



McGinnis Woods Buzz

December 2010 Volume 2, Issue 3



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

Inspiring Students with the
Passion to Excel

DATES TO REMEMBER

- 12/17:** Class Spelling Bees
Report Cards
Holiday Parties
- 12/20-1/3:** Winter Holiday Break
After School in Session
- 12/21:** Reptile Man
- 12/24:** School Closed
- 1/31:** School Closed
- 1/3:** Classes Resume

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

One of my favorite holiday songs proclaims, "It's the most wonderful time of the year." That sums up the jam packed days here at our school during December. This issue of our newsletter highlights some of the excitement and activities which have filled our days, but so much of what has been taking place can't be summed up in a few words, you have to see it to believe it! So, I will try to paint some word pictures for you:

Our Pre-K students are counting to 100 and reading words along with their Letter People friends whenever they can sit still for a few moments!

The Kindergarteners are reading and writing up a storm while looking for gingerbread people.

The 1st graders are learning to share both inside and outside of their classrooms, as they made and delivered Build-a-Bear workshop creations to the Children's Wish Foundation for children in need of a hug this season.

Our second graders hosted an early morning holiday concert featuring their newly acquired recorder skills and enthusiastic voices for their parents.

The third graders have been expanding their understanding of ancient Greece and are looking forward to their Greek god and goddesses' banquet featuring the latest in toga attire.

The fourth graders tried to develop an interest in the finer things in life with their recent trip to the Fox Theater to see the Nutcracker.

Our 5th—8th graders exercised their way into the Guinness Book of World records with 4,000 other Georgia students.

The Girls Wildcat Basketball A Team is undefeated and the boys team has racked up more wins than losses.

The scholastic book fair, along with Ms. Jacki, took over our library with a mind boggling assortment of books and trinkets!

Our amazing Parent Association hosted our annual Holiday Shoppe providing our student body with a chance to shop for and wrap gifts for their favorite people!

As you can see, this is an exciting place to learn and grow. Thanks for sharing this experience with us! We will be eager to see and hear about your holidays on January 3, 2011, when classes resume.



Wildcat Chat

Basketball Teams Start the Season Winning!

The Boys and Girls Basketball Teams have started the season by winning their first two games. Both teams have improved from last year and their early season wins confirm this.

The Girls A-Team won their first two games convincingly with wins against Atlanta Girls' School (24-6) and Davis Academy (20-10). In both wins, Adrienne Lee (Big "A") dominated play with 18 points versus Atlanta Girls' School and 10 points versus Davis Academy. She is getting some real help on both sides of the court from Courtney Stuart and Tomisin Odetoyinbo.

The girls had it rough at Atlanta Girls' School on December 2nd. Both teams fought hard to a 10-9 win for Atlanta Girls' School. Our Wildcats played tough and gained valuable experience while taking on more experienced opponents.

The Girls B-Team opened their season at Atlanta Girls' School. They lost 24-6, but are learning and making progress. They played again on December 12 but had a lot of fun even though they didn't win.

The Boys Team is currently undefeated at 2-0. They have really improved under Coach Stuart and seem to be building momentum as the season moves on. Led by Ryan Field and Sam Zoldock, the team has beaten Davis Academy for the first time ever. They also won their first overtime game at Cottage School in an exciting contest.

It looks like our teams will have a very successful season this year. Stay tuned for more updates and results.



Musical Moments at McGinnis Woods

Many of the students at McGinnis Woods have been busily practicing for the Winter Concerts in December. The second graders had their concert on December 7th. Parents packed the lunchroom first thing in the morning, and they enjoyed the recorder concert first. The second graders have been learning how to play the recorder all semester long and were eager to show off their skills. Ms. Deborah, the Band Teacher, has been patiently working with them, and they all did a fantastic job! Next, the second graders performed the singing portion of the concert. Ms. Xylina, the Music Teacher, picked some fun and spirited songs for the students to sing, and they all sang with gusto!



The musical concerts continued at the Lord of Life Church on December 9th. The third grade band began the evening concert with a mix of seasonal and classic tunes. Next, the 4th-8th Chorus performed some holiday songs, and then they joined with the 4th-8th grade band to combine forces on three holiday songs. Last, the 4th-8th graders ended the concert with some marches and a special band trio. Ms. Xylina and Ms. Deborah have certainly done a great job this semester leading and inspiring all of these talented students!

2nd Annual First Lego Robotics Competition

McGinnis Woods Country Day School competed in the 2nd Annual First Lego League (FLL) Robotics Competition November 13th. For those unfamiliar with robotics, it introduces students to real world engineering challenges by building and programming Lego Robots to perform specific tasks.

For 2010, our challenge theme was "Body Forward," which emphasized biomedical engineering. Our Robotic Team chose to focus on "How does a Robotic Muscle Work?" Hypodermic needle launches, casting broken bones and removing stints were just some of the obstacles the robots had to perform. Through weeks of intense training and superb guidance by our instructors, Mr. Steve and Mr. T, our team was recognized by the judges winning 2nd place in the Best Robot and Design Category. Way to



PA Board Update

As 2010 winds down and the holidays approach, we are reminded of the many blessings we have as a community. Together, we have worked to supply the North Fulton Community Charities with food for the hungry, supported over ten families this holiday season, enhanced our school's technology by providing over 60 new laptops, new sound equipment, new stage equipment and improved our technology backbone with new servers and 40 HP Thin Clients. This year was "wrapped up" with the Holiday Shoppe. It was such a pleasure helping the students shop for their families. Thank you for your participation, and we hope you enjoy the "treasures" your child thought were perfect for you.

We are thankful to have such a wonderful community of caring parents. Your support has provided the backbone to all we do. Thank you and have a great holiday season.

Bingo with the Jr. Beta Club at Cumming Manor Assisted Living

On, December 9, members from the Jr. Beta Club helped spread a little holiday cheer with residents from Cumming Manor Assisted Living Center. The students demonstrated compassion, leadership, and responsibility in assisting the residents as they played Bingo. The Jr. Beta Club Members escorted many of the residents who were wheelchair bound to the activity area and sat with the residents during Bingo, helping out whenever needed. They also got a chance to chat with the residents as well. All players were winners and favorite prizes included calendars in large print, stuffed animals, and tissue boxes.



Field Trip of the Month: Musical at the Alliance Theatre

The 5th-8th grade students recently went to see *Middle School the Musical* at the Alliance Theatre. It was a funny, high energy middle school musical featuring eleven rules to survive middle school! Four actors and actresses played a 6th, 7th and two 8th graders. They sang, danced and acted silly which totally engrossed our students.

They performed book reports on novels our students had read, talked about lockers, sang pop songs and used teamwork to solve problems. At times, the teachers even laughed harder than the students. It was a wonderful performance that our kids really enjoyed! Students then stopped at Piedmont Park for a fabulous picnic.



Preschool Corner (Infants through Pre-K3/4)

Happy holidays from the Preschool!!! It is hard to believe that the holidays are right around the corner. The theme for the month is "Let's Celebrate." The children have been learning about different holidays from around the world and how they are celebrated in a variety of cultures, as well as learning about the different sights, sounds, and scents of the season. Our themes have included: Sleigh Bells, Reindeer and Holiday Cheer, as well as, Cinnamon and Spice and Everything Nice. As you can imagine, it has been a joyous time for us all!

Please join us on Friday, December 17th for our holiday celebration. We look forward to sharing the festivities with all of you.

We appreciate and thank everyone for their generosity with the Angel Tree. Your participation and generosity made this year's tree a huge success. We are also very thankful that we were able to make several families happy this holiday season!!

As a reminder, McGinnis Woods will be closed on Friday, December 24th and Friday, December 31st.



Specials Program: Featuring Ms. Jacki Freeman and the Media Center

After nine years of working at McGinnis Woods, Ms. Jacki Freeman continues to love what she does more and more each day. She has been very fortunate to wear many hats while at "the Woods" including: Pre-school Teacher, Assistant Director, Assistant to the Principal, and Librarian. She has certainly enjoyed each position she has held, but holds the position of librarian closest to her heart.

Nothing brightens Ms. Jacki's day more than to see a student excited about reading. Whether it's the latest *39 Clues*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or the classics like *Anne of Avonlea*, she loves watching students get excited about reading. Ms. Jacki truly enjoys helping students discover secret worlds, interesting characters and faraway lands. To find a book and become completely lost in its pages, imagining you are actually in the story itself is amazing. The feeling of anticipation of finding out what's on the next page and not wanting to stop reading is what she hopes reading does for every student. To learn to read and love it is the most powerful gift anyone can have.

Ms. Jacki encourages parents to not only read every day to their children, but to also listen to their children read. Set aside time each night to read and cuddle with a favorite book. Introduce your children to classic books you loved as a child. By doing this parents not only create family time but demonstrate how important reading is. And don't forget when you're searching for your next adventure, it's only a shelf away. All you have to do is turn the page!

Ms. Jacki & her husband, Chris, have twin girls, Marian and Kristen who attend McGinnis Woods.



The Scholastic Book Fair was a huge success. Thanks for all of your support!

A Little About Our Teachers: Featuring the Pre-K Team

Bugs, Ducks, and Whales....Oh My! The Pre-K class names may lead you to believe that you are entering an uncharted wilderness; however, the varied backgrounds of the Pre-K Team allows them to skillfully guide these little creatures through a learning adventure filled with letter sounds, reading, writing, exploring the globe, numbers, counting and even addition.

The Pre-K 4 A Whales are led by Shelley Parker and Hiral Patel. Both Shelley and Hiral joined the McGinnis Woods Family this year. Shelley Parker has twelve years teaching experience. Prior to McGinnis, she taught kindergarten at Dolvin Elementary in North Fulton. She is passionate about teaching and is currently pursuing her Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Ms. Shelley and her husband, Steve, have two children, Casey (18) and Colin (14) and a dog, Bama. She enjoys reading and watching her youngest son play sports.

Originally from California, Ms. Hiral moved to Atlanta two years ago. She has a degree in Liberal Studies from California State Fullerton. She has taught Pre-K for six years. Hiral is married to her husband, Nioesh. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis, reading, cooking and teaching Modern Indian Dance to young children.



The Queen Bee and Mighty Mantis of the Pre-K 5 class are Ms. Lisa Aber and Mr. Tyler Driskell, better known as Mr. "T." Ms. Lisa is celebrating her 10th year as a McGinnis Woods staffer and her 6th year teaching in our elementary school! Originally from Port Charlotte, Florida, she attended Florida State University and received a degree in International Affairs. Ms. Lisa and her husband, Chris, have two fabulous daughters attending McGinnis Woods, Madison, a second grade Fish and Emerson, a KA Tiger.



Mr. T is a native of Atlanta. He attends Georgia College State and University in Milledgeville and will soon complete his degree in Community Health and Human Services. He has been at McGinnis Woods for five years, helping with summer and winter break camps. He enjoys outdoors, and teaching and training in jujitsu.

The Pre-K 4 A Mama Ducks are Robyn Hogan and Tamara Baker. Originally from Savannah, Georgia, Ms. Robyn moved to Atlanta in 1985. She has a degree in Early Childhood Education from Ashworth College and is currently attending Grand Canyon University to further her education.

Ms. Tamara has been working with children for over 16 years ranging from preschool through high school aged students. Before joining McGinnis Woods five years ago, Ms. Tamara taught kindergarten at Clear Spring Christian Academy. She is the single mom of two college students. Her son attends the University of Kentucky and her daughter attends Georgia State University.



"Ho, Ho, Ho"...Interactive Whiteboard Installation Continues

McGinnis Woods was the happy recipient of another generous donation from Promethean. On December 9th, the Kevin Royals and the Promethean Installation Team stopped by the elementary school to deliver two more interactive white boards. The boards were placed in the 1st Grade Pandas and the 5th-8th grade science classroom.

McGinnis Woods is on a three month installation schedule with Promethean. Their generosity is making our classrooms more interactive and engaging!



Guinness Book of World Records: 5th -8th Graders Participate in Breaking Event with Atlanta Falcons

On Tuesday, December 7, the 5th-8th graders left McGinnis Woods in the dark and cold of morning to join the Falcons at the Georgia Dome for a Guinness Book of World Records breaking event. The students, along with 4,000 other students, and some Guinness organization adjudicators, met in the dome and virtually at schools throughout Georgia to exercise for 30 non-stop minutes to help raise awareness in eliminating childhood obesity. A new world record was set and our students were there!



Veterans Day Follow-Up



"I'm not sure whom I should be thanking for a recent Veteran's Day package I received from your school which contained several cards from some of your younger students thanking me for my service. So, if you wouldn't mind, please extend my gratitude to all those that spearhead and participated in these efforts.

My wife and I really enjoyed going through the cards and personally, I found it very touching having served in the US Army Reserves from 1994 - 2002. The younger one's may, and hopefully, not entirely appreciate the sacrifice and selflessness of those that are serving or have served. It could have been just as easy for your staff to explain the meaning behind that holiday. I applaud your school for taking the time and resources required to reach out and let someone know that a decision made many years ago didn't go forgotten and was appreciated."

Afternoon Discovery Clubs Spotlight: Cooking Club

Students have a great time in the After School Discovery Cooking Club, literally "cooking up a storm." Led by Ms. Tanya Smith, this hands-on class makes a variety of delicious treats, including upside down cake, monkey bread, banana's foster pudding parfaits, pretzel sticks, personalized pizzas, cheesecakes, strawberry surprises and much more. The grand finale is always something exciting like ice cream in a bag with all the toppings. The children learn about measurements while trying out their culinary skills and how even a slightly different amount of ingredients can change the entire outcome of a product. The students enjoy learning how healthier choices can be made and still be tasty.

