

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



February 2012, Volume 3, Issue 6



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

3/1:	Fun Run Donations Due
3/5:	Discovery Clubs Begin
3/9:	2011-2012 Term 3 End No School Staff Development Day
3/12:	Begin 2011-2012 Term 4
3/16	Report Cards (due back on Monday)
3/19-3/23	Stanford Testing, 1st—8th Grades
4/2-4/6	Spring Break Week No School/Afterschool Only

## 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...

Message From Ms. Mary.....	1	Valentine's Dance.....	3	Spelling Bee.....	5
Wildcat Chat.....	2	Science Fair.....	4	About Our Teachers.....	6
Guest Performer .....	2	Classroom Spotlight.....	4	Summer Camp.....	7
PA Board Update.....	3	Preschool Corner.....	5	"Specials Program".....	7

## A Message From Ms. Mary

February has been a very busy month for us. We have enjoyed many special times and events during the month. They are highlighted for you in this issue of our newsletter.

We have had another great visit with the Boosterthon Fun Run Team. This year they have taken us on an **EPIC Adventure** filled with great character lessons, physical activities, and opportunities to help build playgrounds for children in Guatemala. They stressed the importance of Encouraging others, Playing, Inviting others to be part of the group and Celebrating other peoples' successes. Each of these topics was well received and very timely as we want the students at our school to be inclusive and kind to all of the students they encounter each day. Please help your student turn all of the Boosterthon pledges into promises. All pledge monies are due to the school by March 1<sup>st</sup> so that we can begin our work on the trail and outdoor classroom.



March is almost here! We are very excited about the arrival of Spring! We have a lot planned during March, including our week of Stanford 10 testing. As a reminder, testing is scheduled for March 19-23. Please make every effort to ensure your student's attendance during testing.

Enjoy your extra day of February; Happy leap year day!

Ms. Mary

# Wildcat Chat

## Track & Field Season Preview

Track season starts in earnest this month with the first meet at Perimeter School on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Both the boys and girls team look to be competitive and they are shooting for more records and medals.

### Girls Team:

This will be our youngest and most inexperienced Girls team this year. The team is mostly made up of 5th and 6th graders. This doesn't mean that they won't be competitive. The team boasts many top athletes as well as emerging stars.

Our distance team will be anchored by Courtney Stuart. She is our school record holder in the mile and 2 mile. She is also our top pole vaulter. She will be backed up in the mid-distances by Katherine Gall, Maddie Moore and Maansi Gupta. These girls are also some of our best jumpers. Our throwing crew will be led by Sahyaja Munamala, Teema Yassine and Gabby Scott. This was the team's weakness last year. We should see big improvements this season.

### Boys Team:

After placing lower than we wanted the past two years for the Boys team at the Championships, this year looks to be a real breakthrough. The team is well balanced with plenty of speed and skill.

Speaking of speed, watch out for sprinters Jason Son, Joey Anzilotti, and Ryan Field. These guys also are fine jumpers and throwers. Our distances will be handled by Ryan Hulett and Daniel Elkin. The mid-distances will be led by Sam Zoldock, Chris Lee, and Brad Dull. Sam is also one of the top pole vaulters in the State and Brad a fine hurdler.

Look here for next month for meet results and season highlights.



## Guest Performer: Glass Harpist

Brien Engel came to perform at McGinnis Woods on February 9th, and it was quite a treat! He played classical music on the glass harp as well as very familiar songs. The glass harp is comprised of goblets and snifters of various sizes, which he played carefully by rubbing their rims with moistened fingers. Brien also played other "found object" instruments which he created including playing a saw with a violin bow and a homemade guitar comprised of the neck of an electric guitar and a kitchen pot. Additionally, he demonstrated how the glass harp brought to the US by Benjamin Franklin was originally designed and played. It was a very unique performance, full of physics and creativity which we will not soon forget! Brien encouraged the students to go home and experiment with created musical instruments at home. We hope he can visit us again next year.



# PA Board Update

The Parent's Association wanted to provide an update on how Annual Fund 2011-12 monies were distributed. Careful consideration was given to many options. A parent survey was also distributed to enlist a broader range of ideas. As always, we looked to projects that would directly impact each child at every grade level. To that end, it was felt that completing the installation of Promethean Boards in every classroom and purchasing more laptops was the most impactful way to spend Annual Fund 2011-12. Please take a minute to see or ask about these changes in your child's classroom. The teachers are integrating the new technology into the curriculum. Thank you for your support of this project.

Our Valentine's Dance at Andretti's was an immense success. We had great food, music and dancing. We would like to thank all the teachers at McGinnis Woods for giving of themselves to make the teacher auctions so much fun. The winners of the teacher auctions are:

#### Raffle Winners:

1. Gourmet Basket: Andrew Black
2. 50/50: Michelle Brooks \$228.00
3. Sony Bloggie: A. Inman

#### Auction Winners:

1. Girls Day Out with Ms. Stacey and Ms. Hiral: Kumarakalvas
2. Kids Night In and Parent's Night Out with Ms. Robyn: Stuarts
3. Assistant Nurse for the Day with Nurse Penny: A. Aniszewski
4. Mr. Josh and Coach: School of Rock: MJ Yassine & Bowles
5. Cupcake Cravings: T. Yassine, T. Charlton, and E. Sparrow
6. Family Hike with Mr. T: H. Darji
7. Trip to Barnes & Noble with Ms. Valorie & Ms. Tamara: Karp
8. Lights, Camera, Action with Ms. Xylina: Marasco
9. Lunch with Ms. Sam and Ms. Kim: MJ Yassine and Marasco
10. 1 Week of Summer Camp: White
11. Principal for the Day with Ms. Mary: Sparrow and Bowles
12. Paint the Town with Ms. Jessica and Ms. Kristen: Bowles
13. A Trip to Studio Movie Grill with Ms. Robyn and Ms. Jacki: Welch
14. Parent's Night Out with Ms. Michelle and Ms. Sonia: White
15. Nail Spa with Ms. Tanya: Vadapalli
16. An Art Masterpiece by Ms. Elise: Garrett
17. One Hour of Math Tutoring with Ms. Rebecca: Gurrakonda
18. The B and N with Ms. Cece: V. Longo
19. Afternoon Fun with Ms. Wendy and Ms. Tricia: T. Charlton
20. Movies and Ice Cream with Ms. Kelly, Ms. Lyndsey, Ms. Noelle and Ms. Josie: A. Karp, A. Aniszewski
21. Hey Mambo with Ms. Lisa and Ms. Jenn: J. Kershaw
22. Body Plex Personal Training 60 Days: Farcucci
23. Body Plex Group Training 60 Days: P. Pye
24. Splatters & Mangia with Ms. Kammy and Ms. Abby: M. Stuart

Fun Run was a great success. We received pledges from 50 States and over 22 countries. 99% of you logged on and 89% participated by getting at least one pledge. We would like to thank all the parents that connected their children with sponsors. It is because of this generosity that we will be able to build our Outdoor Classroom. Stay tuned! We hope to have all the details by next month's newsletter.

March 5<sup>th</sup> through March 9<sup>th</sup> is McGinnis Woods Teacher Appreciation week. We will send various e-mails detailing all the activities we have planned for our wonderful teachers.

## Valentine's Dance

The McGinnis Woods Valentine's Day Dance was held on February 4, 2012, at Andretti's. The 250 guests enjoyed good food, dancing and lots of fun! The new venue provided an elegant ballroom, and the DJ kept everyone moving and grooving. The Silent Auction was very popular, and several families went back and forth on their bids to win the fun items that the McGinnis Woods teachers had donated. Some examples of the Auction items were painting with the teachers, going to the movies with the teachers or rock star guitar and drum lessons with the teachers. Needless to say, the students were eager to spend time with their teachers doing some of these fun things! Many thanks to the Parent Association who did a great job planning this fun event!





# Regional Science Fair

The Northwest Georgia Regional Science Fair was held at South Forsyth High School on Saturday, February 11, 2012. McGinnis Woods had a group of middle school students whose projects advanced to the regional fair. They competed against students from all over northwest Georgia ranging in age from middle school through high school.

The science fair was an amazing experience for our students. They had to set up their projects and be interviewed by groups of judges. The students did an incredible job and should be very proud of their accomplishments. The projects included *Multi-Stage Rockets* by Andrew Novokshanov, *How Much Heat do Light Bulbs Give Off?* by Alex Field, *Which Mouth is Cleaner: A Dog's or Human's?* by Courtney Stuart, *Can You Make a Home Made Metamorphic Rock* by Gabby Scott, and *Which Fruit or Vegetable Makes a better Conductor?* by Maansi Gupta.

The students learned a lot and enjoyed their experience. According to sixth grader, Gabby Scott, "We all did really well, although we didn't get any ribbons. The judges asked us really hard questions and we gave awesome and perfect answers." We all are very proud of the hard work these students put forth to achieve this level and participate in the Regional Fair.



Right to Left: Maansi Gupta – 5<sup>th</sup>, Courtney Stuart – 7<sup>th</sup>, Andrew Novokshanov – 5<sup>th</sup>, Alex Field – 5<sup>th</sup>, Gabby Scott – 6<sup>th</sup>

## Classroom Spotlight: Technology in the Classroom

The first grade students are using technology in their curriculum in many different ways. They really enjoy working on the mini laptops to take AR (Accelerated Reader) quizzes. They take the quizzes after reading an AR book in class. This helps with comprehension skills. First grade students also use the laptops to work on phonics skills by using the website [EducationCity.com](http://EducationCity.com). This website teaches and reviews phonics through fun games. Students are able to practice math skills, too. [IXL.com](http://IXL.com) is a math website that students use to practice math skills, and teachers and parents can track their progress. Technology is a great teaching tool that we use at McGinnis Woods!



# *Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)*

We are poised and ready for Spring here in the Preschool! Though it is still just February, the children and teachers alike have enjoyed the unseasonably warm weather and taken every opportunity for outdoor fun and adventures.

This past month, we talked a lot about what makes each of us special, how we are different from one another, and also how we are all alike. Our hope is that the children will continue a dialogue with you at home about the things that make them unique, as well as what makes them part of a group (such as family or school).



We have celebrated Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, and most recently, President's Day. Did your child mention that he or she got a visit from the Tooth Fairy for Dental Health Month?

And now, on to March! The children will be learning next month about all sorts of living things! Be sure to ask your preschooler about how bees behave, what flowers need in order to grow, and whether or not they think leprechauns are real.

On Friday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday and the NEA's Read Across America Day. Mid-month, the preschoolers will get a visit from the Georgia Bubble Man and a chance to see how big a bubble can really be.

Thank you to all of our parents who have participated in the Growums fundraiser. We appreciate your support and will keep you posted on additions to our green spaces this Spring.

## **McGinnis Woods Students Participate in GISA Spelling Bee**

On February 9<sup>th</sup>, our school Spelling Bee winners, Gehna Chaubal and Medhana Kadiyala, went to Greenfield Hebrew Academy for Round 1 of the GISA Spelling Bee. They competed against 53 students from over 30 schools.

After the rigorous competition of writing 100 words and spelling them correctly one of our students emerged as a competitor for Round 2. Gehna was one of 12 students who continued to compete in the GISA Spelling Bee for Rounds 2 and 3 held at The Walker School on Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

During Round 2, Gehna, once again, wrote 100 very challenging words. After all of the papers were graded the spelling finalists for Round 3 were announced and Gehna had earned a spot! In Round 3, Gehna and the other contestants were given words to spell orally with an audience present. Gehna represented our school well and had a strong showing. Unfortunately, she was not the overall champion.

We are so proud of both Medhana and Gehna for all of their hard work. When you see them around school please congratulate both girls for a job well done!



## A Little About Our Teachers: Featuring the Pre-K Team

Bugs, Ducks, and Turtles....Oh My! The Pre-K class names may lead you to believe that you are entering an uncharted wilderness; however, the varied backgrounds of the Pre-K Team allows them to skillfully guide these little creatures through a learning adventure filled with letter sounds, reading, writing, exploring the globe, numbers, counting and even addition.

The Pre-K 4 A Turtles are led by Stacey Jahanfar and Hiral Patel. Ms. Stacey graduated from Ohio University with a B.S. in Communications and a minor in Journalism. She moved to Georgia in 1987 where she soon met her husband

Kamran and later had two beautiful children, Ari (12) and Elanna (9). Ms. Stacey has been teaching at McGinnis Woods for the past three and a half years and loves working with the Pre-K students. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis, being outdoors and spending time with her family and friends.



Originally from California, Ms. Hiral moved to Atlanta two years ago. She has a degree in Liberal Studies from California State Fullerton. She has taught Pre-K for six years. Ms. Hiral is married to her husband, Nioesh. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis, reading, cooking and teaching Modern Indian Dance to young children.

The Queen Bee and Mighty Mantis of the Pre-K 5 class are Ms. Lisa Aber and Ms. Valerie Williams. Ms. Lisa is celebrating her 11th year as a McGinnis Woods staffer and her 7th year teaching in our elementary school! Originally from Port Charlotte, Florida, she attended Florida State University and received a degree in International Affairs. Ms. Lisa and her husband, Chris, have two fabulous daughters attending McGinnis Woods, Madison, a Third Grade Owl and Emerson, a First Grade Panda.

Ms. Valerie has been at McGinnis Woods for two years. She is a Georgia native, originally from Woodstock. Ms. Valerie received her CDA in July of 2011. Her hobbies include reading and being outdoors. She also enjoys spending time with her family and two adorable Chihuahuas.

The Pre-K 4 A Mama Ducks are Robyn Hogan and Tamara Baker. Originally from Savannah, Georgia, Ms. Robyn moved to Atlanta in 1985. She has a degree in Early Childhood Education from Ashworth College and is currently attending Grand Canyon University to further her education.

Ms. Tamara has been at McGinnis Woods for the past 7 years. She has taught Pre K for many years and holds a BA degree in Communications. She has two grown children. Tamara enjoys learning about nutrition and nature in her free time.

This amazing team of teachers inspires their young students every day and are quick to share smiles with all!



# Summer Camp at McGinnis Woods

It is time again to start making fabulous summer plans. McGinnis Woods wants to be your child's home away from home by offering great summer camp activities for all ages. This year our camp is called "Wildcat Adventures" and will feature exciting weekly field trips. We will go tubing, canoeing, horse-back riding, and indoor rock climbing, along with other fun adventures including weekly visits to local parks.

We also have some excellent summer Discovery Clubs planned. Your child can participate in weeklong sessions of Robotics, Karate, Golf, Cooking and Tennis. Each week will feature a new themed adventure with arts and crafts, water activities including water slides and games, team sports and so much more. You won't want to miss "Wildcat Adventures" and all the fun we're going to have this summer. Registration information was sent out last week with your student; additional registration information is available in the elementary school lobby. So get excited and register your child for this adventure today!



## **"Specials" Program: Featuring Steve Wells, IT & Technology Instructor**

Mr. Steve Wells is the Technology Instructor and IT Specialist for McGinnis Woods. He also coaches the McGinnis Woods Wildcats Robotics Team along with Mr. Tyler Driskell and Ms. Rebecca McNutt. Mr. Steve has taught K-8 Technology and worked as the IT Manager at other schools and universities in the state. He has worn many different professional hats throughout his life. He has built waterfalls and koi ponds, worked in the television broadcasting industry and even worked on the United States Senate Television Network installation. He has been a house painter, carpenter, electronics technician, and swimming pool equipment installer.

Mr. Steve loves life and enjoys spending time with his two daughters, Jessie and Hannah. He resides in Cumming and tries to get out on the water every chance he gets. He enjoys fishing in local rivers, ponds, streams, and lakes, from a boat, a canoe, while wading and even in an inner tube. His other pastime favorite is playing all types of music from Medieval to rock on the mandolin. He loves working at McGinnis Woods and enjoys working with all of the families.

