THE POST OAK FUND

Leadership Circle Reception
Tuesday, May 9
5:30–7 p.m.

Contributors to the Post Oak Annual Fund at the Leadership Circle level ($3,000) are invited to an annual reception. Please contact the Development Office if you haven’t received your invitation.

STORYTIME

with Cory

For parents & their children in YCC & Half-Day Primary

THEME: Art
May 3 at 2:30 p.m.
at The Post Oak School Bissonnet Campus

ON THE COVER

Lower Elementary students perform for parents in the Music Room.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates, photos, and more:

www.facebook.com/thepostoakschool/
www.facebook.com/postoakhighschool/
twitter.com/postoakschool
twitter.com/postoakhs

2016–2017
POST OAK
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A Year of Growth

I recently spent a lovely Sunday morning walking through Buffalo Bayou Park enjoying the trees, the green of the leaves and the grasses, and lots of wildflowers peeking out as the sun rose higher in the sky. I love spring for many reasons, including the fact that it still gets cool at night and mornings are crisp. Flowers make me happy, and as a person who has spent the last 27 years of their life working with children, flowers in spring come at the same time that I see the growth of a whole school year in the children. Like the flowers, at this time of year, the children are in bloom. It’s as if they are bursting onto the scene with their colorful personalities. Perhaps as parents, you are experiencing this too.

The YCC children are steadier on their feet, more confident on those tricycles, and more verbal about everything. They are asserting their personhood on the playground and in the classroom. Primary children are getting taller—their legs stretching out and I notice, like flowers, they are overflowing with excitement. You can see them climbing higher on the play structures, sewing a button with more pride, and putting those sounds together to make a word.

In Elementary, the children are just a little bit more “wiggly” in their seats as the outside is calling to them constantly, just as the flowers call out to the bees. They are busy on the playground observing bugs and caterpillars and smelling flowers. Maria Montessori said, “A child, more than anyone else, is a spontaneous observer of nature.” The Elementary students are most inquisitive in springtime. Much of their growth is intellectual—in the intelligent questions they ask about everything.

The growth of our adolescents is much more subtle. You can see the wisdom on the face of the Middle School students. Their “goofiness” becomes calmer as they come to the end of the year. The eighth graders are getting ready to take their big leap, and the seventh graders walk upright and tall, now that they have completed their first year in the program. The petals that make up their personalities seem to be coming together in a more uniform way, showing us their maturity.

All the High School colors were on display last month at the prom—an event that welcomed all the students ninth through twelfth grade and was attended by most. It was a great example of the uniqueness of this tight-knit community. There were a few dates, but mostly they came as friends to dance and laugh the night away. Their growth is seen collectively, as this group of high school students has gelled together in a supportive way. The seniors are embraced by the rest of the group as they get ready to graduate, enjoying their last spring as Post Oak students.

The students are not the only ones who have grown this year. I can hardly believe it is May, as it feels as if I just arrived in Houston. I have grown in many ways as the head at Post Oak this year, but most importantly, I have grown in my love and appreciation for this special place. Not all parts of this year have been easy, but all challenges were met with a great team around me. The wonderful faculty and staff who love and nurture their students make my part of the work easy. The Board of Trustees and the administrative team guided the way for me this year.

But it is the children—those flowers—that keep me moving forward on my journey. They are wonderful to be around! They make me laugh and smile through my day and carried me through my first year as a student of Post Oak. •
NHS Cabinet 2017–2018

We’re happy to introduce the National Honor Society cabinet members for the 2017–2018 school year.

From left to right: President: Jordan [junior], Vice President: Nathan [sophomore], Secretary: Iris [junior], and Treasurer: Asa [sophomore]. These students were chosen by their NHS peers for these positions due to their consistent demonstration of scholarship, leadership, character, and service.

Odyssey of the Mind: Bound for World Finals

By Emily Weinstein, Post Oak Parent

Congratulations to the Post Oak Odyssey of the Mind fifth grade team! The team placed first in the state competition and has advanced to World Finals, which will be at Michigan State University from May 24–28! Over 800 teams from all over the world compete. The team is hoping to have a buddy team from Poland.

Team members are: Niko [junior], Aurora Megan [junior], Abby [junior], Talulah Wyatt [junior], and Jules [junior].

Congratulations also to Zoey [junior], a freshman at Post Oak High School, who is a member of the Memorial High School Odyssey of the Mind team! Her team also placed first at the state competition and is headed to World Finals!

Odyssey of the Mind is a worldwide creative problem solving and critical thinking competition. Team members solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics then bring their solutions to competitions on the local, state, and World level. Odyssey of the Mind teaches students how to think divergently, identify challenges and think creatively to solve those problems. The creative process rewards thinking “outside of the box.”

Post Oak thanks Emily Weinstein for her work throughout the year as the team’s coach, and guiding them to the World Finals!
Post Oak Board Brief

NEWS FROM OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Manolo Sanchez, Post Oak Parent, Board Member

As the 2016–2017 academic year comes to an end, another cycle in the governance of our school will be set in motion. Melissa Coleman will step down as chair of the Board of Trustees after three years of dedicated service to our school community. We are grateful for her commitment and the many hours of volunteer work devoted to The Post Oak School. She has guided our trustees through a unique period of change that makes us all proud. From the graduation of our first class of High School seniors to the renovation of the Bissonnet Campus and the search for a new head of school, Melissa has steered our governing body through key events in the life of Post Oak.

Melissa follows two prior chairs that have led the board through a decade of growth that has solidified Post Oak’s position as one of the premier Montessori schools in the southwest: Bob Harvey and Lloyd Kirchner.

It is my honor to be the incoming chair of the board. Having served as trustee and chair of the Finance Committee, I have had the privilege of working for eight years alongside our former head of school, John Long, as well as all three prior chairs. I very much look forward to facilitating the work of our board as a strategic body that, as per its own mission statement, ensures the success of the school by “planning for the benefit of the current generation of students and those generations that will follow.” Our board is charged with the duty of monitoring the school’s alignment with its mission.

As a parent of three Post Oak students, I am privileged to observe firsthand how the holistic pedagogy, on which the school’s mission statement is anchored, allows our “learners” to develop physically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally. And as a Montessori parent, I know also that most of the work done by our students cannot be recorded in a traditional school scorecard: teamwork, independence, creativity, and grit, just to name a few of the skills nurtured in our classrooms.

As trustees, we remind ourselves that the only employee of the board is the head of school and we are delighted to have been able to count on such outstanding leadership, both in John Long and now in Maura Joyce. We are also delighted to count on the very talented teaching and administrative personnel that makes The Post Oak School an excellent institution.

As the school year comes to an end, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, a big thank you to all the hard working individuals that deliver The Post Oak School mission every day... and a special thank you to our outgoing chair Melissa Coleman! ☝️

POPA news and thanks coming in our final issue of The Post, out the last week of school.
MDC Student Appreciation

Dark rain clouds loomed in the distance, but nothing stopped Middle and High School students from having a blast at our annual Student Appreciation event. The group was treated to Maine-ly Sandwiches and shaved ice from Yeti Sunshine. Add a piñata, and that spells party! We love our students! 👍
Bearkats Banquet

Congratulations to all our Bearkats athletes on an outstanding year of sports! Players and their families gathered for dinner and a short program that concluded with this year’s Bearkat Heart Awards. Paws up for a big high five for Ilan (HS), Du’a (HS), Luke (MS), and Josey (MS).

Standing ovation for Coach Tucker captured on video for him to see.
Science Café

Representatives from Texas Campaign for the Environment presented at the High School’s first Science Café on Wednesday, April 26. Zero Waste is their rallying cry, and there’s lots to know about it.

Here are some of the many interesting facts they presented:

- Dallas has implemented a long-term recycling plan aimed at achieving “Zero Waste” by reducing, recovering and recycling over 85% of discards currently sent to landfills by 2040. Way to go Dallas!
- Austin has their own plan to reduce, recover, recycle over 60% of discards currently sent to landfills. Awesome Austin!
- Houston has...not. Hey, Houston, let’s get on it!

Dumping in landfills costs taxpayer funds, pollutes ground water, and is a growing problem.

Learn more: texasenvironment.org/campaign/zero-waste/

Look out for next year’s series of Science Cafés at the High School.
Middle School A-Term

By Middle School students Gabriel Cidette and Sutton Sutton

The first week of April, the Middle School took part in A-Term, an in-depth study of the city focused around a specific theme. Students had the choice between three different groups: “Communication Nation,” “Cultural Diversity,” and “A Kinder Houston.”

In Communication Nation, our main topics included, but were not limited to, investigative journalism, live broadcasting, public relations, fake news, and yellow journalism. On Monday, we traveled to the PBS and NPR headquarters at the University of Houston to take a tour. We then went to the Houston Chronicle in the afternoon and toured their area, printing presses included. On Tuesday, we went to the Bissonnet Campus to talk with our librarian, Cory Eckert. The main topic for the day was fake news. Margaret Downing, the editor-in-chief for the Houston Press, came in and talked to us. Skip Hollandsworth also Skyped with us on that day, where he told us about his job as an investigative journalist at Texas Monthly. On Wednesday, we went to a PR Boutique and they explained to us what they did, how they did it, and what role they play for businesses. Post Oak mom Dominique Sachse came in that afternoon and told us about her job as an anchor at KPRC. On Thursday, we went to Moger Media, where we took a tour and learned how to shoot ads and even how to broadcast radio shows. On the last day, we went to the KHOU 11 studios to watch the taping of Great Day Houston, where we even appeared on TV multiple times and proceeded to take a tour around their studio.

The Cultural Diversity group had a packed week! On Monday, we explored India’s culture with a visit to an Indian temple, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. There we learned about Hinduism and their gods. We enjoyed food at an Indian restaurant called Chowpaddy. On Tuesday, we traveled to the Hong Kong mall in search of Vietnamese products. Afterwards, we ate Pho, a Vietnamese soup that is made up of noodles and often beef. We then went to a Buddhist temple, where we meditated with a monk. On Wednesday, we traveled to Aranda’s Panadería, a Mexican bakery, to decorate cupcakes and make cookies. We enjoyed traditional Mexican food and dancing later in the day. Thursday, the day started with a lesson in Tai Chi, taught by Karen Kuo, Emory’s grandmother. Later, we enjoyed dim sum for lunch. We also enjoyed our origami lessons and tea.

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Backgammon

Extra, extra, read all about it! The Post Oak School is featured in the U.S. Backgammon Federation's PrimeTime Backgammon Magazine thanks to the High School J-Term class and teacher Charles Ziegler. The group pushed the organization's membership past the 1,000 mark, and they contacted Mr. Zielger for an interview about the Cards and Dice J-Term class, why he purchased memberships for the students, and what could the USBGF do better for students in general. The magazine is available online for members.

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High School Commencement 2017

The Post Oak Community is invited to attend Friday, May 26 at Hamman Hall, Rice University, 5:30 p.m.
High School Prom 2017

It was a magical night "Under the Stars" for our High School students who dressed to the nines and danced the evening away. Thank you to this year’s prom committee headed by seniors Matthew, Amber, and Jodi. It was truly a stellar event!
Book Fair

It was a busy month with a fantastic Book Fair kicking it off. Students from all levels and their families gathered for stories, activities, yummy crepes, and good books. Many thanks to our Book Fair chairs, Katie Padden and Nikayla Thomas, for their amazing work. A love of books goes hand-in-hand with a love of learning—something our community knows well. Enjoy your books and come back for more next year! ☺️
A big thank you to Book Fair Chairs Katie Padden and Nikayla Thomas!
1. Families gathered on the back field for Family Movie Night. A big thank you to the Post Oak Dads’ Club!

2. Upper Elementary students keep the beat in music class.

3. Parents and students watched Screenagers in the Post Oak gym. Thanks to our panelists Rakesh Agrawal, Lori Scovill, Jami Sweeney, and our organizer Mirna Andrade-Salgado.

4–5. Upper Elementary students hosted a market to practice their Spanish and raise funds for charity.

6. An ASEP engineering class took its projects outdoors for testing.
New Parent Gatherings

**Elementary**

- **Lower EL**
  - Wed., 5/10
  - 6:30–7:15 p.m.

- **Upper EL**
  - 7:15–8 p.m.

**Primary**

- Thurs., 5/11, 7 p.m.

**Middle School**

- Tues., 5/23 (New date!)
  - 7 p.m.

**YCC**

- Thurs., 5/18, 7 p.m.

*Childcare is available for Primary and Elementary-aged Post Oak students; please call the front office to make a reservation. The cost is $5 per child and will be billed on your monthly statement.

Afternoon Tea & Conversation with the YCC Teachers

Tues., May 16

Bissonnet Campus Parenting Center

Please note this event has been cancelled.

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**GENTLE REMINDER**

The Post Oak Annual Fund pledges are due May 31.

We remain at 95% parent participation. 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!*

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**THE POST OAK SCHOOL’S ANNUAL Volunteer Appreciation**

Wed., May 17

5:30–6:30 p.m.

Happy Hour at Enoteca Rossa

4566 Bissonnet St, Bellaire, TX 77401

Please join us for this opportunity to say thanks to all Post Oak parent volunteers!
NOTICE BOARD

2017–2018

IMPORTANT DATES

Aug. 14 Faculty/staff return
Aug. 22 Elementary, Middle, & High School students return
Aug. 28–Sept. 1 First week for all YCC, PR1 students
Sept. 4 Labor Day—school closed
Oct. 9 Columbus Day—employee retreat/in-service—school closed
Nov. 22–24 Thanksgiving Break—school closed
Dec. 21 Early dismissal
Dec. 22–Jan. 5 Winter Break—school closed
Jan. 8 Teacher in-service—school closed
Jan. 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—school closed
Feb. 19 Presidents’ Day—school closed
March 12–16 Spring Break—only students with expanded-year contracts attend
March 30 Good Friday—school closed
April 20 Teacher in-service—school closed
May 25 Last day of school/early dismissal

Visit our website for the handy one-page Calendar Quickview.

Garmin Vivofit Found at Book Fair

Please contact Christine Peterson in the Post Oak Business Office to claim it.

Nanny Wanted

We are looking for a nanny to care for our three-year-old and help with a newborn weekdays 3–8 p.m. and weekends 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

Please contact Alefiya Akbarally at _____ for information.

FOUND!

The lost and found is overflowing at the Bissonnet Campus. Stop by the Common Room next time you’re here to check the chest for your child’s lost treasures. Items not claimed by the end of the school year will be donated.

Note: If clothing or lunch boxes have a name written on it, the item is placed in your child’s cubicle/locker. It’s a good idea to mark special items so they always find their way home!

ABOUT THE POST

The Post appears every first Monday of the month during 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 to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org) by 5:00 p.m. on the Monday one week prior to publication. Please direct all requests for permission to reprint articles to the communications coordinator.

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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