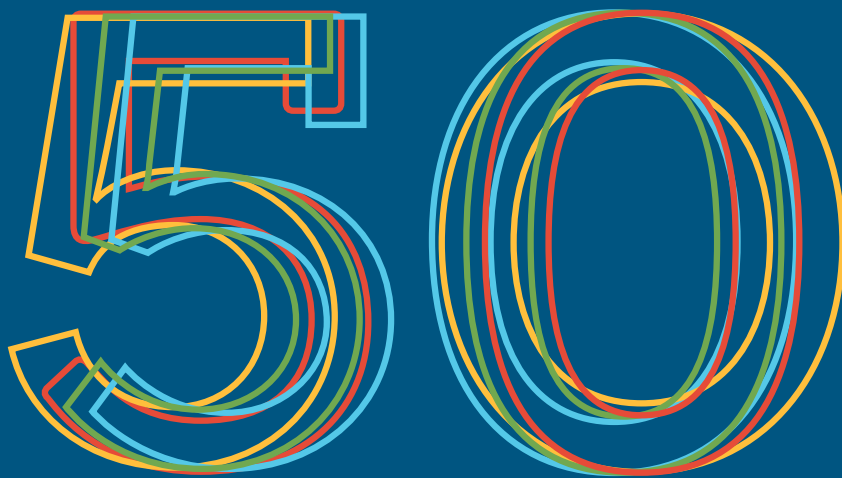


THE POST OAK SCHOOL



FIFTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY

1963-2013

# We are ALL



## POST OAK

*Our history has its  
milestones, and at its core is*

**THE WORK OF THE CHILD**

1963



1963 - Carol Ferguson opens  
the Little School House  
on Briar Ridge Drive with  
one Primary classroom

1965 - First Young Children's  
Program is established



Christmas, 1968

1969 - First Lower Elementary  
classroom is established

1970

1973 - Creative arts  
program is introduced

1975  
First Upper Elementary  
classroom is established

1975



1985 - The School is renamed  
"The Post Oak School" upon  
opening of the Bissonnet Campus



1984 - The School moves  
to the vacant Gordon Elementary  
building while Bissonnet Campus  
is under construction



1981 - The School moves to a facility  
on Harwin Drive and is renamed  
"The Post Oak System"

1985

1987 - The School  
celebrates its  
25th Anniversary

1988 - The Board names  
Suzanne Pugin  
Head of School

1989 - Primary Home  
Environment opens

1984 - Infant  
Community  
is established

1984 - After School  
Enrichment Programs  
(ASEP) begin



Middle School visits the  
White House, 1981

1980

1978  
Middle School  
is established



Mud and Water Day, 1975

# 50

## FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

1963-2013

2013

2013 - The Houston Montessori Institute is founded

2011 - The School begins its BIGWork Capital Campaign

2010

2010 - Third Upper Elementary classroom is established



2012  
The Post Oak High School opens

2007 - Fourth Lower Elementary classroom is established

2006  
The School achieves ISAS accreditation

2006 - The School debuts its beautiful new website

2005

2005  
Our playground is rebuilt



2004 - Prospective Parent Classes begin

2000

1999 - A major Capital Campaign allows for new gym, library, and art studio facilities to open

1996 - The School begins working toward ISAS accreditation

1995

1995 - The Board names John Long Head of School



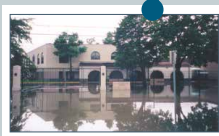
Chemistry, 1995

1994 - First computer system is put into operation



1996 - The Bearcats sports program begins

2001 - Tropical Storm Allison hits, necessitating renovations due to flooding



1990



# OUR 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY JUBILEE

*by John Long, Head of School*

The five-year-old led me to his table where more than 50 individual letter cards were laid out in patterns: “tyrannosaurus rex. ware one of the bigist dinosaurs in the world”—in his hand he held a card with a dot on it.

“Do I need a period after ‘world?’” he asked me.

“It depends on what you’re going to say next,” I replied.

“...when dinosaurs were alive,” he added.

“That’s where you put the period,” I said, “not after ‘world.’”

Dinosaurs connect the dots between that individual child at work this week in a classroom at The Post Oak School, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science, home of so many fossilized specimens, where we celebrate Post Oak’s 50th year this evening.

In 1963, we were not yet The Post Oak School. Carol Ferguson opened a one-room school house for “pre-schoolers” on Briar Ridge Drive and called it The Little School House. It was the first Montessori school in the Southwest United States. Over the next five decades, the school has grown, adding elementary classes, an infant community and middle school, and finally last year, a high school. During that span, the school changed name and location more than once, finally moving to the Bissonnet Campus as The Post Oak School in 1985.

History and heritage strengthen Post Oak. We have learned so much over the past 50 years. Of course, no one person’s career has spanned that entire period, but our mutual experience is passed on through each successive generation of educators who have served the children of this diverse community of families. There are teachers who have worked at Post Oak for 25 years, and others who are new this year. The collective wisdom embodied in our school and in the wider Montessori community inspires and guides us all.

We celebrate our history and our heritage, and the work of those teachers upon whose shoulders we stand; at the same time, we celebrate this very present moment; and in this jubilee year, we also celebrate our future work with these very same children whom we imagine passing through each successive stage of development on their way to creative adult lives; we celebrate the work of our successors, who will extend our work with new children, new families, and make new contributions across the decades to come, contributions to the culture and vitality of Houston and the world.

“Do I put a period after ‘world?’” he asked me.

“Well, it depends on what you’re going to say next.” 🐾

# A NOTE ABOUT THE CHAIRS

Tonight's celebration of our past, present and future came together under the able leadership of our Event Chairs, Pam Boyar and Cc Hetherington. Their involvement and enthusiasm for Post Oak began well before its 50th birthday. As alumni parents, these two influential women have had a lasting impact on our school community over the decades, as well as had the opportunity to see our school change, grow, and flourish. During her children's time at Post Oak, Pam took on a variety of roles within the school community, including Board Trustee (1995–2001), Board Chair (1999–2001), Emerita (2001–2011) and POPA Chair (1996–1998). Pam and Cc both were instrumental in establishing the Parent Education program. As a dedicated volunteer and member of the Post Oak Parent Association (1989–2007), Cc continually worked to enable growth for Post Oak's future. Her husband, David Hetherington, also served on the Board of Trustees (1998–2004).

Together, Pam and Cc worked on countless events, helped to strengthen our sense of community, and have continued to demonstrate their commitment to The Post Oak School. Although their children have long since left Post Oak, Pam and Cc once again volunteered their time and energy for this important celebration. Their immense spirit and collective love for this school is powerful, as it reminds us all of Post Oak's enduring impact on its students and families. 🍷

“Post Oak really allows its students to  
develop their own voice.”

Nick Hetherington,

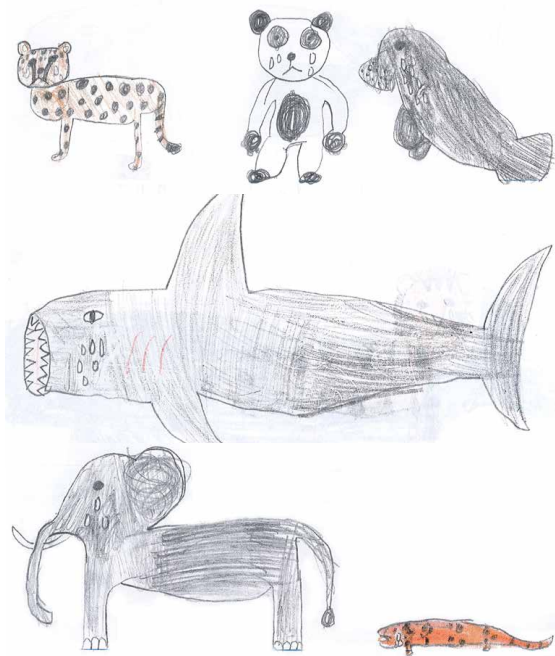
Post Oak Alumnus

*8th Grade Class of '02*



*"The Little Schoolhouse" – Post Oak's first location on Briar Ridge Drive*





I have a dream that someday people all around the world will help protect endangered species around the world like pandas and cheetahs because cutting down their habitats and poaching them is not the right thing to do. Neither is killing an elephant for its tusks or poaching a shark for its fins. Tigers are endangered because people are killing them for their fur coats and their meat.

*work from a Lower Elementary student, 2013*

“I remembered tracing letters, creating stories with alphabet cards, working with the binomial cube, using symbols to learn parts of speech, working with beads to understand the concept behind long division, and conducting science experiments and testing hypotheses. I remember learning about ancient Greek and Roman civilizations—yes, we read books, listened to lectures, and wrote reports, but we also visited museums, created scale models, prepared traditional foods, staged an archeological excavation, and created period costumes to wear to the lower school classrooms so that we could share with younger students what we had learned. At Post Oak, there was always more to learn than what could be found in a textbook.”

Alison Wong McElroy,  
Post Oak Alumna and Current Parent

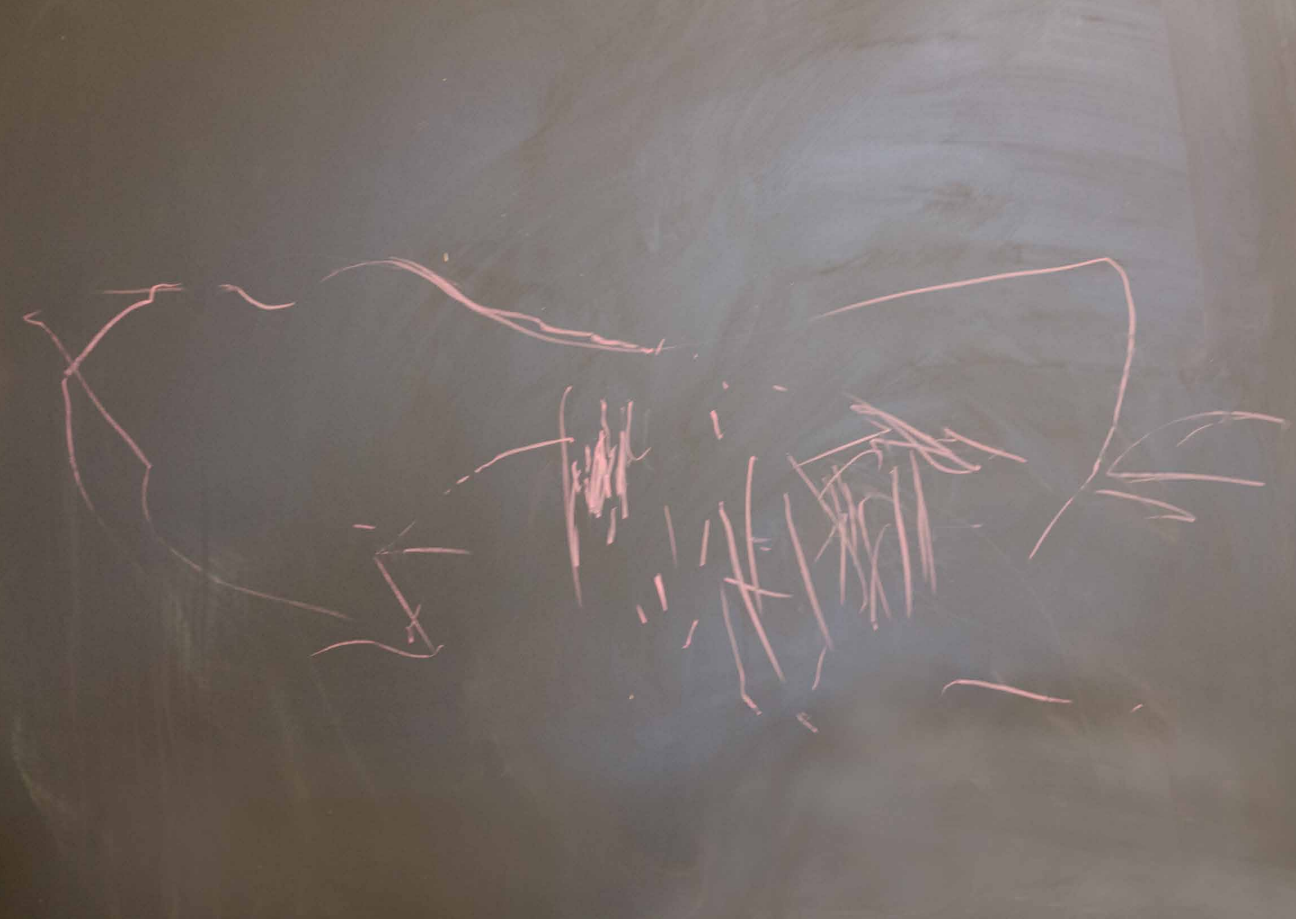
*Attended Grades 5 through 8*



*Sister Edna Ann (founded St. Catherine's Montessori), Christmas, 1965*



*Mud and Water Day, 1976*



*a chalkboard drawing from the Infant Community, 2013*





*student work from Lower Elementary Art class, 2013*

“The Montessori Method successfully exhibited to me the simple miracles in life: how things can be counted in numbers, and those numbers can be manipulated in so many different ways; how a tiny speck of life, a seed, can grow into a huge and mighty living thing; how one can express the exact same idea in different sounds, different words, in a completely different language; how pressure in an organized manner on white and black piano keys can create a beautiful melody; how one can write or type a series of symbols and another person can see them and get the exact same idea that the first person wanted to convey; how one can create a likeness of almost anything, in abstract, realistic, surrealistic, impressionistic, or any style, with a simple pencil, pen, or brush and paint; all these things are a way to see the world, revealed to me through Montessori teachings. ”

Carter Green,  
Post Oak Alumnus

*8th Grade Class of '12 Graduation Speech*





*"Cave Paintings," work from Upper Elementary students, 2013*



The music turns on and everyone shuffles  
around the room putting their books away  
and coming to the rug. Some people close  
their eyes, and some people keep them open.

I prefer to close my eyes.

When I meditate I have to be peaceful.  
I do this by making myself everything.  
I am as restless as the wind, and as still as a  
mountain. I am as bright as the sun, and as  
dark as a moonless night.

I am everything.

I open my eyes, and I become me.

*"Meditation," work from a Lower Elementary student, 2013*

More and More, I feel like Foalan,  
As the Obea takes me further from home.  
Out to where I'll be left to die,  
All because I was born a malcadh.  
Out to the tummfraw, we will go,  
as I sway in her teeth, to and fro.  
Not even old enough to open my eyes,  
Still I can sense an end to my life.  
As I wait for Life's cruel goodbye,  
I hear the sound of another malcadh.  
He is much older, he survived,  
Will I be so lucky, or shall I die?  
To me he sings of sweet things, untold,  
Of all the fun I'll have in the Cave of Souls.  
With all the other Star wolves, up in the sky,  
He asks me softly, Why do I still cry?  
I try to tell him, tell him I want to live,  
To save me, help me, don't let me cross the Bridge.  
As I lay there, upon my tummfraw,  
The Gnaw wolf is silent, stunned in utter awe.  
Before him stands the Great Fengo,  
or at least his Lochin, one well known.  
He looks at me then looks at him,  
and as he looks, his face turns grim,  
eyes filled with empathy and bitter sorrow,  
As he turns back to me, he leans in to borrow,

the dying body of a pup whom knows not of how to speak,  
the nearly lifeless body is just too weak.  
To the Gnaw, he says with my voice,  
"Take care of me, give me a chance, Like I did for you  
before.  
How else do you think you survived your tummfraw?"  
Straightening, he took one last glance, before he slipped  
away,  
as the sun began to rise, upon him hit a ray.  
The Gnaw wolf took me, and raised me alone,  
away from any packs who might try to take me home.  
For as I grew, he started to see what the Fengo meant,  
for I learned easy, and was agile and intent,  
to learn of my destiny, to what had the Fengo seen?  
I was blessed with a beauty that no other wolf had been.  
but thanks to my status, no suitors came my way,  
even though they were kind to me, they had to stay away.  
So a peaceful life was one I lived, until that fateful day,  
when the Fengo decided it was time to take me away.  
The Gnaw wolf begged him to allow me the peace,  
but the Fengo insisted that I was meant for this;  
that he should take me to where all the territories meet,  
once the clans all see I belong to none, they'll crawl for me.  
But with torn heart, I'll rush to each's aid,  
only to increase the others furry and cascade,  
all the blood around me will drive me to a cliff,  
upon which I'll sing a song to which they'll go stiff.

I'll sing of all the blood shed, and how it rips my soul,  
I'll sing of my pain and how it makes me cold,  
to see this much blood shed, its too much to take,

I finally understand, my one big mistake.

I should have stayed in hiding,  
where peace was always near,  
where butterflies and hummingbirds flying,  
many bird songs would I hear.

The Gnaw wolf did as he was told,  
saddened by this burden, he grew tired and cold.  
with heavy hearts, we both went along,  
and on my way, I hummed a song.

Not one of old, nor one of new,  
this was my own song, my own special tune.

Each night we would create our own small Cairns,  
Each day we would choose our favorite bone, to start all  
over again.

when finally I reached the place, my heart was cold as  
stone,

for my father and my guide had passed long ago.

And as the Fengo had said, all went that way,  
up until the part where he let me choose what to say,

"My brother is dead, and now I've started a war!

Will someone end this pain? Cause I can't take it anymore!

If I must, I will go to the furthest Outermost,  
just to escape, from this battle to be my betrothed!"

At this the Chieftans, all leapt up and cried,  
"We only wanted you to be our loving, gracious bride!"  
The youngest of the Chiefs was only a year older than me,  
and stepping forward, he said with great sympathy,  
"We only wanted you for your beauty and your grace,  
we never even thought about asking about your place..."  
I was moved by his compassion and to him I allowed,  
the honor of protecting me, with his solemn vow.

Now alone and in the forest,

I can find my peace,  
even though clans will visit,  
they seldom stay long,  
for with each visit, I often sing,  
this sad, sad song.

*"The Battle of Bitter Woe," work from a 10th grade student, 2013*

“Post Oak graduates show a curiosity and concern for the world around them. We travel extensively and speak multiple languages. We do not tolerate injustice, ignorance, poverty, or disease, and want to make tangible changes in the world. We return to the Post Oak School to volunteer, intern, and teach. We serve as members of the larger, world community by volunteering, going on mission trips, doing research, majoring in medicine, and joining the Navy.”

Sara Mitchell,  
Post Oak Alumna

*8th grade Class of '97*



*Post Oak founder Carol Ferguson (left), 1978*



*Middle School visits the White House, 1981*

Tranquility roams

Fear withdraws,  
with talons sharp

Inner peace returns.

A bird caught my eye,

Different than the others,

One-winged and dark blue.

The dawn approaches

Bright sunrays hit the water

With a look of gold.

The ocean, a blue

Mystery, never fully

Investigated.

Standing strong and tall

Surviving thousands of years

The oak is alive.

A tree, all alone

Grows in a concrete jungle

Steadily sprouting.

*Haikus, work from Middle School students, 2013*





*"Land and Water Forms," work from Upper Elementary students, 2013*



“I learned how to respectfully disagree,  
share ideas, learn new ideas, adopt new  
ideals, and not just stick to a certain  
preconception. I’d say that is probably  
the thing that has stuck with me the  
most from the Post Oak School.”

Tom Harvey,  
Post Oak Alumnus  
*8th Grade Class of ‘08*

I am excited.  
I wonder when Field Day is.  
I hear teachers talking and chairs moving.  
I see kids writing.  
I want to go out to recess.  
I am excited.

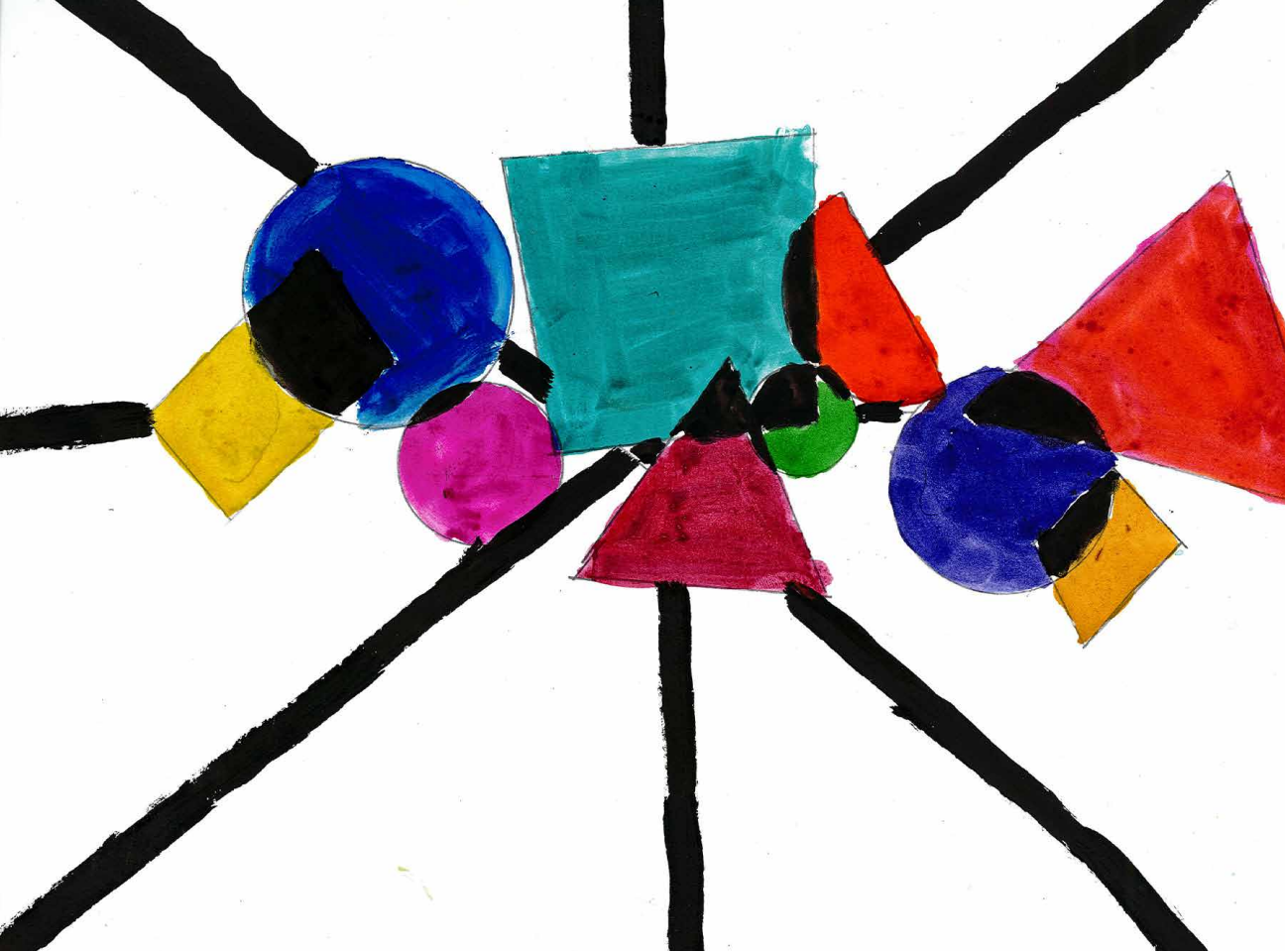
I am a book lover and I like finding out about stuff.  
I like learning new things.  
I worry that I will not get into the Spelling Bee.  
I dislike the fact that school days are 8 hours long.  
I love when I get to meet my friends in school.  
I am a book lover and I really like finding out about stuff.

I dream that I will do well in school this year.  
I say focus, focus.  
I try to work hard.  
I hope I will learn more.  
I dream that I will do well in school this year.



*Post Oak's campus on Harwin Drive, 1981*





*student work from Lower Elementary Art class, 2013*



*Lower Elementary Campout, 1982*





*"The Five Kingdoms," work from High School students, 2013*



*"Cave Paintings," work from Upper Elementary students, 2013*



“After being here for almost six years, I can tell you that Post Oak has given me qualities that a public or traditional school wouldn’t have. Montessori prepares you socially at a young age, since cooperation with other students on work or other tasks for an extended period of time is a must. It also allows you more freedom of choice, which results in a more responsible and proactive personality. You are put in charge of monitoring yourself, how you complete your work, and in what time it is completed, developing independence.”

Brayden Chavis,  
High School Student

*Moving Up Ceremony Speech*

“Post Oak taught us to be really independent and how to work on our own, and yet it influenced us and gave us the scholastic enthusiasm that we carry with us for the rest of our lives.”

Stephanie Styles,  
Post Oak Alumna  
*8th Grade Class of '05*



rojo



morado



anaranjado



rosa



azul



amarillo



Verde

*work from a student in Primary Home Environment, 2013*



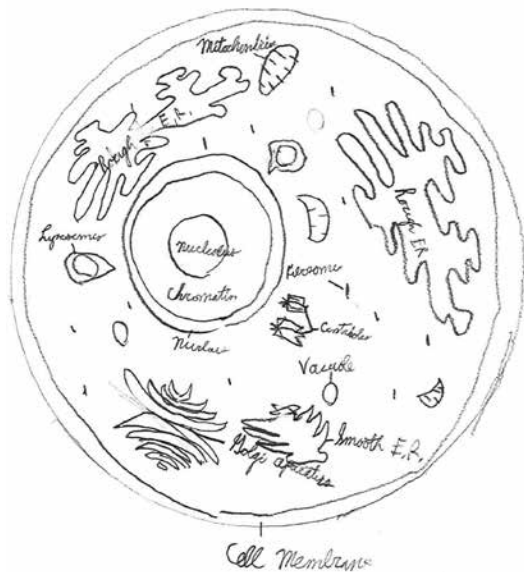
*Lower Elementary, 1989*



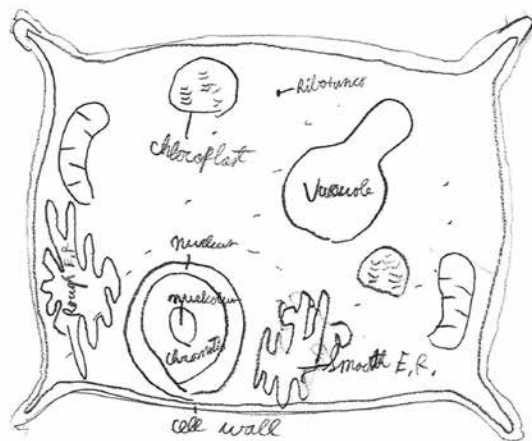
*student work from Lower Elementary Art class, 2013*



Animal cell



Plant cell



work from an Upper Elementary student, 2013

“I remember writing four little pamphlets—they were short. I was interested in a lot of life sciences, which explains my motivation to become a doctor. Back in Lower El, my pamphlets were about animals and their anatomical patterns, subatomic particles, genetics, and DNA and RNA.”

Ryan Cunningham,  
Post Oak Alumnus

*Attended Primary through Grade 8*



The sun heats up the food for the plant. The roots get the water for the plant and sends it up to each leaf so all the plant stays healthy. The things plants need to grow are dirt, water, and sun.

*work from a Lower Elementary student, 2013*





*Pearl Opera, 1991*

“At Post Oak, people teach you how to  
teach yourself.”

Masoud Darvishi,  
Post Oak Alumnus

*8th Grade Class of '95*



*"Cave Paintings," work from Upper Elementary students, 2013*



*Post Oak Assistants, 1996*





*student work from Lower Elementary Art class, 2013*





*"Mayan Ruins," work from Middle School students, 2013*

“As Montessorians, we learn in a manner that is different than others... We have extraordinary teachers who take the time to understand our strengths and weaknesses. Teachers who teach us in a way that we become involved with our work and our community. We are guided by those who are older and in turn we assist those who are younger. All of this adds to our educational experience, one all students should have the opportunity to go through. ”

Samantha Pulaski,  
Post Oak Alumna  
*8th Grade Class of '12*

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| happy<br>happy happy<br>all day long<br>morning afternoon night<br>happy | star<br>in space<br>and beyond the<br>moon and neptune<br>stars | lions<br>resting<br>all day long<br>get up you beast<br>dinner |
| me<br>i'm me<br>the only me<br>no one else is<br>me                      | trash<br>in can<br>composition word<br>awesome awesome<br>yay   | gum<br>and ball<br>form a name<br>definitely not mine<br>his   |

*Lantern Poems, work from an Upper Elementary student, 2013*



*Time Capsule, 1999*







*work from a Primary student, 2013*



*Middle School community service outing, 2000*

I love my home because I give love to my family and I receive love back.  
My home is one of the places in the entire world I feel completely safe.

I love my state because the majority of people are friendly and respect each other's space. Most importantly most of the people want to have peace.

I love my country because it is free and there is no ruler. There are certain rules that need to be followed that some people don't follow, but the rules are there to keep this wonderful place clean and its people kind.

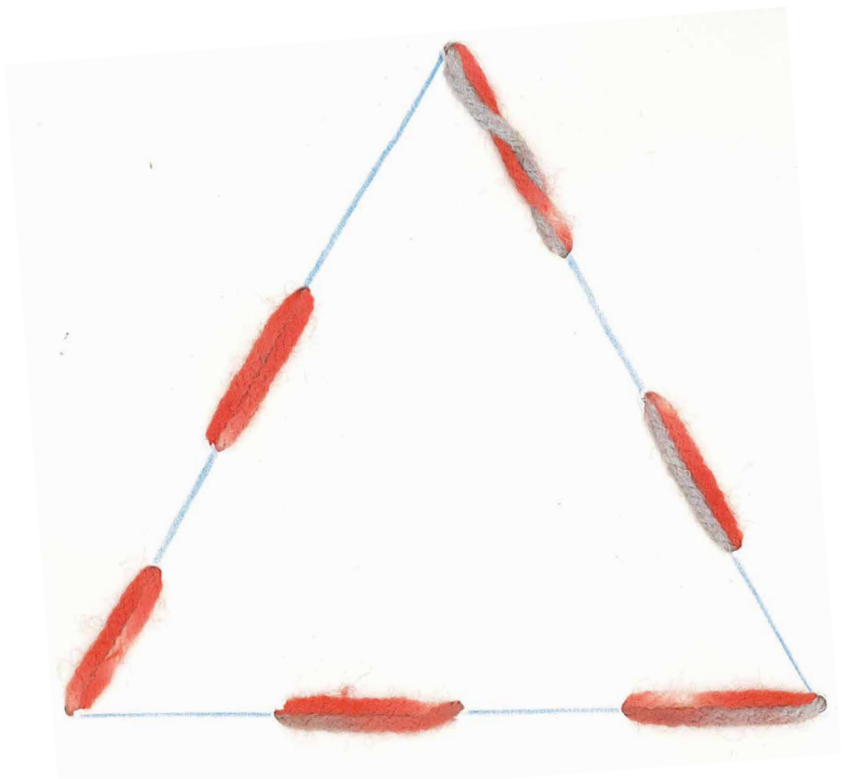
I love my continent because it is a free and strong nation with loyal and kind hearted people like the Navy. There are some cruel people who do terrible things but we learned to share the world with each other.

I love my planet because the Earth keeps us alive and without it all its amazing creatures wouldn't exist. My life would be much different than the life I'm living.

I love the solar system because without it there wouldn't be a sun or a moon or all the planets and all living creatures wouldn't exist.

I love the universe because it keeps the solar system running its routine the way it should be.

*"I Love..." work from an Upper Elementary student, 2013*



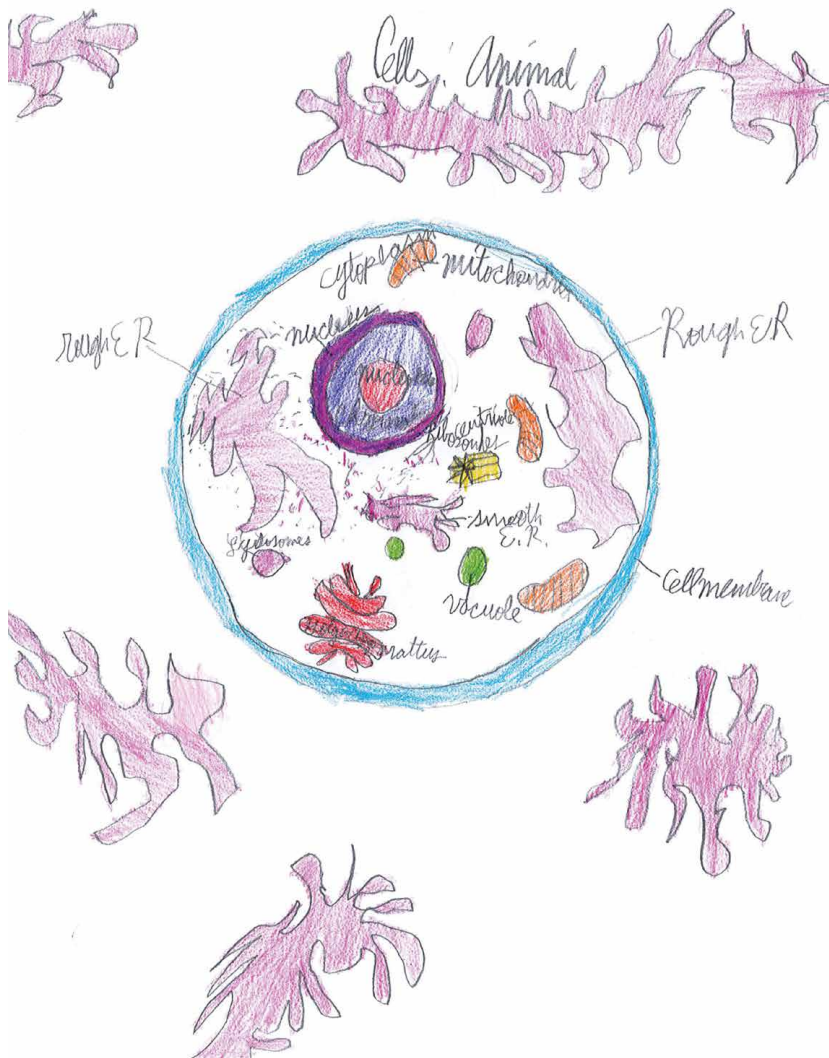
*work from a Primary student, 2013*

“I had a lot of fun with friends in every grade. We always had fun together. Even though we were in class and focused on our work, we were around each other and were able to socialize. We had to get our work done, obviously, but I enjoyed being with them and being free to move around. It was nice.”

Mason Harrell,  
Post Oak Alumnus

*Attended Primary through Grade 5*





work from Upper Elementary



*Bearcats, 2003*

“One of my favorite things about the Montessori method is that the student is encouraged to explore the materials they are interested in. The teacher is there to introduce new material and suggest that the student balance their time with some variety. I distinctly remember spending a majority of my time doing math and whenever I was asked to write a report, I would always pick a really cool topic like sharks or dinosaurs. Allowing children to work on whatever they want really helps define their interests, both academically and otherwise. This freedom of choice in education is really not seen outside of Montessori until the college level.”

John Sallans,  
Post Oak Alumnus

*8th Grade Class of '02*



The roots get the water for the plant and send it up the trunk to the leaf. The leaf makes the food for the plant.

*work from a Lower Elementary student, 2013*





*Bike Outing, 2005*





*work from a Primary student, 2013*



*Eighth Grade Class of 2008*

“Post Oak allows students to stretch the limits of traditional education and shape their own minds. I was allowed to excel in math at an early age and no teacher considered telling me ‘no’ when I wanted to learn something new. I learned how to understand basic concepts and principles in a tangible form. These education methods simplified math and writing in my mind and not only helped me learn them then, but are helping me pass that knowledge on now.”

Amelinda Melanson,  
Post Oak Alumna

*8th Grade Class of '01*

Happiness is laying in the grass reading in the shade with the wind rushing against your ears, and being able to escape to a different world.

Happiness is falling asleep to the pitter patter of the rain with my cat keeping me warm.

Happiness is the joy you feel on Christmas Eve, the excitement keeps you up and then in the morning you wake up your sister and rush down to be with all of your family.

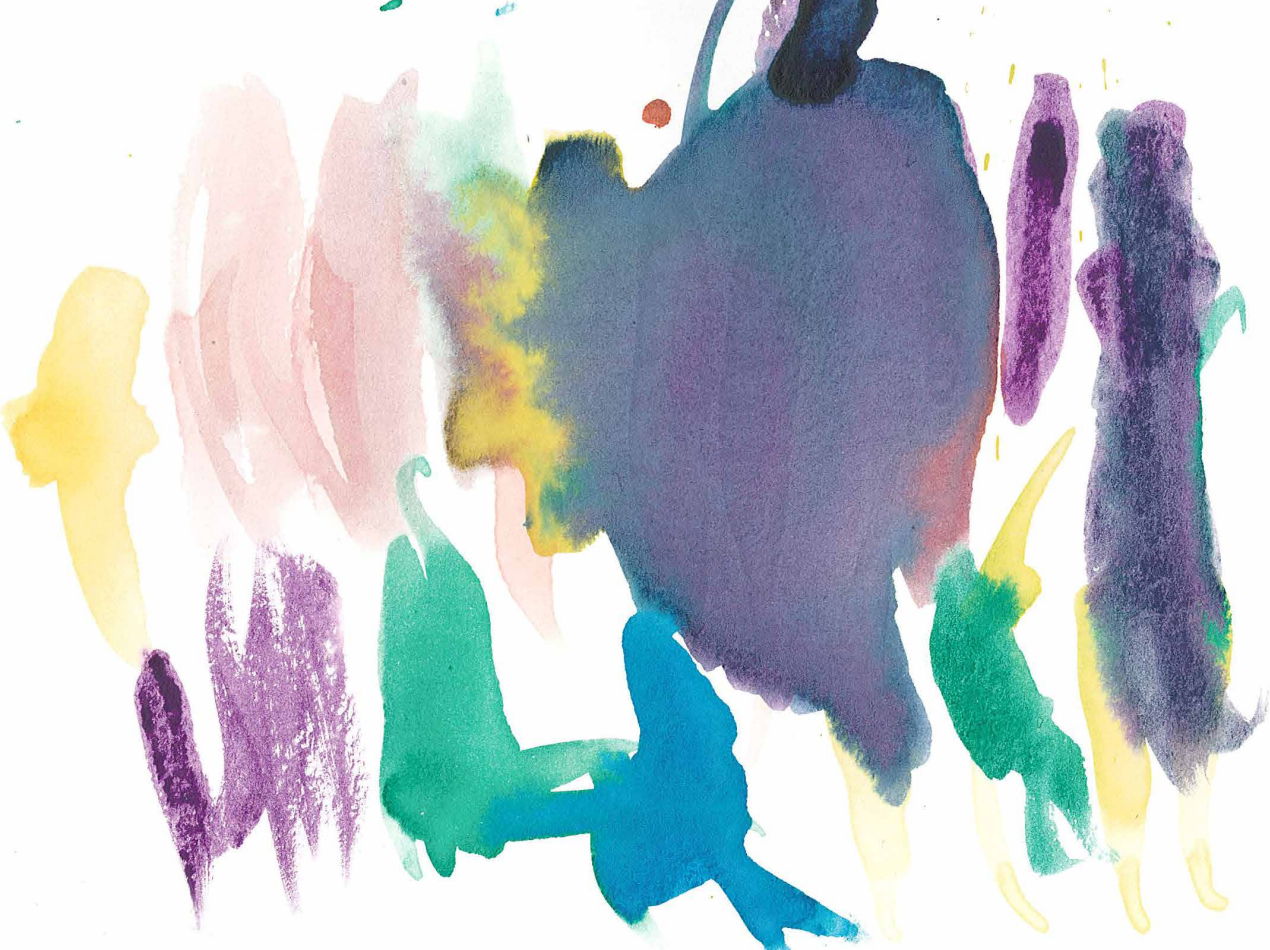
Happiness is seeing family for the first time in a while and seeing the smiles on their faces.

Happiness is stepping outside in the winter and feeling your cheeks turn a little rosy and seeing the snow fall on the ground in your garden.

Happiness is laughing with your friends and capturing precious moments with them and being able to fix an argument and bring ourselves back together with a laugh.

Happiness is reading a story and finishing it, but wishing for more and letting your imagination flow freely.

*“Happiness is...,” work from Upper Elementary*



*work from a Primary student, 2013*

“I believe the strong, supportive, and close-knit community that The Post Oak School has, gave me a strong foundation for self-confidence. The encouragement I received and the focus on an empirical learning system, always encouraged me to try new things and put my self out there. A subject that I have been questioned a lot about is competition. At Post Oak, the students are not ranked against each other, and there is not a strong competitive emphasis with sports. I always felt encouraged to be my best: I was competing against myself.”

Becky Bereswill,  
Post Oak Alumna

*8th Grade Class of '05*





*"Fish," work from a Lower Elementary student, 2013*



*Post Oak High School*



*Post Oak Bissonnet Campus*





*"Cave Paintings," work from Upper Elementary students, 2013*

“I felt like such an extensive traveler by traveling to Blackwood farm; all across Texas; Williamsburg, Virginia; Washington, D.C.; and Crow Canyon, Colorado. Riding the subway in Washington, D.C., was always a thrill, and I felt like an adult buying my own subway ticket and learning how to read the subway maps.”

Brittany Beavers,  
Post Oak Alumna  
*8th Grade Class of '05*







*Upper Elementary students, 2013*

*The*  
POST OAK  
SCHOOL

