

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



January 2012, Volume 3, Issue 5



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

1/24:	Family Math & Science Night/PA Spaghetti Dinner at 5:30 p.m.
2/4:	Valentine's Dance
2/13:	PA Fun Run Starts
2/15:	Open House at 9:30 a.m.
2/20	No School, President's Day/ Afterschool Only
3/1	Fun Run Donations Due
3/5	Discovery Clubs Begin
3/9:	2011-2012 Term 3 End No School Staff Development Day

## 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

Happy January! This is always an exciting time of year and this year is proving to be no exception. Our school has been bustling with excited students and energized teachers. We have hosted a number of guest speakers in 2012 including Jeff Domke from the Center for Puppetry Arts and scientists from High Touch High Tech. Our puppetry expert was absolutely fascinating. He brought many beautiful examples of puppets from around the world that sparked our imaginations and encouraged the students to embrace their creativity. The scientists from High Touch High Tech encouraged the children to explore complex science concepts in fun and engaging ways.



We have many exciting events scheduled during the upcoming weeks. Be sure to join us tonight for our Spaghetti Feast and Math and Science Night. This is a great opportunity to connect with old friends and watch your students as they learn something new. On February 4, we hope your family will join us for our Annual Valentine's Dance at Andretti's. Also in February, we will host Brian Engel, a well known glass harpist. Brian will amaze us all with his musical skills and contribute to our focus on the arts. Then finally, the Boosterthon Fun Run Team will be joining us to lead us in our annual Fun Run. This is always a highlight as we take a week to focus on fitness, leadership and building character. This year's theme is EPIC Adventure, so save the date and plan to join us at a kick off pep rally on Monday, February 13.

Please take the time to read through this informative newsletter. It will bring a smile to your face as you read about the great activities taking place throughout the school and the teachers and staff committed to partnering with you to inspire your student to become a lifelong learner. We are glad that you are part of our community of learners!

# Wildcat Chat

## Basketball Season Goes Well!

The B-Teams and A-Teams have had their ups and downs during the Basketball Season which is ending this month. Significant improvements are being made at every game on each of the teams, even though our win/loss record may not seem like it.

### **B-Team Girls:**

The Girls B-Team has had it a bit rough this season. They have not won any games even though they have made vast improvements in skills and their scoring average has gone up each game.



The leading scorers on the team have been Gehna Chaubal and Maddie Moore. Great defense has been played by Gabby Scott and Carly Bachism.

The Season ends at the Howard B-Team Basketball Tournament. The team should represent our school well and have fun in the process.

### **B-Team Boys:**

The Boys B-Team has also taken a few "lumps" this season. They have improved enough that now they are able to compete in every game. No wins, yet, but the team is getting better and they are experiencing the satisfaction of knowing it.

The team is lead in offense by Will McCusker and Ethan Montgomery. They are backed up with the good efforts of Alex Field and Cole Beckman.

This team also finishes their season at the Howard Tournament.

### **A-Team Girls:**

Catching their first win of the season was a real relief to the Girls A-Team. Wins have been hard to come by this season, but the girls have shown vast improvement in skills and team-work.

The team is led by point guard Katherine Gall and forward Courtney Stuart. Strong defense has been turned in by Maddy Sherbert and 5th grader Maansi Gupta. Kehisha Johnson has also been a big contributor to the team.

### **A-Team Boys:**

The Boys A-Team has lived up to the season's expectations so far. They have a 4-2 winning record at this point in the season and a 2nd place ranking in the league. With the play-offs looming, the team looks to be in a good position for a Championship run.

Record scoring play has been put in by forward Ryan Field. His 18 pt scoring average is a school record and looks to get better. He is complimented by forward Sam Zoldock and guard Chris Lee. Defensive stars Brad Dull and Joey Anzilotti round out the team.

# PA Board Update

Love is in the air....Join us on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at Andretti's for an evening of fun. We have a DJ, great food, and some fabulous auction items from our very own teachers! The dining and dancing will take place in a banquet area that is separate from Andretti's gaming area, keeping the atmosphere family-friendly. We are only able to accommodate 250 people in the banquet facility, so get your RSVP's in early. You can check to make sure that we have received your RSVP on RenWeb, in the Classes section. Click on "PA-Parent's Association", and look under the "Resources" tab, there is a file named *Valentine's Day RSVP*. We look forward to seeing you at the dance!

## A Little About our Teachers: Featuring the First Grade Team

McGinnis Woods has an amazing team of first grade teachers who enjoy each day with their young students. The teachers have varied interests and backgrounds, but work well together to provide a great education.

Ms. Wendy Hamann and Ms. Tricia Haugaard lead the first grade CATS. This is Ms. Wendy's fifth year of teaching at McGinnis Woods. Overall, she has 15 years of teaching experience including both elementary and preschool students. Ms. Wendy has two children: Molly (9 years old) and Benjamin (3 years old). They both attend McGinnis Woods. She has been married for 10 years to her wonderful husband, Mike. She is from Virginia, and holds degrees from Virginia Tech (B.A. in Music) and University of Richmond (Masters in Education).



Ms. Tricia Haugaard also teaches in the 1st grade CATS, and she has 9 years of teaching experience, which includes teaching abroad and at other private schools here in Atlanta. She has been a stay at home mom for the past 8 years. Ms. Tricia has 3 children: Jakob (9 years old), Nicholas (7 years old) and Christina (4 years old). Her daughter attends pre-K at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Tricia is from Massachusetts, and graduated from the University of Massachusetts with a B.A in psychology and education. She has enjoyed getting back in- to teaching!



Ms. Kelly Shaffer and Ms. Lyndsey Boden make up the first grade PANDAS. Ms. Kelly has had the pleasure of teaching First Grade at McGinnis Woods for the last five years. She really enjoys her first graders and their constant quest for knowledge, their abundance of energy and especially the hugs she gets on a daily basis. Outside of teaching, she is a mother of three girls, Erica, Ariana and Olivia and has a wonderful husband, Emmett. Ms. Kelly has lived and worked in the Alpharetta area for over fifteen years and enjoys volunteering and attending sporting events whenever she can.

Ms. Lyndsey Boden graduated in 2010 from Kennesaw State University with a degree in Early Childhood Education. This is her first year teaching at McGinnis Woods. She is originally from Marietta but currently lives in Woodstock. Ms. Lyndsey loves painting and drawing in addition to a variety of other arts and crafts. She has two friends that have joined her this year in the PANDA classroom. They are cute, little gerbils named Abu and Crystal. Ms. Lyndsey is thrilled to be at McGinnis Woods this year and is enjoying teaching and creating fun filled memories for the students in her class.



## Spelling Bee Students Shine!

Spelling Bee participants at McGinnis Woods learned many strategies to help them at the actual bees held the week of January 9, 2012. They learned that sometimes it helps to ask for the definition of a word, or to have the word repeated. They even learned some strategies about word origins, but when it came to actually spelling the words, the students were on their own as they competed in the School Spelling Bee.

Each PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom sent two representatives to the School Spelling Bee. There were four days of rigorous competition. Most students exhausted their grade level lists and began spelling words from unpublished lists in order to determine a grade level winner.

All of the classroom representatives will be recognized during our Awards Ceremony in May. Students will also receive special recognition in our annual school yearbook. This year a Spelling Bee reception has been rescheduled for February 28<sup>th</sup>. During the reception, classroom representatives will receive their Spelling Bee certificates.

Our school Spelling Bee champion, Gehna Chaubal and runner-up, Medhana Kadiyala, will compete in Round 1 of the GISA Spelling Bee on February 9<sup>th</sup> at Greenfield Hebrew Academy. Gehna and Medhana will compete against students from over thirty private schools. During Round 1, students will be given 100 words that must be written without error on paper. We are extremely proud of **all** of our students for their hard work and dedication.

### The grade level Spelling Bee winners are:

**Pre-K** (winner) Sai Pakala & (runner-up) Shreya Hebbar

**Kindergarten** (winner) Srika Nune & (runner-up) Pranav Potluri

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade** (winner) Sameera Adumala & (runner-up) Munil Vaishnav

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade** (winner) Himani Kalra & (runner-up) Divya Raja

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade** (winner) Andrew Krause & (runner-up) Riley Welch

**4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade** (winner) Gehna Chaubal & (runner-up) Medhana Kadiyala



## First Annual Geography Bee

This year, a team of students participated in the first ever McGinnis Woods Geography Bee. The National Geographic Geography Bee is a nationwide contest for students in 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades attending schools in the United States. Bee questions are designed to test a student's comprehensive knowledge of geography and address the subject of geography in its broadest sense. Some questions require knowledge of place names and of the location of cultural and physical features. The distribution and patterns of languages, religions, economic activities, populations, political systems and cultural and physical regions are also covered. Changes in places and regions over time, as well as, tools geographers use are the subject of other questions. Our Bee competitors were Molly Hamann, Pauline and Veronica Yakubovich, Medhana Kadiyala, and Gehna Chaubal. Other team members include Andrew Novokshanov, Maansi Gupta, and Kehisha Johnson. Congratulations to our Bee winner – Molly Hamann – who will now complete the written test to determine if she is eligible to compete at the state level. The team will continue to practice and prepare for next year's Bee. Please contact Ms. Rebecca Weaver if you are interested in joining the team!



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

You won't find any hibernating here in the preschool, though it does look like a peaceful winter wonderland in our hallways and classrooms! Yes, the children are learning about snowmen, penguins, ice and hibernation. We are busier than ever and running full-steam ahead into 2012.

Very shortly, our Pre-K  $\frac{3}{4}$  classrooms will begin our Book Buddy program, in which each student will be paired with an older emerging reader from our private Pre-K program. The children will read books together, allowing each to build confidence and excitement about the joy of reading.



We have also been talking quite a bit in the preschool about building strong relationships with children and parents. We feel that children learn best when supported by a team of adults that includes both parents and teachers. It is important for us to learn about your family outside the classroom, so that we can create a better context for learning inside the classroom. When you see your child's teacher in the mornings or afternoons over the next few weeks, take a few moments to share with them. Some things that are helpful for teachers to know are:

What your family's daily routine is like

Any special interests your child has outside of school (ballet, horses, bugs and snakes, art)

Anything your child seems particularly interested in or has questions about at the moment (for instance, your daughter seems to have a million questions about how cars run or computers work—it could be a great springboard for some classroom investigation!)

Major changes to home or family life (a family member moves in or out of the home, or an illness)

Cultural or family traditions and celebrations

Your questions and expectations about the program or your child's progress

Essentially, we want to hear from you! The more we know about your child, the more cohesive his or her learning experience will become.

Happy January!

## Field Trip of the Month: High Touch High Tech

The kindergarten and first grade classrooms enjoyed an in-school field trip with High Touch High Tech on Wednesday, January 18, 2012. Scientist "C" led the students through the hands on chemistry experiments which included chromatography, polymer putty and erupting volcanoes. The favorite experiment seemed to be the erupting volcanoes which shot up into the air, but they all had fun squeezing and stretching the silly putty! It was a messy but fun learning experience!



# Special Presentation: Puppetry Arts

The Center for Puppetry Arts came to visit us on January 12th. Jeff Domke was the presenter, and he spoke about the five different types of puppets, their history, and countries of origin. He had wonderful examples of each type of puppet and allowed some of the students to have their "hand" at manipulating them. The visuals of the shadow puppets were outstanding as the audience could see the intricate cutouts in these Indonesian puppets.



He also had live footage of puppet shows from around the world! One of the most fascinating ones was the Vietnamese water puppets that are manipulated by rods under the water!! We hope the Center for Puppetry Arts can visit us again next year.

## Introducing Mr. Daniel Riegel, Information Technologist Specialist

Great news! McGinnis Woods has a new Information Technology Specialist who will be working with Mr. Steve repairing, maintaining and improving all phases of our technology.

Mr. Daniel Riegel recently joined the McGinnis Woods Technology Staff. He was born in Kansas City and went to Middle and High School in Jerome, Arizona (once a thriving Copper, Silver, and Gold mining town, now a ghost town popular with tourists). He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Natural Science at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. His technical skills were acquired through a long career with AT&T in their Information Technology department. He and his wife Sheila love to travel and have been to China, Egypt, Turkey, Russia, Australia, England, Ireland, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Eastern Europe. They plan to visit Holland this spring to see the tulips in bloom.





## Join Us For Math and Science Night

The annual Math and Science Night at McGinnis Woods will take place this evening from 6:00-7:30 p.m. An Italian Dinner will precede the event, and begins at 5:30 pm. Each grade level will have a science and math activity for families to enjoy. The Pre-K classes will have erupting volcanoes and an estimation station. Kindergarten will be making fossils and completing a snowman probability activity. First grade will make exploding rainbows and will do Egg Carton Math. Second grade will have addition and subtraction centers and a life cycle project. Third grade will have students making tangrams. Fourth grade will be making toothpick structures and meter art. The upper grades will be playing Math Jeopardy. All students will be able to explore the various activities in each of the rooms. Please make plans to come out for this educational family event!



## Bandtastic Day

Several of our band students have been asked to participate in *Bandtastic Day* which will be held on March 17, 2012, at Reinhardt University. Ms. Deborah, our band director, says these students will experience an amazing day full of fun and learning. There will be guest conductors who will provide the opportunity to learn new music in a day of rehearsals with students from both private school and home school bands throughout our area. At the end of the day the students will perform a concert for families and friends. Congratulations to these talented students!

## Classroom Spotlight: 3rd Graders' Parade of Floats

Students from the third grade enjoyed creating a “book float” for use in the classrooms’ “book parade”. Students selected a historical fiction book on a topic of interest. After reading the book, students decorated an upside down shoe box to represent their favorite scene in the book. The students enjoyed this project immensely and were very creative in visualizing this as a “float” in a parade—a book parade.

