

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



August/September 2014 Volume 9, Issue 1



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

09/29	Box Tops Due
09/30	International Night 6:00-7:30
10/01	Project Showcase Info Sent Home
10/06	Project Showcase Topics are due (1st-8th)
10/10	Early Release at 1:15
10/17	Report Cards Sent Home
10/20	Signed Report Cards Due
10/25	Fall Festival 3:00-6:00
10/27- 10/31	Red Ribbon Week
10/31	Halloween Parties

## 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.*

## The latest buzz . . .

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## A Message From Ms. Mary



What an exciting start to the 2014-15 school year we have had! As we began the school year, our Middle School/Gym construction project was almost complete, but due to weather and schedule delays, we did not receive the occupancy certificate before the first day of school. Thankfully as soon as we did receive the go ahead, we had plenty of eager volunteers to help us with the big move which extended well beyond the middle grades and gym classes. The staff and I are so thankful for the many parents who gave of their time and energies to make this move smooth and efficient. At this time, I am happy to report that each of the classes are settled into their new rooms and are back to their academic schedules.

The new gym and middle school building is a significant accomplishment and milestone for our school. This beautiful, spacious addition has helped us provide the middle school students and their staff with a clear identity and further maturing of the middle grades program. The new space has also allowed us to assign much needed classroom space for Spanish, Guidance Counseling, Band and Chorus. Specials teachers who traveled from classroom to classroom in the past are enjoying the opportunity to decorate their rooms in a way that highlights their content area!

With autumn quickly approaching we are looking forward to cooler weather and many special traditions here at McGinnis Woods. This issue of the McGinnis Woods Buzz highlights our PA sponsored Breakfast with Dads scheduled for this Friday, September 19th; International Night, which is one of our favorite community builders of the year scheduled for Tuesday, September 30th, and a save-the-date for Fall Festival which is on Saturday, October 25th from 3:00-6:00 p.m. This is going to be a busy fall, so be sure to mark your calendars now and plan to join us for these extra special times!

Thanks for being a part of our fantastic learning community!

Have a great week!

Ms. Mary

## Wildcat Chat

The fall sports season is off to a great start! The Wildcats have a lot of enthusiastic athletes ready to play hard and improve their game or race time.

### Volleyball News:

We have 15 girls out to play volleyball this year!! We have an A team and a B team. Our girls are coached by Mrs. Sam and Mrs. Jenn, and they have been working really hard. We are excited to be practicing in our new gym. We have lost two matches, but we have won three! Our biggest win was against Atlanta Girls' School. We will be playing matches every week through September, and we will end the season with a tournament on Thursday, October 6th at Atlanta Jewish Academy.



### Soccer News:

Soccer this year has 14 players, which consist of both boys and girls. We have returning and new club players, recreational players, and some who are learning the game. Our soccer wildcats are coached by Mrs. Heather Bailey and Mrs. Nancy Delk. We won our first game against Faith Lutheran, where we played indoors at the Stars Athletic Club. We fought hard against Intown, but we came up short and tied against The Museum School. We have a lot of potential and look forward to a successful soccer season.

### Cross Country:

We may not have a lot of runners, but we have a lot of skill and enthusiasm. Our Cross Country team had their first meet at Chastain Park on Thursday, August 28th. Our returning runners include Madison Aber and Max Howard. These students both started the season strong and finished near the front of the pack due to diligent training this summer. Jay Isaacs ran his first meet finishing in the top of the pack with a time of 17:25. Monae Smith, Praneet Venigalla, and Hank Royal ran their first race, too, and finished strong. Our team also attended the Whitefield Time Trail, where Madison finished in 5th place overall and came home with a medal! We would love to have more participation in Cross Country. We run in parks and on trails for two miles at our meets. Mrs. Sonia and Coach Croom are coaching the runners.



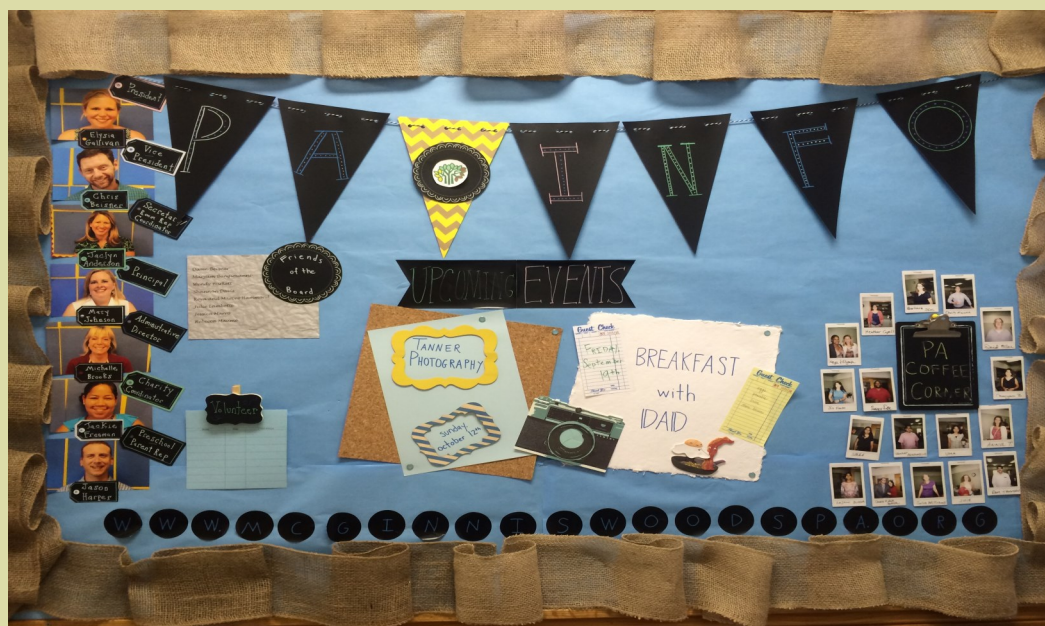


## Jr. Beta Club Builds a Home



Jr. Beta Club had an amazing year last year. We held fundraisers and made contributions to *The Cure*, *The Place of Forsyth County*, and to benefit our campus. Our contributions took several forms including monetary contributions, clothing donations and food donations. One group also reached their two year goal of building a house for a family in Guatemala. Students raised over \$3000 over the two year period to give the family a dry home that will be able to withstand an earthquake. Currently we are deciding on our charities for the 2014-2015 school year.

## PA Update



Welcome to a new school year! Your PA Board is excited about this academic year,, and we have some great things planned for our McGinnis Woods family!

Hopefully, we've had a chance to meet you at one of our recent school events. Whether it was the new family ice cream social, the back to school picnic or first PA coffee; we hope you are feeling welcome in our community and free to ask questions! The Parents Association is designed to help raise funds for the school, provide additional outlets for community service and build community while supporting the school's mission, *Inspiring Students with the Passion to Excel*.

This year, members of the PA are also serving as mentor families for those wanting another connection as they begin the year at McGinnis Woods, feel free to ask Ms. Mary or a member of our PA Board to sign you up!

Now that school has started, we want to give you a look ahead to what is coming in September:

This month has two big events for the PA. The first is the Second Annual Breakfast with Dad! We are calling all Dads, Grandpas, Uncles, or male figure in each child's life to join us in the new gym for breakfast before school. Join us Friday, September 19th from 7:30-8:30 a.m. to enjoy time spent with your student and to connect with other dads.

The second event is the first of our fundraising efforts. This fall our students will be selling Charleston Wrap (wrapping paper and kitchen gadgets). The goal of our fundraiser is to make enough money to purchase items to finish off our stage in the gymnasium. We need curtains, flooring, sound system, etc. Every dollar raised will help make this space just what is needed, so please help out the McGinnis family. The items are super cute, and the wrapping can always come in handy!

Mark your calendar for a Tanner Photography Photo Session on Sunday, October 12th, and save October 17th, too, as that is the date for next PA coffee. It will be held in the cafeteria again and starts at 8 a.m. It is not only a great time to ask questions, but it is also a unique opportunity to build community with fellow McGinnis Woods' parents. We always have a line at the Keurig and talk longer than we should!

More than anything, we want you to know that you are part of our community. Please drop by a PA coffee event, raise funds with us, have breakfast, or volunteer to help! It takes all of us to make McGinnis the place it is, and we need your help. With you, we know that we can make this year the best yet!

## *Treetop Quest: A great Way to Start the Year!*

The 5th through 8th grade students went on their first field trip of the year to *Treetop Quest* at the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center. Students of all grade levels were mixed together to participate in teambuilding activities. They had a lot of fun during these activities, but they also learned some valuable lessons about teamwork. Students learned the importance of trust, communication, listening, and encouragement. They were challenged to put these skills to the test in trust falls and group games. They also practiced many of these skills during other parts of our trip including the ropes course and zip lines. Students traversed obstacles, swings and zip lines in varying ranges of difficulties. They helped one another with equipment and encouragement throughout the many difficult obstacles. We all learned skills to use here at school with students of every age, as well as in our daily outside activities.



## *Student Council*

Student council members made an impact last year by planning and hosting many activities including the talent show, order in days, and the weekly running of the school store. We are gearing up for the school year, and we are currently planning for Student Council Elections and Red Ribbon Week. Both will be held in October.

New officers will be elected after a week of campaigning which culminate with short campaign ads which will air on our morning announcements. Officer positions are open to students in 5th –8th grades. Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade will also choose class representatives.

*Elections are slated for October . Stay tuned for the date!*



## Preschool Corner



It is a very exciting time of year, as we return to school welcoming new friends to the preschool. We are open year round, but many new friends have joined us at the start of the 2014 school-year. We look forward to great learning experiences and a lot of fun, too!

In each edition of the McGinnis Woods Buzz, we will feature different classrooms. At this time, we would like to introduce you to the Nursery and Senior Infants classrooms. Ms. Simin is our Nursery teacher for babies ages six weeks old up to about six months. Ms. Simin was a teacher in Iran, she has been on staff for five years. Ms. Simin is very loving, and she is always smiling and singing.

Our Senior Infant class is for babies who are crawling, and it goes up to age one and walking. We have two teachers in this classroom, Ms. Christine and Ms. Kirsten. Ms. Christine has her CDA in Early Childhood Education. She has been on staff for one year, and she does a wonderful job taking care of the growing babies as they become more mobile. Ms. Christine is very caring and nurturing to the babies. We have added a new teacher to our growing Senior Infant room, Ms. Kirsten. Ms. Kirsten has her Bachelor degree and comes to McGinnis Woods with three years of teaching experience. She encourages exploration in the classroom. She loves and cares deeply for all the babies in her class.

Please take a minute to mark your calendars for some exciting upcoming events:

- Thursday, September 25th Preschool Open House 9:00-11:00 a.m.  
*Please invite a friend to tour the school and see what we makes the Preschool a special place for children to learn and grow!*
- Saturday, October 25th Annual Fall Festival 3:00-6:00 p.m.

*All preschool teachers at McGinnis Woods are CPR, Fire Safety and First Aid certified. Please feel free to stop in for a visit anytime!*

## Discovery Clubs Session Begins

The first Discovery Club session started the week of September 8th. Sessions run one hour once a week for six weeks. Discovery Clubs currently offered will end the week of October 13th.

Classes offered this session taught by McGinnis Woods teachers include Cheerleading, Cooking, Drama, Jr. Robotics, Super Science, and the Robotics Team for 4th - 8th grade students. Classes offered by contracted teachers include Etiquette, Tennis and Playball Soccer.

We want to hear from you. We are always open to offering new clubs or changing days if possible. There are already plans for a Chess and STEM club offered later this school year. If you have any suggestions or comments, please email [elementaryschool@mcginniswoods.org](mailto:elementaryschool@mcginniswoods.org).



## *Internet Safety Parent Meeting*

Parents are invited to an Internet Safety Meeting on Tuesday evening, October 21st from 6:30-7:30pm. Detective, Paige Turpen of the Forsyth County Sherriff's Department will present information dealing with current trends and the impact of Social Media and technology on our students today. Childcare will be available for \$5 per student for parents who RSVP prior to the evening. Look for more information in your student's HABIT binder in the near future.



## *Denim Day for a Cure!*



On Thursday, September 11th, McGinnis Woods students and teachers joined together to raise funds for CURE and cancer research. CURE dedicates nearly \$2.5 million annually to specific research projects aimed at solving cancers which affect children. This opportunity provided our school community an avenue to honor all of the brave children battling pediatric cancer.

Students, teachers and staff each contributed a donation of \$5 and wore their favorite jeans to school. McGinnis Woods raised a total of \$896.00. The collected funds will help support childhood cancer research at the Aflac Cancer Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and other special programs for children dealing with the disease.

We are so proud of our McGinnis Woods students, teachers and staff for supporting a worthwhile cause and children in need. Kudos to everyone!

For more information about CURE please visit [www.curechildhoodcancer.org](http://www.curechildhoodcancer.org)

## *Wholesome Tummies*



McGinnis Woods is happy to offer Wholesome Tummies once again. This optional lunch program is a great resource for families who want to provide their children with gluten free, organic food choices or to add additional variety to their lunches. Wholesome Tummies is also called WT Café. Order is easy and payment is made directly to the company. The food that you and your student select is delivered directly to McGinnis Woods.

In order to be able to offer this great option, we need more families to take advantage of the program. If you have not taken the time to check it out, please visit [wtcafe.com](http://wtcafe.com) and try a selection.

## *Eagle Scout Project Adds to Our Outdoor Classroom*



A former student recently chose McGinnis Woods to be the location of his Eagle Scout Project. Ryan Carroll, a junior at Lambert High School contacted us last spring to see if we would work with him on this large venture. Ryan and his sister attended McGinnis Woods through the 5th grade and his family was instrumental in so many ways during our early years, so we were thrilled to be working with him again! Ryan spent many hours identifying a way to enhance the school and then planning his project. As a former student, Ryan knew that our outdoor classroom would benefit from the addition of new picnic tables and a secure storage area to make teaching in the classroom more efficient.

Ryan presented his project to a Board of Scout Directors who gave Ryan the go ahead for the project.

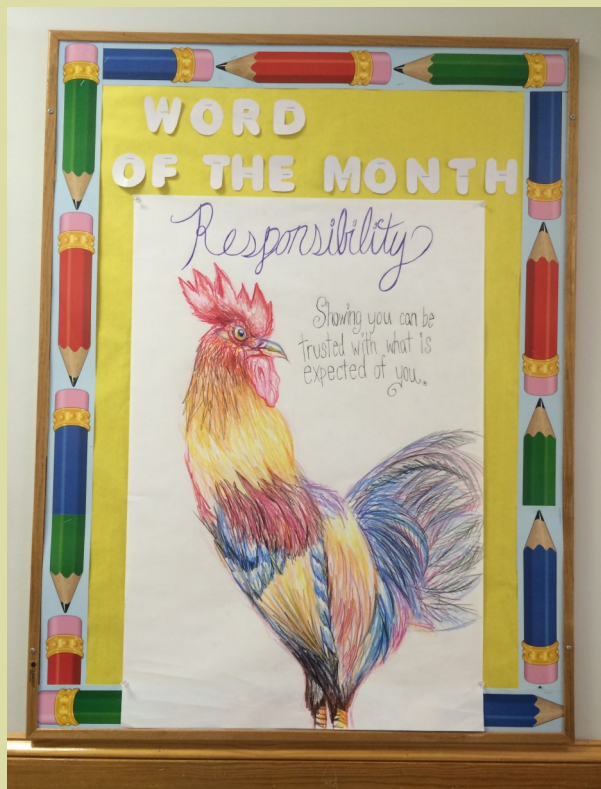
Ryan and his father calculated the needed supplies and purchased everything needed to complete the project, and then, some additional scout volunteers spent two Saturdays building the new tables and creating a storage shed. They worked with all sorts of hand tools and great attitudes during some of the hottest days of the summer!

We are so pleased with the final product and feel very special to have one of our former students give back in such a special way!

***Congratulations to Ryan, who is now an Eagle Scout!***



## Word of the Month: Responsibility



At McGinnis Woods, we believe that developing character in our students is as important a life skill as learning to read and problem solve. Each month we focus on a character trait that we want to incorporate into the lives of our students and staff. We focus on these traits during our daily announcements, classroom lessons with Ms. Jenn and also through other teachable moments each day.

The Words of the Month for August and September are respect and responsibility. We defined respect as *showing others they are important by what you say and do* and responsibility is *showing you can be trusted in what you say and do*.

We have spent these last couple of months pointing out when the students are showing respect and responsibility. Some of our students who have worked extremely hard to master these character traits will be rewarded on the morning announcements with a Chick-fil-A coupon. We ask that you encourage these character traits at home so that our community will overflow with good character.

## Birthday Book Club



In celebration of a student's birthday, McGinnis Woods offers a way for parents to make a lasting contribution to our Media Center. The *Birthday Book Club* is a wonderful way to promote a lifelong love of reading while celebrating a student's special day.

Our primary focus is on selecting books that not only enrich our school's collection but also books students will find enjoyable. There is a monthly celebration for *Birthday Book Club* students in the Media Center—usually on the last Tuesday of the month—with goodies and treats. During that time, students select a book or books from the *Birthday Book Club* collection. A bookplate is placed in the book, and your special student is the first one to check out the book. After two weeks, the book is returned and it is placed into circulation for everyone to enjoy.

It's not too late to sign-up! If you're interested or have any questions about *Birthday Book Club*, please contact Ms. Jacki, Media Specialist at [JFreeman@mcginniswoods.org](mailto:JFreeman@mcginniswoods.org).



## *Middle Grades Teachers Excited About the New Year and New Building*



The middle grades team is comprised of a group of veteran teachers who bring tremendous experience, interests, and energy to the middle grades students. They are committed to teaching this unique group of learners in a way that engages the students and truly gives them the passion to excel. The team's top priorities are to prepare the students to transition successfully into high school by providing them with the academic rigor and strong organizational skills necessary to reach their full potential in high school.

Ms. Heather is the middle grades language arts teacher. This is her ninth year teaching middle grades language arts and her fifth year teaching at McGinnis Woods. She

received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of West Florida and is currently working on her master's degree in Instructional Technology. Ms. Heather also has certification in Middle Grades Integrated Curriculum, ESOL, and Special Education. In addition to teaching language arts, Ms. Heather also coaches soccer and basketball at McGinnis Woods. She and her husband have four children and three dogs.

Ms. Jessica is excited about her first year as the middle grades science teacher at McGinnis Woods. This will be her tenth year in the classroom. She received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Georgia and a Master's of Education from Lesley University. A passion for science is evident in the way she teaches and she enjoys seeing the students of McGinnis Woods take ownership of their learning. Hands on projects, research and step by step investigations are an important part of learning in science lab. In her spare time, Ms. Jessica enjoys botany, hiking and playing Ultimate Frisbee. Her favorite travel destination is Costa Rica.

Ms. Nicole is the middle grades social studies teacher. This is her seventh year teaching middle grades Social Studies, but her fifteenth year teaching at McGinnis Woods. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Florida State University. She then earned her teaching Certificate and Masters in the Art of Teaching from Mercer University. She and her husband have two children, Josh, 10 and Rebecca 7, and two dogs. Outside of school she stays busy volunteering with Cub Scouts with her son and American Heritage Girls with her daughter.

Ms Pam is the middle grades math teacher. This will be her 17th year in the classroom and her 10th year at McGinnis Woods. She received her Bachelor of Science from Illinois State University and did graduate work at University of Illinois. Teaching math is her absolute passion and love. Watching children begin to think mathematically and apply math to everyday life just makes her day. Ms. Pam has one son and large extended family-four sisters, nine nephews and one niece. She would love to be able to travel more, especially to the Far East!

## *Uniform Reminders*

We want to remind you of a few important things regarding uniforms:

Please label all uniform items. This makes it possible for us to return lost items to their rightful owners.

Only monogramed items may be worn in the classrooms. Coats, sweater and sweatshirts that are not McGinnis Woods monogramed items may only be worn on the playground or on non-uniform days.

Hooded items may not be worn in the classrooms.

Only white shoes with natural or white soles can be worn during PE.

Students in 4-8th grades must change into their PE uniforms for PE classes.

Sandals are never permitted, including on non-uniform days.

## *Save the Date for International Night!*

Mark your calendars now for Tuesday, September 30th from 6:00pm -7:30pm because International Night is back! This is a favorite family event where students and their families learn about several countries in just one evening! Grade levels have selected the following countries to represent during this year's event: Jamaica, Argentina, India, China, Russia, Greece, and Italy. In preparation for the night, the students are reading about their country, researching its history, language and favorite foods. Each grade level is planning to turn a classroom into a special display featuring their country. In the past foods native to the region have been served while traditional music played, native costumes, artifacts and informational displays and decorations sparked imaginations and every visitor learned about the featured countries. We need parent volunteers to make this fun annual event run smoothly and to be a night to remember! Each student will be receiving tickets for their immediate family's entry to the night. Additional tickets may be pre-ordered or purchased at the door.





## *Meet Daniel Stegos, Art Instructor*

Daniel Stegos, an award winning graduate from Paier College of Art with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, has joined the staff of McGinnis Woods. Mr. Dan, his wife, Amy, and their two children, Olivia and Sam, recently relocated to Georgia from Connecticut. Mr. Dan has seven years of teaching experience in private schools in Connecticut. He also works as a freelance artist and illustrator, and he has been published in several Smithsonian books including *Backyard Oceanic Collections*. His beautiful artwork has been exhibited throughout Southern Connecticut, Rhode Island and New York City. His work can be viewed at [www.stegosstudios.com](http://www.stegosstudios.com).

Mr. Dan is enjoying his work at McGinnis Woods as he has fit right in, and he is really enjoying his beautiful new art room. He feels that he is fortunate to teach what has been taught to him over his career. He loves showing the students hand-on techniques in a variety of styles and art medias. The students have been imagining, designing and exploring the avenues of visual art and have made some beautiful works of art already!

Mr. Dan believes that “art is an open canvas and the colors you pick from your palette will tell the world who you are!” Be sure to welcome Mr. Dan to our McGinnis Woods community.



## *Save -the -Date*



**What: Fall Festival**

**When: October 25, 3-6pm**

**Where: McGinnis Woods Playgrounds**

**You do not want to miss this fall tradition!**