believers in the connection between daily exercise and success in school. If we can encourage kids to be active every day, their school performance will improve.”

**COURSE LENGTHS, TRANSITIONS & TIMING**

The Houston Kids Triathlon is divided into two groups: the Juniors and Seniors. The younger kids, ages 6 to 10, are in the Junior Session which requires a 100-yard swim, 3-mile bike ride and a half-mile run. The distances double for the older children, ages 11 to 15, in the Senior Session. They must do a 200-yard swim, 6-mile bike ride and one mile run. Computerized timing chips are used to track each participant through four components: swimming, biking, running and transitions.

More than 1,000 children participated in the inaugural Houston Kids Triathlon in 2012. About 700 of those kid triathletes are returning for this year’s event including 11-year-old Madison Dodson of Bellaire. “I feel less scared because I know how it’s gonna go. I know I’m going to finish. I feel ready,” she says.

She has been training with her friends and her triathlete mom Christine Dodson. They bike and run along Braes Bayou, swim at the YMCA and practice transitions between the courses at home. “We practice putting on helmets and mounting bikes. Transitions can throw your entire race,” Dodson says. “It can take 30 seconds if they know what to do to get their bikes out. Kids who don’t have that training can take five to ten minutes to transition.”

At the Houston Kids Triathlon 2013, Dodson is a volunteer at the bike course and will again watch her daughter cross the finish line. Afterwards the Dodsons will join other triathlon families for a celebration brunch. Madison already knows what she will be ordering for a post-race meal: eggs benedict and a chocolate malt shake.

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**Parenting without Fear**

“A recent study found that in 1900, all emotions were expressed in English books at about the same frequency – glee, horror, passion, etc. Though there was some variation, emotional words moved more or less down and in lockstep until about 1975. At that point something startling happens...”

Read more of this post by Marc Seldin of the Center for Guided Montessori Studies (CGMS) at www.guidedstudies.com/blog/?p=87
Thanks to the 2012–2013 Yearbook Committee!

Be on the lookout in late May for the 2012–2013 Yearbook! This year’s committee did an incredible job of putting together this remembrance from a busy year at Post Oak. Thanks go to committee members: Erin Busby, Kristen Katz, Stacey Martin, and Yearbook Chair Mary Livingston.

This project is a true labor of love—it is a yearlong effort with many deadlines along the way. In addition to creating the theme and layout, wrestling with the software, and plotting the inclusion of all activities, the committee spent a great deal of time at many of the events taking pictures of student life at Post Oak. We are certain that you will love this year’s edition. If you see them on campus, please offer a word of thanks to each committee member and to Mary for her superb leadership.

Order your Cinco DVDs from the link in the left-hand menu at postoakschool.org!

2nd DATE CHANGE

CINCO de MAYO

All Post Oak families are invited!
Performances will be held by afternoon Primary and Middle School students.

6:30 p.m. in the Post Oak gym
¡Celebremos Cinco de Mayo 2013!

WED., MAY 1
Danielle Dalsey’s class
Julie Parraguirre’s class
Emily Hansen’s class
Middle School

&

THURS., MAY 2
Tamara Townsend’s class
Miriam Winton’s class
Tamara Basham’s class
Middle school
A SPRING ENVIRONMENTAL EVENT AT THE POST OAK SCHOOL

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY HOUR AT POST OAK

MONDAY, APRIL 29

5:00 PM REFRESHMENTS • 5:30 PM PROGRAM BEGINS

COME HEAR GUEST SPEAKERS

ALLISON SMITH
CLEAN LINE ENERGY

GARRETT GORDY
TEXAS SOLAR OUTFITTERS

PRESENTATIONS BY
POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

& RAKESH AGRAWAL
TALKS ABOUT TESLA

PLUS ELECTRIC CARS!

SIT IN A TESLA!

EMCEE: DR. JANET OTT

THE POST OAK SCHOOL—GYMNASIUM
4600 BISSONNET ST., BELLAIRE 77401
713-661-6688 | www.postoakschool.org
Thank you for inviting me to speak today. It was almost two years ago when I was introduced to Bearkats athletics. I was a cub reporter at The Weekly Post, ambitious as the new often are, dreaming of Pulitzer Prizes and Bob Woodward-like access to John Long’s office. One day, as I was working on a lengthy investigative piece about the school’s lost and found, my editor called and assigned me to cover a Bearkats basketball game. I of course was in no position to refuse, so I grabbed my credentials and found my way to press row in the gym.

What I saw there changed the arc of my journalism career. The team was playing its archrival St. Stephen’s, and the place was electric. While the quality of play was extremely high for both teams, it was the Bearkats that stood out with their crisp passing, sharp shooting, and heady team play. As a reporter, I tried to maintain my neutrality. My efforts were in vain. By the end of the game, I had (metaphorically) painted my face in Bearkats green, and was (metaphorically) typing out my game report wearing a Bearkats #1 foam finger.

Thus started my life as a reporter and a fan of the Bearkats. While on the job, I have tried to maintain the kind of grizzled poise that a sportswriter should have. But it is hard not to jump up and cheer when, say, [redacted] cans a trademark jump shot, or [redacted] harasses the opposing point guard into a turnover and goes coast to coast, or [redacted] shows uncanny court vision and makes a trimly accurate three-quarter court pass.

Yet I’m not a fan just of individual players. It is the team that I root for, from the starting five to the third stringers. Every player contributes something to every game. This is not a squad with a Big Three or even a Big Four: it has a Big Eighteen. There is collective, not individual, greatness at play here.

Now, next year could pose some challenges for the Bearkats, because the team is losing some key players to graduation. But I have spent a lot of time with some people who analyze the team’s play using advanced basketball metrics, and I can say with confidence that the up-and-comers will pick up the slack. It also helps to have such a great teacher and motivator in Coach Tucker. Whenever he addressed the press pool, he showed a tremendous understanding of how to support the team and get the most out of it. He is also a great Xs and Os coach and has a system in place that lends itself to sustained success.

I have not had the pleasure of taking in other Bearkats sports and intramurals. I am sure, though, that the soccer and volleyball teams display the same traits as the basketball team. Is there something in the Montessori method that produces great athletes? The Montessori belief in individual responsibility and initiative coupled with the commitment to the common good surely translates well to the court.

continued on page 8
Let’s Go, Bearkats!

continued from page 7

the playing field, and the pitch. But it is impossible to attribute Post Oak athletic success to any one factor—and surely you parents play a crucial role as well in the development of these athletes who demonstrate such skill and sportsmanship. What I do know is that it has been an honor to cut my teeth in the hardscrabble world of sports writing with the Bearkats.

Let me end by channeling Maria Montessori: if she were here today, I know that she would join us all in saying to all the Bearkats teams, “Andiamo, Bearkats,” “Let’s go, Bearkats!”

Planning Next Year’s Holidays?

Aug. 19–23 First week for EL, MS, and HS

Aug. 26–30 First week for IC and PRI

Sept. 2 Labor Day (school closed)

Oct. 14 Columbus Day (school closed)

Nov. 27–29 Thanksgiving Break (school closed)

Dec. 23–Jan. 6 Winter Break (school closed)

Jan. 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. (school closed)

Feb. 17 Presidents Day (school closed)

Mar. 17–21 Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend

April 18 Good Friday (school closed)

May 26 Memorial Day (school closed)

May 30 Last day of school

CALENDAR NOTES

Don’t forget to mark your calendars with these changes:

New MS Parent gathering Tues., April 30

Cinco de Mayo performances Wed., May 1 & Thurs., May 2

POPA Volunteer Appreciation Event Wed., May 15

IMPORTANT DATES for 2013–2014 online at www.postoakschool.org/postoak/School_Calendar.asp
LETTERS TO POST OAK COUNSELOR
PHYLIS TOMLINSON

Parents, send in your parenting questions now for this column in The Weekly Post. Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson offers guidance and advice on issues such as discipline, consequences, money and children, peer relationships, and more. Please include the gender and age of your child for an appropriate response—letters will be included anonymously in conjunction with Phylis’ response.

Send questions to phylistomlinson@postoakschool.org or leave a note anonymously in her mailbox at the front office.

F.I.S.H. Meetings

Join in the Families Integrating School and Home (F.I.S.H.) meeting

Fri., May 10—Backyard Fun
9:00 a.m. in the Common Room

Take a Walk with the Kids Care Club

Post Oak School’s Kids Care Club is taking part in Walk with Me, a family-friendly fun walk to benefit The Caroline School, a private special needs school with Easter Seals. Help make a difference in the lives of children and adults with disabilities in our community.

Saturday, April 20
8 a.m. at the Houston Zoo

Come for the walk, stay for a free day at the zoo.

Register with the “Caped Crusaders” and dress like a superhero! http://tinyurl.com/cf89eev

THANKS TO BBVA FOR SPONSORING MOVIE NIGHT AT POST OAK
A GALA AUCTION ITEM!

COME SEE DISNEY/Pixar’s BRAVE TONIGHT, APRIL 19

Movie starts at 8:00 p.m.
Doors open at 7:00 p.m.
Come out early for fun prizes from BBVA—shoot and score neat items!

$15 per person

Rain or shine! It’s fun for the whole family!

Email Kathryn Murphy to purchase tickets: kathrynmurphy@postoakschool.org or call 713-661-6688 ext. 130.
SCENES
from
The Post Oak School

1 & 2. Work in Infant Community, such as learning to use scissors and peeling fruit, helps build manual dexterity needed for writing and painting.

3. Future Bearkats take a run during Primary PF.

4. Skip counting in threes.

5. A group of Primary students practices for Cinco de Mayo. Please note the new dates are Wed., May 1 and Thurs., May 2.

6 & 7. Sood class campout at Brazos Bend State Park on April 6 and 7. Students play a game dependent on teamwork.

8. Upper EL students tackle mathematics using the peg board.

9. Students study leaf margins in botony.

10. Bearkats played their last volleyball game against St. Stephen’s.

**CALENDAR**

**APRIL 21–27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>4/22 Earth Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue-Sat</td>
<td>4/23-27 Upper EL Montessori Model United Nations in NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>4/25 New Parent reception  5:30–7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>4/26 Classes not in session: only students with expanded year contracts attend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APRIL 28–MAY 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>4/29 Spring Environmental Lecture: Energy Hour  (see page 6) 5 p.m. snacks, 5:30 program begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>4/30 New MS Parent Gathering 7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed &amp; Th</td>
<td>5/1 &amp; 5/2 Cinco de Mayo performances 6:30 p.m. in the Post Oak gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu–Fri</td>
<td>5/2–5/3 Third graders to Camp Allen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTICE BOARD**

**New Classified Ad Section**

As part of the Green Team initiative, a classified ad section is coming soon to *The Weekly Post*. Have something that needs a new home? Let other parents in the Post Oak community know! Please send a brief description of the item including price to elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org. (Your contact info will be redacted in the online version of the newsletter.)

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**Planning has begun for celebrations throughout the 2013–2014 school year, including our jubilee in the fall.**

**Interested in volunteering?**

Join the committee at our next meeting on Tuesday, April 23 at 9:00 a.m.

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**Congrats!**

Congratulations to Robin Lunsford, our director of finance and facilities, on her recent acceptance of a one-year term on the Houston CPA Society Board of Directors.

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**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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