

McGinnis Woods Buzz



January 2010 Volume 1, Issue 5



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring students with
the Passion to Excel*

DATES TO REMEMBER

1/12	Spaghetti Dinner with Math and Science Night
1/17	Discovery Clubs Begin this Weeh
1/18:	No Classes, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
1/19:	100th Day of School Alessio's Day
1/23	New Student Open House
2/6:	Family Valentine's Dance
2/15:	No Classes President's 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

*A New Year is unfolding –
like a blossom with petals curled
tightly concealing the beauty within.*
Unknown



Happy January and 2010! We are so thrilled to be back at school and working with an energized staff and students! Everyone enjoyed our Winter Break and is ready to get back to the business of learning by being stretched, exploring new concepts, and spending time with classmates and friends. We are excited to see how this new year will unfold.

The word of the month is self-discipline. Could there be a more timely word? The definition that the children are learning is "Doing what you need to do even when you don't feel like it." We would all benefit from putting this definition into action! All of us at McGinnis Woods are working to help our students to dream dreams, set goals and work to accomplish them through developing strong personal character and self-discipline.

Our New Student Open House is on Saturday, January 23 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m.. Please join us and bring a friend who may be interested in a private school education. We know that our greatest marketing tool is you, our McGinnis Woods family. Be sure to spread the word. We have a wonderfully committed staff and school community that work to make each day of learning special for our students. "Inspiring students with the passion to excel" is more than a catch phrase to us... it defines our daily interactions.

Wildcat Chat

The Wildcat Basketball Teams have finished the first half of the season at 2-2 for both boys and girls. This is quite an accomplishment for our first full season of play.

Both teams look forward to the next four games in January. We hope the teams continue to grow and develop and finish with winning records. Stay tuned for the final results of the season which will be announced in next month's newsletter.

For those athletes that are excited about Track and Field, the season will start February 16th with our first official practice. The first meet will be March 3rd at Davis Academy. Sign-ups will begin January 25, 2010.



A Little About our Teachers: Featuring the 6th Grade Team

Ms. Amie Buckner and Ms. Pam Charlton are two of the four teachers who work with the middle grade students teaching their core subjects and make up the CREW. Ms. Amy is currently the middle grades science teacher. She has been with McGinnis Woods since 2000 and has pursued her master's degree through Mercer University. Ms. Amie has taught pre-kindergarten, third and fourth grades as well as the upper grades. Since completing her certification, her love lies with teaching science and inquiry to middle school-aged students. She strives to be an integral part of all students' curiosities about the world around them and helps facilitate learning through scientific inquiry. Her science classes are usually bustling with lab experiments, research, or the beloved debates!

Ms. Amie and her husband, Mr. Brad (Supernovas class), have lived in Georgia for eleven years and have a dog named Nixie, whom all of Mr. Brad's past and present students know, and Romeo the horse.

Ms. Pam Charlton grew up in the heartland of Illinois and graduated from Illinois State University. She did graduate work at the University of Illinois and then went on to teach sixth grade in self-contained classrooms in both Illinois and Florida. Ms. Pam knows her current students can't imagine her teaching science or language arts!! When she relocated to Atlanta, she took a position as the upper school math coordinator for a private school. That was when she discovered that teaching math all day long was a perfect fit for her. This is now her fifth year at McGinnis Woods, and she can't imagine doing anything else.

She has one son, Zach, who is 20 years old and attends Ole Miss in Oxford, Mississippi. He is currently a geological engineering major, although that major could change! Only time will tell on that.



PA Board Update



Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed spending the holidays with your family and loved ones. The Holiday Shoppe was a huge success. The children had a great time carefully selecting gifts for friends and family members. Also, a great big thank you to all the wonderful families at McGinnis Woods who made the holidays so special for those in need.

This month the PA Board will be hosting a spaghetti dinner to coincide with Math and Science Night on Tuesday, January 12th. This is a wonderful evening for the children, and the spaghetti dinner is just an opportunity for you to NOT have to cook dinner and allow us to eat together "family style." The menu will include pasta noodles, marinara sauce, lasagna, salad, garlic bread and a variety of desserts. Please remember to RSVP to the flyer so that we have an accurate count.

SAVE THE DATE: The Annual Family Valentine's Dance will be held on Saturday, February 6, 2010! This is a not to miss event. Watch for an RSVP form the week before and send in your reservation by **Monday, February 1st** to receive advance ticket pricing.

IMPORTANT DATES:

January 12 – Spaghetti Dinner with Math and Science Night
February 6 – Family Valentines Dance

Annual Winter Symphonic Band Concert

The McGinnis Woods annual symphonic band concert was held On Tuesday, December 8 at the Lord of Life Lutheran Church. Students in 4th through 8th grades participated in the event. Mr. Jason Chae, the school's band director, has been working with the students since the beginning of the year to prepare them for the evening's event.



The concert consisted of a variety of holiday music.

The students did an outstanding job. The evening was concluded with a special performance by Mr. Jason and Ms. Wendy. Ms. Wendy is a 1st grade teacher at McGinnis who enjoys playing trombone in her spare time.

Mr. Jason has been teaching band at McGinnis Woods since 2004 and is able to provide instruction to students on all symphonic band instruments.



Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)

Welcome to 2010! We are so excited about what the New Year holds for us here at McGinnis Woods! One of the great parts of each New Year is reflecting on what has passed and planning for the future. As we make our New Year's resolutions, we should think about having our children participate as well. A simple way for children to make and keep resolutions is through helping out around home. One of the best ways to build self esteem, confidence, and a sense of responsibility in children is to have them help with simple tasks around the house. Children who help out with everyday chores learn through experience how to take care of themselves. Cleaning up and learning how to organize is also an important part of the everyday routine in the preschool (that's why we have the clean-up song.) Doing home chores helps children acquire new words, improve listening skills, learn how to count, sort, match and even improve on fine and large motor skills. In return, they feel good about helping out and being a contributing family member.

January is also a great month to learn about everything cold through our curriculum. We are keeping our fingers crossed for just a little snow, but if we can't have the real thing we will just make it! Our very busy preschoolers will learn about winter, polar bears, and penguins. Oh, my! We may try some "ice fishing," build a "snowman" and make snow cones, too. Then at the end of the month, we will "travel" to places far away and even visit outer space.



Lego Robotics Team - Competition Results

This past December, the McGinnis Woods Robotics Team competed in their first Robotics Challenge. The team headed to West Forsyth High School and competed in the Lego Challenge Qualifier against 27 other middle and elementary schools. The team of eight students did a superb job. The competition consisted of several judged challenges, some of which were programming the robots to perform certain tasks to a digital presentation and to an oral interview with judges.



Overall, the team scored high points in each category and tied for first place in one of the divisions for their digital presentation. Most of all, the students were a part of a team that was challenged all day to conquer problems to different obstacles. They worked well with each other and students from competing schools.

The robotics club will continue to meet on Wednesday afternoons throughout the school year.

‘Tis the Season of Giving: Field Trips of the Month Focused on Community Service

First Grade Build-A-Bear Project

For the ninth straight year, the McGinnis Woods first grade made their annual trip to the Build-A-Bear workshop. However, these students were not making the trip to add to their already super-saturated collection of these stuffed animals. They were going to make a special toy for a needy child.

With the help of Children's Wish Foundation, McGinnis Woods has donated nearly 400 bears to sick children who do not get to celebrate Christmas at home. The bears that the students created helped to make Christmas in the hospital a little brighter for children who really needed a smile. This tradition was started by the spectacular Ms. Kim Kershaw (who currently teaches 2nd grade) back in 2001 and continues to warm hearts nearly a decade later. This is a great destination for the December field trip because the students learn so much about giving and about the world around them. Learning that lesson is almost as important as giving those in need something to get excited about. What a win-win situation for the season of giving!



Second Graders Visit to Ivy Hall Assisted Living Facility



On Tuesday, December 14th, 2009, the 2nd graders from McGinnis Woods visited residents at the Ivy Hall Assisted Living Facility in Alpharetta. The children sang holiday songs and presented hand made crafts to the residents of Ivy Hall. The students were not only able to spread holiday cheer, but provided a valuable community service as well. The staff and residents of Ivy Hall were grateful for the children's contribution as well as being gracious hosts.

Beta Club and My House

The McGinnis Woods Beta Club visited My House last month to sing songs and bring holiday cheer to infants and children who reside there. My House is a non-profit organization that provides a home-like living environment for medically fragile babies who are ready to leave the hospital, but have nowhere to go. My House assures that the medical and developmental needs of these babies are met.

The students provided stockings full of books and stuffed animals to the children. They also used the money recently raised at McGinnis Woods to buy food and supplies. Additionally, they sang songs, helped decorate for the holidays, and provided the staff with yummy dessert trays. The Beta Club Members plan to visit My House regularly to host holiday parties and help with chores such as cleaning vans and planting flowers.

Afternoon Discovery Clubs Spotlight: Cheerleading

Go Wildcats! Go!

The Cheerleading Afterschool Discovery Club focuses on teaching the fundamentals of cheerleading including chants, cheers, and pompom routines. The Cheerleading Club helps students develop coordination and flexibility as well as voice enthusiasm. Old school cheers are combined with new school attitude.

The course is currently being taught by Ms. Stacey Jahanfar and Ms. CeCe Walls and is targeted towards students in PreK4 through 4th grade. Come join the fun!



“Specials” Program: Featuring Nurse Penny and Health Education

Penny Crews is the school nurse for the McGinnis Woods Preschool and Elementary School. She is a registered nurse and received her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. She has worked in hospitals as well the home health industry, and has been at McGinnis Woods for nine years. She takes ongoing pediatric and school nurse related medical education courses.

Nurse Penny enjoys her position at McGinnis Woods and really likes working with children. Teaching health at McGinnis Woods has made her more conscience of her own health and health related issues. Nurse Penny feels that Health Education is a very popular subject among students. She loves hearing what the students’ share with their parents about certain class topics (even though it is not always exactly what was taught.) The students learn about so many things from the health curriculum including nutrition; safety; body organs and systems; drugs; fitness; emotions; and constantly about illness and GERMS. Approximately one month is devoted to each topic and a variety of teaching materials are utilized.



Nurse Penny teaches the students weekly in PreK-4th and every other month in grades 5th-8th. In the upper grades, health class alternates with counseling. One of her favorite learning tools is to give the students a memory phrase every week that summarizes the topic. The students repeat the phrase several times during the class, and this really seems to help the students retain what they learned. There are a few "health traditions" that the students LOVE to participate in each year including “Organ Annie,” the green jar experiment on germs, Glo-germ, and of course smoothies during the last week of school. Nurse Penny feels strongly that the McGinnis Woods staff, students and parents are the BEST!

Nurse Penny is married to Scott and lives in Alpharetta with their two sons, Addison and Andrew. She enjoys cooking, especially baking, as well as gardening, completing puzzles and reading. She loves dogs and has two precious cocker spaniels named Cami and Spencer.