Two twelve year old girls gave me my first lesson in Jedi mind control. By concentrating on a ball in a clear plastic tube, I was able to make it levitate; not as well as either girl, but then, it was only my first lesson. “Concentrate,” said the recorded voice of Yoda. “Concentrate,” said the girls.

It was fun. They had a great time showing me this training device (I don’t know whether to call it a tool or a toy), and I was fascinated to see them demonstrate its use and to give it a try myself.

It seemed right that these Montessori students would be fascinated by concentration.

continued on page 2
Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos was a Montessori student. A Business Week feature story said, “As a preschooler, Jeffrey P. Bezos displayed an unmatched single-mindedness. By his mother’s account, the young Bezos got so engrossed in the details of activities at his Montessori school that teachers had to pick him up in his chair to move him to new tasks.”

In Montessori: the Science Behind the Genius, Dr. Angeline Lillard identifies three factors in a Montessori classroom that facilitate concentration: engaging materials, a three-hour work cycle, and actively minimizing forces that interrupt concentration.

Late this afternoon I went looking for students deep in concentration. The day was winding down. Even I was getting a bit squirrely. Even so, my eye landed on two six year old boys in a lower elementary class. They were working together on a map of Africa, placing little flags to name the countries and capitals. Sitting on the floor near the center of the classroom, there were five other students clustered within six feet of them, working on other projects. The boys were going back and forth from an atlas to the collection of unplaced labels, and then to the map. As they stretched and reached from one resource to another, they could have been practicing yoga or playing a game of Twister. Yet despite the physical dance that was a part of the process, they were locked in on the work of locating and identifying the countries and capitals of Africa. I stood there watching for 15 full minutes. They were fully engaged in this work even before I stepped up to the window, and they were still at it when I left.

Is this a form of Jedi mind training? Well, yes, and no. The work certainly drew them into deep concentration. The geography materials are engaging, and the class structure and the schedule of the day enable the children to work without interruption. No bells send them off to another activity after 45 minutes.

I cannot overstate the importance of this. In his book, Flow: the psychology of optimal experience, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (“Just call me Mike.”) describes the state of deep concentration experienced by artists and scientists at work, a description that matches Dr. Montessori’s depiction of children in her classrooms. As parents and educators we have a sense that concentration contributes to learning. You may be surprised to learn, however, that the first chapter of Flow is entitled “Happiness Revisited.” In it Mike asks, “When are we happiest?” His research identifies flow – the state of deep concentration – as the doorway to happiness.

That brings us back to the Jedi mind control game. Yes, it encourages the player to quiet the mind, to focus and to concentrate—but to concentrate on what? With the Jedi game, concentration is the end result. With flow theory as in the Montessori classroom, concentration is the by-product of meaningful work.

The key is to find work that you engage in willingly, joyfully -- and not with a sense of drudgery or dutiful obligation. Do you remember school days when you watched the clock until the end of the day ticked around? You experienced boredom. How often in school did you lose all sense of time passing, and look up from your work to exclaim, “I can’t believe it’s 1:00 already!” When that happens through engaging work, you have achieved happiness through a state of flow, as a result of deep concentration.

Reprinted from the December 4, 2009 issue of the Post.
alumni night

Learn about the Post Oak experience from those who have lived it!

Thursday, January 9, 2014
6:30 p.m.

Join us as we welcome back high school students, college students, and young professionals as they reflect on their experiences at the Post Oak School. Parents of current students, as well as prospective parents, are invited to attend.

RSVP to Jessica Jackson, 713-661-6688, or jessicajackson@postoakschool.org
In the New Year we will present a series of informational sessions that will talk about all things related to the Big Work campaign, including the fund raising and the construction plans. These sessions will be beneficial for all parents and community members to attend.

Join us to learn how Big Work will impact your family and how you can lend your support to this growth and enhancement of The Post Oak School.

Shop & Support Post Oak

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

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

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

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

We truly appreciate all your support! Happy shopping!
F.I.S.H. Meeting: Reading, Research and the Joy of Reading

by Post Oak parent

On Friday, December 13, Post Oak librarian Jami Sweeney spoke to Post Oak parents about children, reading and research as part of our ongoing Families Integrating School and Home (F.I.S.H.) curriculum. Jami led parents on a tour of the library and of classrooms, infant through elementary, focusing on classroom materials and activities that promote reading. He discussed the progression of the child in the classroom from development of pincer grasp in infant community to constructing words with the moveable alphabet in primary, to the eventual discovery of the joy of reading a book and understanding its meaning in elementary.

Jami discussed how children learn by modeling, so the more parents read for themselves and to their children, the more children learn to love reading. We all got another inside tip as well - did you know that as a Post Oak parent, you have access to Proquest and WorldBook (electronic encyclopedias) through the Post Oak website?

Thank you to Jami Sweeney for such an enlightening and enjoyable presentation!

Resources

World Book Encyclopedia and ProQuest (both available by logging in to the Parent Community from the Post Oak website)

Book Lists and Reviews

www.kirkusreviews.com/
bookpickings.brainpickings.org/tagged/children%27s-books
www.brazosbookstore.com/staff-picks
www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/notalists/ncb
www.nea.org/grants/teachers-top-100-books-for-children.html
www.amightygirl.com/books
childrensbooksguide.com/reviews/
www.lexile.com/fab/

eBooks (free)

www.mackin.com/eservices/ebooks.aspx
www.thedigitalshift.com/
creativecommons.org/
www.gutenberg.org/
www.openculture.com/free_ebooks
onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/lists.html

Books for Purchase

www.overdrive.com/
www.kobos.com
store.scholastic.com/microsite/storia/home
www.goodreads.com
A special thank you to this year's Annual Fund chairs, [name] and [name], and to all class captains! Thanks to everyone who has contributed so far to this year's Post Oak Fund. If you have contributed and your name does not appear here, please accept our apologies and contact the development office (christinacantu@postoakschool.org).

Ashley and Herbert Addison
Andrea and Omar Afra
Shonali and Rakesh Agrawal
Irma Alarcon
Sadia and Zuqair Ali
Nancy and John Almon
Nazario Anastacio
D. Kent & Linda C. Anderson Foundation
Mirna Andrade-Salgado and José Salgado
Frank Apollo
Alma Armendariz
Terri and Chris Armstrong
Fasih and Yassir Ashraf
Tori Aumann
Elenir and Rony Avritscher
Teri and Thomas Bar
Diana and Juan Balderas
Bank of America
Jessica and Darrell Barger
Tamara and William Basham
Steve Beeman
Mario Beltran
Sarah Berggren
Ashley and David Besselman
Greg Binion and Bailey Dalton-Binion
Mary Birk
Vivian Blum
Greg Borski and Phillip Bowden
Jessica and Ben Braun
Jennifer and Christian Breckmann
Elena and Alexander Brokhin
Jennifer and Walter Browning
Beth and Kirk Bruce
Courtney and Bill Bucy
Erin and Brett Busby
Reyes and Miguel Calatayud
Kimberly and Michael Callahan
Carla Campbell
Maurien Caron
Elizabeth and Walter Cassidy
Sara and Juan Pablo Cata
Payal and Manny Chana
Farrah and Steven Charnquist
Jennifer and Clifton Chavis
Belisa and Maninder Cheema
Deepa Poduval and Rajesh Chelapurath
Gina Li and Leon Chen
Dinah Chetrit
Rachel Chetrit
Shirley and Yit Nee Chong
Anthony Cisneros
Laura and Martin Citardi
Heather and Ricardo Colmenter
Audra French and Arnold Colunga
Kemah Crockett
Vareen and Dave Cunningham
Jodie and Laith Daik
Danielle Dalsey
Kelly and Garth Davis
Kelly and James Davis
Robyn Davis
Robert Debes
Sandra DeLeon
Mary and Rony Dev
Maneesha and Manoj Devashish
Sangeeta Cheema and Karam Dhillon
Elizabeth DiCesare
Carmen and Kiki Dikmen
Andrea and Robert Dilger
Betul Oran and Serdar Dinc
Victoria and Gislar Donnenberg
Zarafsheen and Imran Dossani
Anne Singleton and Jack Douglas
Lisa and Stephen Douglas
Spring 2014 ASEP Registration is now available on My BackPack!

Act now to get your child(ren) enrolled in the class(es) of their choice — Monday, January 6 will be the last day to sign up.
A Post Oak alumna, came back to see the school, where she says “it all started.” “Post Oak really prepared me for everything,” states as she reflects on the time she spent at Post Oak. She particularly remembers the interesting projects she was able to engage in at such an early age. Her favorite was as a second year Lower Elementary student: a project on weather that landed her and her partner at the Channel 13 News Station. Laughing, recalls, “The teacher didn’t arrange it, we did. We were only seven, and we just picked up the classroom phone and called meteorologist Ed Brandon. It was completely student driven, we wanted to know about weather, and we thought he could help.”

After Post Oak, graduated from Lamar High School with her IB Diploma. was excited to learn about the addition of the Post Oak High School and our movement towards obtaining our IB certification. She explains how her education at Post Oak undoubtedly prepared her for the rigorous IB program and IB subsequently prepared her for college. Drawing from both her experience as a Montessori and IB student, thinks the two curriculums are a perfect match. “Both put a lot on you from an early age. More importantly, both teach you how to take on that responsibility.”

After high school was admitted into Brown University, a school she describes as sharing the Montessori concept of letting students take ownership of their education. earned a double major in International Relations and Education. She took part in multiple study abroad programs, allowing her to work as a volunteer in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. She is currently teaching a College Counseling Course to sophomores at YES Prep High School, and is working to develop programs centered on international education and literacy. will be serving as a panelist for our upcoming Alumni Night on January 9th.

Primary Parent Education Event:
The Importance of Sleep in Children
Thursday, January 16, 6:00 p.m.

Presented by Post Oak parent, MD
Director, Houston Methodist Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Program
Director, Houston Methodist San Jacinto Sleep Lab
Methodist Neurological Institute, Department of Neurology
Parenting the Love and Logic Way®

presented by

Phylis R. Tomlinson, LPC, LMFT, ATR-BC
Post Oak Counselor & Independent Facilitator of Parenting the Love and Logic Way® curriculum

A parenting program designed by Love and Logic®. This series of courses offers solutions for families of children from early childhood to beyond adolescence.

Previous participants are encouraged to return to share experiences and reinforce skills. Grandparents and other care givers are also welcome. All classes are open to the public.

LEARN SOLUTIONS FOR:
• How do I get them out of bed on time?
• How can I stop my children from bickering and fighting?
• How do I get my children to help with the chores without an argument?
• Is there a way to discipline my toddler in public without creating a scene?
• How can I get my teenage daughter to come home at the agreed-upon time?
• How do I get him to stop spitting food or whining at dinner?
• And many other day-to-day parenting challenges...

This parenting program is designed to give you practical skills that can be used immediately!

Facilitators of the Parenting the Love and Logic Way® curriculum are independent and are not employees of the Love and Logic Institute.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Phylis Tomlinson, Counselor
phylistomlinson@gmail.com
Tel. 713-661-6688 x176 or 713-668-6558.

Class size limited to 30 people for morning classes at Post Oak Location. Call or email in advance to reserve a spot!
• Registration opens to the public 1/10/2014.
• Parking available along Avenue B only.

Class size at St. Mark’s Church is not limited. Please register with Phylis before attending.

Payment is due at the first class. Make checks payable to Phylis Tomlinson.
Montessori Journey
January 24, 6–9 p.m.
January 25, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

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

Cost: $30 per person.

What parents have said:

**What was your most memorable experience of the day?**

“The realization that **learning can be fun** and stepping out of your comfort zone can be so **rewarding**.”

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

“A **greater understanding** of the environment and method behind Montessori and what my child’s day is like.”

### Bearkats Basketball
#### 2013-2014 Schedule

**DECEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>vs. Memorial Lutheran</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>vs. St. Stephen’s</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Tournament @ Memorial Lutheran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>@ St. Francis</td>
<td>5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>@ Beren Academy</td>
<td>5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>vs. St. Stephen’s</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**JANUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>vs. Beren Academy</td>
<td>5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>vs. St. Stephen’s</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>@ Memorial Lutheran</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>vs. St. Francis</td>
<td>5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>@ Emory Weiner</td>
<td>4:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>vs. St. Stephen’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FEBRUARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>vs. St. Stephen’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>@ Woods</td>
<td>4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>vs. St. Stephen’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We all have the very best of intentions in recycling. We’ve heard the phrase “Reduce, reuse, recycle” for more than 20 years and internalized it to the point that recycling is now just a part of our daily lives, which is an amazing thing! We want all of our efforts and good intentions to be realized on the other side of the curb, at the actual recycling center, which is why we need to stay informed and current on our recycling know-how.

Here we will try to dispel some rumors about what happens on the other side of the curb and give insight into how our routines can help or hinder the process. This first article will cover curbside recycling, and the second will focus more on recycling centers.

Plastic can be very tricky... just because something is plastic does not make it automatically recyclable! This is easily determined - just check to make sure the item has a recycling symbol/number on it before you throw it in the bin. Plastic bags are not accepted by curbside pickup. They can be turned in at many grocery stores, or at a recycling center. The problems on the other side of the curb are that the wrong kind of plastic can contaminate a batch of material when it is being processed, resulting in the entire batch being sent to a landfill, and also that very thin “film plastic” (such as bags and baggies) can easily slip away and clog up the machinery.

Glass has its own set of mishaps, starting with household glass. Household glass such as vases and serveware is not recyclable via curbside pickup. These items must be taken to a recycling center. The other major problem is broken glass, which is a hazard to the people sorting the recycling on the other side of the curb.

Following the rules for paper recycling is very important to keep the paper batches clean and uncontaminated as well.

My friends and I are always catching each other doing it wrong! It all stems from our desire to do good, but too much of a good thing can be bad in this case. Used pizza boxes are a huge culprit in the contamination of paper recycling, because all of the grease and crumbs gunk up the machinery and will send an entire batch of otherwise completely recyclable paper to a landfill. The presence of ANY food waste on paper makes it unrecyclable. It is perfectly compostable, but unfortunately not recyclable. Used household paper such as paper towels and napkins are not recyclable either. Like I said, we want to include these items because we hate to put them in the trash (we know they are made from trees!), but the recycle bin is simply not the right place for soiled paper. We are hoping for yard waste pickup to one day grace the streets of Houston to take this type of stuff away too!

On the subject of routines, all of us have our own little rituals when we prepare our items for recycling, such as removing paper labels from cans, removing tops from plastic bottles, and removing metal lids from glass jars. But what happens to those items that we remove from the recycling during our prep routines? In our research, we have found that all of those items are also recyclable! So after removal, you can just pop them in the bin along with everything else.

The most responsible thing we can do is use this knowledge every time we are faced with even the smallest piece of waste and ask ourselves, “Is this recyclable?”, and act accordingly!

Please join us for our next Green Team meeting, Wednesday, January 15 at 8:45 am.
BRAES INTERFAITH MINISTRIES
On December 12, a group of Upper and Lower Elementary students had the great pleasure of delivering the donations we collected. It was our largest donation to Braes yet!

PROJECT: WE SEE YOU
On December 15, a great group of Post Oak parents and children helped to package all of the items we collected. The outpouring of support from our community was amazing!

MIDDLE SCHOOL BAKE SALE
On December 12, the Middle School’s fundraiser to benefit the victims of Haiyan collected $838.15. Thanks to everyone who donated!

DON’T FORGET TO LOG YOUR COMMUNITY SERVICE ON THE 50-FOR-50 PAGE – WE ARE UP TO 37 ENTRIES!
SCENES from The Post Oak School

1. Upper Elementary students work together to determine the area of a set of triangles.
2. A Primary student works with the multiplication bead bars.
3. Lower Elementary students check out the goods at the Middle School bake sale.
5. Lower Elementary students explore verbs with the grammar box.
6. A Primary student records a story he created with the alphabet box.
7. Middle School students engage in a lesson on mathematics.
8. Sharing snack in the Full Day Infant Community.
9. Primary children learn to introduce themselves in Spanish.
10. Upper Elementary students work together to determine types of polygons.
CALENDAR

DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 4

Winter Break  
School Closed

JANUARY 5 - 11

Mon  1/6  Teacher in-service  
      School closed

Tue  1/7  High School J-Term begins

Wed  1/8  POPA Coffee/Work Day  
      8:45 a.m.–noon

Thur 1/9  Alumni Night  
        6:30–8:30 p.m.

Fri  1/10 Upper EL Spelling Bee  
     10–11:30 a.m.

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

NOTICE BOARD

Are You on facebook?

So is the the Post Oak School! We’d like to encourage all our families and friends  
to head over and like us to stay up to date on the latest POS news and events. Our  
Facebook pages (POS, High School, and Alumni) are updated regularly and we need  
your participation to keep our online community vibrant! This year we are promoting  
new features, like the 50-for-50 project, that you won’t want to miss!  
www.facebook.com/PostOakSchool

HAVE A GREAT WINTER BREAK!

CLASSES RESUME  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2014

ABOUT THE POST

The Post appears every other Friday 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 Elisa Schmidt (elisaschmidt@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.  

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