

McGinnis Woods Buzz



March 2015 Volume 9, Issue 5



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

3-27 thru 3/29	The Wizard of Oz
3-30	Middle School Social
3-31	PA Spaghetti Dinner and Math and Science Night
4-6 thru 4-10	Spring Break After School "Staycation"
4-15	New Student Open House 9:30a.m.-10:30 a.m.
4-20 thru 4-24	Stanford Testing Week 1st-8th Graders
4-28	Citizen of the Month Lunch
4-29 thru 5-1	4th Grade Nature's Classroom

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

Last weekend I attended the Georgia Independent School Association Heads Meeting where Doug Lyons, a retired Head of School from Greenwich, Connecticut, shared the top four reasons parents choose to send their student to an independent school. Of course he mentioned rigor of program and skill of the faculty along with the role of the school to be a powerful counter to cultural influence, but then he shared what I have always found to be true. The number one and two reasons parents choose an independent school are the relationship between teachers and students, and safety; not just physical safety, but the emotional safety that comes with being known, cared for and nurtured. These reasons are some of the very reasons that McGinnis Woods came into existence and what our entire staff strives to accomplish each day, week, and month of every year. Now, we do not always get it right or do things perfectly, but we sincerely desire to provide each and every student, entrusted to our care, a safe and nurturing haven where they can be known and encouraged to thrive. One of our mom's recently told me, "McGinnis Woods is my village. I do not know what I would do without it." Those words make my heart smile.



As we enter the fourth quarter of this year I seriously wonder where the time has gone. Our students have made so many gains and matured in numerous areas. We will be measuring some of these gains next month during our Stanford 10 Testing week. We ask that you not plan any appointments or trips during the week of April 20-24 to avoid disrupting the testing. Results from the test will be available and sent home by the last day of school in May.

We hope that you will join us this weekend at the Wizard of Oz or next Tuesday evening for the PA Spaghetti Dinner and Math and Science Night. More information about these special happenings are included in this issue of the MW Buzz.

We look forward to seeing you around campus,
Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update



The warmer weather has definitely put a spring in our step here at McGinnis Woods! We not only have warmer temperatures outside, but warmer hearts as we reflect on the last month of PA activity. We raised an incredible amount of funds through our Boosterthon Fun Run to help enhance our gym. We also spent a week celebrating those that teach our loved ones. Watching our community come together to better our school and praise our amazing teachers is so special!

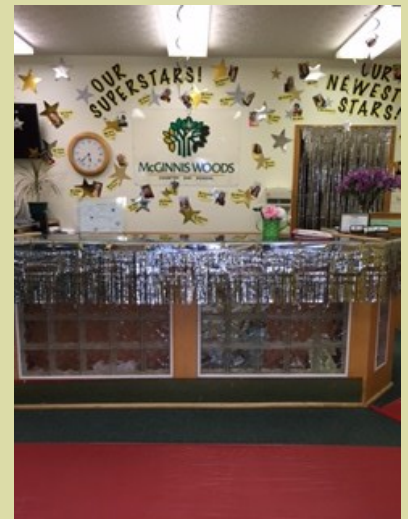
The Boosterthon Fun Run was a great event for the kids and the school. Our students were given great lessons on character and learned the qualities of good leaders. They also learned how important it is to give back to something that gives to you....McGinnis Woods. The students were able to contact sponsors, share their passion for their school, and work together to raise critical funds. Then they were able to celebrate their success with the actual Fun Run! For the first year ever we were able to host our runs indoors in our new gym (with the temps outside we could not have been more pleased with that gym!!). We also hosted a Glow Run for the middle school, the first ever for Boosterthon. With all laps logged, we raised more than \$12,000 in one week to further improve our gym—allowing us to purchase curtains and other items.

With Fun Run complete, our energy quickly shifted gears towards our teachers. March 9-March 13 was Teacher Appreciation Week! Our theme this year was McGinnis Woods Super Stars!!

This was our opportunity to show the teachers of McGinnis Woods how much we appreciate all that they do for our kids. Events were planned for every day of the week. Many thanks to the families that joined us to decorate the school and set the tone for the week. Our teachers certainly felt like stars with the red carpet lining the hall and their star nameplates on their doors. We started the week with a continental breakfast and tote bag treats for our Stars. Tuesday was flower day and each teachers room looked like they were an academy award winner with their giant bouquets! Our specials teachers also received beautiful arrangements due to your generosity. On Wednesday a treat cart rolled down the halls giving each teacher a chance to select a mini Bundt cake and beautiful fondant star cookie and Thursday we had many cheers for the Teacher raffle! Gift cards were given to teachers this day also. We wrapped up the week with a special catered lunch during the teacher work day. Thank you all for helping us celebrate the Stars among us! We are so lucky to have such amazing teachers work with our children!

Coming up next is the Spaghetti Dinner sponsored by the PA before Math and Science Night on March 31. We hope you'll consider lending a hand and volunteering your time! We also hope you'll join us for an easy dinner before spending time at Math and Science Night.

We're beginning to plan for next year and are always looking for more volunteers. Have interest in the PA? Been wondering how to get involved? Have great ideas that you think would make a difference? Drop us a note—we'd love to talk! The PA has a website linked to the McGinnis Woods website and you can always reach us at pa@mcginniswoods.org.



Wildcat Chat

Our spring sports season is well on its way! We have had our first inaugural tennis match and touch football game. Our two new sports this season have been a hit. We have some students participating in more than one sport since we have so much to offer. It is awesome that we can allow our children to experience a variety of sports.

Track and Field has also held their first meet of the season at Davis Academy and our athletes did well. Track and Field is being coached by Ms. Robyn. We are holding our practices at Fowler Park where the students can practice on a Track. We are looking forward to a fun, successful season as we continue to develop the skills of this young team.

Tennis is being coached by Ms. Kammy. Little did we know that Ms. Kammy was a tennis star back in the day! We are practicing at Fowler Park and our home matches are at Sharon Springs. We have a wide range of player skills represented on the team, as we have a tournament player and beginners. We will be taking a lesson with a pro and we are getting better every day!

Touch Football is being coached by Mr. Christian, Mr. Chris, and Ms. Jessica. The students are learning a lot about the passing game and having a great time! This season should be a blast.



Go Wildcats!

Preschool Corner



It has been a busy and wonderful time in the Preschool during March. The children have enjoyed the many themes that we have explored and have had so many happy times.

We spent the beginning of the month celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday. This was a lot of fun since he made such a huge contribution to children's literature. Of course we read the classic *Cat in the Hat* to and made flubber, Thing 1 and Thing 2 handprints, talked about and identified rhyming words and mixed colors to see what kinds of new colors we could create!

We also learned about Windy Weather. This was the perfect theme since March has "come in like a lion" and hopefully will go "out like a lamb". The children learned and wrote windy words, flew and made kites, paper airplanes, and windsocks. Many of these creations are displayed throughout the preschool. The children also made wind by blowing through straws and then created colorful straw art by blowing through their straws, too.

Some of the special events the children celebrated during March included Wacky Wednesday, a visit from a Magician, Teacher Appreciation Week when the children and their parents lavished the teachers with treats, flowers and a wonderful array of gift cards, and, of course, St. Patrick's Day.

During the week of St. Patrick's Day the children heard fun tales of little leprechauns and learned to make rainbows of every shape and size and out of a wide variety of textures, too. They made dot rainbows, finger painted rainbows, and mixed rainbow colors into shaving cream that they then drew with. It was so much fun!

Our Scholastic Book Fair was a huge success during the week of March 16th thanks to your support and participation. The books that you purchased for the classrooms help to keep our classroom libraries fresh and inviting.

We all learned from the Tooth Fairy when she visited us and showed us a giant tooth and taught us how to keep our teeth healthy and well nourished. She had been scheduled for February, but due to the inclement weather we experienced she was rescheduled. Our children love seeing her whenever they get the chance to.

Every day is a great day filled with learning and smiles in the Preschool. We hope that you are able to enjoy the sweet accomplishments that your little one is making each day and that these will become amazing memories to last a lifetime.



STEM Week 2015

Our annual McGinnis Woods STEM week was the week of March 23rd. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, and activities for the week incorporated these 4 themes. It is so important for our students to explore and enjoy STEM projects because our everyday world is STEM centered! All classes from Pre-K through 8th grade participated in neat activities that tied in with their classroom curriculum while focusing on STEM. Many interesting guest speakers including GA Power and a HAM Radio aficionado along with some of our own parents and grandparents volunteered to speak about their STEM related careers.

The purpose of this week is to create a clear and relevant connection for our students to see that what they are learning in school relates to possible career choices for the future and a love for math and science for life!



Science



Technology



Engineering



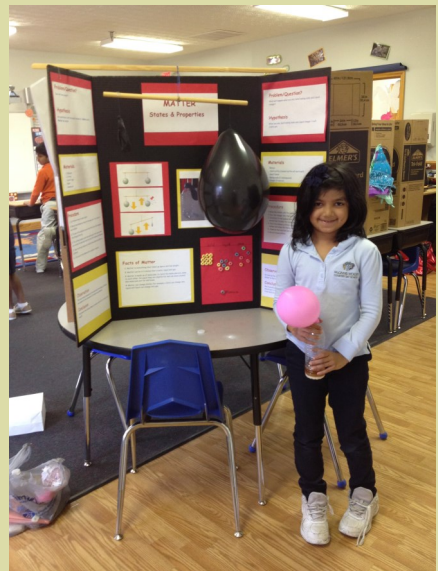
Mathematics

Join Us for Math and Science Night on March 31st

Our annual Math and Science Night will be on Tuesday, March 31st from 5:30-7:30. We have some exciting and fun games planned for children of all ages. We have activities like making gak, a Math Scavenger Hunt, Magic Triangles, and even an Angry Bird Catapult! Students will have the opportunity to win fabulous prizes playing a jellybean estimation game and finding eggs hidden around the school.

The PA will kick off the night with a delicious Spaghetti Dinner which will include, salad, various pastas and sauces, bread sticks and dessert for you and your family to enjoy. Tickets are on sale for \$9 per person and should be purchased in advance. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door for \$15 per person.

The students worked very hard on their Science Fair projects as was evident in their finished products and superb presentations. All of the projects will be on display during Math and Science Night. Additionally, classroom teachers have chosen several projects to be judged for the Science Fair contest. That evening, we are planning on announcing the Science Fair winners! You don't want to miss this either! We look forward to seeing you at this great event!



Ice cream Socials, Pizza Parties and Time for Fun!

Middle School students love to belong and have fun with friends, so our 5th—8th grade students formed the first ever McGinnis Woods Middle School Social Committee in late January. The committee is comprised of student volunteers in 5-8th who came up with ideas for fun Middle School Only social events.

Our first event took place in February with an ice cream social and gym games. Students on the committee organized the event. They even set up tables and chairs, served the ice cream and delicious toppings, encouraged their classmates to play basketball or just hang out and ended the time with a survey for the other students to fill out which rated the event and provided spaces to write suggestions for future events.

The committee also planned a pizza and games social on March 12th which was well attended and a lot of fun. An upcoming event is planned for March 30th. It will feature the popular Just Dance and other treats.



Middle School Students See the Peking Acrobats at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre



in the background as the performers balanced precariously high above the stage.

The 5-8th graders enjoyed a wonderful field trip on March 12 when they visited the Cobb Energy Centre to see the world renown Peking Acrobats. The Peking Acrobats have been amazing audiences with their gravity defying stunts and rhythmic routines since their Western debut in 1986. The middle grades students were mesmerized by the performers' incredible skills of dexterity, balance, and synchronization. They enjoyed hearing traditional Chinese instruments play



Kindergarten Teachers Make Each Day Special!



The Kindergarten Team at McGinnis Woods is comprised of Ms. Kammy and Ms. Christy and assistant teacher, Ms. Kyra.

Kammy Overacre is the lead teacher in the Kindergarten Tigers room. She has been at McGinnis Woods since 2004. Kammy earned her undergraduate degree from LSU. Geaux Tigers! In 2008, she graduated from Mercer with her Masters in Early Childhood Education. Kammy is the co-chair of the curriculum team and the tennis coach at McGinnis Woods. Kammy has been happily married now for 6 years and has two beautiful daughters! She believes each child is very special and can succeed in school. She believes her job is to determine what learning style works best for each individual student and teach them accordingly.

Kyra Ingram is the Tigers assistant teacher. This is Kyra's second year at McGinnis Woods. She is from Alpharetta and has lived here for 16 years. After high school, Kyra attended the University of West Georgia where she earned her Bachelor's of Science Degree in Education. She is currently working on obtaining her Master's Degree. Kyra loves teaching, the color

blue, spending time reading books and singing in the Alpharetta Community Chorus. Kyra's favorite sports teams are the Atlanta Braves, the Georgia Bulldogs, and the McGinnis Woods Wildcats!

Christy VanderWeele is the lead teacher in the Kindergarten Pandas room. This is Christy's first year teaching at McGinnis Woods. Christy grew up in Louisiana and is a graduate of LSU with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Elementary Education. She has 9 years of experience teaching in both public and private schools. Christy has been married to her husband Doug for 18 years, and they have two children. She is a pet lover with a Black Labrador and two cats. Christy enjoys spending time traveling with her family. She is a huge college football fan and loves cheering on her favorite team the LSU Tigers! Christy is thrilled to be a part of such a talented staff here at McGinnis Woods.

McGinnis Woods Drama Now Presenting The Wizard of Oz

Last night was opening night of this year's musical, *The Wizard of Oz*. Ms. Xylina and her cast and crew of volunteers presented a night not soon to be forgotten as they transformed the gym into an inviting theater fitted with top notch lighting and sound. The amazing scenery drawn by Mr. Daniel, the props, brought to life by Thea Stuart, the fabulous costumes created and sewn by Ms. Nicole, and the realistic make-up provided by Jessica Marro and Alyssa Lane made the trip to Oz magical.

The two casts of the show have worked hard to perfect their lines and choreography. And their hard work has really paid off! This is a show you will not want to miss. The sheer enthusiasm of the performers is sure to bring a smile to your face and the cast of familiar characters are so well played and convincing that even L. Frank Baum would be pleased!

The show will be performed 5 times this weekend including Friday, March 27 at 6:00, Saturday, March 28 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 29 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$6 a piece and will be available at the door.

So take a trip this weekend, to Oz!



Health News and Tips

Last month we talked about alternative gifts to candy, for Valentine's Day during our weekly health classes. Some of the things the students suggested were: pens, pencils, stickers, fruit, balloons, flowers, toys, cards, hugs and smiles. (I think my favorites were a TV or a car.) Students were reminded to eat healthy food prior to any junk foods or sugary treats, to keep treats to a minimum and to always brush their teeth after sweets.

February was also Dental Health Month. In grades Pre K through 2nd we learned about teeth and the importance of caring for them for life. Due to inclement weather our Tooth Fairy guest speaker was rescheduled to March 10th. She visited grades Pre K-K and the kids really enjoyed her. She spoke about eating healthy foods, tooth care and visiting the dentist. She handed out little packets to everyone that included a BOOK. I'm sure you heard all about this.

Hopefully everyone is staying well and dry this pre-spring season. Reminder that if your child has a fever of 101F or higher they will need to stay home from school, and remain home until the fever is BELOW 101, FOR 24 HOURS, without PAIN REDUCING MEDICATION. Also, following any illness including vomiting, students must remain home for at least 24 after the last episode. Please contact the school if your child will be absent.

Please be reminded that all information changes such as phone numbers, email addresses, place of employment, must be shared with the school so that we are able to reach you in case of an illness or emergency.

Have a happy, healthy month!



Student Council Update



Our student council survived a very busy February filled with assembling and delivering Candygrams. The officers and representatives did an amazing job filling their orders!

Currently we are in the process of planning the first ever staff vs. student basketball game. This is scheduled for Friday, April 24th. Be on the lookout for more information soon.

We also have a Chick fil-A order in day scheduled for April 24th. We are promoting this as a celebratory lunch for all of the students' efforts and focus in completing the Stanford 10 tests.

One of the favorite events that the student council sponsors each year is out Talent Show. This event has been added to the calendar for the last week of school and is sure to be a crowd pleaser!



Jr. Beta Club Update



Our Jr. Beta Club members have been busy this month. The students supporting the humane society have been hard at work making blankets for the dogs. They will use the rest on the funds they raised with the ice cream day to make dog and cat toys and treats. We are hoping to visit in May to drop off our donations and spend some time with the animals.

The students supporting the orphanage in Kazakhstan have received notice that the items donated in the toy drive have arrived in the country. We should get some pictures soon and will be sure to pass them on to you.

We also have a group of students who have been spending time visiting an assisted living facility called Dogwood Forest. The students have loved this experience and took a trip to visit in February. These experiences have been beneficial for the residents as well as our students. They have heard many stories of growing up in very different times. Their next visit is scheduled for May.



Yearbook Art Contest Winners Announced



Each year we like to provide the students an opportunity to design a lasting piece for the Yearbook. This year we ran an art contest for prominent locations in the book: the front cover, back cover and title page. The contest was designed for students in 5th to 8th grade.

We asked each student to design his or her page with the themes of McGinnis Woods, featuring our McGinnis Woods tree, cool wildcats and fun subject related items. Other requirements included our school name, the school year, and our mission statement, "Inspiring Students With the Passion to Excel".

We received 10 different entries that will be included in the 2014-2015 yearbook. Judges had a difficult time selecting just three winners. We loved many different aspects of each entry and the amazing creativity displayed. The winners of the contest are: Anika Parvateneni for the front cover, Maret Black for the back cover, and Sydney Wood's design will be on the title page. The remaining entries will be featured on the Yearbook Contest page in the book.

Congratulations to all who entered the contest. Thank you for participating!

Mr. Dean, Band Instructor

Mr. Dean Wolinsky joined the McGinnis Woods staff this year to teach our band students. He has developed their skills and improved our program tremendously.

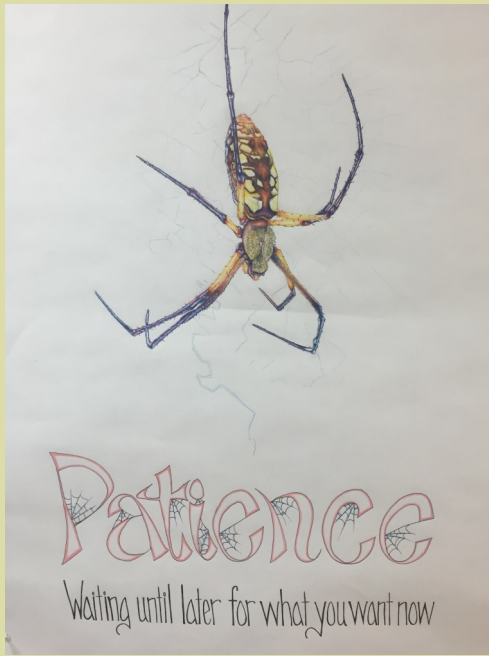
Mr. Dean has a Bachelor of Music Education (K-12) degree from Kennesaw State University and an Associate Degree in Computer Programming from Dekalb Tech. His degree instrument is percussion and he also plays guitar, bass, piano, trumpet, flute and clarinet. He had the pleasure of touring the US extensively in the 80's with various bands playing everything from jazz, rock and pop to casino show bands. He has also performed throughout the greater Atlanta area since 2000.

Mr. Deans passions are family, teaching, music technology and composing. He is married to Angela and they have two awesome children Devin, 10 and Taylor, 4.

Mr. Dean is excited about being at McGinnis Woods and thoroughly enjoys teaching our exceptional students.



Learning About Patience



The word of the Month for March is patience. Patience is defined as “waiting until later for what you want now”. Throughout the month, students have been working hard to master this challenging character trait.

A question the students were asked to think about and discuss in class was been “Good things come to those who wait. What do you think this means? Discuss the meaning of this with a friend or your class.” Student were also reminded of this saying, “It’s hard to wait, to stand in line; just be calm, take your time. You’ll make friends along the way; try to be more patient today”!

Each month we are so fortunate to have Mr. Daniel Stegos’ original artwork on display to further bring the word of the month to life. This month the spider illustrated patience and the webs remind us of the time and effort it takes to develop this trait.

Students Attend Bandtastic in Marietta

On Saturday, March 7th, two of our middle grade band students represented McGinnis Woods at Bandtastic Day. This all day event invites students from the northern metro Atlanta area to merge musical talents into two bands. Alex Beckman and Molly Hamann played their trumpets in the upper group, the Symphonic Band. After just a few hours of rehearsal, the bands conducted by Beth Taylor, Director of Bands at Shorter College, put on a concert at the end of the afternoon for family and friends. It was amazing to see and hear, and we are very proud of the musical talents of these two young ladies.



Winter Science Ushering in the Spring

Winter Science took place on March 3, 2015, with a huge crowd of young scientists from Pre-K through 3rd grade. Ms. Sam and Ms. Wendy had the students complete some winter themed experiments by moving through stations. The first station had erupting snowballs! We created special snowballs made of shaving cream and baking soda. Then we dropped vinegar on them to see the eruptions! The next station was a partner activity. Students took turns rolling a die to see who could melt the ice cube first. The last station was "Save the Arctic Animals." Several plastic arctic animals were frozen in an iceberg, and the students had to help get them out of the ice by using salt water. We ended the fun with a yummy snack!



Sunsational Summer Camp

We are looking forward to a fun-filled, exciting, Sunsational Summer here at McGinnis Woods and we would love to have your camper join us! Our camp is filled with exciting themes, interesting field trips, daily physical fitness and water park activities, special guests and much more.

We are offering many Specialty and Academic Camps that offer a variety of educational ways to sharpen your camper's skills and expand their minds during the summer. Some of these exciting camps include swimming, cooking, baking, gymnastics, drama club and academic boot camps throughout the grade levels. These camps will run throughout the entire summer and a couple camps are filling up quickly!

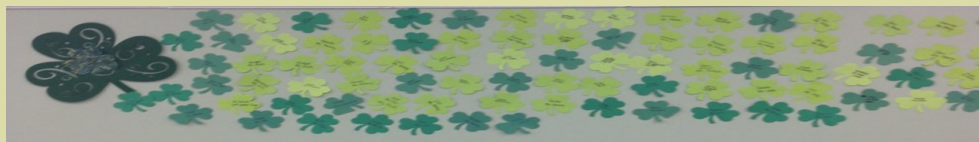
We are visiting many exciting and interesting places like Zoo Atlanta, Dahlonega Gold Mines, Stars and Strikes, Treetop Quest, World of Coca-Cola, and even seeing the Gwinnett Braves take on the Norfolk Tides! We also have many special guests including Mr. Greg's Reptiles, Parrot Productions, Cricket's Petting Zoo and Lee Bryan's Puppet Show are coming to visit us throughout the summer to keep our minds learning. We hope to see you this summer!



Jr. Beta Students Host Bake Sale and Sell Shamrocks for a Cure

March 17th was an important day at McGinnis Woods. Students were able to celebrate St. Patrick's Day by donating funds to a great cause-Cystic Fibrosis. Cystic Fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system. An estimated 30,000 children and adults in the United States have Cystic Fibrosis. Jr. Beta Club students chose to host two events in support of this cause and also spread awareness about the disease to McGinnis Woods students.

The first event was Shamrocks for a Cure. During morning carpool shamrocks were sold for 50c each. Students wrote their name and class on each shamrock they purchased. The shamrocks were displayed on the wall in our school cafeteria.



During each lunch period, Jr. Beta Club students had a bake sale. McGinnis Woods students enjoyed a variety of baked goods. Even teachers nibbled on delicious treats! For their cause beta club students raised a total of \$309.00. The classes who raised the most funds earned Popsicle parties.

Those three classes were: the PreK 4B Ducks, KB Tigers and the 4th grade SUNS.

The Jr. Beta School Cystic Fibrosis group is extremely proud of their accomplishment of raising awareness about CF. We would like to thank everyone from McGinnis Woods for their support and for helping us with this great cause. For more information please visit: www.cff.org.



Spring Carnival is Almost Here! Save the Date!



It's Carnival Time! Each year McGinnis Woods Families come together to enjoy an afternoon of carnival fun! With games, crafts, food and fun activities for all ages. This year's carnival is taking place on Saturday, April 25th from 12:00pm-3:00pm.

We love seeing our little ones on the ponies, our families enjoying a train ride and our big kids flying high on the bungee jump. Don't forget face painting and crazy hair... just a few of the kid's favorites. There will also be a photo booth where everyone can visit and then take home some great memories.

So come and spend the afternoon with us or just stop by for lunch and a few activities, it a great time for everyone to socialize together. Watch for information on the discounted presale admission to be sent home soon.

Pictures from Around the School

