

McGinnis Woods Buzz



February 2010 Volume 1, Issue 6



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

Inspiring students with the
Passion to Excel

DATES TO REMEMBER

2/15	No Classes President's Day Afterschool Only
2/18	Fun Run
2/19:	Haiti Shoe Drive Ends
2/25:	Kindergarten Musical <i>The Three Piggy Opera</i> 6:30 p.m.
2/26:	Non-Uniform Day
3/1-3/5:	Teacher Appreciation Week
3/5:	No Classes Staff Development

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

February has arrived and there has been lot of excitement in the air. The students excited about the great things they are learning in their classrooms and at home. February not only brings Valentine's Day and the wonderful PA sponsored Valentine's Dance, but also *Soles for Haiti*, the Science Fair, the Young Authors Project, Boosterthon Run and the Kindergarten Musical, *The Three Piggy Opera*.

We are so excited to have the Boosterthon Fun Run team back on our campus. Their enthusiasm for students character education is contagious and makes fund raising fun! This year we are raising money to improve our technology. We hope to add additional laptops, whiteboards and robotics equipment to our existing equipment. We have found that the more we use technology, the more excited the students become and the greater the need to keep improving. Further training and implementation of technology is one of the items in this year's school improvement plan, so we are thankful for your partnership as we work with the Boosterthon Team to boost character and fitness on campus as we raise funds and achieve our goals. Be sure to mark your calendars for the actual run scheduled for February 18. There will be four fun run times, so be sure to note your child's time. Each fun run is an amazing time and fun for all!

Our Beta Club has been working with the Sparrow family and our school as we collect and bundle gently used shoes for the victims of the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Our families have provided over 350 pairs of shoes for the *Soles for Haiti* project, and the good news is, the shoes just keep on coming! Thanks for your support of this effort. The students are learning to make a difference and give of themselves in a very practical way.

Be sure to visit us this month to see all of the Science Fair projects and learn about all that is taking place at our great school! We have added a few more Open Houses to our schedule, so plan to join us to check out next year's classes on Saturday, February 27 or Saturday, March 27 from 10-1. You will be proud to be a part of our school family!



a
are

Fun

and

Wildcat Chat

Basketball season is over, but the memories of a successful first year will never be forgotten. Both the boys' and girls' teams way out distanced the expectations at the beginning of the season. They learned as they went along and improved at every game.

The boys' campaign ended in a 3-4 record and a 5th place finish in the B-Team Tournament. They accomplished so much, sometimes playing above their level, but always in the fight. Coach Brad Buckner did an excellent job with the team, and it looks like the team will be a good one next year.



The girls completed a near miraculous run to a 5-4 winning record. Who would have thought, in our first full season, we would win five games? They completed their season at the B-Team Tournament finishing in third place. This team has laid down a great foundation for the coming years. Look out for this bunch!



The coaches and teams would like to thank everyone who supported us and came out to cheer the teams. Special thanks goes out to Coach Jim Stuart, who volunteered his time to be Assistant Coach of the Girls Team. We all look forward to next year.

Track & Field Season starts February 16th. We have had 30 athletes sign up, and the teams look to make an improvement over last year. Next month's newsletter will include a Track & Field Season Preview and a list of School Records.

Go Wildcats!

"Specials" Program: Featuring Steve Wells, IT and Technology Instructor

Mr. Steve Wells is the Technology Instructor and IT Specialist for McGinnis Woods. He co-coaches the McGinnis Woods Wildcats Robotics Team with Mrs. Amy Buckner. Mr. Steve taught K-8 technology and was the IT Manager at Sophia Academy in Atlanta for three years. He was the computer and network technician for both the Children's School in Atlanta and the Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology Department at Southern Polytechnic State University. He has worn many different professional hats in his career. Just prior to coming to McGinnis Woods in July of 2009, he was building waterfalls and koi ponds with a local water feature company. He worked in the television broadcasting industry installing broadcast systems in various television facilities. He helped install a new broadcast and production studio for the Broward County Florida Scholl System and one in the United States Capitol - the United States Senate Television Network. He has been a house painter, carpenter, electronics technician, and swimming pool equipment installer.

Mr. Steve has two daughters, Jessie and Hannah, whom both attend college at the University of West Georgia. He resides in Sandy Springs. He loves to go fishing in many local rivers, ponds, streams, and lakes. He fishes from a boat, a canoe, while wading and even in an inner tube! His other favorite pastime is playing all kinds of music from Medieval to rock on the mandolin. He loves working at McGinnis Woods and enjoys all of the families!



PA Board Update

Wow, the year is flying by...Thanks to all of the families who joined us for the Annual Family Valentine's Dance which was held on **Saturday, February 6th**, at the Holiday Inn in Roswell. As always, it was a fun filled evening with great music, dancing, food and laughter, and the Teacher Event Silent Auction. Although this auction is generally held during the spring, we decided to have this auction earlier this year to ensure everyone could get in on the fun.

Our students are participating in our Annual Boosterthon Fun Run again this year. The Boosterthon Fun Run will be held **February 18th**. In addition to being a fundraiser, every child participates whether or not they are able to raise funds, and more importantly, the children get a daily message of character building leading up to the Fun Run. The schedule of for the Fun Run is as follows:

10-11 a.m.	PreK 4-5
11-12 p.m.	Kindergarten -1st
12-12:30 p.m.	Sack lunch picnic for the entire elementary school
12:30-1:30 p.m.	2nd-3rd
1:30-2:30 p.m.	4th-8th

This is always a great opportunity to cheer and support our children! All funds raised during this event will go directly toward technology enhancement for our school. We plan on purchasing additional lap tops, whiteboards, various Robotics products, and adding minor equipment to our broadcast system. These upgrades will be utilized by all of our children at McGinnis Woods.

Stay tuned for more news on our Teacher Appreciation week during March! We have a fun week planned to show our teachers how much we appreciate their diligence and hard work! If you are able to volunteer during this week, please contact LaDonna Scott at ladonna_scott@hotmail.com.

IMPORTANT DATES: February 18th – Fun Run (weather permitting)
March 1st – 5th – Teacher Appreciation Week



Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)

Love is in the air this month in the Preschool! We are busy preparing for our upcoming Valentine celebrations as we make crafts, learn songs and finger plays and have fun preparing for our parties on Friday, February 12th at 3:00 p.m. Plan to join your little valentines for the fun.

Be sure to check out our new flat screen monitor at the front desk. We will be displaying lots of pictures of the classes so that you can get a closer look at all the wonderful activities that are going on each day. Thank you to everyone for your support with the Honey Baked Ham gift cards that helped make this addition possible.

Also during February, we will explore two important topics: making healthy food choices and proper dental health. It is never too soon to stress the importance of these important lessons. February is National Dental Health Month, and on February 15th, our 3A, 3B and 3/4 classes will have a visit with a local dentist to learn more about keeping our smiles beautiful. To extend these topics at home, involve your little one in daily brushing and providing for healthy teeth and bodies through the weekly food planning, shopping and cooking. By using a "hands on approach" your child will learn important life skills in a fun and memorable way and their help may even lighten your own work load a bit!

We are happy to announce we have added Kindergrooves to our classroom specials. It is a fun active class with music, exercise, dance and even a little yoga. The children love the program and have been having a blast. There is always something new to look forward to in the Preschool!



Field Trip of the Month: The Millennium Gate Museum

On January 29th, the 5th-8th graders visited the Millennium Gate Museum at Atlantic Station. The Museum is located within the Archway at Atlantic Station and contains information and artifacts on Georgia history. The students were able to visit two areas within the museum. The initial area was a set of rooms filled with pictures and artifacts donated by local and historical families of Georgia. The first room led the students from the first Native Americans in Georgia to its involvement in the Civil War. The next room continued the trip through Georgia history from Reconstruction to the 1970's in Georgia. The final room explained modern day Georgia and how its citizens go to work and school, spend their free time and take part in government and politics.

In the second area of the museum there was an interactive exhibit on Georgia's past and present. One side of the exhibit had an interactive screen that reacts to motion. The screen would show the students modern day pictures from Atlanta and surrounding areas. When the students walked in front of the screen, the area they walked in front of was wiped away to reveal a picture of what was there in the past. The students were able to see empty spaces of land and trees that would eventually become Georgia landmarks, including Atlantic Station. The students were also able to see some of the first skyscrapers of Atlanta that still stand today.



The second interactive screen was equipped with three Wii remotes, enabling students to move in a 360° circle in areas of Atlanta and to click on building and landmarks to learn more about them. The students were also able to visit a reproduction of the living room from the Rose House, as well as look out over Atlantic Station from the roof of the Millennium Gate.

A Little About our Teachers: Featuring the 1st Grade Team

McGinnis Woods has an amazing team of first grade teachers who enjoy each day with their young charges. The teachers have varied interests and backgrounds, but work well together to provide a great education! Here is a bit about the members of this team:

Mr. Josh Reiter and Ms. Lauren Donelson lead the 1st grade Crabs. Mr. Josh is an up-beat, creative mastermind. He has been teaching at McGinnis Woods for eight glorious years. Mr. Josh holds a Bachelor's Degree in both English Literature and Human Communication. He attended undergrad at Fredonia State University in NY and completed his Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education at Mercer University. Mr. Josh's wife, Jill, is expecting a boy, their 2nd child, on March 2nd. Their daughter Violet, who is almost 2, comes to school everyday with Mr. Josh where she learns plenty in the McGinnis Woods preschool program.



Ms. Lauren was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, a true southern peach! She went to school up in Greensboro, NC for two years and studied Special Education. She graduated from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelors degree in Child and Family Development in 2008. She knew being in a classroom setting and teaching children was her calling. She fell in love with first grade and hopes to have her own classroom one day. As for the future, she will continue her studies and pursue her teaching certificate. While at McGinnis Woods, she has coached Cross Country and will coach Track this spring. Lauren enjoys biking, traveling, ballroom dancing, scrapbooking, and always listening to great tunes.

Amy Abramson, also known as Mrs. A and Ms. Arlesa Armstrong teach the 1st grade class Parrots. This is Ms. A's first year at McGinnis Woods, but her 13th year of teaching. An Atlanta native, Mrs. A. grew up in Dunwoody. She has taught numerous grade levels. Mrs. A. graduated from Georgia State University in 1995. She lives with her husband, Gary, and her son, Noah, who is in the 4th grade Suns class, along with their dog, Farfel the Wonder Dog. When not teaching, Mrs. A. loves to sing, read books, photography and cooking. She has written 3 unpublished children's books and also writes a music blog on line. Mrs. A. loves McGinnis Woods!

Ms. Arlesa attended college at the University of Montevallo in Alabama and earned a dual B.S. Degree in History and Sociology. Prior to moving to Georgia four years ago, she worked as a social worker for the state of Alabama. This is her second year at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Arlesa lives in Woodstock with her husband, Adam, and her son, Jordan, and is anxiously awaiting the arrival of her second child at the end of March. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, cooking, and playing with Duke, the family dog.

Ms. Kelly Shaffer and Ms. Josie Bunster make up the 1st grade Pandas. Ms. Kelly is enjoying her third year at McGinnis Woods! She loves teaching first graders and enjoys the enthusiasm for learning and exploring that her students have each day. Ms. Kelly loves chocolate, sports and reading all kinds of books. She and her husband, Emmett, and have three girls. The youngest is in kindergarten in KC Tigers. They also have a daughter graduating from high school this year and their eldest daughter is a news broadcaster in Toledo, Ohio. Ms. Kelly is huge football fan and enjoys attending and watching football on the weekends. She has lived in Johns Creek for the last ten years before relocating here from southern California.

Ms. Josie was born in Santiago, Chile, and moved to Atlanta when she was eight. She attended the University of Georgia and has a Bachelor's degree in Spanish and Public Relations as well as a Master's Degree in Non-Profit Organizations. She loves teaching at McGinnis Woods and is getting married May 1st. Her hobbies include cooking, working out, and spending time with her family and beloved puppy, Boggy.

Afternoon Discovery Clubs Spotlight: Broadcast Club

The Broadcast Club is having a great time this session as 15 students meet with Ms. Mary each Friday afternoon to do research, plan sketches, reports, and brainstorm ideas for future morning announcement slots. The team members are in the 3-8th grades and have great, out of the box ideas, about what they would like to see on the 8:30 Wildcat Chat segments. Upcoming segments will include riddles, top ten lists, trivia questions, local and national sporting updates, along with a cooking segment. The enthusiasm level is amazing!

The Broadcast Club has also had an added surprise this session, as it has begun to plan the next edition of the school newspaper. Ms. Felicia is working with Ms. Mary to have the club reporters identify areas of writing interest and get our school newspaper back in circulation. Students have begun working on comics, how to articles, human interest pieces and even a write in advice column called "Dear Juliette". Be on the lookout for the current edition sometime in March.

This team of committed broadcasters will also learn to set up the equipment needed to air the morning announcements, work to film and edit short segments and continue to build the fun program. If you have an interest in this program or wish to volunteer time or expertise, contact Ms. Mary.



The Annual Family Math and Science Night

Following a delicious spaghetti dinner provided by the PA, the Annual Family Math and Science Night was held at McGinnis Woods on January 12th. Family Math and Science Night is designed to get students and parents excited about learning and doing math and science together. This provides a hook to get students interested in these areas.

Each grade level is responsible for conducting a math or science activity. The activities encourage students and parents to work together to generate solutions. Many activities require students to construct items that can be taken home to reinforce their learning. Some activities resemble television game shows and test knowledge, and some call for the use of science or math processing skills.

Everyone had a "bad hair day" when they explored the Electrostatic Generator with Ms. Kim and Mr. Joe. The generator made hair stand on end with static electricity demonstrations. Science Jeopardy is Ms. Amie and Ms. Nicole's specialty. Points were scored as families pooled their scientific knowledge. "Clue Me In," overseen by Ms. Jen and Ms. Courtney, was a math guessing game to determine a mystery number. Who didn't enjoy making snow? Ms. Kelly and Ms. Josie had a "chilling good time." "Pick your Brain" was testing problem solving skills using toothpick puzzles with Ms. Charlton and Ms. Felicia. Everyone made 3 dimensional geometric models under Ms. Camberly and Ms. CeCe's instruction. Mr. Steve's Lego Robotics drew a crowd to the computer lab, and young and old enjoyed "Eggs Full of Sound." Families discovered how dense they were when Ms. Kristen and Ms. Rebecca helped them make density columns from different liquids.



Younger students had fun with Ms. Amber, Ms. Stacie and Ms. Wendy learning about place value, and rings were tossed for points in Mr. Josh and Ms. Lauren's room. The Pre-K building challenged logical thinking with "Will it Sink or Float," and included everyone on a graph of pizza favorites. Matthew Leonard won a prize for guessing how many crayons were in a fishbowl. Every year, there are students who can't wait for the next Family Math and Science Night, and parents who love the event!

