

McGinnis Woods Buzz



October 2013 Volume 7, Issue 2



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

10/18	Report Cards
10/21	Signed Report Cards Due
10/21	Discovery Club Registration Due
10/26	Fall Festival 3:00-6:00 p.m.
10/28	Red Ribbon Week Begins
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.

A Message From Ms. Mary

What an exhilarating month October is! The changing season is evident in the Outdoor Classroom and the trails running behind the school are showing changing foliage. We have had many wonderful lessons taking place here at the school and have started an annual tradition, Project Showcase. Students have selected their topics of study and have been researching and planning their final displays or power points. Be sure to check out the amazing projects which will be on display the week of October 28. They are really too special to miss!



Be sure to read this issue of the McGinnis Woods Buzz because it covers so many of the important happenings that have been going on here at school. It will also allow you to plan for some of the upcoming events which we happen throughout October.

Thanks so much for joining us for Parent Teacher Conferences. Many of our classrooms had 100% participation and a few conferences in the middle grades are still being wrapped up. Our middle grades teaching team meets with each student's parents to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and goals of each student for the year. We take these conferences very seriously and that our partnership with our parents is one of the many aspects that make the education of the students' at McGinnis Woods so effective.

We also want to thank you for taking the time to participate in the AdvancEd Survey that was recently sent to you. We always strive to improve our school and your honest input is a valuable piece of this process. We will share important results with you once they are compiled and interpreted.

We look forward to seeing you at the Fall Festival on Saturday, October 26 from 3-6. This is always a fun-filled way to usher in the fall!

Happy Fall,

Ms. Mary

Wildcat Chat

Volleyball

The fall volleyball season has been exceptional. Our players have gone from beginners to competitors in one short season. We are a young team, and we are going to soon become the team others fear to play. We had a lot of girls pick up the game this year that have never played, and now they have found a sport they enjoy and want to continue playing. We will miss our 8th graders next year as they provided strong leadership. Thank you eighth graders you will be missed! Furthermore, we could not have improved so much without our coaches Mrs. Sam and Mrs. Jenn who have worked the girls hard while still having fun! They even set up a clinic for us with one of our parents, Alyssa Lane. We ended our season with a B team tournament and an A team tournament. Go Wildcats!

Soccer

Fall soccer has been fun to watch. Our players have had exciting and competitive games this season. Our regular season record is four wins, two loses and one tie. We made it into the tournament as one of the top four teams in our division. We played Atlanta Academy in the playoffs and loss 3-1 ending our season in fourth place. The players have worked hard and have played their hearts out. Playing together as a team is what has led this team to their many successes. Thank you, Coach Heather and Coach Brian for all your hard work and dedication. Our season's success is because of you. We will certainly miss our talented eighth graders next year. They were not only great players but great leaders as well. We played each game with heart and showed great sportsmanship! Way to go Wildcats!



Cross Country

We may have been a small team this year, but we were a mighty team. Our runners have endured heat, rain and mud. Maddie Aber came in second place over all the girls in the B team Championship Race at the end of her season and finished with her personal record. She was our only girl, and it was great hearing McGinnis Woods being announced on the loud speaker during the race as a top runner. Max Howard, McKinley Bowles and Kameron Scott also improved throughout the season running their best times at the end of the season. Thank you, Coach Tara and Coach Kammy for running with the team on all of those hot afternoons. We had fun at the meets, and we look forward to my runners returning next year. Run Wildcats Run!



Basketball Season

Basketball is right around the corner. We will start practice October 21st. Boys and Girls will both be practicing at Fowler Park from 3:30-4:30, and we will return to McGinnis Woods no later than 5:00. We will have an A and B team for both our boys and girls. Our home games will be played again at Alpharetta Crabapple Gym. Look out for the information coming home soon.

Pa Update

Each year the PA Board, in conjunction with school administration, seek to impact each student at every grade level through new programs, events, fundraising, and charitable works. Our Parent Association is made up of every parent with a child at the school, and we seek to involve all parents in our drive to make McGinnis Woods a great experience for all. Only through significant parental support can these initiatives take place and thrive.

The last few weeks have been very busy. We finished our Boosterthon Fun Run last month, and it was quite a success! Through the hard work of our students and the financial contributions of parents, extended family and friends, we raised over \$17,000 for McGinnis Woods. The proceeds collected from this fundraiser have gone toward the purchase of tablets, the modifications to the outdoor classroom and teacher grants. We also had our first charity event of the school year on Thursday, October 10th, CURE Childhood Cancer Denim Day, which benefits childhood cancer research. The money collected helps support cancer research at the Aflac Cancer Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Thank you to all who participated.

Tanner Photography came to our school October 13th to take portraits. This was a great opportunity to get your family portrait done for Holiday cards or just for that "moment in time" memory. Those families that participated paid a \$20 sitting fee and received a complimentary 11X14 portrait to take home, as well as the option to purchase more of the fabulous pictures for family and friends.

Fall Festival Baskets are coming up. For those new to the school, each class is given a theme to create a fabulous basket to be raffled off at the Fall Festival on October 26th. We have some new themes for baskets, as well as some old favorites, and we think that there will be a little something for everyone. Presale tickets will be on sale soon (5 FREE tickets with every \$20 spent). You do not have to be present at the Fall Festival to win one of these incredible baskets. The Fall Festival promises to be a lot of fun, so please make sure to join us!

Fall Festival Basket Themes:

Class	Basket Title	Description
Pre School Infants through 3-4	Money Tree	\$10 bill cash tree
PreK 4A - TURTLES PreK 4B - DUCKS PreK 5 - BUGS	Disney	Disney Themed toys, games, dress up and accessories
Kindergarten A - TIGERS Kindergarten B - GIRAFFES	Legos – Let's Build American Girl	Lego toys, everything Lego American Girl Doll, DVD, books, clothing and accessories
Grade 1 CATS Grade 1 FALCONS	Teen Beach Movie	Teen Beach Movie themed items, books, DVD, CD and accessories
Grade 2 LEOPARDS Grade 2 FISH	Georgia Sports	Anything related to ALL Georgia Sports Teams: jersey, shirts, sweatshirt, hats
Grade 3 DOGS Grade 3 OWLS	Outdoor/Camping Family Fun	Outdoor games such as Bocce Ball, Croquet Set, Tossing games, Chinese Jump Rope, sleeping bag, tent, flashlight, iron skillet and large cooler
Grade 4 SUNS Grade 4 METEORS	Road to Reading	E-Reader, Amazon and Barnes and Noble gift certificates
Grade 5A DRAGONS Grade 5B SHARKS Grade 6/7 FROGS Grade 8 GECKOS	Shop Til You Drop	Store gift cards- grocery, I-tunes, Game Stop, retail stores and restaurant certificates

The next PA coffee is scheduled for October 18th in the cafeteria from 8:00-8:30 a.m. This is a great opportunity to drop in for coffee, meet the PA Board and ask any questions that you may have. We hope to see you then!

We are excited and looking forward to the upcoming year and have many exciting events planned. We hope to have your support as we work diligently together to make this another successful year. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the PA at pa@mcginniswoods.org. We would love to hear from all of you.

What is new in the middle grades at McGinnis Woods this year?



The students in the fifth through eighth grade are considered “middle grades” students at McGinnis Woods Country Day School. This school year is in full swing now with the completion of their first term. The school is excited to announce some motivating new additions to the curriculum for our oldest students. Language Arts class is using the ideal new Pearson curriculum including new books and many interactive technology components. Science class is even more electrifying with the addition of weekly student driven lab presentations every Friday. Chorus class is also really in tune with creating their new musical artist personas.

The Language Arts Pearson curriculum includes many interactive technology components. This online aspect allows student to access the literature and response sections at home. Students enjoy watching the videos featuring authors and their stories. The vocabulary videos and games are created to help students grasp the terminology and accomplish the Common Core Standards.

Science lab on Fridays help students explore their curiosity in science by choosing their own lab experiments and presenting their findings to the class. This allows all students hands-on investigation opportunities with an emphasis on science that tests the trials of the scientific method.

Chorus students have been working hard to describe themselves in an interview with a musical artist façade. Students have also been writing their own songs based on their artist’s genre and they will soon perform in a music video for the class.

Middle school students have remarkable talents and promising potential. The impressive new opportunities at McGinnis Woods are just a few ways the school provides superior academics through hands-on approaches, which foster self-confidence and self-esteem that inspire a lifelong love of learning.



Denim Day for CURE

On Thursday, October 10th McGinnis Woods students and teachers joined together to raise funds for the organization 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 \$796.25. 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

Robotics

Robotics is underway at McGinnis Woods Country Day School. *Lego Mindstorms Robotics* is being offered as an after-school club. Robotics students design, build and program robots using Lego parts and a special programmable "Robot Brain" or "Brick". They write programs using software designed especially for *Lego Mindstorms Robots* to get the robots to accomplish certain tasks as they move through their environment. We also will be fielding a team of 10 robotics engineers to compete in the annual First Lego League robotics competition. The theme of the competition for this year is "Nature's Fury" – helping people cope with natural disasters. We have a field set with various missions the robots must accomplish to score points. The competition is held in early December at a several school locations around the Metro Atlanta Area. We are usually placed in the Walton High Regional tournament which will take place on December 7 this year.



Project Showcase, More Than Just a Project

It is time for Project Showcase for the first through eighth grade students! Students have already selected their topics, and the final presentations are due on October 28th. Why do we do Project Showcase at McGinnis Woods?

Project Showcase is a great way for students to delve in depth on a topic of interest. Also, Project Showcase allows students to use different types of skills. The projects are hands-on and allow for students to showcase their artistic and creative talents. The presentation portion of Project Showcase is a great way for students to work on their oral skills. The paper or PowerPoint portion of the project is a great way for those future journalists or authors to highlight writing skills. Students also provide their classmates with feedback during the process by peer editing rough drafts or note cards. As you can see, several important skills are employed during the process of Project Showcase, but most of all we participate in Project Showcase to instill a love of learning and to *inspire students with the passion to excel!* Be sure to check out these special projects at the end of the month when they are on display throughout the school!

Preschool Corner



The preschool has been a busy place learning about different occupations and what the word “labor” means. It was fun to hear the children tell about what they think their parents’ jobs are. Some of the occupations they explored were doctors, lawyers, construction workers, scientists, archaeologists and zoo keepers. They also learned about job safety.

Pet week was another fun filled week where the children discovered the different types of pets represented in their homes. The most unique pet was a chinchilla! The children learned what is involved in being a pet owner such as feeding, walking, and cleaning up after a pet.

By far, one of the most popular themes with the children was our “Pirate Week.” The children discovered what imaginary pirates say and what they enjoy doing on ships. They even found a hidden treasure at the end of the week!

All of these fun activities have encouraged the children to learn through their 5 senses by seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, and hearing about new experiences.

Upcoming Preschool Events

October 25 Pumpkin Patch (in the afternoon)

October 26 Fall Festival (3-6pm)

October 30 Make a Monster Workshop (during the day)

October 31 Halloween Parade & Parties (parade at 3:30pm parties to follow)

November 1 Santa Pictures (for preschool, pre-k and kindergarten)

November 4-8 Scholastic Book Fair (at the preschool building)



Jr. Beta Club is Working to Help Others

The Jr. Beta Club is off to a great start this year. The students have decided to support three main charities. They have outlined a few of their plans and upcoming fund-raising events to help to make our world a better place.

The Place of Forsyth County: A social services organization that provides support to needy families in Forsyth County. We ran the bake sale in early October to raise funds to put together snack bags to go home with children in need of food. The healthy snacks will provide food for children over the weekends. We are also planning to do a food drive, book drive and clothing drive and hope to serve lunch at their facility during the weekly noonday meal.

12X12 Love Project: An organization that builds homes for needy families in Guatemala. We have many fundraisers planned including McTeacher’s Night and Change for Change. We have also put together a letter to send to local businesses requesting support and donations. If you know of any business that is willing to help, please let us know. We are about 1/3 of the way to our goal of \$3000. Please help us support this cause.

Cure: An organization that is working toward a cure for childhood cancer. We held the first denim day of this year. Details of our success are included in the Cure article in this newsletter. We are also working on other fundraisers and opportunities to support this cause. We will promote their run in April and are looking to get a team together to run. If you care to join, please contact Ms. Jen.



Katherine Steckel Top Finisher in State

Third grader, Katherine Steckel, is exceling in gymnastics! She had a very successful competition season this past spring. She started out by winning an all-around Level 3 competition at the 2013 Georgia State Rhythmic Gymnastics Championship held in Miami, Florida on March 23rd. She then received three first-place finishes in ball, rope, and floor and won the championship title for her whole Level 3 at Spring Fling International held in Columbus, Ohio on April 5th. She then competed in the USA Region 6 Championship held in Atlanta, GA on April 20th where she placed first in all three categories and scored the highest score of all competitors at her level.

This season, Katherine has skipped a level and will be competing at Level 5. She is confident that she will be able to earn additional medals at this level. Katherine trains 3 and ½ hours, six days a week. Her dedication and perseverance are really paying off!

Election Time!

Student Council Elections are right around the corner! Interested students in fifth through eighth grades will be running for Student Council President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. We really encourage positive campaigning and want the students to feel proud of their effort. The timeline below outlines the important dates to remember!

Oct 18th: Applications go home

Oct 21st: Applications Due Back to Ms. Jenn

Oct. 21st – Oct 31st: Students will prepare, meet with Ms. Jenn and tape their commercials.

Nov 1st – Nov 5th: Students will campaign, answer questions on morning announcements and view commercials

Nov 6th: Election Day

As a reminder, parents must meet with Ms. Jenn prior to Oct 30th in order for their child to run. Good luck to all!

Discovery Clubs

Our first Discovery Clubs end the week of October 13th unless a day was missed. One of our ongoing clubs is Cheerleading. The students have been working on some fun new cheers, simple stunts and jumps as well as some prior favorites. They will get a cheer certificate at the end of each session. You can see our Spiritcats in action at our pep rallies throughout the year.

The next session begins the week of November 4th and will last until December 20th. The registration forms are due on October 21st.



Healthy Halloween from Nurse Penny

Halloween can be a fun time for children, but please make sure they are following safety precautions:

- Encourage children to have fun collecting treats, but tell them to wait until they return home to eat any.
- Inspect all treats and throw away any torn or unsealed wrappers.
- If your child has allergies, check the ingredient list. (You may need to consult product's website)
- Children should understand that they should trick or treat only at homes of neighbors that they know.

-Younger children should always be accompanied by an adult.

-Check masks to make sure children can see and breathe easily.

-Purchase face paints, glues and glitters made of nontoxic materials. Be aware that some children can have allergic reactions to these products.

-Use caution with any electric lights, or jack-o-lanterns due to fire risks.

These tips should help make sure that Halloween is safe without interfering with the children's enjoyment.

Word of the Month: HONOR

This month's Chick fil-A word of the month is honor. The students have been taught that honor is defined as *letting someone know you see how valuable they really are*. Teachers will be on the lookout for students showing that they honor others. These students will be rewarded with special Chick fil-A coupons.

Students will also learn about honor during the morning announcements and in class. One day recently students were encouraged to discuss one of Sophocles' quotes "I would prefer to fail with honor than win by cheating" and how this might look in their day to day lives.

Boosterthon by the Numbers

Thanks so much for making this year's Boosterthon Fun Run a wonderful success! We could not have accomplished this huge task without strong leadership. Special thanks to Chris Beisner, Parent Association Committee Chair, for volunteering countless hours to our school while heading up Boosterthon.

Here are some final numbers:

\$17,086 Total Amount Collected

268 runners

89% of students obtained pledges

41 Number of states we received donations from

9 Number of countries we received donations from (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, United Kingdom, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, USA)





FalCan Food Drive 2013

We need cans for our Food Drive! Thank you to everyone that has contributed already. We would like to collect 2,000 pounds of food. The FalCan Food Drive School Challenge, presented by Publix Super Markets and UnitedHealthcare, provides an opportunity for communities to help fight domestic hunger. Elementary, Middle and High Schools throughout the state of Georgia will collect canned food/and or non-perishable items until Friday, November 8, 2013 for the chance to win exciting Falcons prizes! The three schools with the highest total pounds collected will be announced in mid-November.

McGinnis Woods participated in the 2012 FalCan Food Drive School Challenge. There were over 80 schools that participated last year and McGinnis Woods came in 7th place with 1,764 pounds of food! 60,664 pounds of canned goods and non-perishable food items were collected by all the schools for the Georgia Mountain Food Bank.

McTeacher's Night Raises Funds for the Jr. Beta Club

McTeacher's Night was on Tuesday, October 8. Many families came out to support our school and the Jr. Beta Team's effort to raise money for their 12x12 Love Project. The students have been working to raise \$3000 to sponsor a home in Guatemala for poor homeless families. We are happy to report that they are \$128 closer to meeting their goal, which they began working toward last school year. If you would like to learn more about this project, please visit www.1212loveproject.org. If you would like to make an additional contribution toward this goal, please contact Ms. Jenn at jevangelista@mcginniswoods.org.

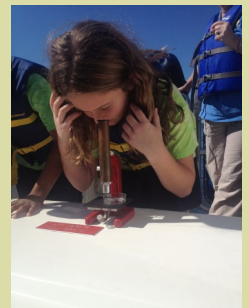


Field Trip Feature: Fourth Grade Goes to Lake Lanier

On September 27th, the fourth grade team took their students to Lake Lanier for an interactive and hands-on experience tied to a unit on weather. The Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center is considered a floating classroom, where students put on life jackets and hop on a boat. The tour guides are affiliated with the Elachee Nature Science Center, and many of them have experience in different fields of science.

Throughout the tour, the students were given many opportunities to connect what they were learning in school. The students discussed watershed, turbidity of water, and the pH levels of water. Students studied different organisms located in Lake Lanier with the use of microscopes, they lowered water probes to determine the clarity, and they took the water's temperature. They even watched water turn from cloudy to clear with the use of chemicals! The students connected these learning experiences to the healthiness of the water and related it to ecosystems, which was a previous unit learned in August and September.

We look forward to another hands-on experience given to the fourth graders on Friday, October 18, 2013. The scientists at Lake Lanier are coming to us, and they plan on making our students scientists of water by giving them hands on experiments to manipulate water. These manipulation techniques include various uses of chemicals including acid!



SACS Survey

Thanks to all of you who took the time to complete the AdvancEd survey that was sent to you at the beginning of October. Our School Improvement Team will be looking using this data as we formulate additional goals for our school improvement plan. Your opinion is important to us!

We are always looking for parents who would like to serve on a variety of teams that meet at McGinnis Woods each month. If you would like to volunteer and participate, please contact Ms. Mary at mjohnson@mcginnisoods.org. Your opinion is important to us!

International Night

Around 500 people joined us on Tuesday, September 24th for our annual International Night. Students and families alike had a wonderful time sampling tasty international cuisine, playing games, and learning about the unique countries featured this year. Students learned all about: the USA, Mexico, Russia, Australia, Greece, China and Italy. The student prepared information was so well done and made the evening extra special! A big thank you to the many teachers and families who volunteered to make this evening a reality and an event to look forward to each year!



14th Annual Fall Festival

Please join us on Saturday, October 26th from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for our 14th Annual Fall Festival. This is a wonderful event that you will not want to miss as our school community gathers to enjoy fun activities, games, crafts, refreshments and much more. The ever popular Haunted House will have some new surprises, and the pony rides and costume contest will also take place. Our chorus students will be performing some haunting musical selections for us, too.

If you need a ticket, you may pre-purchase your tickets for \$5 for adults and \$10 for students before the festival. All tickets will be \$10 on the day of the event. Children under 2 are free.



Halloween Parties

Fall is in the air, and one of our three scheduled parties for the school year is upon us! Our Halloween Parties will be held on Thursday, October 31st during the last hour of the school day. Students may bring in their costumes to change into before their party. Please make sure that your student's costume is appropriate, does not include any weapons, blood, or full-faced masks.

Pre-K students may wear their costumes to school on Halloween if their costumes are "potty friendly" and are not a distraction to their learning as they will follow their regular academic schedule for the day.

Tablets



Keeping up with technology is something we try to do at McGinnis Woods, and this year is no exception. The new Windows Surface RT Tablets, purchased by the Parent Association with Boosterthon funds are being used by 2nd and 3rd graders this year. The Surface RT offers the best of both worlds – is it a tablet or is it a laptop? It's BOTH! The 3rd graders have loved them and are already using these amazing resources on a daily basis. 3rd grade took off to Space using the tablets. They were able to research on the internet, then used a planets app and finally created a PowerPoint to present to the class, all on one device! Students are able to save their work on the tablet and then present the documents using the Promethean board. Students have also been fighting ninjas and racing cars as they practice their math facts on the tablets. They have read non-fiction and fiction stories and summarized them using the story app. Students are able to practice for Worldly Wise tests, read for enjoyment, type in Word and make videos, too. The students are free to come up with their own ideas of how to use the tablet and then share their successes with the class. As you can see, the ideas are endless and the possibilities limitless, and we are grateful to have this powerful tool to use each day to enrich our learning.



Join us for the

14th Annual McGinnis Woods

Fall Festival

Saturday, October 26th

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Activities include:

A Haunted House  Games  Costume Contest
Pony Rides  Bungee Jump  Crafts  Refreshments
Musical Performance by Choir  and so much more!

Pre-admission \$5.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children

Children under 2 are FREE