

McGinnis Woods Buzz



September 2011, Volume 3, Issue 1



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 9/23:** \$5 Denim Day
- 9/28:** McTeacher's Night
4:00-7:00 pm
- 9/29:** Birthday Book Club
- 10/3-10/7:** Stanford Testing
1st and New Students
- 10/14:** End of 2010-2011 Term 1
Early Release, 1:15 pm
- 10/21:** Report Cards
- 10/31:** Discovery Clubs Begin

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

We have had an excellent start to the 2011-12 school year. Our students have adjusted well to their classrooms and teachers. Students have participated in so many great activities, field trips and events. Our Fall Sports Teams and Discovery Clubs are underway. Our soccer, cross country and volleyball teams have experienced both the thrill of the win and the disappointment of defeat with positive attitudes and camaraderie. Our Discovery Club students are building robots, learning cheers, performing, playing tennis and cooking up a storm. There is always something exciting going on at McGinnis Woods!



Curriculum Night was well attended and has provided a smooth foundation for our students and teachers. We strive to inspire our students to excel every day and this is only possible with your continued partnership. We appreciate your support shown through emails, classroom help and ensuring that your student is prepared for each day.

International Night on September 13 was a great success with over 400 in attendance. The countries represented this year included: Denmark, Mexico, Italy, India, France, Costa Rica, Brazil, and China. The food, crafts and games provided our school community with a great learning experience. Thanks to the many families who supported this wonderful event by volunteering in so many ways.

Our Parent Association has successfully run our Great American Fundraiser. The money raised will be used toward teacher grants with a focus on our specials teachers and their classroom needs. Our desire is to continually improve our existing programs and to support the Arts, Guidance, Health, Physical Education and Foreign Language opportunities at our school.

This is going to be a great year for McGinnis Woods. Thanks for your continued enthusiasm, ideas and support!

Wildcat Chat

WILDCAT TEAMS START THE FALL SEASON OUT STRONG!!

The Wildcat fall teams are enjoying their best ever starts to the season. With record numbers of students participating, success is coming to our teams.

Volleyball:

Coach Jessica may have a team with small numbers (six players), but with big hearts! The team won its first game of the season against Atlanta Academy. This is the first time we have beaten them in volleyball. Their next games at Davis Academy and Faith Lutheran were close, but the home teams prevailed to make our team record 1-2 so far for the year.



Outstanding performances have been turned in by Maddie Sherbert and Kasey Baker.

Soccer:

With probably the best soccer team in school history, the Wildcat Kickers are currently undefeated at 4-0-0 and share first place in the MAAC D2 Soccer league with Greenfield Hebrew Academy. Loyal teamwork and emphasis in fundamentals have been the team's keys to success.

Strong performances have been turned in by offensive players Kyle Partain and Jason Lee. The defense has been strong with Sam Zoldock in the goal and Brad Dull fortifying the back line.



The team's next game is with Greenfield Hebrew Academy on Tuesday, September 20.

Cross Country:

New Coach, Tyler Driskell is bringing his team along at the right pace and speed to be ready for the Championships at the end of the season. In the meantime the Wildcat Harriers have been turning in some solid performances early in the season.

The girls team has been led by Courtney Stuart and Emmalyn Cushman. They are close to school record performances and have been placing high in the big races.

The boys are led by Chris Lee. He has already broken the school's two mile record and looks to be getting even better.



PA Board Update

We are off to a great start! It has been wonderful meeting many of the new parents as well as reconnecting with old friends. This year, our goal is to continue to encourage participation and invite all parents to volunteer for at least one event. Our continued success as a school depends on our involvement and teamwork.

We are very excited about the upcoming year and have many special events planned. Our first fundraiser, Great American, was a great success. All the funds raised will directly benefit all the Specials classes (Spanish, Art, Computer Lab, Health, Counseling, P.E. and Music). There will be over \$3,000 for grants for our Specials Teachers. With the final tally done, Ms. Charlton's 7/8 class sold the most items with 107 items sold, followed by Ms. Cece 4th grade Suns and Ms. Kristen's 3rd grade Owls each with 100 items sold. The top sellers were Alexandra Maume in KB Monkeys, followed by Mackenzie Johnson in 7/8 and Jessica Cobb in 4th grade Suns. Congratulations and many thanks to the 100 students and parents who participated in this fundraiser. Please look for your items to be distributed at school in early October.

We had such a great response to our PA Morning Coffees this year. We host these meetings on the 1st Friday of every month, so please stop by to say "hi" or ask a question.

The Fall Festival is approaching quickly and the PA is gearing up to make the Raffle Baskets the best in McGinnis Woods' history. Soon you will receive information about your child's classroom basket theme and how you can help by donating an item. We depend on your participation to make all the baskets outstanding. Each item donated brings us closer to our goal.

Be sure to volunteer to help our school! With your support, we are sure to have an extraordinary year. Together, we can make it happen.

Getting Involved: Volunteering at McGinnis Woods

by Pam Pye

My daughter Addison had attended the Preschool since she was quite small and was graduating to the "big girl school" for PreK. It was a big step for both of us. I wanted to be involved but was not sure what the best course of action was for me to get involved. Then I received an email asking if I would be interested in being one of the Room Representatives for Addison's class. I was thrilled, but a bit apprehensive, since I was not sure if I had the time to commit to the role. Addison has many extra curricular activities; I work full time, and have other commitments as well. I reached out to other parents who I had been Room Representatives before and based on their feedback, decided to give it a try.

Looking back, it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I had the opportunity to meet all of the new friends in Addison's class as well as their families, so Ms. Robin and Ms. Tamara's class became a new "Duck" community for us. I gradually went from being Addison's mom to Ms Pam. With better time management, scheduling and preparing, I was able to attend all of the class events with a few exceptions. I truly enjoyed it but most important to me, Addison was proud that I was the class "room mom."

Volunteering at the school has been great for both Addison and me. We have a greater sense of community with our McGinnis Woods family and something we can work on together. There are many ways to get involved. You can make commitments like being a Room Representative or participate in other events that don't require as much time such as volunteering for a party, helping with a teacher appreciation luncheon or shelving books in the library. If you are uncertain how to volunteer for opportunities, please reach out to your teacher, the PA or Ms. Mary just to name a few. Give it a try, as it is well worth the investment in time.



A Little About our Teachers: Featuring the Fourth Grade

The fourth grade SUNS (Students Using New Skills) and COMETS (Creative, Organized, Motivated, Enthusiastic, Talented Students) are all about success! Under the great leadership of Ms. Cecilia Walls, Ms. Rebecca Weaver, and Mr. Tyler Driskell, the students strive for nothing but the best.

Ms. Cecilia (better known as Ms. CeCe) has been teaching at McGinnis Woods for five years. She is a graduate of Grand Canyon University and previously taught at a Catholic school in Chicago for five years. She absolutely loves teaching, and saw that it was going to be her calling at a very young age. Ms. Cece's teaching does not end when she leaves "the Woods" each day. It continues with her two children, Elijah (14), and NiaMiah (9). When she is not teaching or tending to them, she enjoys cuddling up with a good book, watching a great movie, and eating a delicious meal.

Ms. Rebecca is starting her fourth year at McGinnis Woods. She grew up near Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated from Wellesley College in Massachusetts. Ms. Rebecca holds an MBA from Emory University and recently earned her teaching certification in middle grades Math and Science. Her two sons, Nathan (8) and William (5), both attend McGinnis Woods, and are so proud to be Wildcats! In her spare time, she enjoys reading, cooking (especially baking), and gardening.



Mr. Tyler, also known as Mr. "T," has been at McGinnis Woods for five years working as a Pre-K teacher assistant, pre-school teacher, and summer camp counselor. He is a native Atlantan and received his degree in Community Health from Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville. Mr. Tyler loves all things outdoors, and spends much of his free time as a Brazilian Jiu-jitsu instructor and enthusiast.

Field Trip of the Month: *Into the Woods* at the Alliance Theatre

On September 15, 2011, the 7th and 8th grade students attended the Tony Award winning play *Into the Woods* at the Alliance Theatre. The students have been analyzing characters and themes in classic fairy tales, and attending the play was a wonderful way to put knowledge into practice. This musical interweaves the familiar stories of "Cinderella," "Rapunzel," "Little Red Riding Hood," and "Jack in the Bean Stalk," *Into the Woods* combines the lighthearted aspects usually found in Disney stories, with the sobering themes of the original fairy tales told by authors like the Grimm Brothers. This adventure took the audience "Into the Woods" to discover the rights, wrongs, and in-betweens in life. The students were highly engaged during the musical, and continued to talk about it on the way back to school. Opportunities like this, that allow the students to get out into the community to extend their learning is a foundational goal of all Country Day Schools and enables McGinnis Woods to inspire the students to expand their horizons and excel!



Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)

As the summer comes to an end, we in the preschool are getting back in full swing and looking forward to a wonderful school year with all the exciting events we have planned.

The preschool children recently had a blast during a demo day with “Happy Feet,” an introductory program to soccer. Registration for “Happy Feet” has begun and classes will start on September 21st. Please visit the front table for more information.

Our weekly themes this month include: Healthy Bodies, Opposites, Community Helpers and Fall Frenzy. The teachers have lots of exciting activities on their lesson plans to help the students master these concepts, so feel free to stop by and take look at what is going on.

This week we are featuring Community Helpers. We would love for parents to come and talk with the children about the importance and responsibilities of being community helpers. We will also be having special community helpers visit during the week.

It's almost picture time! School pictures will be taken on Thursday, September 29th and Friday, September 30th. Please make sure your little one is dressed and ready for the camera!



Our teacher of the month for September is Ms. Amy Thornton in our Nursery room. Ms. Amy works hard to keep our youngest members of the community happy and learning. We would also like to recognize the hard work all of our teachers do in making their rooms shine. Be sure to see the photo slideshow running on the monitor in the lobby, as they will help paint a picture of some of the great things happening here each day.



Classroom Spotlight: Science is Alive and Growing

On a sunny April afternoon in 2011, 2nd grade Science classes set out to see if plants could grow and flourish with or without dirt. Following the scientific method, the students and teachers were determined to find out. Who would have thought that when the 2nd Graders sat on the basketball court with bean seeds, water, dirt and Ziploc's that the science experiment would take on a life of its own. One student, Gregory Steckel, took his bean seeds home and planted them in his garden never imagining what would happen. Fast forward a few months later and you can see that the bean plant is alive and well and growing out of control. The science experiment sparked an interest in Gregory and resulted in him having enough beans to feed his family throughout the summer! Great job Gregory!



"Specials" Program: Featuring Kristen Craig, Enrichment and Remediation Specialist

Bringing a big smile and thirteen years of experience, Kristen Craig is excited to be teaching her first year at McGinnis Woods as the Enrichment and Remediation Specialist. She is a graduate of the University of Alabama (go Roll Tide!) and has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. Additionally, Ms. Kristen is a certified Orton-Gillingham tutor.

The first four years of her teaching career began in Gwinnett County as a second grade teacher. She has spent the last eight years teaching in two of Atlanta's private schools. Ms. Kristen and her husband moved to Suwanee from Buckhead this past summer and found McGinnis Woods to be a great fit for her family. They have a three year old son, Houston, and a four month old daughter, Calista, whom also attend McGinnis Woods.

Ms. Kristen came to McGinnis Woods with a great deal of experience and eagerness to work within a school community of outstanding administrators, teachers and families. It is her goal this year to meet the individual needs and learning styles of those students who need extra support, along with developing their academic skills and knowledge to their fullest potential.



International Night



*There is just one moon
And one golden sun
And a smile means
Friendship to every one
Though the mountains divide
And the oceans are wide
It's a small world after all*

This song rang true at our International Night on Tuesday, September 13. Over 400 people joined us for the amazing night featuring foods, clothing, artifacts and activities from countries all around the world.



Each grade level showcased a country. Often the country was chosen because the grade level studies the specific country in their curriculum. Other countries were chosen because a student's family originated in the country. The countries showcased included: Denmark, Mexico, Costa Rica, Italy, Brazil, France, India and China.



Students were given a passport to have stamped in each country "visited" after the student learned one new fact about the country. Students who received a passport stamp from each country could hand in their passports for extra credit points.

The night was a huge success and taught us all that it really is "a small world after all!"



Show Choir at McGinnis Woods



Introducing the McGinnis Woods Show Choir! This year in chorus our focus will be on music, its history and the artists that have created it. It is Ms. Xylina's passion to help the students understand the important role that music plays in their lives each day. Music adds joy and meaning to the every day tasks of life. It helps us explain our feelings and at times helps us cope with difficult issue in our lives. Show Choir will give the students a chance to show off their talents and will challenge them to sing and dance with the emotions expressed by the musical piece. The students will perform in fall and spring concerts this year, so be sure to come out and support our Show Choir musicians.

Summer Camp: Highlights of 2011

Summer at McGinnis Woods is camp time and this past summer was no exception. The summer was filled with exciting field trips, swimming, fun discovery clubs and even some academic enrichment camps.

Campers enjoyed a different field trip each week this summer. Some of the places that were visited included Sawnee Mountain Preserve, the Tellus Museum, Monkey Joes, Stars and Strikes, and horseback riding at Sunny Farms Stables in Dahlonega. But, the highlight of the summer had to be our canoeing trip on the Chestatee River coupled with an old fashioned picnic. Students and teachers look forward to this event every summer, as it is always a blast!

This summer, we also offered three new discovery clubs that proved to be a hit. A bus load of campers were taken over to Laurel Springs Golf Club where golf pros taught our campers all about golf and how to properly swing a golf club. We also had a visit from the experts at Alpharetta Family Karate where campers received hands-on karate instruction. Additionally, our own Mr. Steve taught a fun Keyboarding Club that improved hand placement and increased the students' typing rate through a fun program and a lot of practice. Campers in each of these clubs were able to have fun while learning new skills.

Be sure to have your student become a camper at McGinnis Woods next summer. We are already planning for Wildcat Adventures 2012! We will be back with more field trips and more fun all summer.



Afterschool Fun

Did you know that McGinnis Woods offers after-school care every day until 6:30 p.m.? Each day your child will be greeted with a snack from one of our friendly afterschool teachers followed by a daily schedule featuring homework assistance as well as some time to get some fresh air outside on the playground. The weekly schedule features computer lab, movies, games and art. Fall Discovery Clubs include soccer, cross country, girls' volleyball, tennis, cheerleading, dance, robotics,



cooking, super science, drama and band club. If you need more information, contact Mr. Nate at npeterson@mcginniswoods.org.