

McGinnis Woods Buzz



April 2013. Volume 6. Issue 1



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

Inspiring Students with

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

5/ 1	3rd Grade 911 Call Center
5/ 2	1st Grade Overnight Zoo Atlanta
5/2	Jr. BETA Diabetes Dog Fundraiser
5/ 3	Bake Sale During Lunch
5/ 4-5	Aladdin Jr. Performance Dancing Goat Theater
5/6	Pre-K & Kindergarten Career Day
5/14	Sports Award Ceremony 2-3:00 pm PE Room
5/15	Pep Rally/Yearbook
5/15	Chorus Concert Lord of Life Church 6:30
5/16	Spring Band Concert 6 pm
5/17	Scene of the Green 6:30
5/20	Field Day
5/21	McTeachers Night 4-7
5/22	K-8 Awards Day 10am
5/23	Last Day of School

A Message From Ms. Mary

In Dr. Seuss' beloved book, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, he penned, "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose." This statement comes to life each and every day at our school as our students choose to apply themselves, grow academically and reach their highest potential. We have seen our students use their brains to write their first complete sentences, to create book reports, power points and write research papers. They have used their "feet in their shoes" to compete in sports at many levels, to have fun on the playground each day, to explore museums and forests on field trips both near and far. This coming week we will be helping our students expand their minds as they learn about possible career opportunities in our ever changing world. Career Day is always an amazing day for our students, and it is true for each of them that they can steer themselves in any direction they choose.



This year has been flying by, but we still have a lot to learn and do before this year comes to a close. Most students completed their Stanford 10 testing with great purpose and seriousness, and they are now ready for some celebrating. *We hope that you will join us at our Spring Carnival Saturday, April 27, 2013 from 12-3. We will be hosting it rain or shine!* This event is always a wonderful time filled with ponies, a train, fun carnival games and prizes, the Spider Jump and great food and company. We hope to see you there!

This newsletter is packed with information from all areas of school including the Pre School, Elementary school, robotics, sports, academics, Over Nights, and Parent Association Board update, so please be sure to take the time to read about the great happenings at McGinnis Woods!

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.

Wildcat Chat: Track and Field Championship Report

The Track Season ends each year with the MAAC Track and Field Championships. Both teams held their own through injuries and disappointments. Overall, the season went very well.

Girl's Team:

This year's Girl's Team finished 5th with 46 points. This is pretty good considering our roster and our school being the smallest team in the field.

Courtney Stuart lead all scorers for our team and in the meet itself. She also set two school records over the two days. She won the High Jump and Pole Vault and placed 2nd in the 800. Maddie Moore helped out in the high jump and relays. Christina Park scored in both the 100 and 200 to help score for the team. Both relay teams scored to help us finish with a respectable score.



Boy's Team:

The Boy's Team has performed much better than expected. Although we didn't qualify many to the finals, there were some real highlights.

Chris Lee scored all the team points, winning the Pole Vault in a PR 8-7 and scoring again in the discus.

Although we didn't get a lot of points, many of our athletes set personal records and felt pretty good about their futures in the events.

Final scores for both teams:

Girls: 46 points, 5th place (11 teams)

Boys: 10 points, 8th place (10 teams)



A Spring Break Full of SPLATTERS!



Our campers had a great time over Spring Break! We took a field trip to Splatters and created ceramic tiles with our own creative touch. Campers created their own tiles using colorful paint, and Splatters fired them into the kiln. These masterpieces will be fun to display amongst family and friends!
We had so much fun!

Fourth Grade Level Feature



The Fourth grade team is comprised of four unique teachers who work to inspire the students with interesting lessons and experiences, including their recent trip to Nature's Classroom in Mentone, Alabama. The team really enjoys working with this bright and capable group of fourth graders!

The Comets are taught by Ms. Amy Frazier and Ms. Monica Molina! Ms. Amy Frazier is an enthusiastic new addition to the McGinnis Wood's teaching team! She received her Bachelor's Degree in Communication and Child Psychology from the University of North Florida. Later, she attended The Florida State College of Jacksonville, Florida for her alternative teaching certification. Last summer, Ms. Amy and her family moved from Jacksonville, Florida to Alpharetta, Georgia! She has two children, Savannah and Griffin, and two dogs, Pete and Oscar. She and her husband Kessler enjoy playing, reading, biking, and playing watersports with their children! In addition, she loves to travel, and has flown to many places.

This is Ms. Monica's first year at McGinnis Woods. She has thoroughly enjoyed every minute getting to know her group of kids. Ms. Monica has a bachelor's degree in Advertising Journalism, a Montessori/ Human Development degree, and a Master's degree. She also speaks three different languages! Before becoming a teacher, she was inspired to teach through her experience in an orphanage in Ecuador. She has been a teacher for many years in various private schools. Her duties include being a lead teacher, a Spanish teacher, an Art teacher, and an English teacher. In her spare time, she enjoys going to the movies, working out, outdoor activities, and spending time with family and friends.

The Suns are taught by Ms. CeCe Walls and Ms. Kayla Graham. Ms. CeCe knew that she wanted to become a teacher at a very young age, especially since her mother was an educator for over thirty years! Before teaching, she started her educational journey to become a nurse. She knew something was missing, so she followed in her mother's footsteps, feeling an instant connection. She received her bachelor's degree at Grand Canyon University. She has taught in private schools in Chicago and Atlanta. She has been a part of the McGinnis Woods family for the past seven years. She has two children, a daughter named NiaMiah, age 11, and a son Elijah, age 15. In her spare time, she listens to music, laughing, telling stories, and spending time with her family.

Ms. Kayla is a native to the Alpharetta area. She co-teaches with Ms. CeCe. This is Ms. Kayla's first year at McGinnis Woods. She received her Bachelors of Science in Middle Grades Education from Kennesaw State University last May. As a child, she always knew that she wanted to be a teacher so she is glad to have achieved this dream. She has one adopted child, a Corgi mix, named Bella. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, baking, reading, going on hikes, and playing tennis. She also enjoys traveling and learning about other cultures.



McGinnis Woods celebrates 4th Annual Student Earth Week



McGinnis Woods Country Day School believes in environmental education for its students and their community. On April 20th the school concluded its 4th annual Student Earth Week with a guest speaker from Reaping Nature Educational Outreach Foundation. Denise Carleton, Gertie Green and Echo the Squirrel made a special appearance to educate students on being environmental stewards.

Reaping Nature is an environmental program company that educates individuals about protecting the environment. They believe that everyone, especially young people, should have access to environmental information that will help improve their lives and the health of the planet.

During our program, I “Likel” To Recycle students enjoyed testing their knowledge at recycling trivia and learning how to take better care of the environment. Gertie Green was very enthusiastic as she displayed ways to help the Earth. Some examples were: packing your lunch in recyclable products and using glass or aluminum bottles instead of plastic.

At the end of our program, we became better educated on ways to help the environment, our community and our school. Ms. Carleton and Gertie taught everyone the words and dance moves to the song I “Likel” to Recycle. Students and teachers were up dancing and singing and ready to recycle!





Robotics Team Wins Fourth Place in the Forsyth SumoBots Challenge!

On Saturday, April 13, 2013 a team of students represented McGinnis Woods at the Second Annual Forsyth Lego Sumobots Challenge at Vickery Creek Middle School. There were fifteen teams from private and public schools competing. The team worked really hard after school for two months preparing for the tournament. The students designed, built and programmed Sumo Wrestling

robots using Lego Mindstorms parts.

The tournament is played on a circular platform four feet in diameter with a 2 ½ inch black border around the outside. Two robots battle to see which robot can force the other out of the ring first. The matches are 'best two out of three wins'. The robots are programmed before the match and must operate without assistance from the team. In between matches the team members work furiously to adjust their programs and revamp their robots as needed. Sumo Robots need to be able to locate their opponents, move toward them, push them toward the outside and recognize proximity to the edge of the ring; all while avoided being pushed out.

Participating members were: McKinley Bowles, Tyler Burke, Joshua Chisolm, Tayler Evangelista, Bizzy Jordan, Ben Goldman, Alberta Pagliotti, Nirvan Parikh, Sachin and Sanjay Rajeev, Jacob Simon, Harish Suryadevara, and Nathan Weaver.

The team was coached by Steve Wells.

Stanford Testing



The annual Stanford 10 Testing took place during the week of April 22-26th. Students in grades 1-8th spent each morning testing their knowledge and abilities in a variety of content areas including Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary, Math Problem Solving and Computation, Science, Social Science, Listening and Thinking Skills. The tests are national tests and will provide us with important information regarding the effectiveness of our curriculum, teaching and student learning.

The tests will be sent out for scoring and should be back before the final report cards are sent out. Each student will receive a Student Report sheet which will provide valuable information about academic strengths and weaknesses, as well as specific areas to focus on for continual growth and achievement.

Preschool Corner



We are loving springtime and looking forward to Summer! This month, we have been learning all about Spring-related themes: weather, gardening, picnics and Earth Day! The children have really taken ownership over their little classroom plants and gardens—you may have noticed lots of sprouting carrots, herbs and plants in the classrooms. Last week, we enjoyed class picnics for lunch outside on the playground. The children loved being able to eat outside!

Earlier this month, the children received a visit from Piccadilly Puppets, who performed “Imagination Station.” Before the performance, we discussed “whole body listening,” which means that our bodies are still, our hands

are in our laps, our eyes are focused and our mouths are closed. The students were excellent audience members and had a blast participating in this interactive puppet show.

In coming weeks, we are looking forward to visits from the Fire Department and the Mini Mobile Zoo Party! We will also have our favorite annual events in May, including the Luau and Scene on the Green. If you haven’t already let us know what your plans are for summer attendance, please don’t forget. We have many exciting activities planned for the summer months and want to make sure we know which children will be with us!

Do you have suggestions or requests regarding our preschool programs? If so, we would love to hear from you! Our goal is to continue to be the very best preschool in town and address the needs of the whole child. Thank you for being a part of the McGinnis Woods family!

Word of the Month: Friendship

Friendship is the *Core Value Word of the Month* for students at McGinnis Woods.

We celebrate friendship everyday, but we decided to shine the light on Friendship by decorating our bulletin board with it's true meaning. Kindergarten created wonderful watercolor pieces; 1st Grade colored beautiful dolphins, the friendship animal; 2nd Grade patched together a Friendship quilt; 3rd Grade made a Friendship acrostic spelling out of the meaning; and 4-8th Grade put their hands together for a great quote about Friendship.

We truly are all friends here at McGinnis Woods!



Career Day!

Over the next couple of weeks, the students of our community will have the privilege of learning about a variety of careers. 1st-8th graders will hear about careers in areas including marketing, medicine, and education. On April 29th, adult volunteers will visit the school and give presentations to each grade level in order to give the students insight into opportunities available to them in the future. On May 6th, Pre-K and Kindergarten will visit with community helpers who have *Careers on Wheels*. They will see a fire truck, an ambulance and a police car and talk with these community helpers about their jobs. We would like to thank each of these volunteers for visiting us and opening our student's eyes to the world around them.

Maryam Momtaz

Krishna Doniparthi

Valerie Herrera

Laura Coleman

Brad Kershaw

Lisa Karp

Cedric Thompson

Rupal Vaishnav

Rodney Tabert

Georgia Barrows

Quinn Lawry

Mike Powell

Joe Neuwirth

Jennifer Thompson

Karl Edwards

Alvin Darien

Nancy Delk

George Campbell

Jessica Marro

Rich Mumford

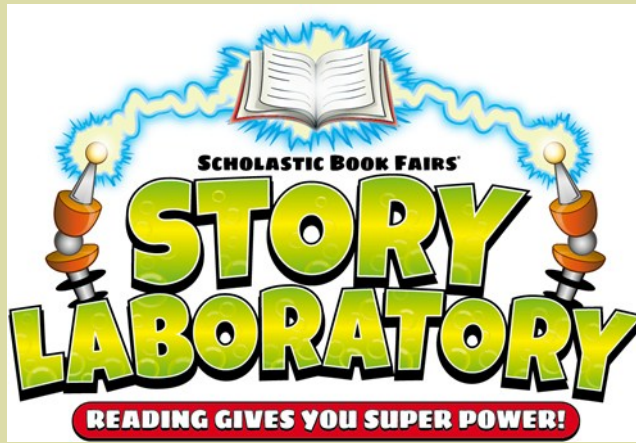
Ashok Immadisetti

Mark Marro

Boxcar Derby



On April 19th the Kindergarten Giraffes and Monkeys conducted a Shoebox Car Derby. Two of the many standards taught in Kindergarten include *motion* and *gravity*. The standards state, “Students will investigate different types of motion.” They also say, “Students will observe and communicate effects of gravity.” Ms. Lyndsey and Ms. Noelle thought it would be a fun and engaging to let their students create their own shoebox cars and conduct a Boxcar Derby. They instructed students to be creative, yet the students needed to be mindful of what elements would cause their cars to be fast or slow, which included weight. The students had such a fun time competing and cheering for each other!



This month book lovers of all ages hurried into the library to get a peek at the Scholastic Book Fair. The theme for our spring book fair was, “Story Laboratory.” Students and teachers alike were excited to begin making their student and classroom ‘Wish Lists’.

Displayed at this book fair were the required Summer Reading books for each grade level. “Having required books available makes it easier for parents,” said Ms. CeCe, one of the 4th grade teachers. There was a plethora of books to choose from. There were picture books, chapter books, reference and even books for parents too! “I love having lots of Spanish books available for students,” said Ms. Cassandra, our school Spanish teacher.



Also on display at the book fair was *Storia*. *Storia* is Scholastic’s interactive and education e-reading app specifically designed for children. The app is free and grows with children from toddler to teen years. Parents can download the free reading app at <http://www.scholastic.com/parents>.

Our Scholastic Book Fairs are always fun and exciting especially because they help create a “buzz” about reading. Your continued support of our school book fairs allows us to purchase books and other multimedia resources for classrooms. Without your help this would not be possible. Thank you for your continued support!

Jr. Beta Club Hosts Blood Drive



The McGinnis Woods Jr. BETA Club sponsored a blood drive on Friday, April 19, 2013 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. The students and sponsors would like to thank all donors for giving their time on a very rainy day. The Red Cross Blood Mobile was parked in front of our preschool all day long where workers greeted and gathered donations from 28 eligible donors. We are so pleased with the results of our drive and look forward to hosting future drives which help to save lives and further research of blood diseases.

Xylina Nuckles, Music and Drama Instructor

Xylina Nuckles is the Music Instructor at McGinnis Woods. She has also taught Drama at McGinnis Woods for the past 9 years and loves every minute of it! Currently, she and the students are preparing for our Spring Chorus Concert on Wednesday, May 15th, and the musical production of Aladdin Jr. on Saturday and Sunday, May 4th and 5th.

Ms. Xylina has a BFA in Theatre and Education from Stephen College in Missouri. When she is not here at school, she spends a lot of her time on stage. She recently finished performing in the Broadway comedy The Drowsy Chaperone at the Aurora Theatre that played to a sold out crowd for 4 weeks. She is also planning her destination wedding in Jamaica. She is marrying her best friend, whom the students know, Mr. Tron Stamper on July 7, 2013. They are so excited about their wedding and were even featured on an episode of *Say Yes to the Dress Bridesmaids* that aired on TLC!

Ms. Xylina believes that McGinnis Woods is truly a special place and she is grateful to have the opportunity to work with such wonderful students and staff.



Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Awards



Congratulations to sisters Siya and Himani Kalra for receiving an Honorable Mention on their Mars Project entry in the 2013 Toshiba/NSTA ExploraVision Contest. Their Honorable Mention placed them in the top 10% of over 5,000 entries. The award is for *demonstrating innovative thinking in the exploration of science and its impact on technology and the future.*

Siya said that she and Himani designed a model of a manned space craft structure and a rover that could overcome all of the obstacles that it would encounter on a mission to mars. Things the girls took into consideration for their design included the presence of cosmic rays, the use of appropriate materials that could withstand extreme heat and cold, research about plasma converters, steam electrolysis and special packaging that would be necessary to keep food and water viable.

Siya said that she is sure that they will prepare another project in the future since there are so many interesting topics to explore.



Sumobot Scrimmage!



A Sumobots Scrimmage was held on Monday, April 15, 2013 at McGinnis Woods. The contest brought the King's Ridge Christian School Tigers here to battle against our Wildcat Robotics Team. A Sumobots Battle Ring was set up in the P.E. Room. Each team entered three robots in a head-to-head competition where the team with the most points at the end of the match was named the winner. At halftime, the two teams were tied but King's Ridge pulled a little bit ahead in the second half and the Tigers were named the champions in the end. This was a terrifically fun, exciting competition with quite a few parents and students cheering our home team on. Thank you to all the students participating and all the spectators!



Social Media Rollout

McGinnis Woods is developing a social media community through Facebook and Instagram as an extension of the amazing things going on at MW everyday. The ubiquitous nature of social media provides an extraordinary opportunity to communicate with our students, teachers, families and friends of McGinnis Woods. As well as, those parents looking for an exceptional school for their children!



We want to share the unique educational experiences of our students and our school culture with the world in a professional and controlled manner. Safety is paramount in the roll out of these technologies at McGinnis Woods. Pictures will not be tagged and full names of students will not be used in descriptions or pictures. Specific dates, times or locations of field trips will not be used prior to or during school trips. We ask that if you comment on one of our posts that you please keep this in mind as well. Ultimately, we hope that our responsible use of social media will demonstrate the positive utilization of such technology to our students.

If you have any pictures of school events, sports teams, clubs or information that you feel is prudent for sharing on the MW-FB page or Instagram please forward them on to efrancel@mcginniswoods.org. Thanks for your interest and input.



Jr. Beta Club Serves at The Place

On April 10, 2013, we went to The Place to serve a Noon-Day Meal. The Place is an organization that focuses on helping people in Forsyth County who are experiencing trouble meeting their basic needs. Going to The Place was a very humbling, yet rewarding, experience. It showed us that we were very fortunate. We realized that most of the things that we use every day we take for granted, for example, being able to go to bed full and to have nice clothing. We served over 100 meals and were able to serve all of the food we brought to the families. We were lucky enough to meet wonderful people of all ages.

We created the entire menu and planned everything out. The funding came from a previous fundraiser, the Penny Project. It felt good for every single person to be able to hand out food. It brought warmth to our hearts to be able to serve the less fortunate.

We all learned a valuable lesson when we went to the Place. We learned not to take things for granted, and to cherish the things that we love. We will never forget this day, and the people that we met with stay within our hearts forever.



McGinnis Woods Summer Spectacular is filled with fantastic field trips!

Don't miss out on our fun-filled Summer Camp. Campers will spend their days discovering, making, doing and growing. Some of the upcoming field trips for Summer Camp this year include:

Art Barn
Legoland
Monkey Joes
Sunny Farms Horseback Riding
Summer Movie Express
Chattahoochee Nature Center
Tubing at Appalachian Outfitters
Center for Puppetry Arts
Picnics at the Parks
Stars & Strikes
and more!

Titanic Guest Speaker



BJ Abraham from the Southeastern Order of Storytellers came to tell her story of the Titanic today. Her story was very different, in that it was told from the perspective of the ship. She became interested in the Titanic because her paternal grandfather was supposed to have been on that ship. She wrote a research paper about it for her Masters in storytelling. She began her performance by making sure everyone knew all the “ship” vocabulary she would mention in the story. The name of her story was “The Night the Unsinkable Became the Unthinkable”. Her story was very fascinating and captivating! After her performance, she showed us artifacts (some replicas and some authentic) from the Titanic. She also opened the floor to a question and answer period. We hope she can perform at our school again next year and tell another one of her amazing stories.

Humane Society Visits McGinnis Woods!

On Monday, April 15, 2013, volunteers from the Humane Society brought two furry friends to visit. The Humane Society is actively involved in advocating laws to protect animals, investigating animal cruelty, and providing shelter to displaced pets. Unlike county shelters, the Humane Society provides open areas for animals to live, and they regularly move these animals around to provide a clean and healthy environment. One of the volunteers, a retired teacher, said, “The best part of our job is to not see one of our animals when we come back in to volunteer.”

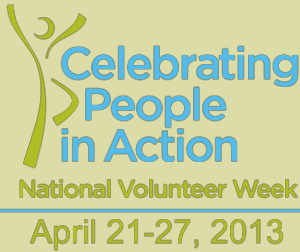
To raise funds for the upkeep of these facilities and to continue the awesome work they are doing for animals, McGinnis Woods hosted a jeans day where students were allowed to wear jeans if they donated five dollars. The fundraising efforts of our Preschool and Elementary Schools raised \$841.80 in one day!



Earth Day Pep Rally Success

We had a wonderful time at our Earth Day Pep Rally on Monday, April 22. A small group of students from the 5-8th grade classes wrote a play about saving the earth through recycling. The clever play included great scenery, props, musical selections and choreography. The performers taught the audience all about fossil fuel, recycling and that you are never too young to make a difference! Special thanks to Mr. Adam, Middle Grades Science Teacher, for heading up the group of young actors.

PA Update



The year is flying by-there is only one more month of school left! April was another busy month, although May promises to be even busier. We welcomed a Guest Speaker from the Atlanta Humane Society, and raised money through a “Denim Day” for this great cause. We were able to raise \$841, and we know it was put to good use by purchasing necessary items from The Atlanta Humane Society’s wish list. Thank you for supporting this great cause. The children enjoyed the speakers and their four legged friends.

This week is National Volunteer Week; a week that is about inspiring, encouraging and recognizing people looking for ways to engage in their community. It is about realizing and demonstrating that as a group we are able to achieve more to shape and change a community than we ever could by ourselves. At

McGinnis Woods Country Day School a group that is trying to positively impact our community is the Parents Association. Our Parent Association Board (all volunteer positions), along with numerous other volunteers from the Pre-K thru 8th Grade classrooms, organize and execute numerous fundraising opportunities, social functions and charitable projects. Without these volunteers the events and projects are simply impossible to attempt. Many of the benefits of these volunteer hours can be seen throughout the school and in each classroom; consider the broadcast system, sports court, or the promethean projectors. Some of the benefits, for example, charity work and our social events are harder to see, but no less important. These volunteers have made a conscious choice to make a difference in the McGinnis Woods community.

As the school year is coming to a close, the PA Board is already looking to next year. If you would like to become more involved in impacting the McGinnis Woods community through volunteering, please contact us at pa@mcginniswoods.org Depending on your availability, time commitment, and talents, we have something for you!

There’s no “I” in Team, but there is a “u” in volunteer; won’t “u” consider giving some of your time and talents to the McGinnis Woods Community? Get involved and help us make next year a great one!

Nature’s Classroom



The 4th grade took their annual trip to Nature's Classroom in Mentone, Alabama for three days and two nights. This has always been a great experience for them because it teaches them about team building, developing new relationships, and responsibility. This year, we participated in activities such as **Burma Bridge** (making a bridge out of rope and then walking across it), making **Fire** using tinder and kindling, **Nature Hikes** (learning about plants, animals, and trees), learning how to **make cinnamon rolls** in the outdoors, building a **Geodome**, performing live **Skits** on stage, **Roasting S'mores** over an open fire, partaking in an **Underground Railroad** simulation, having a **Scavenger Hunt** outdoors

(looking for objects in nature), and learning how to remain **ORTless** (Organic Recyclable Trash). The overnight field trip is a new experience for our students, especially being away from their family for a short time, but each and every student walked away with memorable thoughts of a great, learning experience.