

McGinnis Woods Buzz



December 2009 Volume 1, Issue 4



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring students with
the Passion to Excel*

12/7:	Discovery Clubs end this week
12/7-11:	Scholastic Book Fair
12/7-10:	P.A. Holiday Shoppe
12/8:	Band Concert, 6:00 p.m.
12/10:	Young Voices at 5:30 p.m./Chorus Concert at 6:45 p.m.
12/17:	Pep Rally/Sing-A-Long, 1:45 p.m.
12/18:	Report Cards
12/21-1/5:	Winter Holiday

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 lifelong love of learning.

The latest buzz ...

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A Message From Ms. Mary

The Holiday Season is upon us and this year seems to be flying by. We have had so many wonderful times together as the McGinnis Woods Family and look forward to the jam packed days that December promises. Our Thanksgiving Feasts were a wonderful time of community as over 700 people joined us over 4 days to celebrate and be reminded of our many blessings.

Our Core Essentials word of the month for December is COMPASSION. This is one of my favorite words because it is rich with meaning and so vital in our everyday world. According to Webster COMPASSION means "sympathy for someone who is suffering or distressed in some way". Our school family is actively showing compassion toward the nine families we have adopted during the holiday season through our partnership with North Fulton Community Charities. The gifts being placed under our Holiday Sharing Tree on a daily basis are a tangible reminder to us that these are tough times for many and our rightful response should be to show

our compassion through actions.

Honestly, this word encompasses much of what we do at McGinnis Woods each and every day. I see teachers comforting students who have fallen or are feeling distressed about a test or new concept. Nurse Penny and our Administrators treat each student and parent concern with grace and patience. Our students collected over \$394 for Unicef during our annual Trick or Treat Campaign and our Jr. Beta Club recently raised \$422 to benefit local charities and service projects which they have chosen to support with sweat, brain and time equity.

One of the most amazing exhibits of COMPASSION will be taking place in our 1st grade classrooms as our 1st graders head to Build-A-Bear Workshop to build bears to give away to children associated with the Children's Wish Foundation. That is always a highlight of each December.

The coming days will be filled with lots of fun,



learning and activities. We hope that you will join us for our Band, Chorus and Young Voices Concerts, Robotics Competition, Basketball Games, Book Fair and Holiday Shoppe, sponsored by our amazing Parent Association, parties and our Pep Rally/Sing Along.

We are striving to inspire our students to develop academic excellence and compassionate spirits through our close partnership with you. Our hope is that this holiday season will be filled with joy, peace and love that extends well into 2010 and beyond for all of our McGinnis Woods Family.

Happy Holidays!

Wildcat Chat

PE News:

November was an exciting month for sports and PE. With Basketball games starting this December, this will be a month filled with many great moments.

PK - 1 grades have worked hard on many fun skills such as ball handling, shapes, and movement. We also threw a little Queen Turkey in for the holiday.

2nd - 4th grades have been working on beginning basketball skills. We should have some fine shooters and dribblers soon.

Angle ball is the game of the moment in grades 5th-8th. This exciting game combines the best elements of basketball and football. The kids love it enough to play it on their own during recess!

Athletic News:

Girls & Boys Basketball:

Both Wildcat basketball teams open their season this month. The teams have been practicing hard, learning the game, and can't wait to get to the court.

Look here next month for the game details and results.



1st—3rd Grade Musical: *Celebrate America*

On November 5th, the musical, *Celebrate America*, was held at Lord of Life Church. The musical, for the 1st—3rd grades, was patriotic and featured many American favorites. The performance was well attended, and the children did an outstanding job.

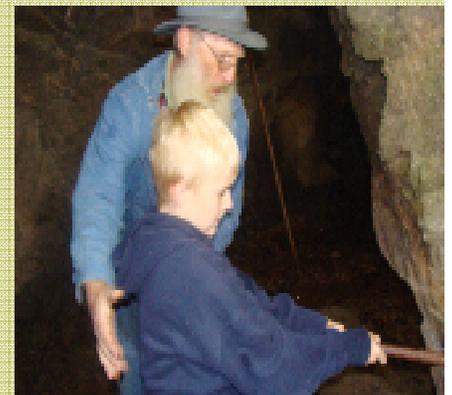
The 4th—8th graders are preparing for their musical which will be held in the spring.

Our next musical is on February 25th and will feature our kindergartners in *The Three Piggy Opera*.

Field Trip of the Month: Consolidated Gold Mines

"Thar's gold in them thar hills!"

On Wednesday, November 11, the Third Grade Stars and Geckos headed north to visit the Consolidated Gold Mines located in beautiful Dahlonega, Georgia. The students got to experience what life was like as a miner. Miner Mike led them safely through the largest hard rock gold mine east of the Mississippi, teaching them about history, geology, and residents (bats!) The students learned about engineering and mining techniques that were utilized by the early miners and heard tales of miner's struggles to uncover gold deep within the large quartz veins. After the tour, the students received a chance to strike it rich and try panning first hand. This field trip tied into their recent study of rocks and minerals in the third grade curriculum.



PA Board Update

The holidays are in full swing and we feel blessed to be part of such a wonderful community. According to a new federal report, last year nearly 50 million people -- including almost one in four children-- struggled to get enough to eat. Our canned food drive to restock the food pantry was an immeasurable help to those in need. Thank you to everyone who so graciously brought in food.

We have continued our tradition to adopt families from the North Fulton Community Charities. Each year we put out the wish lists of the families in need and encourage our families to help those less fortunate than ourselves. All items collected will be delivered on Monday, December 7th. Once again, your generosity has been amazing, and it will be well received.

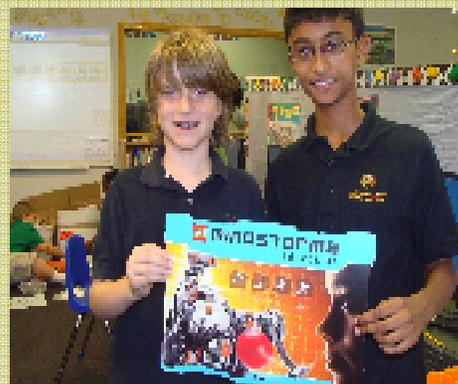
The elves have been busy all year long to create a Holiday Shoppe filled with gifts for those special in our lives. Our Holiday Shoppe, which will be held December 7th– 10th, is a shopping experience for the students of McGinnis Woods where they can shop for parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, friends and pets! Give your children a budget and our parent volunteers will assist them with their selections. Gifts are wrapped and sent home in time for your holiday celebration. No peeking.

We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Lego Robotics Team - *First Competition*

The McGinnis Woods Wildcats Lego Robotics Team will travel to West Forsyth High School, Saturday, December 5th, to compete against 28 other teams in Forsyth County for the right to advance to the Georgia Statewide finals at Georgia Tech. Top finalists in the state competition will advance to the First Lego League World Competition which this year, for the last time, will be held in Atlanta.

The eight member McGinnis Woods Lego Robotics Team will be challenged to complete several three minute missions which require them to program their "bots" to perform several tasks to earn points. This entails hours of preparation, trial and error problem solving, and great communication within the team as a whole. They are also required to present a solution to a transportation problem within our community. Our team has chosen drunk driving in our nation. They have researched the statistics and will present their solution in a small skit that demonstrates their ideas for a solution to drunk driving. The team has come a long way since the beginning of the year, and we want to cheer them on in the first McGinnis Woods Robotics competition!!



Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)

Welcome to December and the beginning of winter!

'Tis the season of hustle and bustle and a joyful time of the year for our preschoolers, their families, and our teachers. Traditions and customs come alive as we share in all the meaningful celebrations and values that our families hold dear to their hearts. We are calling on you to share your family heritage and traditions with us during this holiday season. Our children learn and grow with these experiences and gain an appreciation and acceptance of the multicultural world in which we live. Throughout December we will be busy making special crafts and gifts, learning new songs, exploring musical instruments, and working on art projects to bring out our inner "Da Vinci". To help put us in the holiday spirit we will wear our pajamas to school, drink hot chocolate, count marshmallows, and make candy cane play dough. As we wrap up the year, we will reflect on all the wonderful things that we have learned, and as always, our McGinnis Woods Community's strong commitment to our quality program. We would like to wish all of our McGinnis Woods families a happy and safe holiday season.



Specials Program: Featuring Ms. Jack Freeman and Library Services



After eight years of working at McGinnis Woods, Ms. Jacki Freeman continues to love what she does more and more each day. She has been very fortunate to wear many hats while at "the Woods" including: Pre-school Teacher, Assistant Director, Assistant to the Principal, and Librarian. She has certainly enjoyed each position she has held, but holds the position of librarian closest to her heart.

Nothing brightens Ms. Jacki's day more than to see a student excited about reading. Whether it's the latest *39 Clues*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or the classics like *Anne of Avonlea*, she loves watching students get excited about reading. Ms. Jacki truly enjoys helping students discover secret worlds, interesting characters and faraway lands. To find a book and become completely lost in its pages, imagining you are actually in the story itself is amazing. That feeling of anticipation of finding out what's on the next page and not wanting to stop reading is what she hopes reading does for every student. To learn to read and love it is the most powerful gift anyone can have.

Ms. Jacki encourages parents to not only read every day to their children, but to also listen to their children read. Set aside time each night to read and cuddle with a favorite book. Introduce your children to classic books you loved as a child. By doing this parents not only create family time but demonstrate how important reading is. And don't forget when you're searching for your next adventure, it's only a shelf away. All you have to do is turn the page!

Ms. Jacki & her husband, Chris, have twin girls, Marian and Kristen who attend McGinnis Woods.

Share a Book—The Scholastic Book Fair will be held the week of December 7th—11th.

Afternoon Discovery Clubs Spotlight: Drama Club

Standing Ovations is a musical drama program where students learn to sing, act, and dance to the tunes of many Broadway musicals, such as *Annie*, *The Lion King*, *Peter Pan*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Wicked*, and many more! Music theatre is used to help develop self-confidence, self-worth, and the importance of team work. Additionally, children learn a variety of movement and dance techniques such as jazz, ballet, hip hop, and creative movement. The program combines a variety of techniques to help improve children's articulation as well as fine and gross motor skills. To culminate each session, there is an actual Broadway performance for family and friends. This event showcases the musicals that students have worked on and is truly an event that no one wants to miss!



Xylina Nuckles is the Founder and Director of Standing Ovations. Her love for theatre began at an early age, and she has been performing since she was in the 6th grade. When she was fifteen years of age, she performed overseas in cities such as Budapest, and Amsterdam. She graduated from Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, with a degree in theatre and performing arts. Xylina has had leading roles in several acclaimed musicals such as the *Wiz*, *Annie*, *Chicago*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Rapunzel* to name a few. She is passionate about theatre and loves helping children reach their potential in the performing arts.

A Little About our Teachers: Featuring the Fourth Grade Team



The fourth grade SUNS is all about success! SUNS stands for: Students Use New Skills everyday to grow and develop to their full potential. With the great leadership of Ms. Camberly and Ms. Cecilia, the students strive for nothing but the best.

Ms. Cecilia Walls (better known as Ms. Cece) has been teaching at McGinnis Woods for four years. She graduated from Grand Canyon University and previously taught at a Catholic school in Chicago for five years. She absolutely loves teaching, and saw that it was going to be her calling at a very young age. Ms. Cece's teaching does not end when she leaves "the Woods" each day. It continues with her two children, Elijah (12), and NiaMiah (7). When she is not teaching or tending to

them, she enjoys cuddling up with a good book, watching a great movie, and eating a delicious meal. She enjoys teaching 4th grade language arts because this is the age where the molding and structuring of young adults really begins.

Ms. Camberly Beatty began her career at McGinnis Woods in 2007 after graduating from Armstrong Atlantic State University with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She absolutely loved living in Savannah during her college career, but after graduating from college, she could not wait to move back home to Duluth because missed her mother so much. Now, she lives with her husband and two cats, which she refers to as her "babies." Ms. Camberly looks forward to continuing to teach the fourth grade at McGinnis Woods, and one day obtaining her Master's degree.

Ms. Cece and Ms. Camberly love teaching together at McGinnis Woods because it is a child-centered school that has high expectations for all students. They believe all children deserve the best education and are thankful for the McGinnis Woods environment, where they can inspire students with the passion to excel.