DEEPLY CURIOUS
by John Long, Head of School

Can you teach curiosity?

ONE POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL FRESHMAN

My week finished up with this note from Dr. Ott, Post Oak High School science teacher: "One of our students figured out how many molecules of water there are on the earth! Just thought you would like that piece of information. He got fascinated and figured it out."

That is curiosity in action.
ANTHONY DOERR
Several years ago, before he won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for his book All the Light We Cannot See, I wrote to Anthony Doerr and asked him to comment on his Montessori background. Here’s what he said:

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 27th. Recognizable humans didn’t show up until 11:48 pm on December 31st! 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? Looking back, I believe Montessori was one of the strongest influences in my life nudging me toward this kind of curiosity.

JASON SILVA
Another creative Montessori alum in the public eye is Jason Silva, host of “Brain Games” on National Geographic TV. (Here’s a great video clip, The Ecstasy of Curiosity, to introduce you to Silva. In it he says, “Our goal is to create spaces that allow us to stay curious.”)

In an interview, Silva was asked to reflect on his childhood and here’s what he said:

Q: Do you think we live in a nerd-centric society, i.e., where intelligence is sexy?

JS: Definitely. The heads of companies like Facebook and Apple have become the new icons of society and that has changed the perception of nerds: no longer on the sidelines but now at the center, changing the world.

Q: Were you bullied at school?

JS: Fortunately not, because I studied in a Montessori school in Caracas that did not follow the traditional system, but one that developed its curriculum based on the passion of the student. I was lucky to be in an environment where curiosity was celebrated and nerds were cool.

“Montessori was one of the strongest influences in my life nudging me toward this kind of curiosity.”
— Anthony Doerr

CAN YOU TEACH CURIOSITY?

Curiosity, creativity, teamwork, ethics, resilience, and time management: can you teach them? Can you measure them?

That’s exactly what the INDEX schools wanted to know, so five years ago they partnered with Educational Testing Service (ETS) in a research project to answer those questions — a research project that Post Oak joined last year. The INDEX schools are a national consortium of private schools, and its project, the Mission Skills Assessment (MSA), aims to measure and promote the development of the six non-cognitive skills listed above. The INDEX schools’ web site says, “These skills have proven essential for success in school and in life. The assessment gives each school a more scientific way to measure its curriculum’s success at meeting the goals outlined in its mission.”

We at Post Oak believe that you can teach curiosity, but you do so indirectly, not with a pre-packaged curriculum, not with a brilliant lesson plan, and not with motivational posters. You teach curiosity by developing a culture that encourages
IT’S POST OAK FUND MONTH
PLEASE DONATE.

Why give? In private, independent schools, the annual fund is a regular and routine source of funding. All families are asked to make a meaningful contribution to the annual fund because those unrestricted gifts give the school the financial stability and flexibility to cover unexpected expenses and take advantage of unexpected opportunities.

The annual fund benefits every student, every class, and each campus.

ALL GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

DID YOU KNOW?

Annual Fund gifts helped the school in a variety of ways last year including:

1. Financial aid was increased across all levels.
2. Professional Development costs were significantly increased.
3. Elementary and Middle School received 60 new Chromebooks.
4. The entire gym air conditioning system was replaced.
5. The art room and library’s air conditioning system was replaced with a special humidity controlling air conditioning system.
6. The east and west Primary pods received new pipes and a sprinkler system along with a new water main in that area.
7. To transport more students, a new van was purchased for the Bissonnet campus with annual fund contributions.
8. The board continues its commitment to make annual contributions to the endowment from annual fund dollars.
9. Primary gardens were enhanced with the addition of new furniture and fixtures paid for by these unrestricted funds.
10. A full facilities audit took place detailing all of the necessary maintenance for the long-term care of the Bissonnet building.

Letters and reply forms have been mailed, and donations for the 2015—2016 school year can also be made online.

Our sincere thanks to Post Oak Fund Chairs Lucinda and Javier Loya and our Class Captain volunteers for their efforts.

Basham ............ Erin and Justin Goodman
Brooks ............. Erin Alford
Dalsey Kimball ...... Allison Hamilton
Guerrero .......... Candace Day
Hansen ............ Seunghee Fuller
Klus .. .......... Seunghee Fuller
Middle School ...... Zeenath and Arjun Selvakumar
Mistretta .......... Samantha Wykoff
Nickerson .......... Shelley Quillin
Parraguire .......... Sanchita Jain
Olizki ............. Kelly and Blake Hill
E. Pinto ......... Amy Kirchner
M. Pinto .......... Kimberly Callahan
Sood .......... Stacey Martin
Taj Mahmood ...... Paige Penchas
Townsend .......... Pamela Griffin-Minnich and Gene Minnich
Winton .......... Christine Green
9th grade ......... Michelle Lu
10th grade ........ Abbe Forman
11th grade .......... Katie Orr
12th grade ......... Mary Birk
Board ............. John Long -100%!
Faculty/Staff ......... Miriam Winton -100%!

PARENTS 14%

EMPLOYEES 100%

TRUSTEES 100%
Currently, our middle school is in the middle of our Fundamentals of Human Society unit where we are studying three civilizations: Mesopotamia, The Indus Valley, and Southwestern Native Americans. Complementing this study, we went to Arizona to learn about Native American societies.

MONTEZUMA CASTLE NATIONAL MONUMENT
As soon as we arrived in Arizona, we headed to Montezuma Castle National Monument: a very famous site of Native American cliff dwellings. Montezuma’s Castle is the most famous, but another site called Castle A was much bigger than Montezuma’s Castle; however, it burned down. Situated on high cliffs, we could only speculate on how the Native Americans managed to build this tower and live in it.

GRAND CANYON GEOLOGY
When we arrived at the Grand Canyon, we were met by two rangers who taught us about the geology of the area. By the end of our class, we had learned a brief history of the canyon. The rangers taught us about the different layers of rock that have piled up on each other over the millions of years. They also taught us interesting facts about the Colorado Plateau, the Colorado River that carves through the canyon, and so much more. It was a gratifying experience, as we were actually sitting on the edge of the canyon and could physically see the geology of it.

GRAND CANYON HIKE
This experience was by far the highlight of this trip for me. As we had already seen the Grand Canyon that morning, I thought that I knew how it looked. I thought that there was nothing more to it, but I was quickly proven wrong. The trail that we hiked down was very beautiful, as it gave us many different perspectives on the Canyon. It was rocky and uneven, and many times I had to hold on to someone for dear life. (This might be biased because I have an irrational fear of heights, but I swear it was SCARY). Luckily, we safely made it down ¾ of a mile into the Grand Canyon. As we made our way down the trail into the Grand Canyon, I began to see more and more things that I would have never noticed before from just one point of view. The sight was spectacular, so we all sat down for a bit to talk about the different kinds of rocks.
that we saw. There was sandstone, basalt, shale, limestone, and many other fascinating rocks. It was an awesome hike and we all learned a great deal.

**NATIVE AMERICAN PETROGLYPHS**

Hiking to see Native American petroglyphs (prehistoric rock carvings), we saw several pictures. These pictures included some sort of lizard and what looked like a group of people standing together. It was apparent that these petroglyphs can be interpreted in many different ways and left us asking many questions.

**LOWELL OBSERVATORY**

On Wednesday night, we went to the Lowell Observatory, one of the oldest observatories in the United States. Here we were able to see Saturn, a double star, and even an old galaxy through telescopes. We could see the Milky Way with our naked eye: a band of faint light shaped like a rainbow. We even got to see the observatory’s old library, where we were given a presentation about constellations, nearby galaxies, and so much more.

**OWL PELLETS**

At the beginning of the day, I wasn’t very sure that I wanted anything to do with owl pellets, which are basically little pieces of owl regurgitation. However, the more we learned about them and dissected them, the more interested I grew. We found so many things in the pellets, including small rodents, teeth, skulls, and more. In the beginning, I was grimacing at the thought of touching one of the pellets, but by the end of the task I found myself wanting to hold them up to my eye to get a closer look. After that day I will forever be more appreciative of animal vomit.

**THE MUSEUM**

After we finished our activity with the owl pellets, our instructor showed us around the land that the museum sat on. We saw some really cool buildings and she talked about how the prairie dogs are always eating the food in the gardens that they are growing on the land. We brainstormed for a bit on ways that they could stop that from happening.

**OLD CAVES**

This hike was by far the longest, but the most fun hike of the trip. We climbed a giant hill, and when we finally reached the top, we were triumphant. I remember yelling “VICTORY” when I reached the top. Up there we discovered little caves in the ground that contained broken pieces of pottery that the Native Americans made years ago.
ELDEN PUEBLO PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY
During our visit to the ruins of a Native American village called Elden Pueblo, we did several activities. One of the most interesting activities was when we were able to excavate Native American artifacts (usually pottery shards). Elden Pueblo engages their visitors by letting them uncover Native American artifacts from the past. These artifacts are carefully saved and added to Elden Pueblo’s large collection.

ANALYZING ARTIFACTS
After the artifacts are excavated, they are classified. We learned the different types of pottery that the Native Americans made, as well as the different stone tools that were used. This activity really helped us learn how scientists analyze artifacts from the past.

NATIVE AMERICAN HUNTING
One of our tour guides taught us how the Native Americans living in this area hunted by allowing us to play with mock weapons. Instead of piercing a real animal with a spear, we were able to throw blunt arrows into haystacks. Instead of knocking out a rabbit with this boomerang-like object we tried to hit cardboard stands with pictures of rabbits on them with this weapon. Overall, it was a very fun and memorable experience.

TOUR OF ELDEN PUEBLO
We were given a tour of Elden Pueblo during our time here. We saw all of the rooms at the village, and we learned a lot about the lifestyle that the Native Americans followed. We learned that this village was a matriarchal society, which was very interesting. Another interesting fact was that Elden Pueblo has sort of created a time capsule. They are keeping a part of the village un-excavated for future generation to uncover with better archaeological tools.

VOLLEYBALL GAME
Instead of sitting around and doing nothing in a hotel room, we decided to go to a college girl’s volleyball game on Thursday night. Northern Arizona University was playing against Idaho University. Some of us were applauding the home team, while others were cheering on the visiting team since they were staying in the same hotel as we were. Both teams excelled; but in the end, the home team won 3 games to 1!

SCENIC BUS RIDE
On the last morning of our trip when we were heading out to the airport on the bus, our bus driver decided to take the longer route so we could see some nearby monuments. First we saw Red Rock, where we all took a group picture. Unfortunately we couldn’t stay very long, but what we saw of it was beautiful! Next we passed by the Capitol building in Phoenix, and got to see downtown Phoenix. This was very different because a lot of what we saw during the week were big rocks and trees, and natural landscapes. The whole bus ride to the airport was really entertaining, because with a group as energetic as ours, you always had someone to sing along with, or play or talk or whatever you needed to do.

Overall, it was a great experience and we cannot wait for our next trip. 😊
We are pleased to offer

**Parent Education Nights**

at Post Oak High School, presented by Lori Scovill, POHS counselor

These one hour discussions are designed to:

- **Answer** parenting questions
- **Provide Opportunities** for parent discussion
- **Find ideas and solutions**
- **Discover** how parents influence optimal development

**Join Us!**

**2015—2016 WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE:**
- November 4th, December 2nd,
- February 3rd, March 2nd, and April 6th

All discussions will be held from 7—8:00 p.m.
at the Post Oak High School
Mystery Boxes Demystified

by Nicole Bignen Pedersen, 2015 Field Day Co-Chair

Last year, my family’s first year at Post Oak, my kids came home one day pleading with me to buy raffle tickets to win the "mystery boxes." Having no idea what they were talking about, I mostly ignored this request and even smiled politely but refused the volunteers in the carpool lines selling the tickets. Then, the morning of Field Day, we walked past the magical, fantastic towers known as mystery boxes and immediately succumbed. Now a seasoned Post Oak parent, I understand not just the appeal but the purpose of mystery boxes. Field Day is a free event for our community. Everyone is invited and can attend without any admission price. This wonderful party is funded entirely by the proceeds from the mystery box raffle tickets. Inside each box are surprises - for example, toys or gift cards. Maybe your children will win one of the boxes (mine didn’t), but even if not, buying mystery box tickets is how we create this jubilant celebration of our community.

JOIN US FOR THIS FREE FAMILY FUN EVENT!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
10 A.M.—1 P.M.
ON THE POST OAK BACK FIELD.

Field Day Raffle Tickets are on sale as of Friday, 10/9, in Debbie Henderson’s office and the Development Office. They will also be sold during arrivals and dismissal the week of Field Day.
**Field Day Activities**

- Inflatables
- Bungee Jumping
- Henna Hand Painting
- Dads Club
- Relay Races
- Gran Balón de Fútbol
- Fabulous Food Trucks
- Bearkat Salon: face painting, tattoos, happy hair
- Blanket Making – Community Service
- DJ
- Petting Zoo
- Trendy Touches
- Photobooth
- The Magnificent Muffin walk
- Middle School Microeconomy
- Jump Rope, Hula Hoop Competitions
- And the grand Mystery Box Raffle!

Field Day Mystery Boxes: Get your raffle tickets ready.

Inflatables, games and much more fun in the sun!

YUM! Come hungry, there's a tasty food truck lineup for 2015!
Dates to keep in mind at Post Oak High School:

**October 14th @8:00 a.m.:** P/SAT for all 9th-11th grade students. What is the P/SAT and why is it important? The P/SAT is a nationwide, multiple-choice test taken by about 3.4 million high school students every year—mostly sophomores and juniors. At Post Oak, we test all 9th-11th graders. A great primer for the SAT and even the ACT, the P/SAT is shorter than the SAT and ACT. The P/SAT/NMSQT does not count towards college admissions; however, it is the qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships (11th grade only). That means that the highest scoring students may win scholarship money. To read more about the P/SAT, you may visit: [www.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt](http://www.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt)

**October 22nd @11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m., HARN College Fair at POHS.**
The Houston Area Recruiter’s Network is a community of professional college and university representatives from a variety of non-profit, accredited, two (2) and four (4) year academic institutions who serve Houston area high school students and their families with integrity. HARN is committed to collaborating with high school and college counselors to provide educational access and resources tailored for each student and their needs for future endeavors. This website is intended as a resource for college counselors and students who would like more information about the various universities represented in the HARN network. For more information, please visit: [https://houstonarearecruiternetwork.wordpress.com](https://houstonarearecruiternetwork.wordpress.com)

We routinely have colleges visit the Post Oak High School. See the college visit schedule through November on page 13.

Deeply Curious... continued from page 2

questions, and by creating spaces that are rich in possibility and that allow children to stay curious.

In our first year participating in the MSA, Post Oak students scored in the top 5 of 90 schools on the measure of curiosity, a result that would not have surprised either Jason Silva or Anthony Doerr.

© John Long and The Post Oak School
Post Oak High School National Honor Society Induction

Congratulation to the charter members of the Post Oak High School National Honor Society Chapter.

12th grade
12th grade
12th grade
12th grade
11th grade
11th grade
10th grade

#postoakproud

POHS students taking the National Honor Society oath.

The National Honor Society Charter

Names, scholarship, leadership, service, and character are the four central qualities of membership in the National Honor Society. The National Honor Society was founded in 1926 to provide recognition for students who achieve excellence in these areas. The National Honor Society is open to students in grades 9-12. The charter for the National Honor Society at Post Oak HS was granted on March 18, 2015.

The Post Oak High School
Chapter of the National Honor Society

The Post Oak High School
Tara D. Sullivan
National Honor Society Advisor

March 18, 2015

#postoakproud
Have you lived in Houston for 10+ years?

By Dr. Jamie Lee, Integrated History and Social Science teacher

Students of Integrated History and Social Sciences and English Language Arts will be partnering with the University of Houston’s Center for Public History and Houston’s History Magazine by conducting oral histories during the month of October. These projects will be part of the permanent archives at U of H.

We are looking for Post Oak families or friends who have lived in Houston for at least ten years and have played an active role in the business or social community. We specifically request individuals or business owners in the Museum District, but invite anyone in Houston to reply.

If you know someone, or are willing yourself to be interviewed for this project, please email Dr. Jamie Lee, jamielee@postoakschool.org.

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FISH (Families Integrating School & Home) MEETING

Friday, November 6 at 9:00 a.m.
in the Common Room

Three Levels of Obedience

PRESENTED BY:
Maya Pinto

Applicable for YCC, Primary and Elementary families. Obedience is seen as something which develops in much the same way as other aspects of the child’s character.

All parents are invited to attend this event.

THE POST OAK MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Come meet our POMS faculty and tour our dynamic learning environment. Parents will hear the voices of current middle school students and teachers. A panel of students will present “A Day in the Life of a POMS student.” We will also highlight the special features of our program including trips, community service, technology, clubs, occupations, specials, and academics.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20
7:00 P.M.
This year the Post Oak High School will be commemorating a week of service by partnering with organizations across Houston from October 10 – 17. Spearheaded by our National Honor Society, this year students have created the theme “POHS is Community.”

This year’s lineup includes:
- Amazing Place Houston
- BrighterBites
- Centennial Gardens
- Covenant House
- Head for the Cure
- Hermann Park
- Houston Food Bank - Portwall Warehouse
- Keegan Kitchen
- MAMA / Houston Parks Department
- Meals On Wheels
- Nehemiah Center
- Plant It Forward
- Small Steps
- The Joy School
- The Post Oak School Field Day

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:
COLLEGES ARE VISITING POST OAK HIGH SCHOOL

10/13/15 @ 11:30 a.m.
Sam Houston State Univ.
10/16/15 @ 9:00 a.m.
Rhodes College

10/22/15 @ 11:45 a.m.
HARN College Fair @ POHS!
(20+ colleges)

10/28/15 @ 11:45 a.m.
Sewanee: University of the South
11/5/15 @ 11:45 a.m.
Penn State University

COFFEE WITH THE ELEMENTARY DIRECTOR AND SPECIALISTS

Parents of students at all levels are invited to the Coffee with Elementary Director. At this month’s coffee, you will also have an opportunity to hear from our wonderful specialists: Saida Fagala will share colorful tales from the art room; James Winslow will tell us about current and future music at Post Oak; Ninfa Bridges will demonstrate how she uses custom-made materials for Spanish lessons; Cory Eckert will discuss how the library serves as a literary hub for students and teachers; and Kat Trevino will lead us on a journey through running club, PF and Bearkats. We hope to see you there.

OCTOBER 14, 2015 at 9 a.m.
at the Bissonnet campus
Celebrating 14 months through 12th grade for the first time in Post Oak history
**CALENDAR**

**OCTOBER 11 - OCTOBER 17**

- **Week of 10/10-17**
  - **Mon 10/12**
    - Columbus Day
    - Teacher in-service
    - School closed for all students
  - **Wed 10/14**
    - Coffee with EL Director & Specialists
    - 9:00 a.m.
  - **Wed 10/14**
    - PSAT/NMSQT for high school students
    - 8:00 a.m.
  - **Sat 10/17**
    - Field Day Family Event
    - 10:00 a.m. — 1 p.m.

**OCTOBER 18 - OCTOBER 24**

- **Mon-Thurs 10/19-22**
  - Individual School Pictures (Bissonnet campus)
  - **Tues 10/20**
    - The Middle School Experience
    - 7:00 p.m.
  - **Fri 10/23**
    - Conference Day: reserved for students new to class. Class not in session; only students with expanded year contracts attend YCC in session

**NOTICE BOARD**

**PARENT-TEACHER FALL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION**

Conference days are October 9, October 23 (YCC in session) and November 13. If you have not already done so, please sign up for a conference by going to [www.postoakschool.org](http://www.postoakschool.org) ▶ For Parents ▶ Schedule/View a Parent-Teacher Conference and use your My BackPack login information.

**VOLUNTEERS needed for Field Day**

Field Day: *Good Times, Unplugged!* is around the corner and we need parent volunteers to make it happen. Click on the link below to sign up for a ½ hour shift (or two!) at the event OR to help sell raffle tickets in advance. We need lots of volunteers.

This family fun event happens on **Saturday, October 17 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

To sign up click here:

[www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044cacab23a5f85-field](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044cacab23a5f85-field)

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**ADVANTAGE MOBILE APP FOR MY BACKPACK**

Parents can view the school directory via your Apple or Android device. Go to [App Store](https://appstore.com) for iPhone or [Google Play store](https://play.google.com) for Android users, search for ‘Advantage Senior Systems,’ and install it. The Post Oak School code is `postoakschool`. Use the same user name and password as My BackPack.

The Getting Started with My BackPack User Guide is found on the school’s website.

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**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 Rachel Dupuis ([racheldupuis@postoakschool.org](mailto:racheldupuis@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 International Baccalaureate® Programme (IBO) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS).

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