The mission of The Post Oak School is to prepare an outstanding Montessori environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation and peace, and to provide experiences that promote curiosity, inquiry and engagement. Designed according to the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics and needs of the learner, our methods guide and nurture each individual from infancy to adulthood. The school’s approach is grounded in the principles of AMI Montessori education.”
This is the school’s newly revised mission statement, drafted by a representative group of faculty and staff, reviewed by the full faculty, and adopted by the board of trustees. Does the mission statement really matter? Yes, so long as it is in active use and accurately portrays the school. At Post Oak the mission statement appears in every classroom and office at the school, and when important and difficult decisions are made, the mission is always ‘on the table.’ We describe ourselves as ‘a mission-driven school.’ The mission statement, complemented by the ‘Portrait of a Graduate’ and the ‘Portrait of a Teacher,’ most succinctly describe who we are and what our aspirations are as a school.

Three sentences; sixty-eight words: what do they mean? What do they say?

The mission of The Post Oak School is to prepare an outstanding Montessori environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation and peace, and to provide experiences that promote curiosity, inquiry and engagement.

We prepare an environment and provide experiences.

Dr. Montessori said that the teacher’s first responsibility is to prepare the environment for the children, an environment suited to their developmental stage, and characteristics as learners. It is an environment that includes specially prepared learning materials; an environment that is orderly and beautiful; an environment that inspires and invites learning; an environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation and peace.

Within this prepared environment, we invite the children to have real, hands-on experiences. As Dr. Montessori said, “education is not what the teacher gives; education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the individual, and is acquired not by listening to words but by experiences in the environment,” – experiences that promote curiosity, inquiry and engagement; experiences that promote deep concentration and a long attention span; experiences that promote intrinsic motivation and love of learning.

Designed according to the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics and needs of the learner, our methods guide and nurture each individual from infancy to adulthood.

First, there’s that word ‘learner.’ It’s a little odd. But it speaks to our focus on learning rather than teaching; to our focus on the child first and foremost; and to our insistence that the student must be an active agent in her own education.

Our educational methods are grounded in developmental psychology, understanding that the young person’s needs and characteristics evolve over the first twenty-four years of life as they grow from infancy to adulthood. We do more than teach students everything they need to know. We view children holistically, and attend to all four major domains of development: the physical, emotional, social and intellectual. Schools have traditionally focused on the intellectual domain – on what children should be required to know – to the exclusion of the other developmental domains; and in doing so, fail to explicitly develop many of the skills needed for success at work and in life. Yes, children need to know how to read and write and do arithmetic; but they also need to know how to collaborate on a project; how to be a leader – and a follower; how to speak out in a group, and to make a speech from a podium; how to manage frustration and disappointment; how to plan, and manage time and responsibilities. Post Oak does all the above.

The school’s approach is grounded in the principles of AMI Montessori education.

Since its founding in 1963, The Post Oak School has looked to the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) for the training of its teachers and for pedagogical guidance. AMI represents commitment to Montessori’s core principles. Montessori described her educational method as ‘scientific pedagogy.’ It is a method that began from a scientist’s careful observation of children and evolved through trial and error over a period of decades. As an authentic Montessori school, Post Oak provides a qualitatively distinct option among the school choices in Houston. Post Oak is committed to the Montessori approach because it has proven effective over the years, and in Post Oak alums you can consistently observe the positive personal characteristics common to Montessori grads around the world. At the same time, Post Oak’s commitment to scientific pedagogy means that we attend to the most current research in developmental psychology, behavioral psychology.
DID YOU KNOW?  
(from the Annual Fund brochure)

Why does the school ask us for contributions in addition to what we already pay for tuition?

Annual Funds are common practice among independent schools. From pre-schools to colleges, independent schools all use annual funds to help compensate for expenses not covered by tuition. In fact, over 90% of these schools operate on a tuition gap basis where the tuition is 10–25% less than total expenses. They depend entirely upon their annual funds to cover the gap for budgeted expenses. The Post Oak School is different. Guided by Independent School Management (ISM) for the past twenty years, our administration takes a very conservative approach to ensure that our critical operating expenses (salaries, utilities, benefits, maintenance, etc.) are all covered by tuition. The Annual Fund is used for continuous improvement in facilities, professional development, technology enhancements, and classroom materials. It also ensures our long term stability by building up our cash reserves needed to cover unexpected expenses. All these contributions are needed to provide our children with the best environment possible.

Why doesn’t the school simply charge more tuition?

If tuition were increased many families could not afford to send their children to our school. This could mean a drop in enrollment resulting in steeper tuition increases and discretionary spending cuts which would ultimately affect your child’s education. Additionally, charitable contributions would be even more difficult to obtain.

Why do we ask for 100% participation from parents, members of the board, teachers and all other employees?

Post Oak also receives donations from foundations and corporations. These institutions will only consider support after they’ve seen that the people who are directly receiving the benefit from the institution have shown their commitment. 100% participation shows unquestionable support.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE.  ALL GIFTS MATTER.

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
Kluk ......... Seunghee Fuller
Middle School ...... Zeenath and Arjun Selvakumar
Mistretta .......... Samantha Wykoff
Nickerson ........ Shelley Quillin
Parraguierre .......... 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%!
It was a week of POHS ServicePalooza

By Jamie Lee and

Post Oak High School students participated in the second annual ServicePalooza, a week dedicated to service in our community. We paused morning classes for the week in an effort to expose students to the diverse needs of our community. These short introductions to organizations around Houston help students develop a deeper understanding of non-profit work and make connections for further service, internships or CAS work in IB. This year, students were at fifteen local organizations participating in a range of volunteer work from gardening, preparing meals and conducting science demonstrations.

ServicePalooza Locations:
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

POHS student: "How can we help?"
Please enjoy some student reflections from the week.

**CHANGE, BY**

ServicePalooza week can be summarized in one word: change. Sure, everyone had a different experience than I did, took away a variety of memories and emotions, and achieved a unique level of service. And all these distinct features of the week will result in a number of different words that we associate with ServicePalooza, but for me, that word is change.

Change, by definition, is neither positive or negative. But with the work we accomplished during that four day week, I can only think of positive change. I actively chose to work outside more often than not because making parks more pleasant and beautiful is a great way for me to picture a beneficial impact on someone’s life. And when I think of the work we did at food banks and kitchens, I envision a more practical and constructive effect on a person’s life.

No matter who we are, we will always need help at some point in our life. So for the Post Oak School to actively and enthusiastically search for and follow through on ways to positively change another’s life, we are creating an example for others to fulfill our moral obligations to humanity, and thus making the world that much of a better place to live.

**PRIDE, BY**

ServicePalooza is a week long event at POHS devoted to community service. One of the days that really stood out to me was the day we spent at Covenant House. Covenant House is a place for homeless teenagers, but it’s not simply a shelter. It is a community built around support.

The way this organization works was really inspiring to me. I loved how the people working there go an extra mile in ensuring the success of the kids that come their way. They try their best to make sure the kids never have to face a situation where they need a shelter ever again. I was shocked how even if they did fail, the Covenant House still provided support to get them back on their feet.

Moreover, the stories I heard from the residents there evoked a proud feeling in me. I say proud because for some reason I was proud for them for overcoming the obstacles they did, and that they are doing so well. One story that I still remember is of a young woman who was a victim of human trafficking. Her story was really sad, but I was amazed to see the hope and will in the way she talked about her experience and recovering from that experience.

In conclusion, the Covenant House really showed me the value of a support system. Moreover, it led me to want to contribute to organizations that really make a difference in someone’s life.

**AN “AMAZING” PLACE, BY**

Amazing Place truly lived up to its name, as it was amazing. When we arrived at this elderly home geared for people suffering from mild to moderate dementia, we were immediately greeted with open arms from both the people working there and the elders. We got a brief tour of the organization, which includes an exercise room, an art studio, and a meeting room that can accommodate all of the elders. Following this tour, we introduced ourselves to about 80 people who participate in the Amazing Place program. I specifically remember the faces of these people lighting up with smiles as we introduced ourselves.

After spending a couple minutes getting to know some of the elders, we went to their ‘Macho-Man’ exercise class, which was geared for some of the less mobile participants. I sat next to Leonard, a man in his eighties who told me about his children and his previous job, and Jen, a woman in her seventies whom I had a conversation with about her life while she was in Germany. We exercised for about 45 minutes, which turned out to be surprisingly tougher than any of us thought it would be.

We then transitioned to doing brain games to help stimulate and engage these participant’s brains to try to keep them healthy and active. I sat next to Barbara, who was one of the most joyful, happy and grateful people that I met while there. For all of the six students that volunteered at Amazing Place we all felt truly glad that we were given the opportunity to volunteer at this organization and meet so many amazing human beings.
Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

by Patricia Onofre

Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is an important festivity in many Spanish-speaking countries. Rather than being a sad occasion, El Día de Muertos is a happy one because it celebrates life and pays respect to our ancestors and loved ones. For the festivity, ofrendas (prepared tables) are placed in public places (community offerings), homes, and cemeteries. All students are invited to bring a photo, memento, story, or even a favorite food of their deceased loved ones to place in the ofrenda and to participate in Post Oak’s Día de Muertos celebration that will be held on November 4 and 5.

The Mission...

continued from page 2

cognitive science and neuroscience. This is why Post Oak is currently participating in a series of research projects focusing on student experience and the development of 21st century skills. This is why Post Oak belongs to school associations that invite us into self-study, and to continually ask, “How could we do that better?”

Post Oak’s mission statement was last revised in 1993. This latest version is highly consistent with its predecessor, and affirms the constancy of our educational vision and approach, while incorporating several improvements. Look for this revised mission statement to appear in classrooms, on the web site and in school publications.

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POPA COFFEE AND WORK DAY

8:45 A.M.-NOON

Join Post Oak parents at the Bissonnet campus on Wednesday, November 4 for a delightful morning of coffee, friends, and work. We hope to see you there.
YOUR VOICE MATTERS!
YOUR OPINIONS COUNT!

The Post Oak School Community is faced with two critically important projects this year:

1) The search for a new Head of School
2) Our Self-Study to renew our ISAS Accreditation (every 10 years)

Every member of our community is asked to participate in the corresponding surveys. You have already received links via email to the two Head Search surveys: Feedback and Culture Survey.

In early November be on the lookout for an email with a link to complete a Parent Survey for the ISAS Accreditation.

Let us know your thoughts on these important issues that will affect the future of The Post Oak School.

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.

VISION AND HEARING SCREENINGS

Pine Woods Screening Services, LLC (using state-certified screeners) will be conducting screenings Oct 28-30th. All children in the required ages/grades will be screened for vision, hearing, Texas risk assessment for type 2 diabetes for children (acanthosis nigricans or AN screening) and/or spinal.

REQUIRED AGES/GRADERS (AS OF SEPT 1, 2015) FOR VISION AND HEARING SCREENING: all first-time entrants age FOUR and older, ALL four year olds, all five, six, eight, ten & twelve year olds.

REQUIRED GRADES FOR A SCREENING: all children in 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th grades.

REQUIRED GRADES FOR SPINAL SCREENING: all children in 6th and 9th grades. Boys & girls need to remove their shirts when screened individually. Girls are requested to wear a bra, sports bra or swimsuit top.
A grand day was had by all at our annual Field Day event last Saturday. Our Field Day Chairs, Claudia Macias and Nicole Pedersen, planned a fun-filled day that included all the favorites and lots of new attractions. They also planned the perfect weather! Thanks to Nicole and Claudia, the Dads Club, our many volunteers at the event, raffle ticket sellers in carpool, room parents and volunteers who created the eye-catching mystery boxes, and all of you who purchased tickets to help us offset the costs of Field Day!
The Post Oak Cross Country season was a fun success!

Our runners experienced great personal gains over the season, shaving anywhere from 30 seconds to 4 minutes off their race times.

At our last two meets, we had two runners bring home some hardware: [Name] brought home a 13th place medal from the Dolphin Dash; [Name] brought home a 5th place medal from the Faith West meet.

Our teams made notable advancements at each meet. In fact, at our last meet, the girls’ team placed 7th out of 18 teams and the boys’ team placed 11th out of 22 teams.

It was a joy to watch our runners work and succeed!

“The will to succeed means nothing without the will to prepare.”

Runners, thank you for joining the team. Parents, thank you for your support throughout the season.

Congratulations to all! 🏆
Grandparents’ 
Friends’

&

Days

AT THE POST OAK SCHOOL

November 23 & 24, 2015

Invitations to be mailed soon!

If you would like your child’s grandparents or other relatives/friends to receive an invitation to this year’s Grandparents’ & Friends’ Days, please visit www.postoakschool.org (left hand menu option) and submit their mailing address.

If you already know which guests are coming, please make sure they RSVP.

For questions contact Christina Cantu at christinacantu@postoakschool.org

PATHWAYS to INDEPENDENCE

YOUR PARENTING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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
Hmmmm, community service. Where do I begin? What about the fact that it's AMAZING. We go to community service every week, and every group spends about 90 minutes at their chosen location. We have six groups that go to a variety of different places to give a helping hand. My group, which is Ms. Chetrit's group (cough, cough the best group) goes to Small Steps every Tuesday; Mr. Belis’ group also goes to Small Steps, but to a different campus; Mrs. Lundeen’s group goes to Sheltering Arms to spend time with seniors with dementia; Mrs. Long’s group goes to the Mandarin Chinese School across the street to help first graders practice reading; Mrs Lopez and Ms. Onofre’s group goes to Meals on Wheels to deliver meals door-to-door, and Mr. Sweeney’s group goes to The Joy School where they spend time reading to children with social and learning differences.

My experience with community service so far this year has been truly inspiring. I did not have the chance to go to Small Steps and work with the young children last year, so I was extremely excited for this opportunity at the start of this year. My group gets to play and work for one hour with children of low-income families. We have two buddies who range between the ages of 3-4 years old, and we spend time with them, trying to connect and play with them individually.

I have two girls as my buddies: Isabella and Lucero. At first, I had trouble connecting with either of my buddies, but after a few consistent visits, they started to feel more comfortable and were able to open up a bit. At the beginning of the year, Lucero would not look or interact with me, but today she laughed, high-fived me, and spoke for the first time to me! She said "play-doh" and even though that is such a simple word, it was a huge deal to me. I like to think that by the end of the year, they will think of me as their second family. After all, it’s only the beginning of the school year, and we have a whole great seven months ahead of us!

Being with my buddy is even better than being with someone who is my own age, because I get to see their perspective on the world around us. They think such abstract thoughts, and they are not afraid to voice them. It makes me wish I was four again!

Community service has been my favorite part of the week so far, and I am sure that it will continue to get better as my relationship with my buddies grows.
Middle School helping the YCC playground area stay beautiful.

A Middle School student enjoys reading at The Joy School.
1. When a Primary child draws the parts of a turtle, he reinforces his knowledge of scientific nomenclature while developing hand control and deepening concentration.

2. Enjoying a quiet and thoughtful moment on the playground.

3. An Elementary student painting the diffusion of light as it penetrates the depths of the ocean.

4. "I developed a theory of optimal experience based on the concept of flow—the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter." - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

5. When an older Primary child chooses to polish silver, she desires to make a positive contribution to her classroom environment.

6. BigWork continues at Post Oak High School.

7. At the Primary level, most lessons are presented to children individually.

8. Every practical life task has an orderly procedure: a beginning, middle and end. Rolling up the mat and putting away the apron completes the task.

9. A child in YCC watches her teacher’s hand intently during a lesson on how to serve snack food.

10. A Middle School student prepares cookies in anticipation of Field Day. (see page 8-9)
**CALENDAR**

**OCTOBER 25 - OCTOBER 31**

**Mon** 10/26  
High School Individual School Pictures

**Tues-Fri** 10/27-30  
Upper Elementary trip

**Wed-Fri** 10/28-30  
Hearing & Vision Screening  
*See ad inside for more info*

**Fri** 10/30  
High School Halloween Party

**NOVEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 7**

**Sun** 11/01  
Daylight Saving Time ends

**Wed** 11/04  
POPA Coffee/Work Day  
8:45 a.m. — noon

**Wed-Thurs** 11/04-05  
Dia de los Muertos

**Fri** 11/06  
FISH Meeting  
Families Integrating School and Home  
9:00 a.m.

**Sat** 11/07  
Dads Club Work Day

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**NOTICE BOARD**

**What is TEDxYouth Day?**

It is a physical-virtual event hosted by schools around the world on or near Universal Children’s Day. This year’s theme is Made in the Future. Students will present on topics they are passionate about; topics like Economics of Climate Change, Cultural Diversity, How Important Numbers are in our Everyday Life, etc. Post Oak School will be participating with other ISAS schools.

The TED stage will be set at The Emery/Weiner School on November 14, 2015 from 8 a.m. — 1 p.m.

**ADVANTAGE MOBILE APP FOR MY BACKPACK**

Parents can view the school directory via your Apple or Android device. Go to App Store for iPhone or Google Play store 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). 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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