Our warmest thanks to the following schools for their support of Post Oak after Hurricane Harvey:

**Austin Montessori School** helped set up Primary spaces in the gym.

**Aylett Country Day School** in Bruington, Virginia, sent funds in support.

**Follow the Child Montessori** in Raleigh, North Carolina—their Upper Elementary held a bake sale benefitting Post Oak. The funds they sent included parent donations and a school match.

**Oak Meadow Montessori School**, in Lawrenceville, Georgia—a Lower Elementary class raised funds for Post Oak with a lemonade stand.

**Old Colony Montessori School** sent us cards and letters from their students.

**Springmont Montessori** in Atlanta, Georgia—an Upper Elementary class sent an “activity box” for the five classes that were displaced.

Thank you to these amazing Montessori communities! We are so grateful for your kindness and support!

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**On the Cover**

Ms. Nickerson’s Upper Elementary class created polymers in class while exploring states of matter by combining familiar substances causing exciting chemical reactions. The end result? Mystery matter!

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

www.facebook.com/thepostoakschool and www.facebook.com/postoakhighschool


twitter.com/postoakschool and twitter.com/postoakhs

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Post Oak Resilience

From her speech at POPA Dinner, October 10

Six weeks ago today it was still raining, and we had not begun the drying out process at the Bissonnet Campus. Today, all the Elementary students, the last of our displaced students, returned to their classrooms on the first floor. We truly have a lot to celebrate.

Many of you came up to me and thanked me for my work over the past few weeks. I got a lot of positive responses from the parent community for the emails that I sent out and for keeping you all informed. One person said, “We were confident that you had this under control.” This was great and somewhat puzzling to me as many of those emails repeated these three words: “I don’t know.” I don’t know when school will start; I don’t know how long the reconstruction will take; I don’t know when we will be back in the building; I don’t know about ASEP, etc.

Maybe it was the “tone” of the emails rather than the words in it. Can emails have a tone? I thought about this as I was on a flight last week. I tend to travel a fair amount for both work and family related events. Because I am in the air a lot, I experience my share of turbulence. My father was a pilot—not for his career, just for fun. He flew a twin-engine six-seat Apache, and all of his children took turns flying with him over the years. My father tried to explain turbulence to me, but I just don’t get it.

Sometimes when I fly, turbulence simply rocks me to sleep. Other times, it unnerves me—maybe I am over-tired or stressed, but sometimes it gets the better of me. Whichever is the case, the response from the cockpit is always the same. The captain sounds the same from flight to flight—calm, cool, and collected, as if he just woke up and is still in his pajamas. “Hey folks, I’ve turned on the fasten seatbelt sign because we’ve run into a patch of rough air. Kindly return to your seats and buckle up.” He might as well be saying, “Hey, honey, the coffee’s ready. What do you want for breakfast?”

The pilot understands turbulence. His tone is calm because of what he does know. Perhaps that is what you “heard” in my emails. Although I typed “I don’t know” as we went along, it is what I did know that allowed me to communicate in a calm manner. Let me share with you what I did know:

- I knew that Post Oak had a Board of Trustees ready to support decisions made in the best interest of all the families.
- I knew that Post Oak had a faculty that would rise to the occasion, find a creative solution, and give their all for the students and the school.
- I knew that Post Oak had a support staff of classroom assistants, school counselors, specialists, and coaches. They would be the glue to hold everything together, supporting the teachers, delivering their content and curriculum from a rolling cart, showing up on the weekend to help the teachers, and doing it all with a smile.
- I knew Post Oak had a facilities team that would lead us through the challenges of the flooded building, including loading boxes, moving boxes, throwing out trash, cleaning what we were keeping, moving furniture, waxing floors, and washing windows. They got wet and then dusty over and over and over again.

continued on page 16
THE POST OAK ANNUAL FUND

GOALS

RAISE $330,000 100% PARTICIPATION

Funds support the school environment, allowing for enhancements such as increased professional development, unexpected facility repairs, and enhanced technology. When parents, the board of trustees, and employees all give, it shows strong community support to foundations and corporate donors.

FINANCIAL AID
The Annual Fund supports financial aid

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Teacher training, professional conferences, sabbatical awards

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES
Building repairs

WHERE NEEDED
Unexpected costs

THE ENDOWMENT
For the future of Post Oak

WAYS to GIVE

MAIL
Fill in the reply form mailed to your family or download one from our website.

ONLINE
Visit our website at www.postoakschool.org/donate.

EMAIL
Pledges are due at the end of the school year. Email christinacantu@postoakschool.org.

MONTHLY
Use your bank’s online bill pay or set up a credit card payment with the Development dept.

MATCH
Your company’s matching gift program may put you in the Leadership Circle.

STOCK
Gifts of securities and stocks are welcome. Contact Development for transfer info.

For more information, visit our website: www.postoakschool.org/donate. Thank you for your gift and making a difference with Post Oak.
MONDAY
On Monday, September 25, all the students arrived at the Hobby airport for the Human Origins trip to Flagstaff, Arizona. Our trip is based on our humanities study of ancient civilizations, which has included Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, the Indus River Valley, and the Olmecs of South America. After the plane ride, we walked with our luggage to the shuttle station and I was immediately startled by the freezing weather! It was so cold and I knew that I would regret my decision of not packing a jacket.

After driving for a while, we arrived at the Verde Valley Archaeology Center, where one group had a tour of the center, and the other drove to Montezuma’s Castle. After we arrived at Montezuma’s Castle, we gazed up at the spectacular view of the structure. I was surprised and impressed at how it was preserved so well and for so long! Montezuma’s Castle was built up very high in a raised cliff. This Native American home was five stories and included twenty rooms! You could see all the water levels from markings on the rock walls. This spot was valued greatly by the Sinagua Native Americans because when the river beside it rose, they could easily collect fish. Our three tour guides answered our questions and took us into the visitor center where we looked at the small museum there.

At the Verde Valley Archeology Center, tour guides split us up in small groups and gave us information that related to our projects in humanities. We learned quite a lot from our guides about the Native Americans of Arizona and got to hold some artifacts such as various pottery sherds.

The teachers drove us to Flagstaff and we arrived at our hotel at around 5:30. The first day was amazing and I wondered what would come in the next few days.

TUESDAY
After a long flight and an interesting afternoon of sightseeing on Monday, we were excited for a full day of activities. Our first stop was at Picture Canyon, where a lot, and I mean a lot, of Native American rock art was located. We worked on recording the rock art and checking off the different symbols we saw, which included multiple large panels of rock art that ranged from a picture that has been interpreted as both water and lightning, and petroglyphs consisting of humans and four-legged animals. After that, we drove to the Old Caves Crater, where after a relatively short hike, we were allowed to freely explore them and literally delve into the living spaces of the Sinagua people a thousand years ago. We found pottery sherds, charcoal, and many other artifacts which had been left by them and studied by archaeologists. After that, we visited the Elden Pueblo, a massive pueblo that was an important trade center for the Sinagua and a pit stop for travelers. We toured the pueblo, practiced throwing atlatls and rabbit sticks, and then we looked at pottery sherds that were found there. In addition, we even studied the current human impact on the environment there along with the wildlife and plant species located there.

WEDNESDAY
The next morning, we woke up after a long night of chatting with friends in our hotel rooms. After eating breakfast, we met up with our two guides, Tom and Lisa. We set off into our vans and
Family Fun Day
The Olympics at The Post Oak School

Sat., Nov. 4
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Bissonnet Campus Back Field

Games • Inflatables • Dunk Tank
• Food Trucks • Salon • Fun!

Join us for this FREE family fun event!

Get ready for Mystery Boxes!
RAFFLE TICKETS WILL BE ON SALE 10/30–11/4 in the carpool line!
Purchases of raffle tickets help cover the costs of this community event.
Thank you to all families who contributed to filling the boxes!
It’s time for Family Fun Day, Post Oak’s annual family and friends get-together! Admission and genera activities are FREE.

Bring a picnic basket or purchase food from the food trucks that will be on campus. Then get ready to have fun: slide and bounce around in the inflatables, walk the muffin walk, visit the Bearkat salon, take a turn at the oversized Jenga and Connect 4, and much more!

Where to Park (see map below)
1. Post Oak’s parking lot
2. Along Avenue B
3. In the neighborhood (no permit parking required on weekends)
4. Across Bissonnet at Feld Park*

*There will be Bellaire police officers to help pedestrians cross Bissonnet Street.

Mystery Boxes Await
All costs for Family Fun Day are offset by the sale of raffle tickets for Mystery Boxes. Parent volunteers have made an enticing array of creatively filled and decorated boxes to be raffled at the event.

There will be drawings at: 11:00 a.m., noon, and 12:45 p.m. (you do not need to be present to win).

Remember, this event is strictly a FUN raiser and not a fundraiser. However, we do want to cover the costs for the event, so please buy a raffle ticket or two or ten! Tickets are on sale during carpool the week of Oct. 30 and at the High School during lunch.

What to Bring
We ask that you bring reusable water bottles to reduce cup waste. Remember to bring a blanket to spread out on the field for your picnic!

Please Note: Parents must supervise their children on the playground. To ensure your child’s safety, signs will be posted to identify the age levels for the different playground sections. Please pay attention to the signs as they reflect ASTM safety standards for the equipment. There are areas for Young Children’s Community, Primary, and the older students (Elementary to High School).

We look forward to seeing your family there!

Fun Day Activities

- Inflatables
- Fabulous Food Trucks
- Bearkat Salon: Face painting, tattoos, happy hair
- NHS Community Service
- Live DJ
- YCC play area
- Family Photo Fun
- The Magnificent Muffin Walk
- MS Microeconomy sales
- MS Dunk Tank
- Olympic Torch Crafts
- Bingo
- and the grand Mystery Box Raffle!

Many thanks to our Family Fun Day Chairs Laura De Vera and Jessica Matos!
**YCC Teachers’ Afternoon Tea**

*Thursday, Oct. 26, 2 p.m.*

All parents of young children are invited to these informal gatherings to hear and discuss current topics about developmental milestones in their children.

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**Nanny/Caregiver Class with Deborah Fry, PhD**

*Nov. 7, 14, 28, Dec. 5*

9:15–10:45 a.m.

Parenting Center, Bissonnet Campus

$150 per person

$275 for two people

The class will be taught in English; however, the workbook is available in Spanish if requested.

Register online at deborah-fry.com.

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**Pathways to Independence**

*Middle School & High School Parent Ed*

**The Important Role of Failure in Success**

*Wednesday, November 1, 2017*

*at the High School, Museum District Campus*

6:45 Mix and Mingle | 7:00 Meeting

We all want to be successful and we want our students to be successful. Yet, research suggests that an important factor for success is the willingness to take on failure. At our next Parent Night, we will discuss what happens when the notion of success becomes synonymous with the absence of failure and ways we can support our students and ourselves in learning how failure can play an essential role in our story of success.
Notes from the Nurse

Dear Parents, this is a gentle reminder about when it is best to keep your children home from school. Please keep your child home if they exhibit any of the following:

- Temperature above or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Uncontrolled cough or difficulty breathing.
- Vomiting twice within 24 hours; persistent diarrhea.
- Severe headache, especially with fever.
- Red eyes with dark or “crusty” discharge; discolored nasal discharge.
- Severe ear pain.
- The presence of a skin rash, especially with other symptoms.
- Sore throat more than 48 hours, especially if accompanied by fever.
- Any reason they cannot pay attention because of psychological or physical issues.

Also, it is probably a good idea to periodically check your child for lice, especially if it has been reported in their environments.

Please consult your child’s pediatrician if you have any questions.

—Kate Lagus, BSN, School Nurse

Waldron, H. (2010) Determining when to keep your child home from school. American Academy of Pediatrics, apppublications.org/content/31/9/43.6

Funding the Four-Year Experience
A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP & FINANCIAL AID PREVIEW NIGHT

Monday, November 6, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Museum District Campus, High School building

This is a new event for families with college-bound students to learn more about merit-based scholarships, financial aid, filing the FAFSA, and how to maximize your process on the road to affording the four year degree.
1. A YCC student builds concentration and fine motor skills.
2. YCC students learn about a shell.
3–5. Primary students are back in their classrooms working on math, spatial relationships, and building words to create stories.
6. The gym is open for physical fitness!
7. LE students are happy to be back in the art room.
8. LE students receive a lesson on the large bead frame.
9. Mr. Pinto’s class is back in order.
10–11. Bearkats in action
12. A group of UE, MS, and HS students participated in the Montessori Model UN conference in Hangzhou, China.
13. Congrats to the newest inductees of the National Honor Society.
Share your photos!
If you snapped shots at any of the Bearkats games, please send them to our communications coordinator, Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org).
Thank you!

High School Admission Open House
Tues., Nov. 7 at 7 p.m.
1010 Autrey Street
Join us and bring or tell a friend!

Post Oak Sings!
Wednesday, December 20
6:30 to 8:00 p.m.
A night of community and chorus!
All students...all parents...
all faculty...together.

For parents & their children in YCC & Half-Day Primary
Thurs., Nov. 9 at 2:30 p.m.
at The Post Oak School Bissonnet Campus

Storytime with Cory
I was asked to talk about the work of The Post Oak School board, and to share the big picture from our vantage point.

We met for our back-to-school retreat the night of Harvey’s landfall in Rockport, the unforgettable August 25. We started in the afternoon with an onboarding session for our new trustees. Our head of school brought out a huge poster with a timeline and pictures outlining the history of the school going back to its foundation. For the year 2001, the poster included some horrible pictures of the school flooding after the storm known as Allison.

As the incoming chair, I was thinking to myself, this cannot be true. I was not ever expecting that my first task as board chair would be to help with the reconstruction of a flooded school. (I might as well have bought a lottery ticket that day.) As it turns out, even though there were many conference calls and times to show support, the school leadership and its staff did an amazing job, on their own, as one would expect from a Montessori organization.

I was very impressed by the response in two different ways: first, it was effective in a totally unpredictable environment (we were first on the list of the abatement company and had the construction company lined up for the day they would leave). Short of flood gates, which we do not have, nor could be installed easily on the Bissonnet Campus, we had thoroughly prepared for the possibility of flooding. In fact, right after the board retreat that evening, all trustees had to make sure the chairs and equipment we had used were two feet high. Instead of three months in the case of Allison, Post Oak was able to get back on its feet in just over one month after Harvey.

The second impressive feature of the response to flooding was being creative: housing 150 Primary children in the gym to prove that only Montessori education can entice young children to harmonious co-existence. And also through the help from Episcopal High School (please thank any teacher, school staff, board member, or parent that you may know in that community). They have simply been an amazing neighbor.

Crises like this one also show the true stamina of any individual or organization. Harvey stressed out every single resource to which the school has access. As incoming chair, I was able to see first hand the amazing caliber of our new head of school—her commitment and leadership—as well as that of the whole staff who came to the call of duty, even when some of them had to endure incredibly hard personal situations.

Another test provided by Harvey was to our school’s financial position. I believe I now understand what is meant by “rainy day” funds. Even though insurance is supposed to cover a situation like this, there is always going to be some out-of-pocket money which is not being matched. That’s when our cash reserves come in handy.

But our school has made the right financial choices over the years, operating on a full break-even budget for decades, that is with sufficient hard revenues covering hard expenses, and only devoting the non-tuition revenues for investments, and some big capital expenditure projects.

Fortunately, we will be back to business-as-usual in a few weeks, and the main area of focus for the board will be again to work on a new strategic plan. The timing is ideal since we are transitioning to a new phase of our organization’s life, and also a new leader.
POP A Welcome Dinner

This long-standing tradition of old and new friends coming together to kick off the new school year met a few twists and turns in a post-Harvey Houston. This year, over 230 Post Oak community members—parents, trustees, faculty, and staff—gathered at the Cohen House to celebrate a successful re-start. The evening included a presentation to Head of School Maura Joyce in recognition of her leadership. Our thanks go to event chairs, Emily Browning and Carlin Putman, for their outstanding work, and to everyone who attended and contributed to support faculty attendance.

Our thanks to the following donors for their support of faculty and staff attendance at the event.

- Shonali and Rakesh Agrawal
- Maura Joyce and Roberto Argentina
- Ginny and Robert Ashton
- Marjaneh Azad
- Nataya and Johnny Carter
- Deepa Poduval and Rajesh Chelapurath
- Xing Zhang and Xiaodong Cheng
- Casie and Andrew Cobos
- Dee and Shaki Commissariat
- Vareen and Dave Cunningham
- Tina Petersen and John Duboise
- Emily and Robert Emmett
- Kathleen Padden and Richard Evans
- Elizabeth and George Farish
- Lori Ann and Michael Foertsch
- Abbe and Adam Forman
- Jessica and Vean Gregg
- Leashanne and James Guo
- Rochelle Tafolla and Richard Hess
- Reena and Medhavi Jogi
- Teresa Lin and Stephen Lai
- Sara and Gabriel Loperena
- Susan and Jeffrey Lynn
- Kathryn and Roy Marrero
- Jenny and André Marshall
- Stacey and Mark Martin
- Victoria Matthews
- Emily Browning and Adam May
- Erinn Boyle and Alejandro Mayral Blanco
- Lane and Rhian McKinney
- Marissa Wagner Mery and Carlos Mery
- Pamela Griffin-Minnich and Gene Minnich
- Julie and Thomas Morin
- Elaine Block and Dennis O’Rourke
- Jacqueline Pourciau and Robert Phillpott
- Carlin and Damon Putman
- Shelley Rice and James Rice III
- Alicia Kowalchuk and Benjamin Saldaña
- Daniela and Manolo Sanchez
- Krystal and Ryan Scott
- Jordan and Dylan Seff
- Erica and Vadim Sherman
- Morgan and David Sherman
- Vanessa and David Sims
- Susie and Gary Stankowski
- Rebecca and Jeffrey Tapick
- Nikayla and Aaron Thomas
- Judy Le and Don Tom
- Donna and Fredrick Williams
- Courtney Wulfe
- Samantha and Charles Wykoff
- Kim Yates
- Lauren and Garrison Ziff

Chairs Emily Browning (L) and Carlin Putman (R) recognized Maura Joyce for her leadership.

Board President Manolo Sanchez spoke to the crowd. Read his speech on page 13.

For more photos, visit the gallery page in the parent community section of our website.
Post Oak Resilience
continued from page 3

- I knew that I had POPA and the parent community to take care of each other while we focused on the building and keeping our business operational. I also knew that you would all answer the call for volunteers with such enthusiasm.

- Most importantly, I knew that I had your students—who would ultimately teach us how flexible Montessori’s pedagogy is. They returned to school after a natural disaster and supported each other. They walked into a foreign space and knew what to do. They taught us the meaning of adaptability, because they are Montessori kids and go to The Post Oak School. They are resilient, optimistic, compassionate and resourceful. They turned a challenging situation into an opportunity for service, outreach, learning in a new environment, and connection to each other in a new way. They were the inspiration for the last six weeks. They were the ones that made working seven-day weeks bearable. They were our hope that we would come out on the other end of this challenge in a stronger, better position than we were. And we have.

My job was easy, all I had to do was sound like the calm pilot. ☺️
got ready for the two hour drive to the
Grand Canyon National Park! The ride
there was exciting in the beginning; we
were talking and singing to the songs on
the radio, but soon most of us got bored
and fell asleep. When we finally arrived at
the Grand Canyon, we split up into our
two groups. My group walked the Trail
of Time with Tom. I really liked this trail
because of the ancient rocks that were
placed on pedestals every few feet. The
rocks were all from the different layers of
the Grand Canyon. Visitors are allowed to
feel these rocks, and it was interesting how
some were so rough on the exterior, but so
smooth inside when cut in half.

After this nice walk, we had some
sandwiches for lunch. The other group
joined us a little later, and we heard many
grumbles. They said we had to hike
something called the Bright Angel Trail.
When I heard this, I thought, That doesn’t
sound so bad. But the thing was, instead
of hiking up, and then down, it was hiking
the other way around! My group walked
to the hiking destination and wondered
if it was really all that difficult. When I
saw the Grand Canyon for the first time,
I was so mesmerized by its wondrous
formations and cliffs! The layers were all
various colors and the different types of
rocks made it look so beautiful! As we
walked down the trail with Lisa, I kept on
stopping to look at the canyon around me,
and it looked very different in different
perspectives. Our hike was 1½ miles long,
but if you were tired, you were allowed to
stop halfway and hike back up. The rest of
us hiked up (or should I say hiked down?)
to the bathroom rest-house where we took
a break. As we were hiking back up, we
had a lot of water breaks.

Our next activity was a long drive to the
Desert View Watchtower, which I really
enjoyed. The Watchtower was not made
by Native Americans, but it was designed
by Mary Colter to look like a pueblo
tower.

We left the watchtower and headed for
Cameron’s Trading Post. We ate dinner
there and drove a long drive back to our
hotel. I was so tired and ready to sleep.

THURSDAY

On Thursday, we once again geared up
for a long adventure. To start off, we
visited Sunset Crater, the site of a massive
volcanic eruption in around 1000 AD. We
immediately noticed a very widespread
area covered by volcanic cinders, for as
far as the eye can see. We studied the
history of the site and the countless other
volcanoes in the whole area. After that, we
visited the Wupatki National Monument.
We first walked through a fairly large
house/structure, and we learned that
all of the 26 pueblos in the area were
constructed within eye’s view of at least
one other pueblo. Afterwards, we drove
to the Visitors Center, where we explored
the artifacts and knowledge that they had
to offer about the largest site there, the
Wupatki Pueblo. After reading up on
it, we walked the large, 100 room pueblo
that was even outfitted with a ballcourt
and a community room. We explored the
pueblo and even visited their geological
blowhole, a natural A/C of sorts that
produced a cold wind that literally came
from an underground cave, and it really
fascinated many, if not all of us. We
then drove the Wupatki loop, where we
visited the Citadel followed by the Long
House Ruins. Our guide then drove us
to a small pueblo that he mapped himself
and told us about it. We then drove back
to the hotel, only to leave for dinner. At
night, we visited the Lowell Observatory,
where we were given a few lectures on
the constellations and the sky along with
seeing their main telescope. We drove
back to the hotel in our vans, and we were
ready for a good night’s sleep before flying
back to Houston. ✈️
The last time a strategic plan was tackled, the High School was born. Not only the High School, but also the Houston Montessori Institute, the parenting center, and the upgrades to the Bissonnet Campus, which include the nurse’s station and the music room. It is worth going back to that time to understand how it happened, how the board made the decision to launch a strategic plan, and how it engaged all the stakeholders in our community. A consultant was hired who conducted focus groups, survey responses came in, and for a community representing an average student age of five years, the number one most desired addition to Post Oak was a high school. This result did not appear to be very intuitive at first.

The first question needing an answer was: what kind of high school? Our leaders had seen a Montessori high school come into existence that could be used to model our project, which was the Cleveland Montessori High School. A very thoughtful approach was taken, which included a trip to Cleveland, to which I was not invited to join, by the way. Understanding the Cleveland model was critical because it was structured around partnerships with a museum district similar to the one in Houston. In fact, the idea of partnering with the museums in Houston was not only an ideal Montessori-like feature, but it opened the doors of (what was likely to be) a small school to amazing facilities: whether labs or arts studios. In addition, any Houston high school campus in the Museum District could also benefit from partnerships with the Texas Medical Center. A little-known fact is that we almost opened the school at the Glassell School of Art, which made a lot of sense because their facilities were not used during the daytime. Fortunately, that invitation was withdrawn. If you have been driving down Montrose and seen the construction of the new Museum of Fine Arts campus, you understand what I mean by fortunately, because the Glassell School was torn down and is currently being rebuilt. That would not have been the right way to start our high school.

From the Cleveland High School also came a very important recruit, James Moudry, who we were able to hire as director for our new project.

Applications for our first freshmen class was also not intuitive at first: our early adopters turned out not to come from our community but the world at large. These were families that were inspired by our educational proposition and were prepared to be the first ones to adopt it.

What we are delivering at the High School is truly unique. The Montessori pedagogy is widely recognized for educating younger children; however, we count on several decades of experienced teachers with solid Montessori programs for educating adolescents and pre-adolescents. This is the opportunity we have taken advantage of in expanding Middle School and High School programs. And this is the luxury we can afford to have: to see how some of the best teachers in the nation are confirming how Montessori education can help deliver excellent outcomes for our learners.

I said I was surprised when the surveys and the focus groups resulted in our decision to start a high school. You can see how the wisdom of our community has enlightened our path, and how it will bear fruit in providing better education, better outcomes, and better options for our children.

A new strategic plan will guide our work for the next half-decade. I do not have the best crystal ball, now that you know that I did not see the high school coming, but I am willing to speculate on some of the things we might want to deliver. One I know is to affirm and re-state the school’s commitment and aspiration to “developing very...
unique individuals (individuals who are compassionate, creative, and who are team players) while continuing to be one of the nation’s premier Montessori organizations. I believe our new plan will also focus on expanding our High School and Middle School programs, and I would not be surprised if we end up re-writing the standards of Montessori in these age groups. And finally, somehow, I expect that there will be the odd construction project and campus expansion, which I know the staff has grown to master after so many years. And I know that Maura, who arrived at the school while it was under construction, worked out of boxes her first months, and then, because of Harvey, started the second year in similar conditions. Well, I believe she may very well have grown a liking for it. Not sure 100%.

The Board of Post Oak works “for the benefit of the current generation of students and those generations that will follow.” I wanted to ask fellow board members to stand, as well as any other past board members who may be in the room. Please help me in recognizing these individuals, who graciously volunteer their time to ensure that our school is governed so that it may be sustainable.

In closing, I wanted to share a personal story about my participation on the board; in fact, my very unforgettable first lesson as a trustee. Coming from the business world, the day came when I asked naively about the number of students in a classroom. I asked if it would not be better for the school to lower the number of students per classroom so that it would be more in line with other private schools, and more importantly to improve education by allowing the teacher to concentrate better on teaching students. I swear I had been doing my homework on the Montessori methodology and had paid plenty of attention to the introductory courses when we had applied to the school, but it had not registered. As a response, I was reminded that at an AMI school there had to be a minimum number of students per teacher, so that the adult would not dominate the classroom, and children could really become independent and self-starters. Having attended an all-boys Catholic school, it is no wonder that I had difficulties in understanding the principle of the more students per teacher, the better.

I share this anecdote because I believe it illustrates the uniqueness of the pedagogy imparted at Post Oak. It is a proven methodology for developing independent, creative, compassionate children. None of these skills are on any scorecard in traditional schools. And yet we worry about our kids hitting every milestone in their academic achievement road, whilst not seeing a quarterly scorecard. That’s the ordeal of a Montessori parent. Wait a minute, are they learning the algebra, and the biology, and the history of the world, getting lessons from a kid a year older than they, or working on a research project at age six or just sitting on the floor on a mat with ten more? Or in Primary, are they learning to read or write by stroking sandpaper letters for weeks? And yet, it does take courage and conviction to believe in the proven results of the Montessori system, and every year around admissions time to wonder once again, is this still good for our family, and are we sticking to this for the next cycle? And yet, the most valuable outcomes of this pedagogy are NOT in the traditional school scorecard anyway. You won’t find teamwork, critical thinking, independence, compassion, and creativity. And yet, as we have been reading about the advent of the robots and artificial intelligence, we know all too well that these sets of skills—the character skills, the skills that power human intelligence—are the ones that will give our kids an opportunity to get and keep jobs that won’t be supplanted by machines.

However, as parents of three Montessori children, the thing Daniela and I appreciate the most about Montessori education is the fact that they are cared for and nurtured as whole individuals. And that holistic approach is the guaranty of a harmonious and well-rounded education that any parent in the twenty-first century would desire for their children.

Thanks for your attention and enjoy the rest of the evening.
NOTICE BOARD

CALENDAR CHANGES

Family Fun Day: 11/4
Montessori Journey: 1/19–20

An updated version of the Family Calendar is available online under Calendar > School Calendar.

VOLUNTEERS

needed for

Family Fun Day

Fun is around the corner and we need parent volunteers. Sign up for a ½ hour shift (or two!) at the event OR to help sell raffle tickets in advance. Contact event chairs Laura De Vera and Jessica Matos.

This family fun event happens on Saturday, November 4 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

GRANDPARENTS’ & FRIENDS’ DAYS INVITATIONS

Order invitations on our website using the link in the left-hand menu. The students’ special guests are invited to visit the Museum District Campus on November 20 and the Bissonnet Campus on November 20 or 21.

Invitations will be mailed in late October.

To avoid the school’s email communications arriving in your junk mail folder, please add info@postoakschool.org to your safe sender list or address book/contacts.

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).

Bissonnet Campus: 4600 Bissonnet St., Bellaire, TX 77401 • Tel: 713-661-6688 • Fax: 713-661-4959
Museum District Campus: 1010 Autrey St., Houston, TX 77006 • Tel: 832-538-1988 • Fax: 832-538-1926
www.postoakschool.org | facebook.com/thepostoakschool

POP A

COFFEE | WORK

Day

Wed., Nov. 1, 8:45–noon

Parents, grandparents, and friends are invited!

Hosted by our POPA Chairs, this is a great way to meet other Post Oak parents and friends while helping our teachers accomplish a variety of easy-to-do projects for their classroom.

These gatherings generally fall on the first Wednesday of each month. Please join as often as you can!

Parents, grandparents, and friends are invited!

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