

McGinnis Woods Buzz



September 2012, Volume 4, Issue 1



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 09/16:** Outdoor Explorers (1st-8th Grade) 1-4 P.M.
- 09/24:** Hat Trick for Reading Logs Due
- 09/27:** International Night 5:30 P.M
- 10/1** Hawks Fast Break 200 Reading Minutes Due
- 10/12** K-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences - Early Release 1:15

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

Welcome to our first edition of the McGinnis Woods Buzz for the 2012-13 school year. This year is off to a great start. Our teachers and students have not wasted any time as we have been learning new information from the very first day of school. Assessments were given and learning groups have been established at all grade levels. Everyone is working well together.

Curriculum Night was a success. Parents have done an excellent job of signing agendas and returning our new H.A.B.I.T binders each day. Our hope is that this consistent binder system will help to keep everyone organized and prepared for daily homework. We strive to *inspire students with the passion to excel* each and every day and this can only be accomplished with your continual partnership and support.

Our fall competition teams of Girls' Volleyball, Soccer and Cross Country are doing well. The team members' persistence and diligence is really paying off as is reflected by their team records. Be sure to read more about them in this edition.

After School Discovery Clubs are also in full swing. The students have been enjoying special sessions of Science, Cooking, Robotics, Band, Cheerleading, Cartooning, Jujitsu, Drama and Dancing. We even have a group of students meeting to play kickball!

Be sure to join us on Thursday evening, September 27 beginning at 5:30 for our annual International Night extravaganza. Our teachers and many volunteers are planning a great evening celebrating our diversity and expanding our knowledge of other cultures from around the world. This year we are focusing on the countries of India, Mexico, Italy, Australia, France, China, Greece and the Philippines. The evening is sure to be packed with great food, activities and surprises.

Finally, I want to thank you for your support as we raised funds through our recent Denim and Pajama Days for CURE Childhood Cancer. September is Childhood Cancer Awareness month so this seemed like the perfect opportunity to reach out and help others in our community in this simple way.

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



Wildcat Chat

Wildcat Teams are off to a Fast Start!

The fall sports season is off and running with good news all-around for Wildcat fans. The teams are working hard in practice and playing hard on the field and courts.

Soccer Report:

The Wildcat Soccer Team had their first defeat with a 2-1-0 record in the MAAC. The team is motivated to defend their championship from last season. Although the team is young, they have been dominating many of their opponents so far. Strong play from all team members coupled with great plays by Hiram Hicks, Cole Beckman, Ethan Montgomery, and Christopher Lee has been the key to our wins. Will this team be League Champions again this year? We sure hope so!



Volleyball Report:

Our volleyball team is also composed of a young bunch of players. They have a new coach and bring new attitude to the court. This has helped them be competitive in their first games of the season. The Wildcat Netsters lost close matches at Atlanta Girl's School. Although the team was outscored, progress was made in all the skill areas. Look for great plays by Kasey Baker, Gabby Scott, and Maddie Moore.

Cross Country Report:

Our small Wildcat Cross Country Team is a bit better than one would expect. With only 3 girls and 2 boys, they have been working hard and posting some pretty good times. Courtney Stuart set a school record placing 22nd out 150 at the recent Blackburn Park meet. 5th Grader Vivian Longo placed 99th in the same race for a personal record.

Please join us at one of our many competitions and cheer on the McGinnis Wildcats. We are working each day to build lifelong memories and great skills!

Trike-A-Thon



On Friday, September 21st, our preschool will be hosting our annual Trike-A-Thon at 3:30 on the Sports Court. This fundraiser raises money for Saint Jude's Research Hospital, a non-profit organization that provides treatment and research for children with catastrophic diseases such as cancer. Within the past 5 years, McGinnis Woods has raised almost \$10,000 for St. Jude's. This year our goal is to raise \$2000!

In the weeks leading up to the Trike-A-Thon, our students will learn all about being safe while playing. Families will also have two weeks to ask friends and family members to donate money based on the number of laps their child completes. On the day of the event, kids will bring the riding toy of their choice (scooter, trike, or bike) and have fun riding around with their friends, earning money for a great cause! All donations will be due back to the Preschool by October 1st. To learn more about this great cause, please visit www.Stjude.org/trike.

News from our Parent Association

We would like to welcome back all our returning families and extend a heartfelt welcome to our new families. For the Parent Association to be effective and truly representative of the school, everyone's participation is essential. Whether you have 30 minutes or a few hours, we need your help. We want everyone to feel that they are part of the McGinnis Woods community- your ideas, your time and your talents are truly needed. By volunteering, you will enjoy interacting with students, meet other parents and make a difference in your child's education. Getting involved in the school shows your child you care.

We have completed our first fundraiser, Otis Spunkmeyer Cookies, so stay tuned to see what we were able to raise this year. The proceeds from the Otis Spunkmeyer fundraiser will go to classroom teacher grants.

Last week the PA Board sponsored the first of four Teacher Appreciation Luncheons that are held throughout the year. This is an event all the teachers love. The theme for the next luncheon will be "Tailgating", and will take place on November 1st. We know the teachers are looking forward to that one!

We also had our first charity event on Monday, September 10th for CURE which benefits childhood cancer research at Emory University School of Medicine and the Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Through our Denim and Pajama Days we were able to raise \$1050 between the preschool and elementary schools to benefit this great cause. Thank you to all who participated.

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 20th. 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. The proceeds of the raffle baskets will be put towards new PE equipment, benefitting the children at all grade levels.

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..

Help The Parent Association: Buy a Raffle Ticket!

Class	# of students	Basket Title	Description
Pre School Nursery Transitional A Transitional B		Money Tree	\$5 bill cash tree
PreK 4A	18	Superheros & Princesses	Disney, Avengers, Superhero related toys, games, dvds, books egames, etc.
PreK 4B	18		
PreK 5	18		
Kindergarten A	15	Let's go Legos American Girl	Lego toys & American Girl doll basket—lego toys, books, games AG doll as well as books and accessories
Kindergarten B	15		
Grade 1 CATS	18	Let's go Legos American Girl	Lego toys & American Girl doll basket—lego toys, books, games AG doll as well as books and accessories
Grade 1 CRABS	17		
Grade 2 LEOPARDS	14	Family Fun	Things that provide happy and fun family time—movie tickets, putt putt, dinner gift certificates, games
Grade 2 FISH	20		
Grade 3 DOGS	20	Family Gaming	Nintendo DS 3D bundle pack and some games
Grade 3 OWLS	18		
Grade 4 SUNS	20	Road to reading!	E-Reader and amazon gift certificates
Grade 4 COMETS	15		
Grade 5 FROGS	22	Shop Til You Drop	Store gift cards- grocery, retail, and restaurants
Grade 6 GECKOS	10		
Grade 7/8 DRAGONS	18		

Featured Grade Level: Middle Grades



McGinnis Woods has an amazing group of middle grades teachers who work tirelessly for the students and their families. They love middle graders and have a great time inspiring them to reach their full potential in a fun and engaging environment.

Amy Frazier is an energetic new addition to the McGinnis Woods teaching team as the fifth grade teaching assistant. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Communication and Child Psychology from the University of North Florida and also attended Florida State University in Jacksonville, Florida for her teaching certification. This year, her husband, Kessler, daughter, Savannah and son, Griffin moved from Jacksonville to the Johns Creek, Georgia area. In her free time Amy loves to travel! She has flown all over the world, from many islands in the Caribbean to Denmark. Rounding out their family are their two wonderful dogs: Pete and Oscar.

Nicole Seltzer teaches social studies for the middle grades, and is the homeroom teacher for the 5th grade students. She has worked at McGinnis woods for eleven years, having earned her certification in social studies and language arts, as well as her Masters in the Art of Teaching during that time. Nicole stays busy with her husband, Jeff, son, Josh and daughter, Rebecca. She is also involved with her son's Cub Scout Pack and her daughter's American Heritage Girls Troop. She enjoys movies, music, and crafting when she can find the time!

Adam Branson teaches science for the middle grades, and is the homeroom teacher for the 6th grade students. He was born in Madisonville, KY. He graduated from Western Kentucky University with a BA in Education and has taught for thirteen years. Adam has a daughter, Kayla, who is 5 years old. He enjoys spending time with Kayla, watching the Boston Red Sox, and hiking.

Heather Bailey teaches language arts for the middle grades, and is the homeroom teacher for the 7th and 8th grade students. This is Ms. Heather's seventh year teaching middle school language arts, and her third year teaching at McGinnis Woods. She received her B.S. in Elementary Education from the University of West Florida, and is currently working on her master's degree in middle grades curriculum and instruction. Ms. Heather also has certifications in Middle Grades Integrated Curriculum, Special Education, ESOL, and Middle Grades Language Arts. She is married with three children: Troy (19), Isabella (16), and Isaac (15). Ms. Heather enjoys boating, camping, travelling, and SCUBA. She also loves coaching the MCGW soccer team!

Ms. Cecilia Walls teaches 4th grade and co-teaches 5th Grade Language Arts along with Ms. Heather. She has been teaching at McGinnis Woods since 2006. She earned her BS at Grand Canyon University with an emphasis in English. When she is not teaching she likes to go to the movies, dine out with friends or family, "crank" up the grill, shop, go roller skating, read a good suspenseful book, go to an art show, see a play, stroll around a museum, dance, sing, or listen to some good old-school music (jazz, rhythm and blues, or neo-soul). She has a 15 year old son named Elijah who is a sophomore in high school and very active in the marching band. Her daughter NiaMiah, a 5th grader, is getting ready to try-out for the soccer team this year. They also have a dog named Arty, a rambunctious Jack Russell Terrier. Cece is originally from Chicago and still roots for her home teams like the Chicago Bulls, Chicago Bears, and the White Sox.

Pam Charlton teaches mathematics for the middle grade students. This is her sixteenth year teaching math and her eighth year at McGinnis Woods. She is extremely passionate about math and it is definitely her favorite subject to teach! Originally from Illinois, she received her B.S. in Elementary and Middle School Education from Illinois State University and did her post graduate work at the University of Illinois. Over the years she has taught in Illinois, Florida, and Georgia. Pam is from a family of five girls, three of whom also work in the field of education. She has one son who currently attends college at the University of Mississippi. In her free time she enjoys walking her dog, reading, and decorating her new condominium.

Specials Teacher: Jenn Evangelista



Welcome to another amazing year at McGinnis Woods! My name is Jennifer Evangelista and I have the pleasure of beginning my 6th year as the counselor within this amazing community.

I was born in Syracuse, New York and relocated to the Atlanta area in 1996. I received my bachelor's degree from the State University of New York College at Oswego with a certification in elementary education and a middle grades extension. I am certified to teach elementary grades as well as middle grades math, reading, social studies and science. I have since worked for the Forsyth County School System, as a 3rd, 4th and 6th grade Math, Reading and Language Arts teacher. I received a master's degree from Georgia State University in school counseling and worked as a school counselor for Forsyth County for one year before moving to McGinnis Woods. I also completed my gifted certification. I have been the counselor at McGinnis Woods for the last five years and am very excited to be starting another wonderful year.

My position at McGinnis Woods is multifaceted. I see each class throughout the year to discuss topics such as bullying, De-Bugging, teambuilding, and safety. I meet with individual students, groups and parents to discuss a variety of concerns they may have. In addition I coordinate the Jr. Beta Club and Student Council.

I currently reside in Cumming with my husband and our three children: Tayler, Drew and Addison. My children have attended McGinnis Woods for the past seven years. We are so thankful for the education, friendships and sense of community we have found here.

Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)

School is in full swing in the preschool! The classrooms are bursting with energetic faces and new experiences. The students are enjoying their first fall using the new curriculum Zoophonics. The younger students are beginning to learn the kinesthetic movements and character names associated with the letters of the alphabet, and older children are transitioning toward producing the letter sounds when they see the cute Zoophonics animals! The MWCDS Preschool also uses Creative Curriculum. This curriculum provides teachers the freedom to create a variety of experiences within each learning domain in order to tailor the learning experience for each child and group's needs.

This month in addition to our weekly themes which include Jobs and Work, The 5 Senses, Peace and Character Education we also hosted a guest speaker. On Tuesday, September 12, the Storyteller, Wendy Bennett joined our preschool and PreK students for a wonderful, lively interactive performance. She incorporated puppets, colorful props and her amazing singing voice to bring to life the stories of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Green Eggs and Ham* and Maurice Sendak's *A is for Alligator*.

On Friday September 21 we will be hosting a Trike A-Thon for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. This is a fun event for our riders and it supports a great cause, so be sure to mark your calendars and join us on the Sport Court for the event. The Preschool is a happy, nurturing school. We are excited about the way the children are growing and changing right before our eyes!



Garden Day: Sunday, September 16, 2012



McGinnis Woods will have a Garden Day this Sunday, September 16th, from 1:00-4:00 pm. Students from 1st through 8th grades are welcome to join us as we clean the garden beds, plant fall vegetables including lettuce, carrots, beets, and cabbage and go for a nature walk on the trail. Students are encouraged to bring labeled gloves and garden tools along with water and sunscreen. Participants will also make garden art projects like leaf prints and rock creatures. This group of garden enthusiasts led by Ms. Rebecca and Ms. Wendy will work their "green thumbs" while having some fun, too!

Beta Club: Overview of the Year

The Jr. Beta Club at McGinnis Woods holds amazing opportunities for our students in grades 5-8. We are a national organization that is founded in excellence and helping others. Last year our students reached out to many organizations. We partnered with Kevin Smith from Keep Forsyth Beautiful to continue our efforts to care for our outdoor classroom. Students received their certification to adopt the stream behind us. We also worked with The Place, a social services organization in Forsyth County. Students developed and implemented the Change for Change program to raise money to provide snack bags to be distributed to children in need throughout the summer. We worked with the PA to run food drives and delivered food to North Fulton Charities. The children also enjoyed running a jeans drive and a used book drive to help others in need. Students will continue their efforts throughout the 2012-13 school year.

This September we began meeting with current members. We outlined our objectives for the 2012-2013 school year. The Beta Club meets two Fridays per month and has extended working lunches to organize our projects. Students eligible to join Jr. Beta include students who have all A's or all A's and one B and S's or E's in the conduct section of their report card. Eligibility for fifth grade and new students will be done after the first report cards in October and invitations to Jr. Beta will be sent home at that time.



The Big Three

Character Education is an important component of all of our classes at McGinnis Woods. Teachers and staff work to catch the students being kind and encouraging to one another. We also focus on specific character words and concepts each month to help our students develop as excellent citizens.

During August we focused on The Big Three: Treat Others Right, Make Smart Decisions and Maximize Your Potential. During our first Pep Rally of the Year, students and teachers shared examples from their lives that illustrated how they lived out the Big Three. The word of the month for September is RESPECT.

One student from each of the Kindergarten through eighth grade classes was honored as Citizen of the Month. Those citizens and Ms. Lyndsey, our teacher of the month, were treated to a celebratory lunch at Moe's on Mansell Road on September 5. We think developing great character is an important key to our student's success!



Field Trip Highlights: Pre-K 4 and 5 Visit Publix at Flynn Crossing



The Pre-K 4 and 5 classes went to Publix during August for our first field trip. Everyone had a fabulous time! The children received a "behind the scenes" tour of our local Publix grocery store. During the visit, the children learned about healthy eating and how the healthy food makes it to our dinner table. The highlights of our tour were meeting Larry the Lobster, going in the freezer, and wearing hair nets. We love Publix!

Fourth Grade Make Terrariums

The fourth graders in the SUNS and COMETS have been working on learning about habitats, ecosystems, and animal adaptations during their unit in Science. Their first field trip was to Zoo Atlanta where they learned about the different animals' diets, behaviors, and what they do to survive. As they wrapped-up the unit on ecosystems, each student brought in an empty 2-liter bottle to make into a terrarium (which consists of living and nonliving items). Ms. Taylor cut the top part off of each bottle. The students then filled the bottom of the bottles with soil, layered the top of the soil with grass seeds, and then placed nonliving items that they had collected together on the trail by the outdoor classroom (sticks, rocks, acorns, and sand) into the bottle. The terrariums have been sealed and are sitting on the window-sills of the classrooms. The fourth graders are observing them for a couple of weeks to watch the changes that take place, especially with our grass seeds.



McGinnis Woods Summer Camp 2012

Wildcat Adventures

Summer Camp was WILD this year at McGinnis Woods! Each week we experienced new themes, art projects, field trips and more! Wildcats enjoyed waterpark splash 'n play, reading countless books, creating amazing art projects, participating in camp talent shows and swimming at our local pool! We visited several parks, Legoland, Studio Movie Grill, Adrenaline Rock Climbing, Stone Mountain's new Geyser Tower and many more places during our summertime adventures. We would love for you to be a part of our Summer Camp, so please join us in 2013 for a great time with the Wildcats!

