

McGinnis Woods Buzz



August 2015 Volume 10, Issue 1



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

8/28	1st Graders to Gwinnett Environmental Center
8/31	4th Graders to Zoo Atlanta
9/2	PreK 4A to Kroger
9/3	PreK 4B to Kroger
9/4	PreK 5 to Kroger
9/7	Labor Day McGinnis Woods Closed
9/9	K-2 Digger Dog Guest Speaker
9/10	KA and KB Art Barn
Week of 9/13	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 life-
long love of learning.*

A Message From Ms. Mary



We were thrilled to welcome our students and their families at our annual Back to School Picnic on Saturday, August 8. That seems like a long time ago as the school year is now in full swing and everyone has settled into a comfortable learning routine. Students have done a fantastic job adjusting to their new classrooms and accepting the challenges associated with different grade levels. Our staff is collaborating and working to meet the individual needs of all of our students. As you can imagine, this is a lofty, yet rewarding task. There are plenty of smiles to go around as we greet each day with excitement.

This week is our third full week of school and our scheduled Curriculum Nights. We trust that you will make attending Curriculum Night a priority. The evenings run from 6:00pm-7:30pm. For PreK-4th grade we break the evening into two identical sessions so that parents are able to attend sessions in different grade levels. During our Middle School Curriculum Night, parents should plan to attend the entire evening as is it broken into two sessions based on content area, rather than grade level. Curriculum Nights are a wonderful time to ask questions regarding class specific issues, learn about the class goals for the school year, and to connect with other parents.

Our sports teams have been practicing hard and are ready to take on other schools. The Cross Country Team has their first meet today at Jim Miller Park in Marietta. The Girls Volleyball Team will host their team opener at McGinnis Woods on Monday, August 31 at 4:30. Please come out to support our Wildcats!



Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to make your McGinnis Woods experience more meaningful. Like us on Facebook and be sure to check out our Parent Association page at www.mcginniswoodspa.org

We are going to have a great year!

Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update

Welcome to a new school year! Your PA Board is excited about this academic year, and we have some great things planned for our McGinnis Woods family!

Hopefully, we've had a chance to meet you at one of our recent school events. Whether it was the new family ice cream social or the back to school picnic; we hope you are feeling welcome in our community and free to ask questions!

The Parents Association is designed to help raise funds for the school, provide additional outlets for community service and build community while supporting the school's mission, Inspiring Students with the Passion to Excel. This year, members of the PA are also serving as mentor families for those wanting another connection as they begin the year at McGinnis Woods. Feel free to ask Ms. Mary or a member of our PA Board to sign you up!

If you walk in the front doors of school to take your children to class or pick up your kids afterschool, you cannot help but notice the smiles beaming from the PA bulletin board at you! Thank you to all who sent in adorable pictures of your children on the first day of school. As fun as it was for you to capture the moment, it has been equally great to share these moments with others! Just a great example of how we can build community!

Another example of community building exists in the second floor hall of the main school building—right outside our library. Come “meet” the teachers who make up our family in the Woods! Pictures and quick bio sheets are posted in time there just in time for Curriculum Nights. Learn about the people that fill your child's day, and we promise you will be inspired too!

Now that school has started, we want to give you a look ahead to what is coming this Fall:

September brings us our first Fundraising event--Charleston Wrap! This fall our students will be selling Charleston Wrap (wrapping paper and kitchen gadgets). The items are super cute, and the wrapping can always come in handy!

Other special events this Fall include a denim day, Tanner photography, Fall Festival baskets and a few new opportunities that we are still ironing out!

More than anything, we want you to know that you are part of our community. Please drop us a note to get involved, raise funds with us, and volunteer to help! It takes all of us to make McGinnis the place it is, and we need your help. With you, we know that we can make this year the best yet!



Preschool Corner



Our Summer is over and the waterslides are put away, but we have had a wonderful return to our "Back to School" schedule. Our themes for the month of August were: On the go with Transportation, Welcome Back to School, All About Me and Exploring Our 5 Senses.

During "On the go with Transportation" the children had a wonderful time pretending to take a trip on an airplane, making ramps for their cars and trucks to drive down, making and flying paper airplanes and watching a real space shuttle taking off on our interactive whiteboard.

Welcome Back to School week was filled with self-portraits, introduction and reminders about class rules, calendars, circle time and making new friends. We traced our bodies with sidewalk chalk and made fun apple prints and apple collages.

We had a fantastic week focusing on the theme "All About Me" where we learned about the many things that make us special. We especially enjoyed the wonderful parent involvement that we had during the planned activities of the week.

This week we are focusing on "Exploring with our 5 Senses". We are enjoying the many touch, feel and listen books we have in our classroom libraries, exploring finger painting with shaving cream rather than finger paints, listening to music, sampling different treats through taste tests and touching many different textures.

New this year, we are featuring an author during the last week of each month. This month's author is Jane Yolen. She wrote the How Do Dinosaur books.

We would like to welcome back Ms. Jasmine who was away for a time but has returned to her McGinnis Woods work family. Two new staff members have recently joined our staff. Ms. Shannon works in 3TB and Ms. Amy works in our Senior Infants room. We are happy to welcome them to our McGinnis Woods Pre-school team.

Please mark your calendars for this upcoming events:

Trike-A-Thon week of September 14th

Scholastic Book Fair week of November 9th



Wildcat Chat

Our Wildcats are off to a great start! Many of our Middle Schoolers are participating in Volleyball, Soccer, and Cross Country this fall.

Our soccer team is young, but talented. We have 8 fifth graders on our team this year so watch out in 2018! We are fortunate enough to be coached by Coach Roger Gallivan. Coach Gallivan is an avid soccer fan and played soccer for many years even throughout college. He brings enthusiasm and knowledge of the game to our players. Under his tutelage, we will have fun and learn a great deal about soccer. Our first game will be September 3rd against Faith Lutheran at Terrell Mill Park.

Volleyball this fall is being coached again by Ms. Sam and Ms. Jenn. The team has been working hard and has many returning players from last year. We are extremely excited to be able to host our first home volleyball games this fall. We have a new volleyball net system that our girls have been practicing with this fall, so we are well prepared and looking forward to a home court advantage. Our first home game will be August 31st. Please come out and support our Wildcats as we crush Epstein!

Cross Country is being coached by Ms. Lisa Aber and her husband, Mr. Chris Aber. They are very familiar with the running community as both of their girls run with a club and bring lots of expertise to our team. Our XC teams consist of four girls and will run their first race on August 26th at Jim Miller Park.

We look forward to a great season!

Coach C



Go Wildcats!

Parents Night Out Planned for September 18th



Calling All Pre-K – 5th Grade Students! Parents' Night Out is Back! Plan to join Ms. Sam and Ms. Wendy on Friday, September 18th from 6:00 – 9:00 for an evening packed with fun and excitement.

Students will enjoy dinner, a movie and fun crafts and activities. Students may come in their pajamas and bring a sleeping bag to snuggle in when the movie is shown.

Watch your child's binder for the flyer promoting the night and be sure to sign up for the fun.

McGinnis Woods 5th Grader Wins National Title in Gymnastics



McGinnis Woods is always pleased to share about some of the amazing feats that our students accomplish outside of the classroom.

Katherine Steckel, a fifth grader at McGinnis Woods, successfully completed her level 5 Rhythmic Gymnastics season last year with some impressive competitions and titles.

She came in first all around and with her hoop routine in the Georgia State competition last March. She also performed well at the South East Regional Competition in Houston, Texas last May when she placed second all around.

Katherine capped off her successful season of training at the National Windy City Power League Competition in Chicago, Illinois where she won the national title for her age and level with her hoop routine and then placed fourth all around.

What an amazing season Katherine had! Her passion for gymnastics was evident as she lit up the competitions with her skill and grace.



Middle School Social Committee Formed

This month many of our middle school students volunteered to head up the 1st semester of our middle school social committee. This committee, led by Ms. Nicole, plans social events catering to ONLY our upperclassmen! The students on the committee help with planning the events, setting up, and running the events. Past events have included ice cream socials, pizza parties, open gym, electronic games, a “Just Dance” party and a campfire featuring s’mores.

These events allow our middle school students to spend time with classmates in a non-academic setting, to just hang-out and have FUN!

Congratulations to our first semester committee members: Marian Freeman, Anthony Musolino, Sainidhi Battula, Tate Smith, Madison Aber, Maggie Beguiristain, Mari Davis and Molly Hamann. They are hosting a donut breakfast on Friday, August 28 from 8:00-8:25 in the lunchroom to kick off the year.



Second Graders Visit Fernbank



The Second Grade Fish and Leopards traveled into Atlanta to experience the Fernbank Museum on Wednesday, August 19. They explored the new exhibit on the brain and practiced using their brains to help them speak a second language. Students also spent time in the exhibit on the 5 Senses and enjoyed blowing bubbles, talking to each other from across the room with a whisper, viewing optical illusions, a tornado and a green screen!

The final exhibit the students experienced was the “Walk through Georgia”. There they explored all of the regions and habitats from our state, saw the animals from each region and met the huge dinosaurs! Lastly, they watched the IMAX movie on the oceans created by Jacques Cousteau. Students were mesmerized by the

amazing animals and learned many secrets of the sea!

It was a great field trip and we can hardly wait for our next adventure together when we head to the Tellus Museum in September.



Ms. Jenn, School Counselor, Makes Each Day Special



Ms. Jennifer Evangelista is the school counselor at McGinnis Woods. This is her 9th year at McGinnis Woods. She is originally from Syracuse, New York, but has been in the Atlanta area for 19 years. Ms. Jenn went to State University of New York College at Oswego in upstate New York. There she earned her BS in Elementary Education with a Middle Grades extension. She completed her masters degree in School Counseling at Georgia State University and also received her gifted endorsement. She is a certified teacher in grades PK-8, a certified school counselor K-12, and certified to teach gifted education.

At McGinnis Woods, Ms. Jenn does a variety of things. She teaches character education/guidance lessons to all classes on a weekly basis. During those classes she covers many topics including problem solving, study skills, and bullying. She also meets often with staff, parents, and students to work through various student concerns.

Ms. Jenn also runs the Jr. Beta Club, a national service organization. Fifth through eighth grade students meet with her to identify and support local charities and our own school community. She also manages the Student Council at McGinnis Woods which supports and conducts many fun programs for the school community including order in days, Talent Show, and the wildly popular Staff vs. Student Basketball Game.

Ms. Jenn lives in south Forsyth with her husband Joe, their three children, Tayler (12), Drew (9), and Addie (7), and their puppy Cooper. Having all 3 of her children at McGinnis has been a blessing for her family and they enjoy spending a lot of time with their McGinnis Woods friends. In her free time, Ms. Jenn enjoys running with her dog, going to the movies, and travelling.

Our word of the Month: Wisdom



The Word of the Month for August is wisdom. Wisdom is defined as finding out what you should do and doing it. Throughout the month, we will be looking for students who are working hard to master this important character trait.

Some students who work hard to master this character trait will be recognized on the morning announcements and will receive a Chick-fil-A coupon to celebrate their progress in this area.

Welcome New Lead Teachers

We have had a number of new lead teachers join our ranks this year. Each of these dedicated individuals brings unique gifts and talents to our exceptional staff. We hope that you will take the time to welcome them into our school community.

Ms. Sandra Leon Cone is teaching Spanish to our PreK4-8th grade students. She has taught over 14 years in independent schools and understands the joys and demands that the job brings. She is very excited about her role at McGinnis Woods and has created energetic and stimulating lessons for the students.

Ms. Samantha Westerlind is a familiar face at McGinnis Woods. She filled in during Ms. Sonia's maternity leave and was a Camp Counselor during our Sunsational Summer Camp, too. Ms. Sammi has taught Middle Schoolers at another private school before joining our staff in the 4th grade.

Ms. Lindsey Reeder is our new Computer Lab Instructor. Lindsey is a certified teacher who loves working with students and is passionate about technology. She taught 5th grade last year at a local school. She has some wonderful plans in store for our Robotics Team and all of our students.

Anne Aviles is the Science Teacher for 5th-8th grade students. She enjoys learning about science through labs and hands-on activities and always has something interesting to share with her students. She joined our staff from a local school where she was their STEM teacher.

Melisa McGuire is teaching our 5-8th Grade Language Arts students. She comes to us via another Atlanta Independent School. Her positivity and love for the students and literature is inspiring her students to stretch themselves and learn new skills and strategies.

We are so thankful to have these fine educators join our staff. Their expertise and commitment to the students and families of McGinnis Woods is one of the many things that makes McGinnis Woods special.



5th Graders Learning to Keyboard During Electives

Each of the Middle School students at McGinnis Woods choose an elective to participate in each semester. This semester the students were able to select from either Fit Girls, an exercise and nutrition course geared to girls, Cartooning taught by our art teacher, Mr. Dan, or Singapore Math with Ms. Pam.

Each year every 5th grader takes keyboarding during the first semester. This class helps to prepare the students for the rigors of typing and note taking necessary for 21st Century Learning. Each student is given a pretest at the beginning of the semester and will be administered a post test at the end of the semester to show growth in both speed and accuracy.

The middle schoolers are enjoying their electives as they develop new skills and interests.



Discovery Clubs Back in Session



Our first Discovery Club session begins the week of September 14 and ends the week of October 19, except for Monday and Friday clubs that end the last week of October. Space is very limited so be sure to get your form in as soon as possible. Forms are due by Monday, 8/31. There are many great clubs offered this six-week session including Jr. Robotics with Ms. Wendy, Cooking with Ms. Tanya, Cheerleading with Ms. Stacey, Morning Band with Mr. Dean, STEM with Ms. Kammy and Ms. Wendy, Hip Hop Dance with Ms. Cece, Chess with Ms. Sam and Drama club with Ms. Xylina.

The Robotics team is for students ages 9 and older. The team meets twice a week until 4:30. Computer instructor Ms. Lindsey Reeder will be having an information session in September for those families interested. Information

about the competitions will be given to us in late August from the First Lego League (FLL). This year's competition is Trash Trek. The robotics team students will program an autonomous robot to score points on a thematic playing surface, create innovative solutions to a problem, all while being guided by the FLL Core Values. Parent volunteers are welcome.

Later this year, we will be offering Mandarin Chinese, Etiquette and Science Olympiad. Please let us know if there is an additional club that you would like to see offered or would enjoy sponsoring.



Health and Safety Tips from Nurse Penny



I hope this school year is off to a healthy start for you and your family. All of the students seem to be settling in nicely and adjusting to their new classes and schedules.

In Health, we have started the year off learning about germs and hand washing. This is a very important practice that we reinforce throughout the year. Nutrition is also a very important aspect of health class and is reinforced frequently. As a school, we strongly urge healthy meals and snacks during school hours and saving sugary treats for other times. As a reminder, only water is permitted during snack times.

The practice of providing healthy treats is encouraged for class birthday treats and classroom celebrations, too. As a staff, we see a difference in our students' learning abilities and behaviors when they are following a healthy diet.

Have you handed in all of your students required school forms?

FORMS NEEDED:

- Ga 3231, immunization form
- Ga 3300, hearing, vision, nutrition and dental form.

The following is an excerpt from our school handbook regarding medication:

***MEDICATIONS are administered only at 11am and 3pm. Medication should only be administered at school if it is necessary for your child to have it during school hours. Forms should be filled out when medication is necessary.

Please note: IF EMERGENCY MEDICATIONS are needed by your student, they must be turned in to the front office along with a current medication sheet in order for your child to leave campus to attend any field trip or sporting event.

Here are a few websites which I refer to for reliable health related information:

USFSIS@public.govdeilvery.com

Kidshealth.gov

Organwiseguys.org

Have a healthy month and call or email me at any time with questions or comments,

Nurse Penny

Student Council Update

Student Council is a wonderful leadership opportunity available to our students at McGinnis Woods. This club is sponsored by Ms. Jenn, our school counselor. Ms. Jenn does an excellent job empowering our students to dream big and to bring their ideas to life.

Our Student Counsel actively supports many activities at our school. Students organize events throughout the school year including Chick-fil-A order in days, Candygrams which are sent out during Valentine's Day celebrations, and the annual Talent Show. Last year our student council hosted our inaugural Student Teacher Basketball Game! It was an electrifying event that started with a simple idea and then became a successful community building event.

Elections for Student Council officers will run during the month of September. Fifth through Eighth graders are welcome to run for office and will complete applications in order to run for President, Vice President, Secretary, or Treasurer. A full week of positive campaigning will take place before the election and each candidate will create a commercial to be aired on the morning announcements highlighting their ideas and dreams for the school and its students. Student Council elections will take place on Tuesday, September 29.

Also in September, classes will choose class representatives to attend all Student Council meetings and help the officers assist with planning and implementing important monthly tasks.



Jr. Beta Club Update



The Jr. Beta Club at McGinnis is already meeting to determine the charities we would like to work with this year. This club is open to 5th-8th grade students who have all As or All As and one B and good grades on the conduct section of their report card. Fifth graders will be eligible to join at the end of the first quarter.

As an organization we will spend the year raising money and completing activities to show our support for specific organizations. Be on the lookout for our activities!

Thanks in advance for supporting our efforts to help others! We believe that caring for others is a responsibility and a privilege that we can enjoy.

New Gardens Welcome Students Back to School



During Summer Camp this year, our campers enjoyed STEM activities and ecology opportunities as part of their weekly schedules. A lot of time was spent planning, prepping, planting and caring for beautiful gardens in our outdoor café area and also on the playground area near the new middle school building.

The campers loved watching their seeds sprout and grow into amazing, towering sunflowers and vegetable bearing plants. They even made whimsical signs and decorations to hang from the trees and fences near the gardens.

Now we are enjoying watching the gardens as the seasons begin to change. Students can enjoy lunch outside in the outdoor café under the umbrellas, too. Ms.

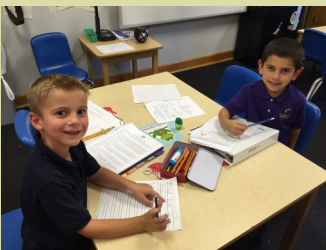


Wendy Hamann, 1st grade teacher, and her dedicated workers will be adding fall plants and vegetables to the gardens when the time is right. But until then we will enjoy the beautiful flowers and peaceful butterflies that are making themselves home.



at

After School, A Great Way to End the Day



The McGinnis Woods After School is an important part of our program. Our wonderful assistant teachers lead our After School classes, which are assigned by grade level, and ensure that the students follow the after school schedule which includes snacks, outdoor playtime, and a variety of other activities.

After School students spend quiet time focused on their homework daily. The After School teachers refer to student binders to make sure that homework is started. Students are able to ask their teachers for assistance completing tricky homework problems and other needs.

Another aspect of our After School Program is our successful Discovery Clubs Program. Registration forms were sent home at the beginning of the school year and are due on Monday, August 31st. These clubs give your student an opportunity to explore interests and deepen their skills. Clubs being offered this session range from cooking to robotics.

Our After School Program runs all school year long and so, we make special plans for all holiday weeks that include field trips and daily fun activities. Our favorite thing to hear after a busy day is “can I stay a little longer?” because it reminds us that we are doing a great job as a home away from home for our students.



PreK Teachers Guiding the Way

Who has patience galore, loves answering endless questions, and relishes teaching four and five year olds? Our fabulous Pre-K 4 & 5 teachers! We are lucky enough to have six dedicated PreK teachers here at McGinnis Woods.

Ms. Stacey and Ms. Hiral are both teachers in PreK4-A. Ms. Stacey is originally from Dayton, Ohio. She graduated from Ohio University with a B.S. in Communications and a minor in Journalism. She has been teaching at McGinnis Woods for seven years. She adores Pre-K. Ms. Stacey also enjoys coaching cheerleading and being involved in the schools functions. She loves to spend time with her family... husband Kamran, son Ari (16), daughter Elanna (12) and their dog Oreol!

Ms. Hiral is originally from California. She attended California State University Fullerton where she earned a B. S. in Education. Ms. Hiral has been at McGinnis Woods for the past seven years. She has been working with children for the past nine years. She enjoys spending time with her husband Nilesh and son Dylan (2 1/2).

Ms. Robyn and Ms. Valorie are both teachers in PreK4-B. Ms. Robyn is originally from Savannah, GA. She has been in Atlanta since 1985. Ms. Robyn has degrees in Early Childhood Education from Ashworth College and Grand Canyon University. She has taught Pre-K for many years. This is Ms. Robyn's ninth year at McGinnis Woods. Her hobbies include reading, bowling, and sports "Go Falcons". She enjoys spending time with her husband Curtis and has two children Amber, and Zeffery.

Ms. Valorie is from Woodstock. She has three children Amy, Chris, who is a senior at Kennesaw University, and Zachary a senior in high school. Ms. Valorie received her CDA in 2011. She has been with McGinnis Woods for 7 years. Her hobbies include reading and doing just about anything outdoors. Ms. Valorie loves to spend time with her husband Ryan and their family and especially going on different vacations. In her spare time she is outside playing with her three Chihuahuas.

Ms. Lisa and Ms. Ryan are teachers in PreK-5. Ms. Lisa is originally from Port Charlotte, Florida. She attended Florida State University and received a degree in International Affairs. Ms. Lisa has been with McGinnis Woods since May of 1999. This is her twelfth year teaching in the elementary school. Her hobbies include reading, cooking, and tennis. She enjoys spending time with her husband Chris and her children Madison (12), Emerson (10), Bryson (2) and Allison (3 months).

Ms. Ryan is an undergraduate at Emory University where she studies Human Health and Spanish. This is her very first year at McGinnis Woods, but she has been working with children for several years. Her hobbies include reading, singing, and exploring Atlanta. She loves spending time with her three brothers, sorority sisters, and Alaskan Husky, Remington.

Our PreK teachers work tirelessly to prepare engaging lessons and fun hands-on learning activities for our students. They make every day a great day at McGinnis Woods!



Library News



The McGinnis Woods Media Center has expanded and welcomed returning students to this school year. Our media center is full of color and lots for students to do.

Over the Summer Ms. Jacki was busy remodeling the Media Center. We have added new books, weeded out older books and created a reading nook for students. Students have been so excited about the changes and love the new expansion! Also added this year is library centers. During each month, students will rotate between library centers that correlate to the theme they are studying in class.

Our media center will continue to celebrate student birthdays with our monthly Birthday Book Club! Birthday Book Club allows parents to recognize student birthday's and create a memory of the occasion in our media center. Students will visit during their birthday month and select a new book.

A nameplate is placed inside with the student's name. The book will be checked out to the student for two weeks before it is cataloged and becomes a part of our library collection. The cost to participate is \$20 and it's not too late to recognize your student! If interested, please email Ms. Jacki at JFreeman@mcginniswoods.org.



McGinnis Woods Summer Camp Success!



We had an amazing time in Summer Camp here at McGinnis Woods! Our summer was filled with exciting themes, fun and interesting field trips, daily STEM and Ecology classes, daily physical fitness and water park activities, special guest visits and much more.

We offered many Specialty and Academic Camps to our campers including a variety of educational ways to sharpen their skills and expand their minds all throughout the summer. Some of the exciting camps included swimming, cooking, baking, gymnastics, drama club, nature club, and academic boot camps at many grade levels.

We visited many exciting and interesting places throughout the summer such as the World of Coca-Cola, Mayfield Dairy, Zoo Atlanta, Treetop Quest, Stars and Strikes, Consolidated Gold Mines, and we even saw the Braves win their game against the

Norfolk Tides!

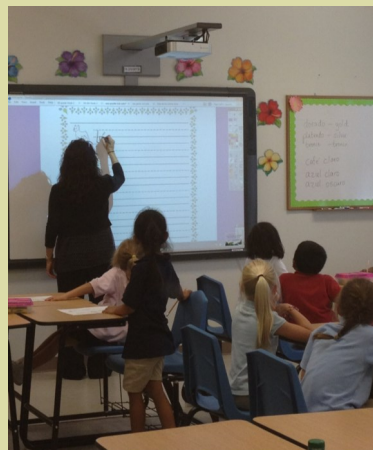
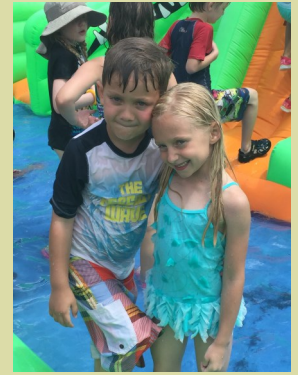


Some of the many special guests that visited us during our Sunsational Summer Camp included Mr. Greg's Reptiles, Parrot Productions, Cricket's Petting Zoo, and Lee Bryan's Puppet Show.

We had such a great summer! We hope that your camper will join in the fun next summer!



Pictures from Around the School



Please Save the Date



KENDRA SCOTT

You're invited to a

Kendra Gives Back Party

A fun shopping event benefitting

McGinnis Woods Country Day School.

Enjoy raffles, bubbles and bites while you shop

Friday, October 2nd

6-9 pm

20% of sales will be donated to

McGinnis Woods Country Day School's

Parent Association

KENDRA SCOTT – AVALON

3150 AVALON BLVD I ALPHARETTA, GA 33432