

McGinnis Woods Buzz



February 2015 Volume 9, Issue 4



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

10-19	Boostethon Rock'in Town Live!
13	Candy Grams and Valentine Exchange Parents Night Out
16	Presidents Day After School Only
17	PreK and K Visit from the Tooth Fairy
18	3rd Grade to Puppetry Arts
20	1st to Center for Puppetry Arts
25	Citizen of the Month Lunch
26	Spelling Bee Reception 2:00 in the gym

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

The start to the second semester has been a busy one. January flew by as students settled back into their learning routines and enjoyed new concepts and aspects of their grade level curriculum. They also had a great time extending their learning outside of the classroom with visits from High Touch - High Tech which focused on STEM concepts and activities and also trips to the Georgia Bar Association, the Jimmy Carter Library, and Elachee Nature Center, to name a few.



February wrapped up our basketball seasons for both the boys and girls teams. They filled our new gym with the wonderful sounds of squeaking shoes, bouncing balls, cheering fans and teamwork in action. Read more about their season in this edition of the McGinnis Woods Buzz.

The Boosterthon Team is on our campus sharing character lessons and motivating our students to find sponsors to help us raise funds to continue to outfit our gym. We are hoping to raise enough money to purchase curtains and bleachers. We hope to have the curtains installed and ready for our upcoming production of The Wizard of Oz directed by Ms. Xylina. The actual Fun Run will take place on Thursday, February 19 in the gym. PreK and Kindergarteners will run at 10:30, 1st-3rd graders will run at 12:30 and the 4-8th graders will be running at 1:45. Please be sure to join us for this fun event to cheer on the runners. We will also have a school-wide picnic lunch at 11:30 in the gym if you would like to stop by.

Thanks to so many of you who took the time to complete the annual SACS/AdvancED Survey. Our School Improvement Team has been sifting through the data and identifying areas where we are doing well and those which need improving. We will be sharing those results with you in the near future.

It is re-enrollment time at McGinnis Woods, so please turn in all completed forms and fees to ensure that your student is set for the 2015-16 school year. We are in the early stages of planning for the year. Summer Camp registration forms were sent home last week. We are super excited about the great plans we have for this summer's Sunsational Summer Camp. There is more information about camp in this newsletter.

Have a wonderful Valentine Weekend,

Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update

The school year is moving along and no matter what the groundhog says it feels like spring is just around the corner! February has gotten off to an exciting start and the fun just keeps on coming! Thanks to everyone that made our Valentine Dance such a fantastic event! It is always so great to see the McGinnis Woods students, teachers and families come together outside of school for a night of fun! The dance floor was packed, the food was delicious and everyone looked great! You not only brought your best dance moves but your generous support as well! Our teachers put together some wonderful auction items for our families to bid on with the proceeds going to the Parent Association. Our winners will be going on all sorts of exciting outings with their favorite teachers and some will even serve as principal for the day! Bidding was fast and furious and thanks to your generosity the auction raised nearly \$3,000 for our school!

Our Boosterthon FunRun kicked off with some awesome, energy-packed pep rallies. The students are all ready so excited to raise some money for their school and have fun while doing it!! This year's character theme is ROCK'N TOWN LIVE, a music festival theme all about COMMUNITY! Students will learn five ways to make their community rock where they live and play. The money raised from Boosterthon will be used to help outfit the school's new gym and to provide grant money to our fabulous McGinnis Woods teachers for a variety of different projects and classroom improvements. Our goal is to raise \$18,000 so it's critical that everyone do their part to make FunRun a smashing success!! The FunRun will take place on Thursday, February 19th. All parents are welcome to come and cheer on their runners!

With all of the great events planned between now and the end of the year, there are numerous volunteer opportunities both big and small and we would love to have you join us!! Please check out the PA Association website at www.mcginiswoodspa.org for more information on upcoming events.



Wildcat Chat



Our basketball season is over and we are now look forward to all of our spring sports. First, however, we would like to thank our coaches from our basketball season: Coach Robyn and Coach Brittany our girls coaches and John Montgomery and Coach Heather for coaching our boys teams. We could not have a program without dedicated teachers and parents!

This winter we had a great time hosting games in our new gym. We enjoyed our cheerleaders and our concession stand, as we watched our players as they worked hard on the basketball court. Our parents and spectators enjoyed using their adorable spirit shakers to cheer on our Wildcats. Thanks for coming out and supporting our teams!

Now we are starting our spring sports. All of our sports this spring are co-ed. We will participate in Track and Field, Tennis, and Touch Football. Touch Football and Tennis are new to our sports program this year. Track and Field will begin with their first meet being held February 25th at Davis Academy. We have eleven Wildcats participating this season. Coach Robyn will be on the track coaching our Wildcats.

Six tennis players will be going out to the courts this spring, including beginners as well as some seasoned tennis players. We will play #1 singles, #1 doubles and #2 doubles. Our home matches will be played at the Sharon Springs courts. Coach Kammy will be working with our tennis Wildcats. Our first match will be held at Davis Academy on March 3rd.

Touch Football will be coached by Coach Jessica, Coach Christian and Coach Chris. Our Touch Football is a 7-on-7 passing league that incorporates non-contact play with proper fundamentals. Our Wildcats will play both offense and defense. Our first game will be March 12th at Torah Day.

We are looking forward to lots of fun with all our sports this spring! We hope that you will find the time to come out and support our Wildcat Teams.



Go Wildcats!

Preschool Corner

This month we have had a wonderful time in the Preschool learning about the seasons along with Groundhog's Day and the big concept of hibernation. Children made caves and pop up groundhogs to use as they role played the groundhogs prediction.



The little ones also enjoyed learning all about the symbols of love including hearts and flowers in honor of Valentine's Day. They made valentine crafts and special bags to collect all of their valentines in. The teachers read them many sweet stories about love and friendship. Two of their favorite stories were *Pigeon Loves Things That Go* and the ever popular story, *Guess How Much I Love You*.

We have also added some new staff and would like to introduce them to you. We are very happy to have Shelby, Kara, Alex and Kim join our preschool team.

Ms. Shelby is born and raised here in Atlanta and loves spending quality time with her daughter Aubree who does competitive dancing. She has her Associates degree in Early Childhood and over 10 years' experience in childcare.

Ms. Kim is originally from West Palm Beach, Florida and has over two years of experience in child care. She is a proud mother of two children Alyssa (15) and Alex (12). They also have a dog name Zoe.

Ms. Kara is form Horton, Alabama and comes to us with her CDA. She has over 6 years of child care experience. She enjoys spending time with her boyfriend, going to the beach, reading and crafting.

Ms. Alex is originally from Philadelphia and now lives here in Georgia with her son Asher who attends McGinnis Woods. She is currently working on her CDA and has over 6 years of experience in child care. Ms. Alex loves animals and painting.

We welcome all of our new staff to McGinnis Woods Preschool! Please take some time to stop by and see all of the amazing learning and activities happening in the Preschool!



Boosterthon Fun Run Comes Back to McGinnis Woods!



We are excited to host the 9-day Boosterthon Fun Run as this year's fundraiser. We kick off the fun, healthy, character-building program on February 10 with 2 pep rallies in the gym: PreK –2nd graders will meet at 10:00 a.m. and 3rd-8th graders will meet at 10:40 a.m. Students will be learning five ways to make their community rock with Boosterthon's character theme Rock'n Town Live, a music festival theme all about community. Along the way, students will gather pledges for how many laps they'll run at the Boosterthon Fun Run event, which is on Thursday, February 19. Your family is invited to come out and cheer on your student! Please help our school by connecting your student with sponsors. Thank you for your support!

Market Day 2015: *Bring Your Quarters, Dimes, and Nickels!*

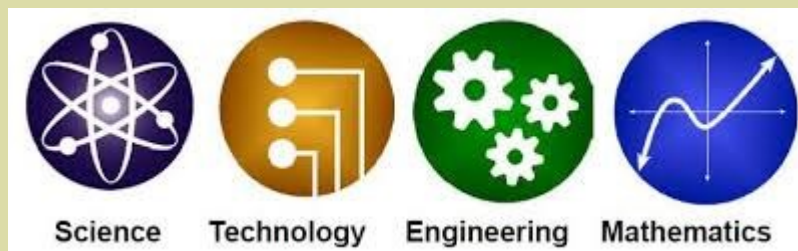
Market Day is right around the corner! In conjunction with an Economics Unit, students have been learning how to buy, sell, and trade goods and services. Their lessons have focused on important vocabulary and concepts including interdependence, the jobs of consumers and producers, how to price an item, how price impacts supply and demand, and how countries create currency.



Students have learned about the role of entrepreneurs by watching and discussing portions of the show Shark Tank and creating their own marketable product. On Markey Day you will find Minecraft characters, paper airplanes, pencil tops, hand-made scarves, and so much more! Preview day is scheduled for Thursday, February 26th for third and fourth grade, and student items will be available for purchase to the entire school on Friday, February 27th.

STEM Week 2015

Our annual McGinnis Woods STEM event will be the week of March 23rd. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, and activities for the week will incorporate these 4 themes. It is so important for our students to explore and to enjoy STEM projects because our everyday world is STEM centered! All classes from Pre-K through 8th grade will participate. We have many exciting guest speakers lined up like GA Power and HAM Radio along with some of our own parents who have volunteered to speak about their STEM related careers. However, we still need additional speakers! If you have a STEM related job, please consider volunteering to share your experiences and thoughts about your profession! This will make a clear and relevant connection for our students to see that what they are learning at school relates to a possible future job.



IT'S YEARBOOK TIME!

We are now collecting pictures for the 2014 – 2015 Yearbook and we need your help, so pull out your computers and grab your memory cards! Please place your pictures on a labeled CD or Jump Drive and turn them into Ms. Kim, yearbook editor, or your homeroom teacher. We are looking for your child's classroom pictures including parties, special events and field trips, as well as Citizen of the Month, Sports, Band, Drama, Robotics, International Night, Fall Festival, Thanksgiving Feast, Sing A Long, Valentine's Dance, Project Showcase, Discovery Clubs, School Clubs; Everything we do!

We have already done so many amazing things this year at McGinnis Woods that we want to capture in the Yearbook as a special keepsake for your child and family for years to come! Thank you for all your support of this exciting project! Stay tuned for the next newsletter edition when we announce the winners of our Yearbook Art Contest! We have chosen student art winners for the cover, back cover and the title page as well!

PreK Students Visit The Center for Puppetry Arts

The PreK classes journeyed to the Center for Puppetry Arts for their February field trip to see Rainforest Adventures. The show gave the children an entertaining and enlightening peek at the amazing Amazon Rainforest. A few of the children's favorite animals that were highlighted during the show were: anacondas, howler monkeys, and sloths. After the show the children attended the CREATE-A-PUPPET WORKSHOP. Each child made a glow in the dark electric eel! The children loved pretending that they were the puppeteers at the end of the workshop! It was a wonderfully interactive, educational experience!



Overnight Trips Filled with Learning and Fun: A McGinnis Woods Tradition



Students at McGinnis Woods have been enjoying unique field trips since the founding of the school. The trips provide students with a wonderful way to expand their worldviews and to embrace the world as their classroom. Most grade levels return to the same location for their overnights each year, making the trips a celebration and rite of passage of sorts. Only the 5-7th graders have a change of venue each year. The following information details the scheduled trips for this year:

1st grade is the first year students attend school overnights. This year the first graders and their parents will meet at Zoo Atlanta on May 7-

8. They will participate in the Night Crawlers program which features behind the scenes experiences, learning activities, and up close animal encounters along with many other adventures.

2nd graders and their parents will meet at DeSoto Caverns in Alabama for a fun day of activities like gem panning, rock climbing and a fun water balloon challenge. The day ends with a family cookout, cavern tour and spending the night inside the cave.

3rd grade students and parents will experience the Tennessee Aquarium from May 7 – 8. The fast-paced Sleep in the Deep adventure is a tour of both the River and Ocean Journey. Students will go where the aquarists and divers go and learn about being a part of the Aquarium team. They will meet with some of the critters up close and experience the Aquarium after the lights go down. They will sleep alongside the largest exhibits and dream about all the magnificent creatures.

4th grade students will enjoy Nature's Classroom atop Lookout Mountain in Mentone, Alabama from April 29-May 1 as they venture out on their own. Students will take classes and have fun adventures! Small Field Groups hike together, dine together, and participate in team-building activities together. After dark, the students will participate in the Underground Railroad simulation and, weather permitting, a snack around the campfire.

5th – 7th grade students will be going to the Blue Ridge Outdoor Education Center in Toccoa from May 4–6. Students will go to different hands-on field adventure classes each day. They may hike, wade, explore a beaver pond, prowl for owls while learning about the plants, animals and ecology around them. The center has forests, coves, wetlands and a waterfall which create a rich learning environment.

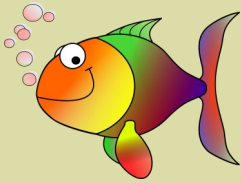
Our 8th grade students will join Close Up in Washington DC from May 3 – 5 with peers from all around the country. Students will stay in a hotel and learn about the Jefferson Memorial, Roosevelt Memorial, Capitol Reflecting Pool, and Capitol Hill. Students will have a study visit for the Korean War, Memorials for Vietnam Veterans, Lincoln, MLK Jr., WWII, US Marine Corps and Air Force, White House and National Archives. They will participate in a mock congress, and explore The Smithsonian, Arlington National Cemetery.

These trips teach our students so much about their world and themselves. They also create wonderful memories which will last a lifetime!



We are Second Grade!

The second grade team includes three committed teachers who work to help their students mastery important curriculum , develop a love for learning and enjoy each day!



Ms. Kim Kershaw has been a member of the McGinnis Woods staff for sixteen years ! She graduated from college in Rochester, NY and earned her Master's degree at Georgia State. Kim has taught everything from Pre-K up to 6th grade. She LOVES teaching second grade and this is her tenth year doing so.

Kim and her husband Brad have been married for fifteen years and have two precious girls; Tori who is in the 6th Grade Geckos and Julianna who is in the 3rd Grade Dogs. Outside of school Kim enjoys traveling with her girls, listening to music, trying out new recipes and scrapbooking with my girlfriends. Kim and Brad, a homicide detective in Dekalb County, cherish spending their weekends playing with our girls and being with our friends and family.

This is Ms. Ginny Snead's first year working at McGinnis Woods. She has a B.A from Randolph-Macon College and has prior teaching experience at The Collegiate School and the Atlanta Girls' School. Her favorite parts of teaching at McGinnis Woods are teaching students to think critically to solve word problems in math and seeing students' individual personalities shine through in their language arts compositions. One of her favorite highlights from the Fish classroom so far this year, was when the class received correspondence from the White House during their Flat Stanley project. When Ginny is not at school she enjoys spending time with family and friends, exploring Atlanta, and cheering on the University of Virginia in football and basketball.



This is Ms. Sonia Walker's fourth year at McGinnis Woods. She teaches the Second Grade Leopards and thoroughly enjoys doing so! She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education at Gainesville State College which is now The University of North Georgia. She began substituting in the spring of 2011 and then started at McGinnis Woods as an assistant for Ms. Kim. Sonia loves spending my time at McGinnis Woods, and also enjoys spending time with her husband, Jeremiah Walker, who is also a teacher. They have been married for seven years and are expecting their first child in March!



Annual Spelling Bee



What is the hardest part of a School Spelling Bee? Well that depends on whom you ask. At McGinnis Woods Country Day School, our students believe it is spelling the words correctly. In December, each class conducted a classroom spelling bee to determine their classroom representatives.

During the week of January 19th, those class representatives in Pre-K thru 8th grade competed in our annual School Spelling Bee. After four days of spelling, two winners emerged. Our school Spelling Bee champion is 5th grader, Himani Kalra and our 1st Runner-Up is 6th grader, Harish Suryadevera. Both of these students will continue on and compete in Rounds 1, 2 & 3 of the GISA Spelling Bee.

Round 1 will be held at Mill Springs Academy on Thursday, February 12th. For Round 1, students must write 100 words and also complete vocabulary questions. From there our spellers will compete in Rounds 2 & 3 on March 3rd at The Atlanta Academy. Round 2 is another written round of 100 words plus vocabulary. Round 3 is an Oral Round.

Please congratulate our classroom representatives, along with winners, Himani and Harish for all of their hard work. Every student has done a fabulous job, and we are very proud of their efforts.

A Spelling Bee reception will be held for all of our participants on February 26 at 2:00 p.m. in the school gym. We look forward to honoring our students and parents at that time!



Student Council Update

Student Council representatives and officers have been very busy filling candygram orders for our McGinnis Woods community. Candygrams are special Valentines that can be delivered to friends in your class or in other classes. Students fill out special cards and student council members add candy to them and send them special delivery. Happy Valentine's Day to all!



Jr. Beta Club Update



Dogwood Forest: We travelled to visit with our friends at Dogwood Forest Assisted Living Facility in Alpharetta this month. We brought cookies and Valentine wishes to the residents as we chatted and got to know them better. It was a wonderful experience for all.

Humane Society: We have gotten our plans made to make dog blankets, toys, and treats for the animals at the Forsyth County Humane Society. We will begin creating all of these wonderful things at our next meeting.

Kazakhstan Orphanage: We are still amazed by the outpouring of support for this cause. We have shipped several boxes and are waiting for it to arrive. We were unable to ship a small portion of the donations, therefore we are planning to take it to The Place, a social services organization in Forsyth County. This will allow us to also benefit children within our own community.



Ms. Cassandra, Spanish Teacher Extraordinaire



Ms. Cassandra Hulett moved to Atlanta from Los Angeles in 1994 and has felt at home ever since. Although she misses the beach and her family and friends, she feels this has been an amazing place to raise her fabulous boys, Ryan (13) and Colin (9). This is Ms. Cassandra's 5th year at McGinnis Woods and feels blessed to be doing what she loves every day.

She has a BA in Spanish and is finishing up her Masters in Spanish at Georgia State University this semester. She has had the amazing opportunity to travel abroad to countries like Argentina, Spain and Mexico and one day would love to live in one of those countries when the boys are grown. She appreciates the Latin culture for its focus on putting family first and enjoying life to the fullest.

Ms. Cassandra lives in Sandy Springs with her fiancé Gary and her two wonderful boys. They live within walking distance from Chastain Park where they love to take their Akita, Meiko, for walks as much as possible. During her free time, Cassandra enjoys running, getaways to the beach, trips to California, scrapbooking, camping, hiking, movies and popcorn, alone time with her friends, and listening to all different genres of music.

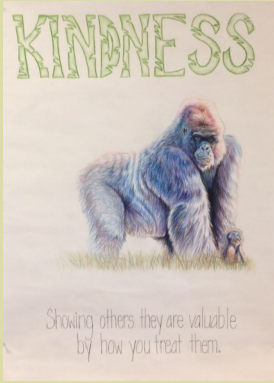
Wildcat Cheerleaders Entertain the Crowd

The Wildcat Cheerleaders enjoyed cheering at the home basketball games this year. Their enthusiasm and sweet smiles won over the crowd every game. They especially rocked the girls Basketball Tournament! They worked the crows and had some in the gym the up, shaking their spirit shakers and cheering on the home team.

The Wildcat Cheerleaders practice once a week and learn cheers associated with football, soccer and basketball. There are many perks to being a cheerleader, as the members enjoy spending time sharing ideas and enjoying the sisterhood that cheerleading offers.



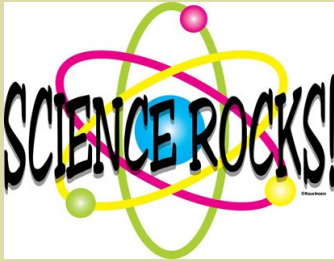
Focus on Kindness



The Word of the Month for February is kindness. Kindness is defined as showing others that they are valuable by how you treat them. Throughout the month, we will be looking for students who are going above and beyond to show kindness to their peers. Some students who work hard to master this character trait will be recognized on the morning announcements and will receive a Chick-fil-A coupon to reward their kindness.

Annual Science Fair Set for March

The Science Fair is a school-wide learning experience which encourages students to use skills in critical thinking, research, problem solving and the use of the scientific method. The students in 2nd-4th grade will create a tri-fold board and 5th-8th grade students may choose to make a tri-fold board or a PowerPoint presentation to showcase their experiment. Pre-K through 1st grade students will be doing a Science experiment and creating a class tri-fold board.



Final projects are due on Monday, March 23rd the first day of our STEM week.

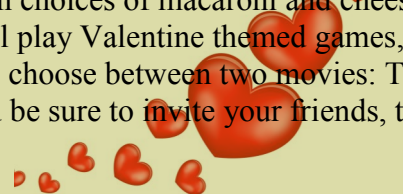
Teachers in 4th grade and up will choose 2 winners from their class to participate in the annual Science Fair contest. There will be a 1st and 2nd place winner from each grade level chosen. The winners and participants in the contest will be announced at Math and Science Night on

Tuesday, March 31st. Be sure to join us for this fun family event, too!



Special Parents Night Out Tonight!

A special Parent's Night Out is being held on Friday, February 13th, with extended hours! Parents can have a romantic night out, and children can stay and play! It will be from 6:00-10:00 pm with a drop-off time of 5:45 pm. Ms. Wendy and Ms. Rebecca will provide a yummy pasta dinner with choices of macaroni and cheese or pasta with red sauce, along with fun activities. During the evening we will play Valentine themed games, make Valentine crafts and make a tasty Valentine treat! Students will be able to choose between two movies: Tangled and Shrek. Wear your pajamas, bring your pillows and sleeping bags, and be sure to invite your friends, too!



Mr T, Technology Teacher



Mr T has been working at McGinnis Woods for many years. He started as a summer camp councilor while he was in college at Georgia College and State University where he earned his bachelors degree in Community Health Education. Following college, he began working as an assistant teacher during the school years in kindergarten and Pre-K. After working in 4th grade for a year, Mr T found his way into the computer lab and technology classroom and has never left! This is where he now teaches, and coaches Senior Lego Robotics.

In his free time, Mr T is a Brazilian JiuJitsu instructor and competitor. He has been training for 8 years and holds the rank of Brown Belt. Creighton Mixed Martial Arts Academy is his second home to McGinnis Woods, where he teaches fitness classes, kids martial arts, and adult JiuJitsu classes.

When not teaching or training, Mr T enjoys exploring and learning about the universe. He can be found backpacking or climbing rocks, or drawing art with Sharpie markers whenever he can!

Sunsational Summer Camp Registration Now Open



We are looking forward to an exciting, Sunsational Summer here at McGinnis Woods! Our camp is filled with exciting themes, daily physical fitness and water park activities, field trips, caring counselors, and much more. We have many amazing art projects planned and special guests including Mr. Greg's Reptiles, Cricket's Petting Zoo and the Georgia Bubbleman scheduled throughout the summer to keep our minds learning.

We are visiting many interesting places like Zoo Atlanta, World of Coca-Cola, Gwinnett Braves game, the Art Barn, and the Dahlonega Consolidated Mines. These trips tie into our fun themes which include: Animal Antics, Star Reporter, Fun and Fitness and How it's Made!

We are also offering many Specialty and Academic Camps that offer a variety of educational ways to sharpen camper skills and expand their minds during the summer. Some of these exciting camps include cooking, swimming, gymnastics, drama and various academic boot camps for campers of all ages.



Pictures from Around the School

