I was at a dinner last night with several dozen people who are actively working to improve mobility in Houston. A transportation dinner? Really? Here’s the skinny: transforming our streets and developing multi-modal transportation will affect more than quality of life in Houston; it is an issue that will increasingly impact the region’s economic vitality. Mayor Turner is calling for a paradigm shift in the way we think about transportation. Dinner guests included
people from the Kinder Institute, TX-DOT, the Houston Parks Board, Houston Tomorrow, Rice Design Alliance, Houston B-Cycle, BikeHouston, Traffic Engineers Inc., City of Houston Planning Department and a number of City Council members.

During dinner I had a great conversation with Councilwoman Amanda Edwards, who is an accomplished young woman. Check out her bio. Turns out she’s a Montessori kid, too. I commented to Ms. Edwards that academic accomplishment is important, but the chief aim of Montessori education is to develop personal characteristics such as self-direction, personal agency, and taking responsibility for one’s actions.

When I said that, her eyes lit up and she told me a personal story. As a child, she left Montessori after her primary years and entered a traditional first grade. She wasn’t happy with the change, so on her own initiative she made an appointment with the school principal to say that she was not being challenged in her new class. She requested that she be moved into second grade so that the work would be more challenging. I said that sounded like a Montessori kid. I told her that I’d received a hand-delivered letter this week from three nine-year old girls proposing that we build a gaga ball pit on the playground. By the end of the afternoon they were outside with Mr. Schneider, measuring tape in hand.

I also heard Montessori echoes from Ms. Edwards when she stated, “I believe in a life of service,” and in illustration, talked about her experience working in post-Katrina New Orleans as inspiring her non-profit board work and subsequent government service. She has also been involved in community development initiatives.

Coincidentally, I received a note today from the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota (MTCM), asking if I could put them in touch with Pulitzer Prize winner Anthony Doerr, also a Montessori alum. MTCM is organizing an event at the new St. Paul’s stadium in St. Paul, celebrating Montessori All Stars—past, present, and future. This is a great idea and I suggested they consider adding Amanda Edwards to the list—along with diplomats Ronan Farrow and Samantha Power; musicians Joshua Bell and Taylor Swift; athlete Steph Curry; and entrepreneurs Jeremy Allaire and Will Wright. At the same time, I cautioned that in our cultural obsession with the rich and famous, we need to avoid the People magazine treatment and instead focus on the personal characteristics displayed by this group of extraordinary individuals.

What are those personal traits commonly found in Montessori grads? Look through the profiles of the people listed above and you’ll see these traits over and over again:

- Creativity...in the arts, in business, in problem solving;
- Curiosity...always wondering 'what if?';
- Courage...to be different, to be wrong, to try something new, to succeed wildly;
- Self-knowledge...good at being themselves, comfortable in their own skins, advocate for themselves;
- Entrepreneurial orientation...self-directed, pursue their passions with single-minded dedication, hard-working, business-minded;
- Personal accountability...take responsibility for their own actions, and expect that of others
- Social skills...collaborative, stand up for themselves, connect well with others.

What leads to success in personal life, professional life and business? This is a pretty good list. ☝️

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Success on the Field

Senior Megan received the USPA Interscholastic Varsity Letter for 2016 from the United States Polo Association (USPA) for meeting various requirements from her Interscholastic Polo participation. This included a minimum of 100 hours of polo riding and training, a number of qualified games, participation in regional and/or national game, and two letters of recommendation (one of which had to be from someone in the polo community who was familiar with her abilities, skills, and team participation). This is in addition to the Lettering program from the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) where she has received their Lettering recognition in all high school grades (9 through 12) for her riding, which included her hunter jumping equestrian participation. Congratulations Megan!

Young Leaders Institute Acceptance

Congratulations to Andrew who was accepted to the Young Leaders Institute at the Asia Society Texas Center:

In order to be prepared for the challenges of the 21st century, students need to be globally competent. The Young Leaders Institute (YLI) is a week-long program intended to prepare Houston high school students for leadership in a globally interconnected city and world. Most students do not understand the nature of global challenges, such as terrorism, climate change, human-environmental interactions, world trade, demographic change, and global conflict. In 2016, YLI will focus on China’s global challenges, including: cybersecurity, climate change and energy cooperation, and military challenges involving the South China Sea. Students will engage in the four tenets of global competency:

1. Investigate the world
2. Recognize perspectives
3. Communicate ideas
4. Take action

Throughout the week, students will learn the value of collaboration as they work in teams, researching, debating, and presenting solutions for the challenges facing our world. They will be mentored throughout the week by Asia Society staff and local experts in their respective fields.
Middle School Goes to Washington

by Dua'a and Megha

Middle School students

Last week, Post Oak Middle School went on a week-long trip to Washington DC as a culmination of our Conflict and Peace unit in humanities. This unit is about acts of peace and global conflicts like the Holocaust, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and terrorist groups like Boko Haram. In DC, we visited museums, memorials, government organizations, and we walked a lot (about 30 miles).

We first went to different Smithsonian museums in DC. I went to the Renwick Gallery, a contemporary art exhibition. Just like people of the past cannot explain our struggles in the present day, art made in the past cannot either. However, people and art today are expressive of today. I would go as far as to say that contemporary art understands the present day. We saw colorful tsunamis, nests that looked like pointy elf hats, and skulls made of insects, just to name a few.

I never thought I would describe a cemetery as "awesome," but that was the first word that struck me when I saw the Arlington Cemetery, a place where American soldiers and the Kennedys lay at rest. And I mean "awesome" in the literal meaning of the word: struck with awe. I did not take any pictures, but I still remember the dew drops on the grass and graves, making them sparkle on that sunny Tuesday morning.

From one kind of monument to another, the Holocaust Museum was a touching place to visit. The museum described Hitler’s rise to power, the extermination of the Jews and other groups, and the liberation of the people in the Nazi camps. I passed by several people with tears in their eyes. Later, I would come to find that some of those people were our students. As for me, I mostly felt frustration. Perhaps the part of the museum where I became the most outraged was the last bit of the museum; it showed videos of children in conflicts around the world that are happening right now. Never again? It has happened again.

It was interesting that we visited the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), a governmental organization that finds solutions for conflicts, right after we visited a museum about WWII, the deadliest conflict ever. Here, we discussed the importance of peace, mercy, trust, and justice in the mediation of a conflict. We also had a speaker talk to us about the conflict in Mali that she was studying. We were able to gain a better understanding of the work that the USIP does this way.

On Wednesday, we had the opportunity to visit some breathtaking and moving memorials, such as the Lincoln, Korean War Veterans, and World War II memorials. The Lincoln memorial was very crowded, so we did not stay in there for long, but we did go outside in front of the memorial building to take pictures in front of the Washington Monument. Our class has expanded our photography skills throughout this trip, with all the fantastic photo opportunities that we just couldn’t miss! After that, we walked towards the World War II memorial, which was stunning, and it saddened us quite a bit after just seeing the horrors of this war in the Holocaust Museum just a day before.

We then visited The Korean War Veterans memorial, which was very touching, and on one of the walls, there was a quote that truly resonated with me, and it said, “Freedom

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Middle School Goes to Washington
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is not free.” Going into this trip thinking about all the conflicts that happened and are still happening, it made me think of all the people around that world that are sacrificing so much, for freedom.

I was so happy that we got to explore what the Smithsonian Museums have to offer so much more this year! One of my favorite ones this year was the Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden and Museum. It was very modern and was one of those all in your face, BAM type of situations. The art was very liberal, and it made you think. Another museum that we visited was the American Art Museum, which had much art based around the Presidents of the United States. It was very professional. The last museum that we visited was the Museum of Natural History, which was super informative, because we got to explore the parts of the museum that we wanted to, and the all of the visuals were cool and made you feel in touch with nature. That day, I learned a lot about the coral reef, and how it will look in a couple of years if we do not protect it. I am telling you; it will not be pretty. I loved exploring all of these interesting museums, and it was a great addition to our trip!

Peace Corps is a government organization established by John F. Kennedy in 1961 to “send Americans abroad to tackle the most pressing needs of people around the world.” At the Peace Corps building, several individuals gave us presentations on their personal experience. Before we had gone to Peace Corps in Washington DC, we had four former Peace Corps volunteers speak with us, including Mr. Long and Mrs. Long. Many of us were considering joining Peace Corps when we were older during this time. However, once we visited Peace Corps, I am sure that at least one person in Post Oak Middle School will go on to work in Peace Corps.

The spy museum might have been my favorite place that we went to, because, well, it was INCREDIBLE! A lot of us did not know that being a spy was an actual job, so learning all about it and what role it plays in conflicts around the globe was fascinating. Later on in the day, we visited the Pentagon. We got a tour of the whole building, and we learned a lot about the way the making of the Pentagon and its history. We were all very fascinated throughout the whole tour, and we obtained much knowledge from that visit.

Our trip to Washington DC was pretty amazing, and I would do anything to go back. All of our experiences were very memorable, and I think I am speaking for all of us when I say we learned a TON. It was a great mixture of fun and seriousness, from the Spy Museum, to the war memorials, to all of the great places that we ate. A special thank you to all of the travel managers and teachers for making this trip what it was. •

Congratulations to the Student Yearbook Committee and Advisor Monica Lundeen for this year’s beautiful book! Thank you for your hard work throughout this year to capture the life at school and our Post Oak family.
Stepping Back in Time to America’s Birthplace

by Andreas, Annie, Emory, Gabe, Kristin, Lydia, Pragya, Sammy, Sophia, Sutton, and Taylor, Upper Elementary students

The sixth grade students from all three Upper Elementary classes in our school recently took an exciting week long trip to Williamsburg, Virginia to explore the Historic Triangle.

In Jamestown, we visited a Native American village. In the village, there were people dressed up in traditional Powhatan Indian furs. We learned how to make rope by twisting yucca plants together. We also played an Indian game of corncob darts. It was very fun. We climbed aboard recreations of the first merchant ships to arrive in Jamestown. On one of the ships, there was a man who showed us how to be “knotty”. Next, we went to the Jamestown fort where we learned about colonial medicine and saw a soldier fire a musket. It took a long time to load the firearm, and it was very loud. In the Jamestown museum, we participated in a scavenger hunt finding answers to historical questions through the ages. The whole day’s experience was very memorable and enjoyable.

We got up bright and early the next day eager to explore Colonial Williamsburg. We drove to our first stop, the Governor’s Palace. The first thing we noticed as we walked in the palace was the large collection of weapons mounted on the wall. After further exploration of the palace, we stepped outside only to find large gardens composed of various flower types, hills, and even a hedge maze! We raced to the maze and played multiple tag games. We also went to the town jail and learned about the lifestyle of a jail keeper. We had a lot of fun exploring the jail cells and sitting on a throne (aka toilet). As the day wrapped up, we headed back to the hotel, awaiting the many adventures yet to come!

Our day at Yorktown began with a lecture in the museum on the Revolutionary War. We explored a detailed timeline of the events leading up to the Revolution. Outside the museum, we pretended to be privates in the Continental Army and learned some commands from a member of the militia. Once we finished, our “commander” fired a real Flintlock musket. We explored a Continental Army encampment and learned both how soldiers lived and the conditions they had to endure. Next, we went to the battlefield where the Battle of Yorktown took place. We sang our national anthem on a hill that overlooked the entire battlefield. As soon as we finished the anthem, we staged an attack on the redoubts 9 & 10, where American and French troops attacked the British at night, and we pretended to fire the cannons there. We wish we could have spent more time there, but we left feeling very patriotic.

During our time in the Historic Triangle, our group went to many night activities.

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On one of our favorite nights, we experienced a scary ghost walk where we heard stories about an arsonist, a widow, and a drunken pirate. We were also able to go to an African American Dance program that involved audience participation, and it really got us up and moving. One of our other favorite activities was the mock witch trial. The supposed witch had a lot of evidence against her, but in the end she was voted innocent. We got to see a play called 'Affairs of the Heart'. It was about a servant girl who was in love with her master, but had to let him marry a rich woman. Overall, all of these activities were both thrilling and exciting, and we would recommend them to everyone.

Our sixth grade trip to the Historic Triangle provided us with many hands on learning opportunities to experience what it was like to be a Native American, a colonist, a soldier, and a patriot in the birthplace of America.

Bearkats Wrap Up: What a Year!

by Mark Tucker, Bearkats Coach

Awesome! Fantastic! Ground-breaking! Those are just a few words to describe the year for the Bearkats.

With over 60 students participating in athletics this year across all levels of the school, even those words can’t describe the year. We participated in 6-7-8 grade cross country, volleyball, flag football, girls’ and boys’ basketball, and girls’ and boys’ soccer.

At the High School level the students competed in cross country, flag football, basketball, and soccer.

Our High School flag football team finished second in the TCSAAL-PSL Regional Championship, won the basketball Regional Championship, and finished second in soccer. Our 6-7-8 girls’ volleyball team won their league championship. 6-7-8 boys’ flag football won the TCSAAL-PSL Regional Championship, and the girls’ and boys’ teams of 6-7-8 grades finished second in both basketball and soccer. Our teams competed in more than 85 games and/or meets over the course of the year, by far the most ever at Post Oak.

We awarded three Bearkat Heart Awards this year with the winners this year being Dua’a [redacted] for the 6-7-8 grade girls, Alexander [redacted] for the 6-7-8 grade boys, and our first ever High School winner, Rains [redacted] (pictured left).

We look forward to even more growth next school year! Go Bearkats!

Stepping Back in Time...

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MORE STUDENT REPORTS FROM WILLIAMSBURG

by Courtney

On our first day I got up at 3:15 a.m. on May 2, finished packing, got ready, ate, and as soon as I knew it we were heading to Hobby Airport. Once we got to Williamsburg we played tag and ate the best sandwiches ever under this huge Magnolia tree. Afterwards we played more tag and went into a museum. The museum was partly about a mental hospital and partly about the timeline of people and their slaves in Williamsburg and then we made a quick stop in a soap shop.

We then checked into our hotels, had some rest time. Afterwards we went to a play that George Washington and other famous people in history might have gone to see. After that play we went to Baskin Robbins for a little dessert. That was a lovely surprise! The last event of the night was a ghost walk. We were told about 4 to 5 ghost stories. Then we got to the hotel and went to bed. What a day!

by Nicole

On Wednesday May 4, the sixth graders went on a ghost walk around the town square where we were told 3 different ghost stories in 3 different locations. This ghost story we were told in the governor’s palace, where this story takes place.

Once upon a time there was a lady with a husband and 3 sons. The husband and the sons had to go to war and be soldiers. After the war, there was a list of all the people who died in war. The lady found her husband’s and two of her son’s names on it. The remaining son was the youngest and his name was James. The lady could not find James anywhere. One night she woke up and heard a song that James made for her. She followed the song to find a boy playing the song on the fife. This was normal to find a random person in her house because her house was being used as a hospital for wounded soldiers. Anyway, the lady asked the boy where he learned that song and he replied, “A boy named James taught me this song, but he died a year ago!” The lady was so sad and distraught, she went to the basement and started a fire. The flames lapped at her skin but she did not care. Soon the whole house burned down. Thankfully all the soldiers got out. Everyone got out, all but one.

by Asher

Our first evening event was a play that took place in the 18th century and had tons of comedy. In the 18th century people would do many things people would not do today if they were watching a play. If you liked a part you could yell encore and the actors would repeat the scene. If you didn’t like the play some people would throw rotten fruit. If they liked it a lot people would throw flowers and money on stage. After that we went on a ghost walk which took place all around town. It was scary and then it wasn’t. There were four locations that we went to where four different scary stories told. The first location was a jail, the second a tree stump which was weird, the third a cafe called Shields Tavern, and the fourth the Prentis Store.

Tuesday’s evening events were very fun. First there was an African American interactive presentation where we got to sing along and dance. My favorite was the ring dance where we made a circle and a bunch of people did funny dances and we all had to do them. Also they said, “Crossing your feet in the ring dance was a curse.” Also one of the songs they sung we knew part of which was Funga Alafia. Overall the dancing and singing was very fun. Also some people got to play instruments. Next we went to a mock witch trial called “Cry Witch.” If you got there early you got to be a part of the jury. Lydia, Frederika, Josey, Mr. Kirchner, and

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I got to be on the jury. The woman who was accused of witchcraft was called Grace Sherwood. In the end she was proved not guilty. She gave a very scary cackle.

Wednesday, we went to a play called "Affairs of the Heart" right after dinner. The play was about slaves and the people who owned the slaves. It was interesting to see how a slave was treated and how the slave treated their owner. It was also sad because if you had a different skin color you were treated in a different way instead of being treated equal. When the play was over we went to another ghost event called "Ghosts Among Us." Three different stories were told that night. They were all scary, sad, and weird in their own way. Also you got to go into different buildings when they told the stories. This "Ghost Walk" was a lot scarier than the ghost walk on Monday.

by Hannah

We arrived in Richmond on May 2 at about 11:30 a.m. and proceeded by bus to Williamsburg to our initial destination in Colonial Williamsburg which was the lawns of the first mental hospital (1773) in the United States, where we ate sandwiches for lunch, played and then proceeded to pay a visit to the Dewitt Wallace Museum beside it. At 3:30 p.m. we departed to check into the Residence Inn Marriott to drop off our things, and then to explore Williamsburg until dinner time. For dinner, we went to Giuseppe’s Italian restaurant and then our group of 36 went to an evening event called a Grand Medley of Entertainment. Then we went to Baskin Robbins for ice-cream followed by the Williamsburg Ghost Walk, which ended at 9:30 p.m. We reached the hotel at 10:00 p.m. to retire for the night.

Tuesday morning we got on the bus around 8:30 to go to Jamestown. The first thing we did was explore the re-creation of the Powhatan village, then we went to see the ships that brought the colonists from England, then the St. Jamestown Fort. After that we ate lunch, followed by a trip to the Jamestown Settlement Museum. We all got to play outside for a little while, and soon after that came the gift shop. When it was 4:00, we headed over to a restaurant that was called Food for Thought. We then rode the bus to see the African American Music Program, followed by the play Cry Witch, an example of how a trial was conducted back in the 18th century. It was soon time to go back to the hotel and then to bed.

Wednesday in Colonial Williamsburg, we got to see the colonial governor’s palace, explore the palace gardens, and listen to Patrick Henry speak his mind. Lunch and the tour of the historic Bruton Church came next. We also got to take a group picture in front of the College of William and Mary, the second oldest college in the USA after Harvard. We went to a group picture in front of the College of William and Mary, the second oldest college in the USA after Harvard. We visited a few gift shops until dinner, and by 4:30, it was time to head over to Second Street Restaurant. Next we went to a show called "Affairs of the Heart," and after which was yet another Ghost Walk in Williamsburg before retirement for the day.

On Thursday, a very cold day, we visited Yorktown. We visited a museum dedicated to colonial Yorktown, learned battle commands that one would learn if enrolled in the army, and after a quick lunch, went to see the Yorktown Battlefield. Before dinner we went to the famous Williamsburg Whyte Candy Shop. Dinner was at Christiana Campbell’s. The food there was delicious, and we even got birthday cake because Sophia turned 13 that day. It started raining heavily, so we headed back to the hotel to pack up our bags for the flight back to Houston the next day.

by Josey

During our Williamsburg trip we enjoyed some wonderful meals. The day we arrived we got delicious sandwiches from the Cheese Shop a family owned deli. After a long day of activities we went to Giuseppe’s Italian Restaurant for a delicious dinner. Some of us had pasta, mussels, and many other delicious options.

In the mornings we had a complimentary breakfast at the hotel. There were many options some of which were waffles, eggs, fruit, oatmeal and various breads.

On the second day we went to the Jamestown Settlement Cafe for lunch where we had a choice of sandwiches, pizza, burgers, soups, salads, beverages, hot dogs, and a couple other options. We had pre-ordered lunch so we got chips and dried cranberries with our meals.

We had an early dinner at the famous Food For Thought restaurant and we had some really good food and cool riddles that were on the table.
Breakfast was the same on Wednesday morning. We went to the Cheese Shop again for lunch and it was just as good the second time, but we had to miss going to some other restaurants because there was no room for a group of 36. For dinner we went to Second Street Grill which had a wonderful food menu—another famous restaurant in Williamsburg.

Thursday morning we had the same thing for breakfast which was still just as good. We got to eat lunch at the Yorktown Victory Center Cafe, which as the name suggests was in Yorktown.

On Thursday we had a dinner reservation at Christiana Campbell’s where George Washington and other historic people used to enjoy dinner. We also celebrated Sophia’s birthday and we had a pre-ordered dinner of fried chicken. A lady dressed in 18th century clothing entertained us with a song and later a man demonstrated how people greeted each other with a bow or a curtsy and what it signified.

Jail: At one point we got a super cool tour of the jail. There was an upstairs where the jail keepers children would play and had a room to sleep, while the jail keeper would sleep downstairs. The jail was just a place where prisoners would stay before they went off to their trials, or before they were hanged. The jail keeper was given $5 per prisoner per day. He had to buy the prisoner food and supplies and whatever money was left over the jail keeper would keep and that was what he got paid. Even though the jail keepers knew they would not get paid much they didn’t really have a choice since the city elected them. Since the jail was where the jail keeper lived that was where the jail keeper raised their family and where they worked.

by Sophia

Late at night, all the 6th graders walked into the courtroom. Some of the kids got to be in the jury and got a really good view of everything, but I was not one of those kids. There were seven actors: The judge (Governor), the crown prosecutor, the bailiff, three witnesses, and the “witch.”

The first witness was a farmer who was the neighbor of the witch. He said she was the reason why all of his crops and livestock were dying because she was casting spells. The farmer also said he saw the witch dancing in front of a fire seeming to chant or sing something. The second witness was the wife of that farmer and she said the witch made her unborn baby die because she cursed the baby. The last witness was the other neighbor of the witch and she was an old lady. She said that when she was sleeping, the witch and the Devil came to the bedroom and woke her up. She also said that the witch rode on her back like a donkey through the cornfields.

Now, in the beginning of the trial, all three witnesses and the witch held the bible in their hands and swore to tell nothing but the truth. So, that was supposed to be the truth.

The old woman continued her story and said that she and thirteen other women investigated the witch’s body while she was bound hand and foot. They saw two black marks on her body. A witch can only have two black marks on her body if she signed her name in the Devil’s book. The witch admitted that she had two black marks on her body, but she said that they were from birth. The old woman also saw her floating on the surface of a lake. The last test was to have the witch recite The Lord’s Prayer, and although she started, she fainted during her recitation. Near the end of the trial, I was very, very convinced that

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the witch was a real witch because all seven actors were really talented and persuading but, I knew that witches were not real.

The judge took a vote for whoever thought the witch was guilty or not guilty. I voted for not guilty because I didn't believe in witches.

The verdict was not guilty. Mr. Pinto said that in all his thirteen years going to Williamsburg, this was the first time the most votes were not guilty. The bailiff took the witch out of her station. As they walked down the aisle leading to the door out, the witch was muttering “Thank you! Oh, thank you!” Then it became “Oh, ha ha ha ah ah ah ah AHMW AHAHAHA!!!”

It was so scary!!! I think it's really hard to cackle like that. I wondered what the witch would have done if the verdict had her to be guilty.

At this time, I was thinking, Um... judge? It’s kind of obvious that the witch is a real witch. Uh, could we um.. Take a revote??!! This woman is a witch!

From this activity, I learned that witches could be a real thing and that if I lived during that time, I would believe in witches!

I LOVED THE WILLIAMSBURG TRIP!

by Beck

Thursday was the final full day of the trip to Williamsburg, Virginia and what we did that day was awesome. We were on the bus by 8:30 to go to the Yorktown Victory center which was some ways away but when we got there we had a HUGE presentation about the Revolutionary War and how it started, what happened during it and how it ended. After the presentation we went through a timeline of the Revolutionary War then went outside had drill practice to learn saw how the Confederate troops worked during the war, like how they march, how a flintlock musket works and what to do when they call a command.

Next we saw an average troop camp where 6 or more people slept in one tent and how richer people got better treatment. After that we saw the medical supplies and how they work, and some treatments were sometimes very primitive, and how more soldiers died due to infections other than of gun shots. Next we saw how soldiers were punished either by public humiliation—branded or pain—whipped. We also learned about camp food how it was cooked and where they kept supplies like ammo, gunpowder, food, wood and many other things, like the smoke house, a blacksmith and a wood worker.

We were then shown what made Virginia rich: tobacco. It had a strong odor. After lunch we went to a gift shop where we bought souvenirs. Next we went to the Battlefield of York Town where the battle for Independence took place. When we got there we watched a short movie on the siege of Yorktown then went outside to the real battlefield, where we all sang our National Anthem. The battle field was immense and was about a mile from one side to another. After we finished looking at the trenches we looked at what they used for battle which were huge 6 pound shot cannons.

We then returned to Williamsburg where we went to a famous candy store where we could buy $10 worth of candy. Next was dinner at Christiana Campbell’s, a 250-year-old tavern, that served us 17th century food. We all had fried chicken, vegetables followed by ice cream and cake. It started raining so the evening's event “In Defence of our Liberty” was rained out so went back to the hotel to rest and pack for the plane ride home.

by Luke

On two different nights on the Williamsburg trip we went on ghost walks. On Monday, May 2, we met up with this guy who told us stories at 3 different locations and what happened there. The first location was at the 250 year old Williamsburg Jail. It was about a woman who is sometimes seen and heard at night in the jail. The second place was a stump right outside the gates of the Capitol Building. According to the story, a man who is dressed up in WW1 apparel is occasionally seen sitting on a stump under the street light. Our 3rd and final location was at the Prentis Store, a store that hates to be insulted. The story says that people who have said a rude things about the store (while in it) will get a flying checkerboard to the face. So they don't sell checkerboard's there anymore.

Our second ghost walk was a bit more interactive and scary. The first location continued on page 12
was at the Governor’s Palace, where we heard two stories. The first one was about a mother who sent off her boys to war and they never returned. She got pretty mad and set the place on fire. The house burned to ash. Our second story was about a pirate who went rogue (and was pretty drunk) and had people chasing after him. That was probably the scariest story that we heard. Our final story was at a little house. Inside there was a ghost lady and she was telling us about her ghost child and their stories. The ghost walks that we did were very fun!

By Emilie

On Tuesday we went to Jamestown. When we got there, it was raining so we sat in the visitor center and watched a movie about the exhibit there. Then when it stopped raining we went outside and visited the Powhatan Native American Camp where we learned how to make rope, and skinned the deer hide with oyster shells. It was nice to have hands on activities there.

Then we went down to the docks and toured the replicas of the Susan Constant, Speedwell, and the Discovery. These were the first three ships which came to Jamestown from England in 1607. We were part of a group learning to tie nautical ropes and our instructor was very funny! Then we went to the Jamestown settlement fort where we learned all about the medicine they used in those days. We saw the weapons they had, how they worshipped, how they lived, how they built fences, and we were able to see a soldier show us how to fire a musket.

While we waited for the cafe to finish our lunch, we went outside and played tag on the huge field that they had behind the museum. Then we went to lunch at the cafe in the museum. We enjoyed our lunch there. Then after lunch we went to a movie where we learned all about how the British came to Jamestown. After the movie we sat in the middle of the foyer in front of the theater and we did some meditation. After we went through the museum at the end one of the teachers would give us a question and we had to go back in the museum and find the answers and then go back and tell them the answers. It was like a scavenger hunt for information. Then we went to the Jamestown gift store.

We went to play called “Cry Witch” where we went to a fake witch trial from the 1700s and some of the people from our school got to be part of the jury. I liked how the actors made it seem so real! Then when it was done we went back to the hotel and Mrs. Pinto had a group meeting then we went to bed.

by Blake

I woke up at 3:00 a.m. to go to the airport. When my mom was driving me to the airport there were almost no cars on the street because it was so early in the morning. On the plane, I sat with Andreas and Gabriel and it took one hour and thirty minutes to get to Atlanta. We had to take two flights—one was to Atlanta and the other one was to Richmond. When we arrived to Richmond we had to get on a bus and it took us to a park. The drive took one hour. At the park we got to play on a big field.

Then we went to a mental asylum. After we saw the mental asylum we went to a museum that had a lot of different things like chairs, tables, guns, and many other things. In the museum we had to find one thing that we liked and describe what it looked like. When everyone was done looking we went to a gift shop. In the gift shop everything was very expensive so I bought a stuffed dog for ten dollars. Then we got on a bus and went to our hotel.

At the hotel we all went to our rooms and unpacked our things. Once everyone was done unpacking their things we all went to a restaurant and got dinner. For dinner I had pasta and I tried calamari for the first time. After dinner it started raining but we got in our bus right when the rain started. Then the bus took us to a theater where we saw a comedic play. After the play we went to Baskin Robbins where we got ice cream. We walked through the main street called, “The Duke of Gloucester Street.” We had an appointment with a guide who took us to four spots—the jail, a tree stump outside the Capitol, a Tavern and a market store for handmade goods. At each spot he told us a ghost story that the local people tell is still happening. He was a great story teller. Then we went to our hotel. At the hotel we had to do journals. In the journals we had to write what we did during the day. Then after I wrote my journal I went to bed and fell asleep.

by Henry

Wednesday, May 4, I woke up at 7:00, and headed for breakfast at 7:30. At 8:30 we got on the bus and headed for Colonial Williamsburg. It was a very cold morning...
Williamsburg Reports 
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When we got to Williamsburg we took a picture at the top of a cascading water fountain and headed straight for the Colonial Governor's Palace, which is a huge building with beautiful gardens. Inside the mansion there are a total of 540 swords and muskets, adorning the walls in really cool and impressive patterns. We also got to see all the rooms. Next we saw all the different foods (one of them was cow's tongue) displayed in the kitchen for important and wealthy people like the governor. We also walked in the beautiful gardens. We even got to play in a hedge maze.

Next we got to see “Patrick Henry” say his “give me liberty or give me death” speech, followed by a visit to the very old colonial jail. A man told us about the people who were kept here and what life was like for them in the cells. We also got to see and enter the cells that dated back the 17th and 18th centuries. At about 12:30 we ate lunch at the Cheese Shop.

After lunch we went to a 300-year-old church where many famous people attended church services. I even got to sit where George Washington sat. There were pews facing the back of the church because back then people believed that you had to hear the sermon and not necessarily see it.

Next we went to some gift shops. They had lots of cool things like soap balls and toys that kids played with in the 17th century. After that we saw a movie about the Rockefeller family. They were the ones who donated the money to restore and preserve Colonial Williamsburg. We ate dinner at a place called Second Street.

After dinner we went to a play about slaves one of whom is forced to leave her husband. It was very entertaining and had great actors. The last activity we did on Wednesday was a ghost walk. We followed a lady with a lantern in the dark and we went to buildings where people have claimed to see ghosts. There were actors who told scary stories and every now and then we would get a jump scare. Even though the day was packed on Wednesday we had a great and memorable time.

By Cidette

On Wednesday, we got up at 7:05 a.m. We ate breakfast and got on the bus headed to the visitor's center. From the visitor's center we walked to the Governor's Palace. Inside the Governor's Palace the walls were decorated with lots of muskets and swords. Our tour guide said that the walls were decorated with weapons to intimidate anyone who came to the Palace.

We walked through the rooms and exhibits of the Palace. After we saw all the rooms, we went to the gardens in the back of the property. There was a small hedge maze that we played in. The leaf walls were short so we could see each other. We then visited a larger hedge maze that was tall but we could still slightly see each other through because the brush was damaged.

We then went to the old jail to take a tour. We played in the cells and some people thought that they saw a ghost in one of the cells. For lunch we went to the cheese shop and I had a PB and J. After lunch we went to the Williamsburg Church to learn about the order of religion in the 1800s. Then we visited the same soap shop we visited on Monday. We went back to the visitor's center and went to the gift shop. After the gift shop we went to the restaurant “2nd Street.” Then we went to Raleigh Tavern to see a performance called “The Affairs of Love.” It had more drama than 6th and 5th grade combined!

When it got dark outside, we went to a scary story tour called “The Ghosts among us.” One story was about a farmer's wife and how her three sons and husband went off to war and died. She burned a building down in rage. I thought her story was the most startling.

The second story was about a sailor and how his friends killed a man and the sailor was accused. I thought his was the scariest because at the end he came bursting through the door and started screaming. The last story was about a mother her child. I thought she was the eeriest because she didn't show much emotion and was very still and calm. It gave me a creepy vibe. We then finished the day by going back to the hotel and talking about our day. There were lots of remarks on the screaming sailor story. We then went to bed around 11:00 p.m!

By Auden

Monday, May 2, was the first day of our trip to Williamsburg. The day started off quite early, with us having to arrive at the airport at 4:15 a.m. for our flight to Richmond via Atlanta.

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When we first arrived in Williamsburg, we played tag games in the field in front of the first mental hospital in all of America, then we ate a picnic lunch under a big tree. We had sandwiches from The Cheese Shop. After lunch, we visited the mental hospital and we saw the patient’s living space, and the devices that were used to contain them. Then, we went to a museum beneath the mental hospital and saw loads of different 18th century items, from muskets, to dollhouses, to furniture. After the museum, we ate dinner at an Italian restaurant called Giuseppe’s, the food was excellent. After dinner, we saw an 18th century-style play called “A Grand Medley of Entertainment” which showed us how plays in the 18th century work, and it was also very funny. Then, to wrap up the night, we went on a ‘ghost walk’ all around Colonial Williamsburg and we were told some cool and creepy ghost stories.

By Isabella

During our Williamsburg trip we attended an evening event each day. On Wednesday, May 4 at 7:30 we attended the play ‘Cry Witch’ at the court in the Capitol building. This was an activity where we got watch, and participate in the reenactment of the witch trial of Grace Sherwood, which took place in the very same Capitol courthouse in 1697, this was the room where we saw the reenactment.

When you walk in the room it feels like you have been transported back in time to the 1700s. You felt like you were actually there at Grace Sherwood’s Witch trial. The first 12 people in line for the trial were invited to sit on the jury with the judge. During this unique opportunity we got to experience how the trials actually went. To start off the reenactment, Grace Sherwood was brought into the room by the sheriff and put in front of the judge on a small stool. Then the governor brought in his first witness named Luke Hill in to testify against Grace Sherwood. Luke Hill explained that he had bumped into her at the market and when he asked what she was up to she got very defensive and angry and “cursed” him. The very next day Mr. Hill stated that he found out the baby that his wife had been carrying for the past 9 months had mysteriously died before birth the very day after Grace Sherwood had supposedly “cursed” him.

Grace Sherwood started shouting and claiming that she had nothing to do with what happened, interrupting him so much so that the judge threatened to give her 10 whippings and the sheriff banged his stick very hard and loud on the ground. The judge said to Grace that she would have to let the witnesses speak and then she would get her turn to speak. Then next witness was Mr. Hill’s wife Mary Hill. She explained that the night her husband was cursed she felt horrible pains and was moaning and screaming so loud that their neighbor who was none other than Grace Sherwood, ran to their door to see what was wrong and if there was anything she could do to help but they mistook it for an attack and Mrs. Hill slapped her. Once Grace Sherwood was on the ground bleeding Mary Hill said the pain immediately disappeared but the information was not allowed as evidence because she was in pain and delusional because of the loss of her baby so the judge called it spectral evidence.

The last witness was a midwife, her name was Elizabeth Barnes, she and Grace were both in the same league of midwifery with 12 other people. Since Grace had many other cases against her about Witchcraft
the County that she lived in asked the other midwives to inspect her body. Back then they believed if you were a witch, you would have two black spots given to you by the devil himself. So they checked her body and found two black markings on her private parts but they wondered if they were moles so they grabbed a needle and poked them hard enough for the needle to break the skin but they claimed that the markings did not bleed. Elizabeth Barnes and the other midwives signed a piece of paper stating what they saw. The second test required bounding her hands and feet together and throwing her in a lake near her home, if she floats she was supposedly a witch and if she sinks and drowns then she wasn’t a witch and no one really cared that she had died.

At the end of the trial we got to vote and see if we thought Grace Sherwood was guilty or innocent. Once the votes were taken Grace Sherwood was declared innocent and was allowed to go free of charge. Once she reached the end of the room she let out a blood-curdling cackle. Many people jumped out of their benches.

The other times when our teachers had gone to this trial she had been declared guilty and as she left the room she had cursed the people there. After the trial we were all very happy about the experience that we had and overall really enjoyed our trip to Williamsburg.

The Spanish Market

Three years ago, the students of the Sixth Grade in our class got an idea for a community service project. They wanted to stage a “Spanish Market” where two or three students would together set up a market stall with different items to sell. Each stall would have items donated or hand-made by the students. Then we would advertise a “Market Day, and students from Elementary and Middle School would come as our customers. The money generated by this manner would be donated to a worthy cause. This became a classroom tradition and this year we organized our third “Spanish Market.”

Our Spanish Market is based on street markets in Mexico and other cities in South America. We work hard to prepare for this market. There is a lot of planning, time and effort that goes into it. This year we had 14 stalls and 28 students participated. We had toys, candy, books, art, baked goods, jewelry, ice cream, flowers, a café, fruit and honey. We even had “El Elefante Blanco” a white elephant stall managed by our teacher with trinkets usually found at a flea market! The only condition was that our customers, (students from other classes) had to speak with the shopkeepers in conversational Spanish! We gave them lots of help and useful phrases in a booklet, and there were lots of laughs and giggles when we started bargaining! Customers and shopkeepers all had a good time. We even had a “policeman” and a “banker” to make sure everything was orderly.

At the end we raised $2,085.00 which we are proud to donate to Monroe Dunaway Anderson Cancer Center. One of our sixth graders, Emilie Janzen is a leukemia survivor, (she was treated at the Wisconsin Children’s Hospital) and we wanted to honor her being cancer-free for five years.

On Tuesday, May 17, the sixth grade students went to M.D. Anderson to deliver the money we collected. We hope this money will be used to save more children’s lives. We also hope this tradition will continue next year.
Faculty/Staff Updates for 2016–2017

by John Long, Head of School

Every year at this time we announce faculty and staff changes for the following year.

PRIMARY AND YCC

I am pleased to announce that Primary teacher Miriam Winton has agreed to take on a newly created position as Director of Auxiliary Programs. In this full-time, twelve-month, division director level position, Miriam will assume responsibility for summer school, After School Enrichment Programs (ASEP), Primary and Elementary before-school and after-school programs, and the Post Oak Parenting Center. This position consolidates direction, development, and supervision of existing auxiliary programs as well as the launch of the Parenting Center. Miriam has directed the Post Oak summer school program on a part-time basis for more than a decade and it is a real step forward for the school to have one person take the lead with all of these programs on a full-time basis.

Stepping into Miriam’s role as lead Primary teacher will be Elizabeth Dickson. Elizabeth has been the assistant/intern with Tamara Townsend for the past four years. She has a BA from the University of Texas at San Antonio and AMI primary training from the Houston Montessori Institute. Tamara mentored Elizabeth throughout her training and in the two years since. Elizabeth is fully prepared to step across the pod to take the lead in that classroom, and is already familiar with all of the children. Monica Moreno, who has been Miriam’s assistant/intern for the past four years, will carry on in that role with Elizabeth.

A second change results from Rebecca Duran’s decision to step back from the lead teacher position she assumed in October. Rebecca is expecting her second child in July, and this personal and family decision is made even more difficult by the sense of responsibility and loyalty she feels for the children in her class and their families. When she returns from maternity leave, Rebecca will work with Tamara Townsend as an assistant/intern.

Cynthia Blessman will succeed Rebecca as lead Primary teacher. For the past twenty-two years Cynthia has been a primary teacher at St. Catherine’s Montessori School here in Houston. She has also served on the advisory board for the Houston Montessori Institute. Cynthia has a BA from Birmingham Southern College (AL), an MEd from Loyola University Maryland, and AMI primary training from the Montessori Training Center of St. Louis. Lilia Garza will continue to serve as the assistant in that classroom.

In the Young Children’s Community (YCC), Marcella Martinez left Post Oak in April. Lauren Dean has been working as Deidre Brooks’ assistant, and will continue in that role through the end of the school year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY:

As you no doubt already know, Kathy Long will be retiring at the conclusion of this school year. Kathy first came to Post Oak in 1995 as a Lower Elementary teacher and during her tenure at the school, has also served as curriculum coordinator, lower school director, interim admission director, and for the past two years, as Middle School community service coordinator. She leaves big garden boots to fill—and a legacy of selfless dedication to the children and the school.

In August, Jessica Samano will move from Upper Elementary to Middle School. Jessica has a BS from the University of Houston and has worked as Errol Pinto’s classroom assistant since 2009. She attended the first-ever AMI training course for classroom assistants, is a member of the American Council of the Teaching Foreign Language (ACTFL) and the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT), and is excited to be joining the Middle School faculty where she will partner with Diana Lopez in working with community service and occupations.

Kaylee Kress will join Errol Pinto as an assistant/intern in the fall. Kaylee was a Montessori student herself for nine years before earning a BA from the University...
of Oregon. She is completing the Montessori elementary teacher training course at the AMI center in Portland, Oregon. Kaylee sought out Post Oak because of its national reputation as an authentic Montessori school of the highest excellence, and is enthusiastic about its vibrant professional culture.

Spanish specialist Ninfa Bridges will present Spanish language and culture lessons in Mr. Pinto’s class.

HIGH SCHOOL
At the High School, we’re very pleased that Jamie Lee will be expanding her work at Post Oak to full-time. Dr. Lee teaches history and social science classes and next year will take the lead with the High School internship and service program. For the past two years, she has led our A-Term trip to Nicaragua as well.

Returning to Post Oak next year is Mandarin teacher Shoulong Zhou. Shoulong was with us for three years at the High School before relocating to Phoenix. We’re pleased to welcome him back to Post Oak.

We are currently interviewing for a math instructor to team with Jeremy Grisbee. We are also interviewing for a physics teacher.

ADMINISTRATION
On the administrative side, CFO Robin Lunsford is leaving Post Oak and relocating to New Orleans where her children and grandchildren reside. Robin will become the CFO of an ISAS school in New Orleans. In recognition of her exceptional work here over the past eleven years, Robin was just named recipient of the “2016 NBOA Will Hancock Unsung Hero Award” by the National Business Officers’ Association, which means of course, that her accomplishments are no longer ‘unsung.’ Recruitment of her successor is ongoing.

Post Oak CFO Robin Lunsford

A Post Oak Hero

ABOUT THE NBOA WILL HANCOCK “UNSUNG HERO” AWARD
The Will Hancock Unsung Hero Award is given to business officers who have made an extraordinary and significant difference in their schools. These business officers, in doing their job, exemplify a high standard of integrity, knowledge, and motivation to help their schools succeed. They are team players whose work supports faculty, staff, trustees, and administration. They are both excellent managers and true leaders. In order to be considered for this award, a business officer must have clearly demonstrated an effective mastery of his or her job. Yet more importantly, this individual must have made a significant difference to the school, its staff, and its students.

The award is named after Will Hancock who is widely recognized as both a pioneer and innovator within the independent school business officer profession. Will served NBOA as its first Deputy Executive Director.

IB EXAMINERS ANNOUNCED
Congratulations to James Quillin who was recently appointed an IB Examiner for History. He joins Ben Preston who earlier this year was appointed for Economics.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION
Construction at the Bissonnet campus begins Saturday, May 28. The building’s new temporary entrance will be on the Avenue B side for the summer (signs will be posted).
GENTLE REMINDER

Post Oak Annual Fund pledges are due May 31.

There’s still time to help us reach 100%! Please show your support of The Post Oak School by making your Annual Fund contribution today online, via pledge, securities, or check.

Thank you!

CONGRATULATIONS to classes reaching 100% PARENT PARTICIPATION:

Rebecca Duran
Sue Guerrero
Emily Hansen
Lindsay Mistretta
Debbie Nickerson
Errol Pinto
Maya Pinto
Simran Sood
Anita Taj Mahmood
Tamara Townsend
Miriam Winton
9th Grade
11th Grade

9th Grade
11th Grade

Important Dates

2016 END OF YEAR

May 26 Last day of school and High School Commencement
May 27 In-service day
May 30 Memorial Day—school closed
May 31 & June 1 In-service days
June 6 Summer school & HMI begin

2016–2017 CALENDAR SUMMARY

Aug. 5 Summer school & HMI ends
Aug. 15 Faculty/staff return
Aug. 23 Middle & High School students return
Aug. 29–Sept. 2 First week for all YCC, PRI, and EL students
Sept. 5 Labor Day—school closed
Oct. 10 Columbus Day—school closed
Dec. 16 Early dismissal
Dec. 19–30 Winter Break—school closed
Jan. 2 Teacher In-Service—school closed
Jan. 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—school closed
Feb. 20 Presidents’ Day—school closed
Mar. 13–17 Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend
April 14 Good Friday—school closed
May 26 Last day of school
1. High School parents, faculty, and staff gathered for the annual BBQ and enjoying the new space.

2–5. Primary classrooms spent time celebrating John Long, including baking together, planting a tree, discussing bicycles, a tea ceremony, and more.

Don’t forget the reception for John and Kathy Long on Friday, May 20 in the Post Oak gym, 4 to 6 p.m. All ages are welcome, rain or shine!
**NOTICE BOARD**

**Thurs., May 26**

Last day of school

HDYCC: 11:00 a.m.
FDYCC: 11:10 a.m.
PRI: 11:30 a.m.
EL, MS, and HS: noon

Have a wonderful summer!

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**Parking for MS & HS Events at Rice University**

Hamman Hall is building 31 off entrance 21. Drivers can pull up and drop off and then park in lot NA during the day or North Lot after 5 p.m.

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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 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 International Baccalaureate® Programme (IBO) 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