When father cradles his arms to receive his newborn, time stops. From that moment, for a few weeks or a few months, days blend into nights. Elation passes, but his world will never be the same again. One morning he stumbles out of bed, just alert enough to comprehend the sacrifices he has already made. From that first cradling to an unspecified date in the future, both parents surrender their independence, the sense that they can determine the contours of their days according to their own needs and desires. Their new life is abundant, but most parents regret the loss of personal freedom. The only sacrifice as great is intimacy, the feeling of eternal connection that inspired the birth of a child.

continued on page 2
Intimacy can be recaptured. Children thrive when parents go away together, shut their bedroom door and refuse to allow their children in. The burden of a child’s routine remains heavy for parents, though, for many years. When parents do not establish a routine that supports healthy development, the child suffers. For at least three years, the smallest departures from sleeping or eating routines end in misery.

Expectant parents read books by experts, talk to their neighbors, care providers, and friends with kids. They know routine is essential. Nothing prepares them for the gut-wrenching screams of their baby when she is hungry and away from her mother or tired in an unfamiliar room. Pattern, structure, and order assume an urgency parents could not have imagined.

“Order provides an adult with a certain amount of external pleasure,” Maria Montessori writes in The Secret of Childhood (53). “But for small children it is something quite different. It is like the land upon which animals walk or the water in which fish swim.” (53). Young children need routine almost as much as they need nourishment.

The infant’s inflexible eat-sleep routine is the new parents’ boot camp. Days last forever, three years pass in the blink of a tired mother’s eye. Naps and meals become less frequent and longer, but bed- and wake-time remain. “Routine is to the child what walls are to a house,” Drexler writes. “It gives boundaries and dimensions to his life. Routine gives a feeling of security.” (Children: The Challenge, 116). By the age of three, children thrive in the order and routine of the children’s house. The routines of a strong home begin the growth of confidence that continues in school.

By the age of six, most children can tolerate and even enjoy variations in family routine. They have achieved this comfort and confidence to depart from routine, because they know the routine exists. As she moves from childhood toward adolescence, a child is like a swimmer on the end of a diving board, bounding higher and higher, until her confident inner voice tells her to change position and direction of her body and dive.

Children who have chaotic home environments, irregular or interrupted sleep, and unstructured meals will not reach their potential. Lacking structure at home, they are often disorganized. Their work at school is messy and inaccurate. Often, they quit before they try anything new or challenging. Their lives are too unpredictable for them to risk failure.

“The order of what, when and where in a child’s life provide the structure and opportunity for limits and discipline,” Lillard and Jessen write (Montessori From the Start, 204). Disorganized children are often disobedient. The parameters provided by routine insist the child control his behavior until he has internalized limitation and can self-regulate.

The decision to establish a routine for children is a gift of grand proportion. Every day, sometimes several times a day, parents make small sacrifices to preserve routine. They sit down to a meal together, every day. They make sure they are at home at naptime. They read a story every night before bed. They have achieved this comfort and confidence to depart from routine, because they know the routine exists. As she moves from childhood toward adolescence, a child is like a swimmer on the end of a diving board, bounding higher and higher, until her confident inner voice tells her to change position and direction of her body and dive.

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The decision to establish a routine for children is a gift of grand proportion. Every day, sometimes several times a day, parents make small sacrifices to preserve routine. They sit down to a meal together, every day. They make sure they are at home at naptime. They read a story every night before bed. Each sacrifice of a parent’s time and freedom is another small gift, an investment in the future of a child and his family.
This year we will present a series of informational sessions that will talk about all things related to the Big Work campaign, including the fundraising 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.

High School J-Term—What Is That?

by James Moudry, High School Director (Adapted from his January, 2013 post to the Post Oak High School blog)

Each January (hence the J in J-Term), Post Oak High School students have the opportunity to participate in courses that they help design. The ideas for the courses come from both students and faculty members. The courses are collaboratively designed by a small group of students with a faculty member.

The goals of the J-Term experience are for students to take on increased responsibility for their own learning. Creating a path of study is challenging work and it calls on students to consider content, timing, field work, assessment, and budgeting. The faculty facilitator for each course supports the students in their work ensuring a successful course experience for everyone.

After J-Term, the students enrolled in each course will present a summary of their course experience to the school. The work involves a complete course including class work, field experiences, and assessments. The courses are opportunities for students to pursue topics that connect directly with their interests. The student suggestions are developed over several weeks in November and December. Planning groups meet regularly during this time with their faculty facilitator to lay out the course expectations, experiences, and assessment plan.

This year, there are four J-Term courses:
- Design & Entrepreneurship
- Creative Writing
- EV Car Conversion
- Jamaican History Trip

The students are already engaged in the various stages of project completion relevant to their courses. Check out the photos at right, follow the High School on Facebook, follow the J-Term Jamaica blog at http://jamaicajterm2014.blogspot.com/ , and the J-Term EV Car blog at http://postgarage.blogspot.com/. We’re all excited to see what amazing experiences will be revealed to us at the end of J-Term! 

We are pleased to announce next year’s POPA Co-chair, [name] who will join current chair [name].

Two years ago we introduced a new schedule for selecting our Post Oak Parent Association (POPA) Chair. The school has two POPA Chairs who serve two year terms rotating off during alternating years. POPA Chair [name] currently in her first year will pass the baton to incoming chair [name] who will begin her two year term in the fall of 2014.

[Name] and [Name] will work throughout the year with event chairs, including our soon-to-be-announced 2015 Biennial Gala Chairs. In addition, the POPA Chairs serve as liaisons to the parent community and handle all aspects of the monthly POPA Coffees. They work with Room Parents and volunteers on a variety of school activities. These school leaders are often called upon to offer guidance on issues affecting the community.

[Name] comfortably comes into this role having worked on countless Post Oak events and activities since her family started here in 2007. Most recently [Name] served as Post Oak Fund chair for two years, with record-breaking results. With a desire to help parents gain a greater understanding of Montessori, [Name] pioneered the F.I.S.H. program (Families Integrating School and Home) several years ago which continues successfully to this day.

[Name] strategic thinking, boundless optimism, and love of Post Oak, make her a valuable part of the school’s leadership. Please congratulate [Name] on her new role for next year, and be ready to volunteer when the POPA Chairs give you a call!

- Christina Kopanidis-Cantu, Development Director
by Mirna Andrade-Salgado, Technology Director

The Post Oak School participated in the 4th annual TEDxYouth@ISAS event in Houston on November 17, 2013. Nearly 100 TEDxYouth events took place worldwide during that weekend. The event coincided with Universal Children’s Day in an effort to promote transnational togetherness and awareness among children worldwide. Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart hosted the event with the participation of 7 other ISAS schools: Emery/Weiner School, The Kinkaid School, Cincoquapin Preparatory School, Trinity Valley School (Dallas), Episcopal High School and, of course, Duchesne Academy and The Post Oak School.

The event was inspiring, with over 22 live speakers using this year’s theme “The Spark” to illuminate ways to spark change in their communities. There were a large number of event reporters and photographers who told the story as it unfolded through Twitter and Instagram using hashtags of #TEDxYouth and #TEDxYouthDuchesne. Videos and a complete list of speakers can be found on the TED website at http://www.ted.com/tedx/events/10487 and at the event blog at http://TEDxYouth@ISAS/DuchesneAcademy.blogspot.com. Following is a reflection of the event in the words of our own TEDxYouth reporter.

“My experience participating in the TEDxYouth program this year was AMAZING! I absolutely loved hearing such inspiration given at the event. During the event, I tweeted and Instagrammed so many things. I felt so lucky to be a part of this.

One of the speeches that really stood out to me was about hazardous driving. It was presented by one of my friends, Nicole Sagarnaga. She talked about her cousins who had died in a car accident because they didn’t have their seatbelts on. It really made you think about how important it is to be cautious while driving. I really enjoyed spending my time at the TEDxYouth event this year.

Thank you to all Post Oak middle school and high school participants: Speakers and Photographers. See you at the TEDxYouth 2014!

Emma Bennett and Maddi Speed - Sexism in Modern Society

Shiraz Ghauri - Globalization

Isabella Nebbitt - LGBTQ Bullying

Congratulations to this year’s Spelling Bee winner and runner-up!
Post Oak Alumni Night 2014

“It’s all about the experience!” That was the mantra for this year’s Alumni Night that took place last Thursday evening. Post Oak students left their secondary school with more than just a transcript of their academic performance. Amidst all of the experiences you could receive from the range of private schools in Houston, Post Oak is one where children become equipped to apply what they’ve learned to new situations and problems. It’s this type of academic and personal growth that keeps our alumni talking about Post Oak.

Our alumni returned to their former campus to explain how Post Oak was so impactful. Even after all of this time (for some more than 20 years) it is an experience still worth remembering, and even more so, worth talking about. Our 11 panelists varied in age, background, and specific interests. Yet all of these individuals are people who strive to make a positive impact in their world. All are appreciative of Post Oak, a place that they believe provided them with a profound educational experience, anchoring them into a life of purpose and success. Below are our panelists and a glimpse of where they are now:

(2008): graduated from Kinkaid and is currently studying biomedical engineering at the University of Texas in Austin. believes that it is because of his Post Oak education that he’s able to see the big picture of the work he’s doing in college as opposed to just studying for a test.

(2011): is currently a junior at Kinkaid. She believes Post Oak played a significant role in fostering her appreciation for the arts.

(1995): graduated from Clements High School in Sugar Land, and received his Bachelor of Arts in Government and History from the University of Texas in Austin. He received his Juris Doctor from South Texas College of Law. practices law in Houston and is a founding and current member of Young Alumni Council at South Texas College of Law.

(1990): attended Post Oak from primary through 8th grade. He attended Stratford Jesuit for high school, and received a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in Theology from the University of St. Thomas. He completed 2 years at the Baylor College of Medicine, and attended dental school at The University of Texas School of Dentistry. is currently a dentist in Missouri City where he lives with his wife, Laura, and their new baby boy.

(2011): is currently a junior at The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts for vocal music. Her participation in Opera at Post Oak generated an interest in singing, and later allowed her to develop that interest into a true passion.

(2009): graduated from Kinkaid and is currently at the University of Texas in Austin. is particularly appreciative of Post Oak’s ability to foster individuality and self expression.

(2011): is currently a junior at YES Prep High School, and is working to develop programs centered on international education and literacy. 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 public speaking course at YES Prep High School.

(1986): After Post Oak went to St. John’s School. She then went on to receive her BA in Psychology and Sociology from Southwestern University and her Juris Doctor from The University of Texas. She asserts her most treasured skill to be one that she can without question attribute to Post Oak– an undying intellectual curiosity about the world and her place in it. returned to revisit the Post Oak campus after the birth of her first child. She wanted her child to feel as inspired and supported as she did.

Former student and current Post Oak parent, was our guest speaker of the evening. His experience was so positive as a student, felt like Post Oak was an obvious choice when he and his family returned to Houston after completing his residency. currently works in the Department of Anesthesiology at the Parent W orks at Baylor College of Medicine. (2011): is currently a junior at Kinkaid. He received his Juris Doctor from South Texas College of Law. practices law in Houston and is a founding and current member of Young Alumni Council at South Texas College of Law.

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Infant-Parent Classes

**INFANT & PARENT MONTESSORI: CLASS C**

For children at least 12 months and walking well (able to carry an object with two hands) to 24 months

Instructor: Sarah Moudry

Location: The Post Oak School - HDICa

Prerequisite: completion of Infant-Parent Class B or Prospective Parent Series

Session 2: Jan. 27, Feb. 3, 10, 24, March 3

Building on the foundation of experiences from the previous Infant Parent classes, weekly parents explore a Montessori classroom with their child. In this new setting parents learn setting limits and expectations, the art of observation, and how to support the whole development of their child. Children experience materials and toys that are unique to the Montessori classroom, an environment that is built specifically to support their developmental needs, and opportunities to interact with other children their age.

A TODDLERS KITCHEN: CLASS D

For children 16 months to 24 months

Instructor: Sarah Moudry

Location: The Post Oak School - HDICa

Prerequisite: completion of Infant-Parent Class C, Session 2: March 24, 31, April 7, 14

A child who is now confidently walking wants to explore his independence and capabilities. Inviting him to work alongside you in the kitchen is just the thing he needs. In this class we explore activities that you and your young child can do together in the kitchen. Each week, together with your child, you will prepare a snack that can be eaten at the end of class, and along the way you will learn how to introduce such skills as spreading, slicing, peeling and even baking. Come join us for a fun and fascinating experience as you learn the art of cooking with your toddler.

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**AMI Refresher Course: Parents’ Workshop**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

**AT THE WESTIN GALLERIA**

**Presented by Debra Riordan**

**A.M. SESSION:**

I Feel a Change Comin’ On: Understanding Developmental Stages and Their Reflection in Montessori Classrooms

**P.M. SESSION:**

Help Me to Help Myself: How to Support Your Child’s Development Through the Integration of Montessori Principles at Home

**SCHEDULE:**

Friday, February 14

7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Welcome & Opening Panel

8:30 – 10:00 p.m. Fruit and Cheese Reception

Saturday, February 15

9:00 am – 12:00 pm | Lecture Session

12:00 – 1:30 pm | Lunch

1:30 – 4:30 pm | Lecture Session

5:00 – 6:00 pm | Open Meeting with the AMI/USA Board

6:00 pm | School Tours – sign up onsite

**COST:**

Half-Day $50

Full-Day $125

Full-Day & Opening Panel $130

Pre-registration deadline is Monday, January 27, 2014

Register online at [AMIUSA.org](http://AMIUSA.org)

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**Redirecting Children’s Behavior**

*The Gentle Art of Parenting*

**Tuesday evenings,**

Jan. 28, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25, Mar. 4, 6:30–9 p.m.

Course fee: $235 for one; $335 per couple (Includes book, workbook and 15 hours of class time)

Taught by Deborah Fry, PhD, CPE

For more information and to register, please call Deborah at 713-840-8663.

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**Montessori Promotes Disruptive Innovation**

**Wednesday, March 5**

**12:00 - 1:00PM**

**Austin Convention Center**

Post Oak High School Director James Moudry will serve on a panel of speakers to present the innovation that exists within the framework of Montessori:

“As traditional education fails students, educators are questioning the purpose/delivery method of education. Professionals have developed learning styles to address this problem resulting in ‘flipped’ classrooms, peer instruction and hands on learning. However, outcomes these methods aim to produce – critical thinking, problem solving, entrepreneurship and creativity – are already available with Montessori.”

#disruptedu

For more information, visit [http://schedule.sxswedu.com/events/event_EDUP21309](http://schedule.sxswedu.com/events/event_EDUP21309)

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**Post Oak High School J-Term Creative Writing Presentation**

**at the Post Oak High School**

Thursday, January 23 from 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Join us as the students in the Creative Writing Intensive J-Term present a reading of their work. Refreshments will be served, and the first edition of the POHS Literary chapbook will be for sale. All proceeds will go toward publication and getting a table at the Houston Indie Book Fest at The Menil in April. Please be advised that the content of this presentation may not be suitable for children under 12.
Recycling: The Real Deal (2 of 2)

by Elisa Schmidt, Communications Coordinator

Got a New Year’s resolution? Got more than one? I know I have many, and of course #1 involves all of the typical self-help mantras: exercise more, eat healthier, drink less caffeine, etc., etc. My #2 resolution is much more concrete and quantifiable: CLEAN OUT THE GARAGE. It really sounds do-able compared to those other more subjective, on-going goals! I’m ready to get to it, and a huge part of it involves getting all of the recyclables that I collect but are not accepted by curbside pick-up OUT - for good!

In the last issue of the Post, we discussed ways to streamline our routines for curbside recycling, to be sure we are getting enough “bang for our buck” of the precious time we spend cleaning, sorting, and transporting our recyclables out to the curb. This time we will focus on all of the other items we can safely and reliably recycle by bringing them to the nearest drop-off center. There are three centers that we will focus on: The Westpark Recycling Center (Hwy. 59S between Chimney Rock & Fountain View), ESC North (NW side of 610 @ 59), and ESC South (S. Post Oak @ 90/S. Main). The general idea here is that anything you can’t take to the Westpark center, you can probably take to an ESC. And these locations are all so convenient!! No matter where you live in and around the Loop, it is a snap to get to Westpark and/or the ESC closest to your area.

Westpark is the “flagship” recycling center for the City of Houston’s program, where you can drive-through(!!) to drop-off your items. In addition to all of the curbside items, here is a list of special items you can bring to this location: styrofoam, plastic bags, metal coat hangers, glass, B.O.P.A. (batteries, used oil, latex paint and antifreeze), computers & computer equipment, small household electronics, fluorescent bulbs, TVs, microwaves, and tires.

ESC stands for “Environmental Service Center,” and these are the two locations where you can bring anything listed at the Westpark center, plus Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). HHW generally includes any and all household chemicals you can possibly think of; such as pool chemicals, acids, cooking oil, degreasers, drain cleaners, fertilizer, helium tanks, herbicides, kerosene, mercury, metal polish, solvents, varnishes, turbine oil, based paint, and most automobile-related fluids - yuck, yuck, and yuck!

So, with all of these wonderful resources available to us, you can clearly see how the task of cleaning out my garage is inching closer and closer to the top of my list! We Green Team members hope that this list will help you accomplish at least one of your resolutions in the New Year. Here are a few links to get more information about recycling in our great city:

Green Houston: http://www.greenhoustontx.gov
This is the site for answers to every question about recycling in Houston: lists of accepted items, locations of drop-off centers, resources for businesses, downloadable PDFs and FAQ’s on recycling Gala.

Houston Galveston Area Council: http://www.h-gac.com
H-GAC is the state-designated planning agency for solid waste management issues in the region. Their site is full of informative guides and a more comprehensive list of drop-off centers for residents outside of Houston city limits.

Waste Management, Inc.: http://www.wm.com
Waste Management is the largest privately-owned environmental solutions provider in North America. They are able to assist with items that even local facilities can’t handle, such as medical waste.

Please join us for our next Green Team meeting, Friday, January 24 at 8:45 a.m.
1. Infant Community children gather together to sing, listen, and relax!
2. Concentration and hand-eye coordination are gained through work with a screwdriver in Primary.
3. Post Oak Middle School students are free to express themselves, even in math discussions.
4. An Upper Elementary student works on a History paper in class.
5. Lower Elementary students take a bow after presenting a series of recitations of Aesop’s Fables.
6. Intense concentration (aided by noise-cancelling earmuffs) in Upper Elementary.
7. Peeling a cucumber is Big Work in Primary.
8. A student matches objects to corresponding images in Infant Community.
9. An Infant Community child receives a warm welcome as he begins his transition process to Primary.
10. A student works to identify ancient artifacts in Upper Elementary.
11. High School J-term students await their next historical destination in Jamaica.
### CALENDAR

#### JANUARY 19 - 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mon 1/20</th>
<th>MLK Jr. Day</th>
<th>SCHOOL CLOSED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 1/24</td>
<td>HS J-Term ends</td>
<td>Montessori Journey 6-9 p.m. ($ &amp; registration req.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 1/25</td>
<td>Montessori Journey 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.</td>
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#### JANUARY 26 - FEBRUARY 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Mon 1/27</th>
<th>HS Second Semester begins</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue 1/28</td>
<td>Redirecting Children's Behavior 6:30 – 9 p.m. ($ &amp; registration req.) Beginning of six-week course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 1/31</td>
<td>Chinese Lunar New Year: Year of the Horse</td>
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### FOUND!

**LUNCH BOXES, JACKETS, SWEATERS, AND MORE…**

**Missing something?**

Have a look online: [www.postoakschool.org/postoak/Photos_Lost_and_Found_Gallery.asp](http://www.postoakschool.org/postoak/Photos_Lost_and_Found_Gallery.asp)

If you recognize an item you can come reclaim it from the treasure chest in the front lobby.

**Please retrieve all items by Friday, January 24.**

**Everything left over will be donated to charity.**

*If clothing or lunch boxes have a name written on it, the item is placed in your child’s cubicle/locker. It’s a good idea to mark special items so they always find their way home!*

### Are You on Facebook?

So is 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](http://www.facebook.com/PostOakSchool)

### 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).

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