got the news via text message: Anthony Doerr wins Pulitzer Prize for fiction. I jumped so high I could have dunked a basketball, maybe. You see, I taught Tony Doerr as a seventh grader, and watched him grow up as a Montessori student in Cleveland. I really don’t remember any of the research work he submitted to me at the time, even though he now relies on meticulous research to provide background color and texture in his writing. Was he an extraordinary and exceptional student? Not really: he was a seventh grade boy, as funny and quirky as the next. He was a Montessori kid, just like his classmates: creative, questioning and engaged.

I jumped so high I could have dunked a basketball? Really? Must be play-off fever. I do follow the Houston Rockets. Recently their fans began chanting “MVP! MVP!” whenever James Harden...
MVP
continued from page 1
does something spectacular. His chief competition for this year’s Most Valuable Player award is Steph Curry, point guard on the Golden State Warriors. What sets Curry apart, aside from the fact that he is the best player on the best team in the NBA? He, like Tony Doerr, is a Montessori kid.

Meanwhile, closer to home, I learned this week that Post Oak alum Megan Routbort has won a prestigious Jefferson Scholar Award from the University of Virginia. The selection process for this award is like nothing I’ve ever heard of. Only superstars need apply. Here’s an excerpt from one of her college application essays:

When did you first realize how unorthodox your education was? It wasn’t while crafting papier-mâché birds in primary school. Nor was it while eschewing multiplication problems to read D’Aulaires’ Book of Greek Myths for the third time in Lower Elementary. These were the days when you believed wholeheartedly in the magic of Montessori. When you took enormous pride in the bead chains and pin maps that separated you from neighborhood friends who read textbooks and took quizzes. When you still believed that any problem could be resolved with a little bit of imagination.

Montessori was the educational system of your childhood. Its philosophies lent you freedom to feel your incessant thirst for adventure. Creativity was the norm. You regularly penned thirty-page dramatic scripts for the class to perform. You organized Lunar New Year feasts and planned field trips. You learned long division with a set of test tubes, meticulously distributing plastic heads evenly among them in search of a quotient.

How do we connect the dots between the accomplishments of Anthony Doerr, Steph Curry and Megan Routbort? Did Montessori education make Steph Curry a better basketball player? It didn’t hurt that his dad, Dell Curry, was an NBA basketball player. As a story from Seth said,

Dell Curry is often credited as the source of Stephen’s on-court confidence and cool. But the roots may also be in his childhood education.

When Stephen was in first grade, his mother started a Montessori school. For the next several years, Stephen and his siblings went to work every morning with their mother. The Montessori method teaches independence and accountability.

“If you hit a roadblock, don’t be discouraged,” Sonya said. “It provides a sense of who you are. That life throws you challenges and you need to figure it out.”

Stephen attributes much of his self-confidence to his early education.

“It is pretty special,” he said. “It teaches you how to work through something.”

What about Anthony Doerr? What does he have to say about his own Montessori education? Four years ago I invited him to answer that question. Here’s what he sent in response:

Of all the skills nine years of Montessori education gave me—critical thinking skills, social skills, kickball skills—the most lasting has been a sense of my place in deep geologic time. We were making twenty-foot-long timelines as early as first grade. I could spell Paleozoic before I could spell Coca-Cola. I remember one analogy in particular: What if a single calendar year represented the entire four-and-a-half billion year story of the Earth? The Earth would form on January 1; single-celled life would show up in late March. Animals with skeletons didn’t evolve until late November. Dinosaurs showed up around Christmas and were gone by the twenty-seventh. Recognizable humans didn’t show up until 11:48 p.m. on December 31! Columbus fumbled his way to North America 12 seconds before midnight!

You’re six or seven years old and you’re being asked to measure the brief, warm, intensely complicated fingersnap of your life against the absolutely incomprehensible vastness of time. The sense of luck that made me feel—to be here at all!—has never left me. It permeates my writing, my attitudes toward natural resources, and my relationship with my sons. We all share this one big clump of iron and magnesium and nickel whirling around the sun and it is the one thing we will bequeath to our children. So why not be as deeply curious about it as we can? Why not try to understand what is happening to it in the pitifully brief time we’re here?

How do we connect the dots between Anthony Doerr, Steph Curry and Megan Routbort? About the same time Tony Doerr was writing me about his Montessori education, Peter Sims wrote “Montessori Mafia” for The Wall Street Journal. In it he said:

But her daughter’s future and ours might be much brighter with a little less conditioning to perform well on tests and more encouragement to discover as they teach in Montessori schools. Ironically, the Montessori educational approach might
Correction

We incorrectly edited the “Odyssey of the Mind” article in the March 26, 2015 edition of The Post. The effort was led by Michelle Luo (not Michelle Lu). Our apologies for the error.

Webe the surest route to joining the creative elite, which are so overrepresented by the school’s alumni that one might suspect a Montessori Mafia: Google’s founders Larry Page and Sergei Brin, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, videogame pioneer Will Wright, and Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, not to mention Julia Child and rapper Sean “P.Diddy” Combs.

Is there something going on here? Is there something about the Montessori approach that nurtures creativity and inventiveness that we can all learn from?

And so we offer our congratulations to Anthony Doerr, Steph Curry and Megan Routbort.

And go Rockets!

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Underlined phrases in this article are links to websites—access them in the online edition (link on the left side of the homepage).

Cyberbullying: What We Learned

Dr. Sameer Hinduja, professor, author, international speaker and co-director of Cyberbullying Research Center at Florida Atlantic University, was invited to The Post Oak School on April 7 and 8 to conduct a series of conversations with our students (rising fourth graders through high school), our faculty/staff, and our parents.

TOPICS COVERED

• Cyberbullying and its prevention
  • Red flags that a child is involved in cyberbullying as a victim or offender
  • Responding to cyberbullying
  • Questions parents should ask their children about technology
  • Safe and positive online social networking
  • Keeping your identity and information safe and secure
  • Cell phone safety
  • Inappropriate content in texts
  • Challenged students to be positive role models by mentoring younger students, starting a cyber-club, building awareness or pledge campaign, creating informative posters, etc.

Topics were crafted for each specific audience. For the third, fourth, and fifth graders, he shared age-appropriate videos depicting cyberbullying. With the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, he shared stories of positive uses of social media. Dr. Hinduja shared his own stories and did live polling during the interactive session with the high school students. He shared many resources with both parents and faculty/staff and talked about the importance of adults modeling positive technology use for children.

TAKE AWAYS FROM THE PARENT SESSIONS

• Be present in the moment (set technology aside when your attention is needed)
• Model appropriate technology use
• Educate your children on appropriate internet-based behaviors
• Monitor your child’s online activities
• Utilize internet and cell phone use contracts (samples were handed out)
• Dr. Hinduja recommends not “freaking out” when technology missteps happen.
• Cultivate and maintain an open, candid line of communication with your children
• Teach and reinforce positive morals and values, treating others with respect and dignity

Dr. Hinduja emphasized a partnership between home and school is required to create good digital citizens. Let’s partner up.

For more information, go to www.cyberbullying.us.
In honor of National Week of Service, Post Oak High School put on their first annual, ServicePalooza. Students signed up for a daily service opportunity and were engaged in an array of community-centered activities from farming, gardening, sorting, tutoring, or crafting. Students worked individually, together with their peers, and directly with their neighbors in asking “How Can I Help?”

continued on page 4
A Connection
Stronger than Wi-Fi

Below is an article about one of Post Oak Middle School’s groups at community service written by a student social worker who has been documenting the experience for the center and the University of Houston.

by Angelica Rodriguez, Peavy InterTEChnational Class

What is a selfie? What is an Angry Bird? These may seem like easy questions to answer but what if you do not have a cell phone to take that selfie with or the understanding of computers to download a game like Angry Birds? Being born in the twenty-first century comes with many perks; you are part of the digital age. In the last 15 years we have seen the mass availability of the internet, the debut of several iPads, MacBooks and the availability of cellular phones for all, but what if you were born in the twentieth century? It is easy to understand how seniors may feel that “today’s technology” is beyond their reach. Within six months after release the technology is already outdated. This can be intimidating for even the most tech savvy. Technology is used in everyday life, and if you do not know how to use it, life can be difficult.

Thinking back to the first time Post Oak Middle School students walked into the Peavy Senior Center, I wondered how these two generations would bridge the digital divide and find common ground. Would these teens be ready to take on a teaching role and help a senior learn the fundamentals of a computer? Would the seniors be receptive to learning about twitter, LOL, and Facebook from teenagers? This was a unique opportunity for all involved, including me. I was apprehensive when this class began. I worried the differences in race, economic background, and age would deter the possible success of this class. I was wrong to worry.

These two generations have found an understanding in each other that must have seemed far removed. Week after week, I sit back; eavesdrop and observe in amazement the genuine interaction and the budding of relationships. They have exchanged email addresses and send messages throughout the week, are sincerely happy to see each other on Thursday and have shared advice. When seniors have questions that the teens cannot answer, they go back, do research and return prepared with appropriate responses. With these weekly interactions, there has been amazing feelings of accomplishments, positive changes in attitudes and an increase in self-esteem. The teenagers are developing and applying leadership skills that have eased the cross-generational discomfort. Both generations contribute an enthusiasm for technology that evolved in to dispelling of stereotypes and a lesson in patience.
Many Thanks to All Room Parents This Year!

TAMARA BASHAM
Kim Proler

DEIDRE BROOKS
Renee Morris & Cari Gill

DANIELLE DALSEY
Lori Ann Foertsch
& Kasia Leon-Lubowicz

EMILY HANSEN
Kelly Davis & Jennifer Wheler

ORKL KLUK
Hannah Golub

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Katie Orr

SARAH MOUDRY
Erica Sherman

DEBBIE NICKERSON
Jennifer Chavis

JULIE PARRAGUIRRE
Jennifer Brenckmann & Jennifer Wheler

ERROL PINTO
Amy Kirchner

MAYA PINTO
Shonali Agrawal

BETH SMITH
Stacey Martin & Michelle Lu

SIMRAN SOOD
Erin Busby
& Vareen Cunningham

ANITA TAJ MAHMOOD
Natalia Urreta & Belisa Diaz

TAMARA TOWNSEND
Leashanne Guo

MIRIAM WINTON
Nikayla Thomas

PHOEBE YEAGER
Seunghee Fuller

9TH GRADE
Carol King

10TH GRADE
Jennifer Chavis

11TH GRADE
Terri Armstrong

DINAH CHETRIT/PHE
John Duboise

We appreciate you!
IMPROVEMENTS TO BISSONNET CAMPUS:

- A dedicated music and performance space for instrumental and vocal music classes and full class plays and performances,
- The library will expand its reading and gathering space,
- A new technology office to better serve students, faculty, and parents,
- A nurse’s station that comes with a school nurse,
- Reposition several classrooms to bring Lower Elementary together and add new support spaces,
- Enclose the breezeway for climate controlled comfort during Primary and Elementary dismissal,
- A needed new HVAC system to replace our current system,
- Dedicated space for The Parenting Center for parents with children of all ages,
- The creation of a campus dedicated to early childhood and elementary.

THE HIGH SCHOOL NEEDS YOUR HELP TO BUILD A NEW BUILDING!

Thank you for being a part of Post Oak and believing in the work we do each day. Please continue to support that work for students today and for the future.

BIG WORK NEEDS YOU

We have raised $5,750,000 of $8 million.

40% of our current parents have contributed.

Thank you!

IT’S EASY TO CONTRIBUTE

Go to Post Oak’s homepage and look for the Big Work link in the left sidebar or email development@postoakschool.org.

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2015–2016 Important Dates

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 17–21</td>
<td>First week for Elementary, Middle School, &amp; High School</td>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Jr. Day school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 24–28</td>
<td>First week for Young Children’s Community &amp; Primary</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>Presidents’ Day school closed</td>
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<td>Sep. 7</td>
<td>Labor Day school closed</td>
<td>Mar. 14–18</td>
<td>Spring Break (only students with expanded-year contracts attend)</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Columbus Day school closed</td>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>Good Friday school closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 25–27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break school closed</td>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>High School Commencement (2016 graduating class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 21–Jan. 4</td>
<td>Winter Break school closed</td>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>Last day of school (to be confirmed)</td>
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This annual effort continues until we reach full participation. Parent participation is currently at 83%, and we have raised $270,000 of our $300,000 goal. Pledges can be made by emailing christinacantu@postoakschool.org, or go to our website to donate with a credit card. Pledges are due by May 31.

Questions? Please call Christina Cantu at 281-822-8024

Thank you to everyone who has participated!

THE 2014–2015 POST OAK FUND CONTINUES!

THE FOLLOWING CLASSES HAVE REACHED 100% PARENT PARTICIPATION:

DANIELLE DALSEY
ORLY KLUK
DEBBIE NICKERSON
ERROL PINTO
MIDDLE SCHOOL

FOUND!

LUNCH BOXES, JACKETS, SWEATERS, AND MORE…

Missing something? Come check out the lost and found box by the front entrance.

Please retrieve all items by the last day of school, Friday, May 29. Everything left over will be donated to charity.

*If an item of clothing or lunch box has 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!
The Francolin and the Bee

by Upper Elementary student

Did you know that a francolin is a type of bird? On Saturday, March 28, 2015, I represented The Post Oak School in the State Spelling Bee, and was asked to spell the word “francolin”.

We arrived early in the morning, but the actual television filming of the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee began at 2:00 p.m. My speller number was 38. My parents went into the special room reserved for families, and I went into the studio with the other spellers. I was nervous because there were 55 competitors, and I didn’t know any of them.

My first word was “contradictory”, and I spelled it correctly. “Lucky me,” I thought to myself, “So far so good.” “Barbican” was my second word, and by spelling it accurately, I proceeded to the third round. And then came “francolin”, which I mistakenly spelled with a k.

Looking into the future, I may not know how to spell the name of every bird that has ever lived on the Earth, but when I go to the next spelling competition, I’ll be as prepared as I can BEE! 😊

We invite you to join us for our upcoming

INFORMATION GATHERING SESSION
THURSDAY, APRIL 30 AT 7:00 P.M.

Learn more about the next AMI Primary Training Course starting June 29, 2015.
Jack Rice, Director of the Center for Montessori Education at Loyola University, will be answering questions about the M.Ed. program.

RSVP at info@hmiusa.org.
1–3. PHE students explore music and dance during conference days: James Winslow on the ukulele leads the children in song; dance teacher Helen Terry from NiaMoves guides the children in expressive movement.

4. During Tortillas and Talking with Ms. Bridges, a Gala auction item, students learned how to make homemade flour tortillas. They had a blast putting all the ingredients together and learning the steps how to knead, roll, and even eat the flour tortillas, all taught in Spanish.

5. Meet the Bearkats girls’ volleyball team. Bearkats and their families are being honored at the annual Celebration Banquet on April 29. See the back page for details.

6. POPA Coffee Workday may be over for the school year, but we need one more thing... Your presence at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Ice Cream Social! Let us show our thanks for all your work, big or small, done over the year. All volunteers are invited!
CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!
JOIN US FOR POST OAK’S ANNUAL

Thank You
Ice Cream Social

FRIDAY, MAY 15
3:30–4:30 P.M. IN THE PLAYGROUND GARDEN

Let us say thank you for all the volunteer efforts big and small that happened throughout this year. Post Oak parents, grandparents, and friends are the best volunteers around!
The POST

CALENDAR

APRIL 26–MAY 2

Spanish Market Day
(Bissonnet Campus)
9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Tue
4/28
New Parent
Welcome Reception
(Bissonnet Campus)
5:30–7:00 p.m.

Wed
4/29
Bearkats Celebration Banquet
6–8 p.m. (Bissonnet Campus)

Thu-Fri
4/30–5/1
Third graders to Camp Allen

Thu
4/30
HMI Information Gathering
Session (Bissonnet Campus)
7 p.m.

MAY 3–9

Big Work phone-a-thon begins

Mon–Fri
5/4–8
Middle School Odyssey trip
Sixth graders to Williamsburg

Tue
5/1
Cinco de Mayo

NOTICE BOARD

Bearkats Celebration Banquet

You’re invited to join us for our annual Bearkats Banquet as we honor the hard work of our Post Oak athletes and the families who support them. Meet us in the gym for an exciting program and catering by Beck’s Prime!

Wednesday, April 29
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Please RSVP by calling 713-661-6688
or email frontoffice@postoakschool.org.

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 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.

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

SPANISH MARKET DAY
a fundraiser for “The Star of Hope”
hosted by students of Maya Pinto

Tuesday, April 28, 9–2
in the Common Room