“The next Steve Jobs” reads the cover of Wired magazine’s November issue beside a photo of Mexican student Paloma Noyola Bueno, a fifth grader who had the highest scores on a recent national exam. Her school “has captured the attention of the nation thanks to the remarkable, groundbreaking teaching methodology of Paloma’s teacher Sergio Juarez Correa.” At the heart of his method is this idea: “knowledge isn’t a commodity that’s delivered from teacher to student but something that emerges from the students’ own curiosity-fueled exploration.”

Last week Forbes magazine picked up that story. In fact, both magazines also
My Montessori Journey

by Elisa Schmidt, Communications Coordinator and Post Oak parent

On January 25, myself and a group of about 40 other parents visited Post Oak to embark upon our Montessori Journey. We split into two groups and each headed off to the Infant Community, where we marvelled at the miniature sizes of the tables and chairs, and learned about the practical life exercises and foundational education that starts there. We then moved on to Primary, where many parents reveled in the simplicity of being allowed to just “do” and “be,” there in the moment with the beautiful and carefully arranged materials, doing work that was specifically designed for them. Every piece of work that was placed out on the tables for us to interact with had an explanation as to what to do with it and what the educational purpose was for it. In Lower Elementary, how the subject matter all ties together throughout the levels quickly became apparent to the group. The map work was similar, but more complex, and we could plainly see how the math materials and curriculum built upon what was learned in Primary and even Infant Community.

The visit to Upper Elementary was my personal favorite. I felt it would have been the perfect place for me at that point in my life. The space is optimized to the needs of a curious “older child,” whose world is expanding by leaps and bounds, to sit and explore, patiently and quietly, for hours and hours without boredom or complacency. Here we received higher-level lessons in geometry, mathematics, and biology. Many of the materials we interacted with covered theories and ideas that I would love to re-learn in that environment, and it made me very excited for what is to come for my own child.

We ended the Journey in Middle School, a light-filled, peaceful space, which features its own library, a large discussion area, a “middle room” with windows on all sides for smaller groups, and a science lab. We received a lesson in botany with Mrs. Madiman, at which point we were informed that the lesson had actually been simplified for us! We then moved into the larger discussion room and participated in a seminar with Mr. Tucker, where we discussed a simplified version of the tome “Peace and Education,” by Maria Montessori. The structure of the seminar was inspiring, as we were all instructed not to raise our hands but to let the discussion happen naturally, to look at each other and call each other by name, and to not look at Mr. Tucker for ideas and/or permission to move forward.

We all decided on a central question raised by the text that our discussion would aim to answer, wrote it on a notecard, and discussed, using specific passages from the text as reference for the group to understand where our ideas were coming from. At the end of our time, we were asked to write down how our opinion of the subject had changed in light of the ideas that were presented by others.

The two groups that had been on the Journey finally reconvened in the middle school to discuss how the day had impacted us. All of the parents had similar sentiments of amazement and delight, one even expressed mock jealousy of her children for having the opportunity to learn in such an environment as this. Another parent echoed that he trusted his children have as much time as they would like to spend exploring these environments that were created with only them in mind, and we were happy. It is my hope to be able to attend the Journey again next year and experience the joy all over again! I hope you will join me there.
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 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.
Where in the World Do Our 50th Anniversary Shirts Go?

To Jamaica, of course — Where else??

Join us this Spring Break as we gather images of Post Oak families and friends sporting their 50th gear (or any POS gear) all over the world! We will be capturing all of the fun on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Upload your pics in real time from wherever your travels take you (even if it’s right here in Houston!) and show the world your Post Oak spirit! ✨

The POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL

ADMISSION OPEN HOUSE

Two Opportunities Remaining!
Wednesday, February 12th – 7 p.m.
Tuesday, April 8th – 7 p.m.

1102 Autrey Street, Houston TX 77006
www.postoakhighschool.org

2014–15 Important Dates

Watch The Post and our website for more information about next year’s academic calendar. Here are a few dates we have already determined:

- Aug. 25-29: First week for all students
- Sept. 1: Labor Day (school closed)
- Oct. 13: Columbus Day (school closed)
- Nov. 26–28: Thanksgiving Break (school closed)
- Dec. 22–Jan. 5: Winter Break (school closed)
- Jan. 19: Martin Luther King, Jr. (school closed)
- Feb. 16: Presidents Day (school closed)
- Mar. 16–20: Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend
- April 3: Good Friday (school closed)
- May 25: Memorial Day
- May 29: Last day of school

My Backpack Maintenance

There will be scheduled maintenance performed on our systems Friday, January 31, 2014 from 9:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m. All cloud services (Advantage, My Backpack, Web Services, Dashboard, etc.) will be unavailable during this time. If you have any questions, please contact Technology Director Mirna Andrade-Salgado at 713.661.6688 or technology@postoakschool.org

SAVE THE DATE!

THE POST OAK SCHOOL’S

2014 BOOK FAIR

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

9 A.M.-9 P.M.

Celebrating Heroes Throughout History

Barnes & Noble
3003 W. Holcombe Blvd.

Book Fair Chairs:
Jennifer Brenckmann and Vareen Cunningham

Post Oak’s Book Fair festivities will celebrate Heroes Throughout History. Students of all grade levels are involved in making this event special. Activities will include cape and mask-making, robotics, readings by our own Post Oak Primary and Infant Community teachers, performances by the ASEP choir, a poetry jam, face painting, creating your own characters with illustrator Bill Megenhardt, and a storyboard activity station.

The Book Fair begins at 9 a.m. on Thursday, March 6, and will end at 9 p.m. Feel free to come shop earlier in the day—and then return for the festivities with your children again later. Volunteers will be on hand to assist you throughout the day.

Grandparents, relatives, parents, and friends can shop all week at the store beginning on March 6 (through March 9), and the proceeds will go to the school—just as they will for any purchases you make throughout the week. Just tell the cashier, “I’m with the Post Oak Book Fair.”

In addition, if families want to shop online at www.bn.com, they can use an online code (watch for it in upcoming issues of The Post) until March 14.

Bring the whole family and let the Book Fair take you from the Heroes of History into the exciting future of Post Oak!

Volunteers are always welcome—no experience necessary!

If you’d like to help, please contact Jessica Jackson at jessicajackson@postoakschool.org.

Friends of the Library UNDERWRITING FOR THE POST OAK LIBRARY

Make checks payable to “The Post Oak School” and write “Friends of the Library” in memo.

FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:
☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card # ___________________ Expiration Date __________

Name (as appears on card) ___________________

Signature ____________________

CSV # ____________________

Please turn in this form to the Development Office.
The Importance of Sleep in Children: A Primary Parent Education Event Recap

by Elisa Schmidt

Post Oak parent Dr. Aparajitha (Appu) Verma very graciously and directly spoke with us about her findings on the importance of sleep in children on January 16 in the Post Oak gym. Dr. Verma is the director of the Comprehensive Sleep Disorders Program and the San Jacinto Sleep Lab at Methodist, and shared a wealth of information with us. She began by helping us define what sleep actually does for our bodies and brains:

- Restoration and recovery
- Tissue repair
- Energy Conservation
- Consolidation of memory and daily experiences
- Strengthen immune defenses

Dr. Verma shared research that shows how the brain is cleared of toxins during sleep, and showed how sleep needs gradually lessen over time, as this need parallels brain development. Therefore, sleep is most critical in childhood, and lessens into adulthood. Here is the breakdown from the National Sleep Foundation:

- 0-2 months = 14-15 hrs; 2.5-5 hrs nap
- 2-12 months = 12-14 hrs; 13-3.5 hrs nap
- 1-3 years = 12 hrs; 13-3.5 hrs nap
- 3-5 years = 11-13 hrs; 0.5-1 hrs nap
- 5-12 years = 10-11 hrs; no nap
- 12-18 years = 9-10 hrs

Dr. Verma described how adolescents are the most sleep-deprived of the group because of factors such as early school start times, hormones and mood, stress, technology, caffeine consumption, and sleep apnea. She shared that the #1 reason that kids don’t get enough sleep today is because of technology: television, video games, social media, and texting all lure our children to stay up past bedtime. She also addressed behavioral problems that can get in the way of sleep in childhood that we are all too familiar with, such as bedtime refusals, stalling and repeated demands. The treatment she prescribes in these instances is to emphasize the importance of limit-setting, creating consistent guidelines for both yourself and the child, and using positive reinforcement.

Regarding sleep disturbances such as night terrors, sleepwalking and nightmares, Dr. Verma advised to let the episodes run their course, secure the bedroom to prevent injury, and to emphasize "sleep hygiene," which refers to a regular, appropriate sleep schedule, a bedtime routine “sleep ritual,” using the bedroom only for sleep and not play. We then discussed sleep apnea, a disorder that is under-diagnosed in children, with nocturnal symptoms such as loud snoring and observed apneas; pauses after which the child may snort, gasp, or choke as air floods back into the system. Daytime symptoms include excessive sleepiness and behavior akin to ADHD such as inability to concentrate and/or sit still. Dr. Verma cautioned parents to be on the lookout for these symptoms, as a major side effect is impaired growth, brain cell death, and cardiovascular consequences such as pulmonary hypertension.

For more information, visit http://schedule.sxswedu.com/events/event_EDUP21309
Physical Fitness (PF) Update

We have been practicing football skills in our elementary and middle school PF classes this January and are finishing up this Super Bowl week with some flag football games. We have learned how to carry a football, how to throw and catch, and also how to dodge and break away from the defenders.

Next month will move into soccer, teaching dribbling skills, shot-making and defensive moves.

In Primary PF the students have been running, jumping hurdles and helping build an agility course with new foam blocks the school has purchased. The students have also been working on the Patch equipment we received last year.

Please join us for the upcoming Green Team meeting Friday, Feb. 7 at 8:45 a.m.

Encourage Your Teens to Attend the Houston National College Fair!

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) will hold the Houston National College Fair at the Reliant Center on Thursday, February 13 from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The fair is free and open to the public and offers high school students and their families the opportunity to meet face to face with college representatives from throughout the country.

Now in its 42nd year, the National College Fair program annually helps more than 675,000 students and families explore their options for higher education, making it one of the most visible college recruitment tools in the United States. NACAC hosts 79 college fairs each year.

Attending a college fair is the best way to gather information, first hand, about colleges and universities, especially those in distant cities. Participants will learn about admission requirements, financial aid, course offerings, and campus environment, as well as other information pertinent to the college selection process. At the fair’s counseling center, students and parents can discuss their individual needs with college experts. Students and parents are encouraged to register online at www.nccf1.org prior to attending.

Houston National College Fair
Thursday, February 13 at the Reliant Center
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Bearkats Basketball 2013-14

After Monday’s game at Emery/Weiner the Bearkats basketball team has a record of six wins against seven losses with four games left on our schedule. The Bearkats won against Emery/Weiner by the score of 46-22. Scoring was led by [redacted] with 17 points, followed by [redacted] with 12 points. The Bearkats have been led by the four eighth graders on this year’s roster: [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted]. The Bearkats have enjoyed playing an upgraded schedule this year against many very polished teams. We hope to finish the year strong and have many positive memories of our season.

Primary Parent/Child Night
Thursday, February 6
Group 1: 5–6 p.m.
Group 2: 6:15–7:15 p.m.

This is an evening when children bring their parents to school and demonstrate to them the work they do during the day. Childcare for siblings is available; please call the front desk to make a reservation.

Attending the annual Green Team meeting Friday, Feb. 7 at 8:45 a.m.
SCENES
from
The Post Oak School

1. Middle school students enjoying their botany studies.
2. A child in Infant Community concentrates on the work of window washing.
3. Exploring fractions in Primary.
4. Lower Elementary students work on handwriting as a group.
5. Working with the test tube material in Upper Elementary to solve math word problems.
6. Primary students engage in a Spanish lesson through building a house with felt shapes.
7. Lower Elementary classmates ponder the destruction an earthquake can bring.
8. A 3-year-old works on plant care in Primary.
10. Lower Elementary students sport their hairnets upon returning from a field trip to an industrial gelato kitchen.
11. An Upper Elementary student gets a little help from a friend.
CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2-8

Wed 2/5
POPA Coffee/Work Day
8:45 a.m. - Noon

Thu 2/6
Primary Parent/Child Night
Group 1: 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Group 2: 6:15 – 7:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 9-15

Wed 2/12
Coffee w/ Elementary Director
9:00 a.m.
High School Admission
Open House
7:00 p.m.

Fri 2/14
Teacher In-Service
Classes not in session: only students with expanded year contracts attend
EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR RE-REGISTRATION

Fri - Mon 2/14-17
AMI-USA Refresher Course
in Houston

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

NOTICE BOARD

Nanny Needed
Part or full-time nanny sought for Galleria-area household with two young children: 2.5 years and a newborn. The ideal candidate is bilingual and English fluency is a must. Experience working with Montessori families is a plus. References required. Please contact Nicole at

Nanny Available
Wonderful full time nanny who works with family of three children, has references available for over 13 years of long-term employment, 23 years at her church as a youth counselor and in nursery. Impeccable work ethic, extremely trustworthy, reliable, and hardworking. Please call Shanell Moody regarding details at

POPA Coffee/Work Day
Wednesday, Feb. 5
8:45 a.m.–noon

ABOUT THE POST

The Post is distributed via email every other Friday of the regular school year. You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or view the 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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