

McGinnis Woods Buzz



March 2015 Volume 9, Issue 5



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

5-8	Muffins for Mom PreK and 2nd Grades
5-8	Scene on the Green at 6:30
5-11	PreK Field Trip to Zoo Atlanta
5-12	3rd Field Trip to Puppetry Arts
5-13	Open House 9:30-10:30 am
5-14	4th Field Trip to Cobb County Art Museum
5-16	New Student Open House 10-12 am
5-18	4-8th Field Day
5/19	PreK-3 Field Day

McGinnis Woods Mission Statement

*Our mission is to provide
superior academics
through hands-on
approaches, which foster
self confidence and self
esteem that inspire a life-
long love of learning.*

A Message From Ms. Mary

This year has absolutely flown by! We have been so proud of the many accomplishments the students have made and have so much to celebrate as we wrap up these final days of May.

Stanford Testing week went well. The students worked hard, showed persistence, and applied their knowledge and skills to the test items. The many delicious snacks provided by parents and intermittent breaks helped to keep everyone energized and focused. We were pleased that very few students missed any of the testing, so the test make-ups were minimal. We hope to have the results back early in June. These will be mailed to you, so please be sure to update any contact information that may have changed in our system.



Many students have participated in our overnight trips. These trips are designed to expand our students' worldviews, accomplish curriculum goals, and create special memories. This April and May, McGinnis Woods has sent students, staff and parents to Zoo Atlanta, Desoto Caverns in Childersburg, AL, The Tennessee Aquarium, Nature's Classroom in Mentone , AL, The Blue Ridge Outdoor Center and Washington, DC. We believe that our overnight trips inspire our students in unique ways that would be hard to replicate in the classroom.

The final day of school is Friday, May 22. The PA will be hosting a crazy Water Day for the students. We are still in need of volunteers to make this day a success, so please contact Elysia Gallivan at pa@mcginniswoods.org if you are interested in doing your part to make this day great.

We hope to see you tomorrow evening at 6:30 at our Scene on the Green. This is the final family event that the PA will be hosting for this school year. We will be showing the movie Paddington and will have games, food, treats, and beautiful auction items available for purchase, so be sure to join us and support our Parent Association and School.

We look forward to seeing you at our *Sunsational Summer Camp*. Camp starts on Tuesday, May 26 and runs for the 11 weeks of summer. We have great themes, activities, and fun planned, so come for a week or the entire summer!

See you at Scene on the Green,

Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update



We kicked off April surrounded by our McGinnis Woods family with our Spaghetti Dinner! It was so wonderful to see so many smiling faces gathered around tables sharing a meal. Pasta, bread, salad and desserts filled tummies while conversation and laughter filled many hearts. Many thanks to Julie Lambotte for chairing this event and helping set the stage for a wonderful Math and Science Night!

We are looking forward to our next fun adventure together—Scene on the Green. Each year the green grass between the preschool, elementary school and middle school is transformed into an outdoor theatre. This year we are excited to show Paddington Bear. We have a food vendor for those who want to order dinner. The Kona Ice truck will be there for dessert and Beta club is selling candy. We'll provide popcorn and water...you bring your blankets or chairs. This year we are also running a great Silent Auction consisting of crafts created by each class in McGinnis Woods. From the itty bitty babies to those about to graduate—come see what Mr. Dan has helped them create. This event is such a great way to enjoy an evening with friends and support the school as we wind down this school year. Please join us on May 8th !

Did you know that May 22nd is the last day of school?! The PA is hosting our Annual End of Year Water Day! Interested in helping us set up and run the event? We'd love as many families to help us as possible! Drop us an e-mail and let us know how you can help! Stay tuned for more details!

Even with all the great events coming up, nothing tops our excitement for the new curtains that are hanging in the gym...our McGinnis Woods GREEN curtains! These curtains, as well as the gym floor could not have happened without all of your support. We are so grateful for the help that each family has given in either selling items or getting pledges—and we look forward to further enhancements that we can continue to make to our beloved McGinnis Woods!



Wildcat Chat



Our spring was full of sports. We added two additional sports to our spring offering of Track and Field, Tennis and Touch Football were new to McGinnis, but the sports themselves were not new to all of our students. We discovered gifted tennis athlete in Snehil Chilkamari. We will look for him in the pro circuit in a few years! He was undefeated all season! Our boys' doubles players were Sergejs Vasins and Mihir Das and our girls' doubles were Tayler Evangelista and Kaitlin Marro. They had some great matches and improved tremendously throughout the season. Thanks to Ms. Kammy for coaching our inaugural tennis season!

Touch football was also new to McGinnis this spring. We had 10 players join our team. We played through the Youth Passing League against 9 other MAAC schools. Our kids had fun and were up against some stiff competition. Our leaders and quarterbacks this season were Nirvan Parikh and MJ Yassine. We were able to end our season with an exciting win! Our coaches were Ms. Jessica, Mr. Christian, and Mr. Chris. Thanks for a great 1st season.

Track and Field ended with our MAAC league championship at Galloway Athletic Complex on April 21st. Our top finishers for the day were Tayler Evangelista, Ethan Montgomery, and Madison Aber. Tayler placed 5th in the discus and shot put. Madison placed 5th in the 3200 and Ethan placed 4th in the triple jump. Thank you Ms. Robyn for coaching our track and field team!

Spring sports were filled with fun and individual growth that team sports produce. Thanks to all of the support that you provided our athletes as you attended games and meets. We are already planning for the fall and look forward to another season of success!



Preschool Corner



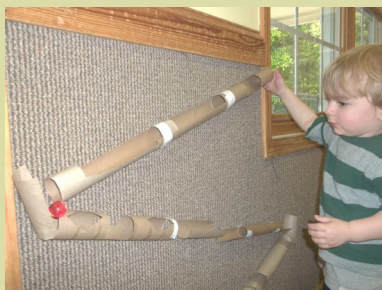
The Preschool at McGinnis Woods is accredited by NAEYC which stands for the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This accrediting body designates a special week each year known as the *Week of the Young child*. This year the week of April 12 was set aside to focus on a special theme each day which our youngsters could embrace and enjoy while learning about the world around them, Music, healthy eating, Art and of course the importance of family. Our Preschool created special activities for the week based on the themes and everyone had a great time!

On Monday we had a school wide parade featuring home made instruments in honor of Music Monday. Our little ones were so proud of their unique instruments and had a great time showing them off. Tuesday was Healthy Snack Tuesday and wacky sock day. Wednesday was Work together Wednesday and we had children in our older classes visit younger classes. We even had 4-6th grade students from the elementary school come over and read to the 3 year olds. It was so sweet to see! On Artsy Thursday, Mr. Dan and Ms. Tonia prepared a special Gum Ball art project for the whole preschool which incorporated science and sensory based activities. Friday we wrapped up the week with Family Friday. The children brought in special items that represented their families to show their classmates. These items showcased the great diversity we have in our school and included unique foods and artifacts. The children were very excited to share their baby pictures or family photos. Some parents even filled out an information sheet on their little ones to be displayed!

We have included some of our favorite pictures from *Week of the Young Child* that capture the genuine joy and excitement of the week.

During Earth Week we celebrated Earth day , learned the 3 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and worked to keep our earth clean. We made recycled art projects, enjoyed some gardening fun by planting seeds, identified parts of the flower through art and so much more. Each class is also participating in a science project as we are watching and recording data as caterpillars turn to butterflies which will then release!

It really is a joy to watch our little ones learn something new each day in the preschool.



Books for the Beach and Beyond



Surfs Up everyone! Our spring book fair arrived and took us on an “Under the Sea” reading adventure! At our spring book fair students and teachers discovered a wide variety of books for all ages! The high tide revealed easy reader books, chapter book and lots of exciting non-fiction books.

There was a new addition this year to the Teen Reads section. For this book fair a new offering of books were beached for our middle school readers. Of course Scholastic did not forget to send our Graphic novels. Two student favorites in the graphic novel series were Marvel Superheroes and Adventure Time.



While shopping at the book fair many parents remembered to support our classrooms by purchasing books from Classroom Wish lists. These purchases helped place books in the hands of McGinnis Woods students. Due to your support, this year we have placed more than 1,500 books in the hands of McGinnis Woods students. Thank you for your continued support in making reading a fun, exciting and wonderful way to learn.

“Honesty” is the word of the Month for May

This month our focus is on honesty and the definition we are trying to drive home is “Choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do.” The students are being reminded that “honesty is the best policy” and that earning trust can be accomplished by showing virtues like being honest.

Each morning the students are given examples of people who have shown great character through honesty or are asked to practice being honest in their own lives.



Middle School Campfire Fun

On April 17, the 5-8th graders enjoyed another exciting middle school social. Students participated in an outdoor campfire themed program filled with games, songs, stories and outdoor cooking, even though the weather didn't cooperate.

The students played team games in the gym before heading to the outdoor classroom for dinner. Students roasted hotdogs over the fire pits for dinner and had s'mores for dessert! They also had a blast participating in a traditional campfire program. "Campers" sang songs and performed skits for one another while the teachers acted out crazy run-ons between skits. And of course, no campfire is complete without some scary ghost stories.

The rain couldn't keep away the fun and a good time was had by all.



Pre-K Teachers Make Each Day Special



Who has patience galore, eagerly answers endless questions, and loves teaching four and five year olds? Our fabulous Pre-K 4 & 5 teachers! We are very fortunate to have six PreK teachers at McGinnis Woods. They lead our Turtles, Ducks, and Bugs through lessons big and small.

Ms. Stacey and Ms. Hiral are both teachers in PreK4-A Ducks. Ms. Stacey is originally from Dayton, Ohio. She graduated from Ohio University with a B.S. in Communications and a minor in Journalism. She has been teaching at McGinnis Woods for the six years. She adores Pre-K. Ms. Stacey also enjoys coaching cheerleading and being involved in the schools functions. She loves to spend time with her

family, husband Kamran, son Ari (15), daughter Elanna (12) and their dog Oreo! Ms. Hiral is originally from California. She attended California State University Fullerton where she earned a B. S. in Education. Ms. Hiral has been at McGinnis Woods for the past six years. She is in the process of receiving her Georgia Certification. She has been working with children for the past nine years. She enjoys spending time with her husband Niles and son Dylan (2).

Ms. Robyn and Ms. Valorie are both teachers in PreK4-B. Ms. Robyn is originally from Savannah, GA. She has been in Atlanta since 1985. Ms. Robyn has a degree in Early Childhood Education from Ashworth College and is currently enrolled at Grand Canyon University to further her education in Elementary Studies. She has taught Pre-K for many years. This is Ms. Robyn's eighth year at McGinnis Woods. Her hobbies include reading, bowling, and sports "Go Falcons." She enjoys spending time with her husband Curtis and has two children Amber, and Zeffery. Ms. Valorie is from Woodstock and has three children Amy, Chris, who is a junior at Kennesaw University, and Zachary a junior in high school. Ms. Valorie earned her CDA in 2011. She has been with McGinnis Woods for 6 years. Her hobbies include reading and doing anything outdoors. Ms. Valorie loves to spend time with her husband Ryan and taking vacations with her family. In her spare time Valorie enjoys being outside playing with her three Chihuahuas.

Ms. Lisa and Ms. Jennifer are teachers in PreK-5. Ms. Lisa is originally from Port Charlotte, Florida. She attended Florida State University and received a degree in International Affairs. Ms. Lisa has been with McGinnis Woods since May of 1999. This is her eleventh year teaching in the elementary school. Her hobbies include reading, cooking, and tennis. She enjoys spending time with her husband Chris and her children Madison (12), Emerson (9), and Bryson (17 months). She is expecting a baby girl in June. Ms. Jennifer is originally from Michigan. She obtained her Child Development Accreditation from Central Kentucky Technical College. She has been a proud parent of McGinnis Woods for five years before becoming part of the McGinnis Woods teacher family. Her husband David, son Ben and daughter Addison keep her busy. Her hobbies include traveling, cooking, crafts, and spending quality time with her family.

Chattahoochee Nature Center Visits Third Grade

Instructors from the Chattahoochee Nature Center visited the Third Grade and the topic of pollution was discussed. The students learned how pollution can impact the environment. One of the topics discussed was chemicals in water. Students learned that when chemicals are in water, these chemicals can harm the life cycle of dragon flies, get into trees that beavers eat, and cycle up food chains.

Human impact on the environment was also stressed, and our speaker showed the students a visual representation of different types of pollution that will flow into water including pieces of tires, chlorine, and balloons. Students had a wonderful time learning about nature and many even enjoyed touching one of the critters that the facilitators brought with them from the center, a snake!

Our world is a precious place entrusted to us all for care, so these interesting lessons made an impact on our students as they learned how they can combat pollution.



Spring Health Tips from Nurse Penny



I hope that everyone is well and managed all of the spring pollen. I know we have had a good deal of rain, but thankfully it has kept the pollen at bay.

This month the students and I discussed fresh vegetables and the benefits of having our own gardens. This is a project that the entire family can do together and is an excellent way to have the best fresh food for family meals.

May is one of our busiest months at McGinnis Woods as there are many activities and trips, along with school work and other obligations. So please make sure that your child does the following to get the most out of this busy time:

- Get adequate sleep every night.
- Stay on a healthy diet regimen for mealtimes (treats and parties tend add a lot of sugar).
- Exercise regularly.
- Minimize TV/Video time during down time.

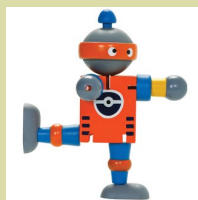


Discovery Clubs for 2014-15

The last Discovery Club session of the year ended the week of April 20. This year we had clubs taught by McGinnis Woods teachers including Cheerleading, Cooking, Drama, Jr. Robotics, Super Science, STEM, the Robotics Team for 4th - 8th grade students, and the Morning Band Club. Classes offered by outside instructors include Etiquette, Tennis, Creative Movement and Dance, and Playball Soccer.

It was wonderful to see our students share their new skills at school activities like the cheerleaders at many of our home games, pep rallies, and the Student vs Staff Basketball Game. Other club students demonstrated their knowledge by working in the garden during Science Club or representing our school at Robotics competitions throughout the year and our Drama students amazed us all with their beautiful production of the Wizard of Oz.

We will have 4 more exciting sessions during the 2015-16 school year, so we want to hear from you. We are always open to officering new clubs or adjusting the days if possible. If you have any suggestions or comments, please share them with us by email at elementaryschool@mcginniswoods.org.



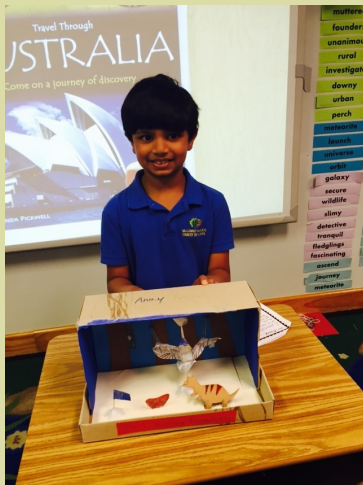
Second Graders Learn About Australia



The second graders have been very busy learning about and exploring the country/continent of Australia - The Land Down Under! The Fish and the Leopards have mapped the country, learned about the Aborigines and their customs, explored its famous landmarks, learned about the Great Barrier Reef, and researched their unique animals too! We have created boomerangs, didgeridoos and Australian animal dioramas, written research reports and even tasted marmite and Pavlovas!

On Wednesday, April 29, we invited the 2nd grade parents into our classrooms and performed the chorus of “Waltzing Matilde” for them.

This is an important song to Australians as the song is about someone who wanders through the Australian Outback. Following our song, the children presented their final research papers and Australian dioramas to our classes. What a great time we had sharing our discoveries about the incredible creatures that make Australia home with all of our classmates.



Student Council Update

The Student Council has been working very hard this month to create special memories for our student body. This month we have organized the following activities:

Chick-fil-A Order In Day: We ended testing week with our final Chick-fil-A order in day of the year. Students who ordered lunch enjoyed a yummy meal of a chicken sandwich, chips, and 2 cookies.

Staff vs. Students Basketball Game: The 1st annual basketball game was an amazing way to end testing week and let off a little steam. Students cheered for their favorite team as staff members battled with the 5th-8th graders for the title of basketball champion. The clock ran out as the students tied the game. We can't wait for the rematch next year!

Talent Show: Student Council Officers, Ms. Jenn, and Ms. Samantha previewed the acts for the annual talent show. There is a lot of amazing talent at McGinnis Woods and we can't wait for everyone to see it. The acts are practicing and the show will be on Thursday, May 21st at 1:30. Come join all the fun!



Jr. Beta Club Update



Jr. Beta has been very busy planning the finishing touches on our projects for our chosen charities. The group supporting the Kazakhstan Orphanage has received word that the donations are in the county and will be delivered to the children as soon as they clear customs. Our students who are supporting the Humane Society have been working hard to make blankets to deliver to the animals at the shelter. We are hoping to bake treats and deliver them in May. The students who have been visiting the residents at the Dogwood Assisted Living Facility had their final visit with residents on Friday, May 1st. They played BINGO and shared stories with the residents.



The Many Ways Students Learn Through Nature



"It is quite possible for today's child to grow up without ever having taken a solitary walk beside a stream, or spent the hours we used to foraging for pine cones, leaves, feathers and rocks-treasures more precious than store-bought ones. Today it is difficult to tear children away from the virtual world to introduce them to the real one."

~Gary Paul Nabhan and Stephen Trimble, *The Geography of Childhood*

The "Nature Classrooms" at McGinnis Woods Country Day School encompasses several beautiful areas on the campus. Students and teachers can find nature in the gardens at the Outdoor Café, the Nature Trail and the Outdoor Classroom. More gardens are coming to the playground near the Middle School Building.

Why is the "Nature Classroom" important to our students and our curriculum? There are several reasons why nature is important to the education of our students. Children today are becoming increasingly disconnected to nature. They spend less time outside, and the time they are outside has become very structured with busy schedules. Children need time to freely explore in nature to develop a love for the Earth. Research shows that outdoor play in nature turns on all of the senses and many parts of the brain are being engaged at the same time. For example students exploring how to build a structure like a fort using sticks would have to use language skills to communicate their thoughts and ideas to classmates, visual-spatial skills to construct it, math skills of making angles or shapes, self assessment and self evaluation of the structure with whether it will stay together or fall apart.

Sitting in the classroom using a pencil and paper would not stimulate the brain as it would with taking the lesson outside to nature where all the senses would be engaged. Some other benefits of positive experiences with nature are improved concentration, more advanced motor fitness(like coordination, balance and agility), development of observation and creativity. We are fortunate at McGinnis Woods to have access to wonderful "Nature Classrooms" to enhance learning and engage students.

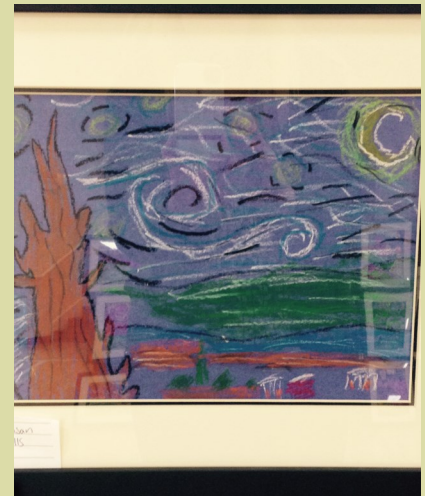


Annual Art Fair Pleases the Crowd

On April 14, Mr. Dan and the students of McGinnis Woods showcased amazing art at our Annual Art Fair. Our school partnered with Artome which framed each individual piece of art and displayed the work in gallery style. Classical music played in the background while parents and children browsed the framed collection. Cheese, crackers, fruit and punch were also available.

The theme of the show was *Animals and Nature* and each of the grade levels prepared unique projects which highlighted specific animals and art mediums. From our youngest artists who made fish and sheep to our 7th and 8th graders who made beautiful trees the pieces displayed creativity and personality.

Thanks for attending the fair and supporting our school. The funds raised through the show will be used to further enhance our Art program.



Meet Ms. Samantha Crews, Music Instructor



Samantha Crews began singing when she was 5 years old. She competed in all the talent shows and school performances all throughout elementary school, middle school and high school. In high school she received the lead roles in "Chicago", "A Chorus Line", and "Pleasantville".

At 16 years of age she decided to start her career in recording pop music. She landed a record deal with Grammy nominated winner Kendrick Dean. After four years of professional training in the recording studio and a completed album, she received a full ride scholarship to Lee University singing with the "Voices of Lee", a ten person ensemble that traveled all around the state competing and winning.

After college she went out for "The Voice" auditions and made it to the second round before going to L.A. She now teaches music to the students of McGinnis Woods and teaches musical theatre, singing, acting, and dancing lessons at the British Academy of Performing Arts and continues to perform and take vocal lessons at Jan Smith Studios.

McGinnis Woods Summer Offerings

Have you enrolled your student for Summer Camp yet? Well do not delay because some of our popular weekly Specialty Camps are filling up fast. We are looking forward to a fun-filled, exciting, 11 weeks of camp here at McGinnis Woods and we would love to have your camper join us! Camp kicks off on Tuesday, May 26 with our *Animal Antics* theme and trips to Zoo Atlanta and Cagle's Dairy Farm.

Each day of camp we will feature something new, new skits, new games, new crafts, new trips, and new learning. We are offering many Specialty and Academic Camps including art, cooking, drama, swimming and academic boot camps which provide a variety of educational ways to sharpen your camper's skills to avoid that awful summer slide. So be sure to fill out your registration form today.

We are also a host site for the Emory Reading Program which helps students learn to read or strengthen their skills in reading and comprehension.

We hope to see you this summer at camp!

Spring Carnival: A Day to Remember

Each year McGinnis Woods families come together to enjoy an afternoon of carnival fun filled with games, crafts, food and fun activities for all ages. This year's carnival was to take place on Saturday, April 25th from 12:00pm-3:00pm, but the weather caused us to postpone the event for the first time in its 15 year history. The Spring Carnival took place on Saturday, May 2nd with the bluest of skies overhead and a wonderful turnout of McGinnis Woods friends and families.

It was great fun seeing our students on the ponies and enjoying a train ride. Our big kids flew high on the bungee jump before having their faces painted and then finishing off their look with the perfect crazy hair. From there, they could capture the moment in the Photo Booth.

Lunch was enjoyed by all along with wonderful cotton candy and tasty popcorn. Children of all ages had fun playing the Angry Bird game, balloon blaster and other carnival games to win fun, colorful prizes.

This was a great day of family fun and a perfect way to welcome spring!



Pictures from Around the School

