

McGinnis Woods Buzz



December 2015 Volume 10, Issue 4



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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Important Dates:

12/18	9:30am Sing-a-long
12/21	Winter Break
-	After School Only
12/23	Field trip on 12/22
12/24	McGinnis Woods
-	Closed
12/25	Merry Christmas
12/28	Winter Break
-	After School Only
12/31	Field Trip 12/29
1/1	McGinnis Woods
2016	Closed
	Happy New Year
1/4 -	Winter Break
1/5	After School Only
1/6	Classes Resume
1/7	PK Field Trip to INK
1/8	K and 1st High Touch High Tech
1/11	5-8th Georgia State Bar

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



There is an air of anticipation as we near our Winter Break. The students are very excited about the many holiday traditions they have been able to participate in here at school and also away on field trips. All of the students who participated in the Secret Holiday Shoppe enjoyed picking just the right items for the special people on their lists. Our 1st graders learned to live out our word of the month "compassion", by making and then giving away beautiful Build a Bear Workshop bears. This is a unique and difficult job for 6 year olds! Our 4th graders experienced the Nutcracker at the Fox Theater. Attending this magical performance is one that will become a special memory. Both our chorus and band concerts also helped to get us into the holiday mood. On Friday, we all will gather in the gym at 9:30 am for our annual Sing-a-long and in the afternoon, classes will host parties which will feature book exchanges, hot cocoa, holiday treats and loads of fun. Please join us for these fun events.

January signals re-enrollment time in the private school community. Our re-enrollment packets will be sent out in January and will be due on Friday, January 22. With this in mind, we have added two additional Open Houses to our January calendar target to specific grade levels. On Tuesday, January 12 at 6:30pm, we invite current 4th - 7th grade families to join us for a Middle School Open House. This will be the perfect opportunity to learn about our program and to meet the staff and have any questions that you may have answered. On Wednesday, January 13 at 6:30pm, we invite all Preschool and PreK parents to join us to learn about why McGinnis Woods is the best choice for early childhood education. The PreK and Kindergarten teachers would love to meet you as they showcase their programs and answer questions. PreK students will also be showing off their skills as they kick off the evening in song. We will also host an Open House on Saturday, January 23 from 1pm-3pm, so please join us and bring a friend!

We wish you all a safe and festive break and look forward to seeing you in 2016!

Ms. Mary



Parent Association Update



Happy Holidays McGinnis Woods Family!

It seems like yesterday we were sitting together as a board to map our calendar and make plans for the upcoming school year. It seems impossible that we are moments away from closing the first half of the year! And what a first half it has been...friendships have formed, community has been built and dollars have been raised! Happy December indeed!

Hopefully everyone had a chance to experience a little holiday spirit with us this month. Your first opportunity was to donate to the NFCC tree project. We are grateful to ALL the families that gave from their hearts and pockets to make this holiday special for another family! The giving was generous and we were able to fulfill the wishes of all the families we were assigned. Hopefully your child was impacted by the experience!

Our next opportunity was the FABULOUS Secret Holiday Shoppe! Did you see the gingerbread door that welcomed all? From the set up to the gifts, our elves set up a perfect venue for our children to select special gifts for those they care about. We certainly hope that the smiles continue when presents are opened over the holidays! Thank you to all who volunteered to make this event a success. As with all events that we plan, it is best when we come together as a community to make it happen. We are grateful for all who shared their holiday spirit with the kids while they made their selections!



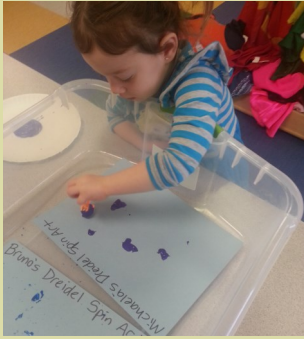
Now we turn to 2016 and New Year resolutions...we hope that another resolution can be to volunteer in the coming months. Perhaps the request is bold—but many hands make light work! We'd love for more parents to join us and offer their time. You may think you don't have enough time or can't be available during the school day. Rest assured that not all of our work happens on McGinnis Woods time...we have opportunities big and small! We'd love to give you some options and add more to our ranks! As you reflect on 2015 and plan for 2016—please consider spending more time with us! You will not regret it!

We wish all in our McGinnis family a Happy Holiday season and a restful break.

May your travels be safe, your laughter plenty and your hearts full!

See you in January!

Preschool Corner



These have been very exciting and busy days in the preschool. During December we have taught the children about the many unique celebrations of Holidays Around the World, winter themes, amazing books about winter and hibernation.

Some of our parents visited PreK 3A and 3-4 to teach them about their family celebration of Hanukkah. The children played the dreidel game and ate special homemade latkes and donuts.

During our Winter Wonderland, the weather didn't cooperate, but we have still enjoyed doing a variety of wintery things including sorting by shape and size using snowflakes and snowballs, a snowflake borax experiment and observing melting ice.

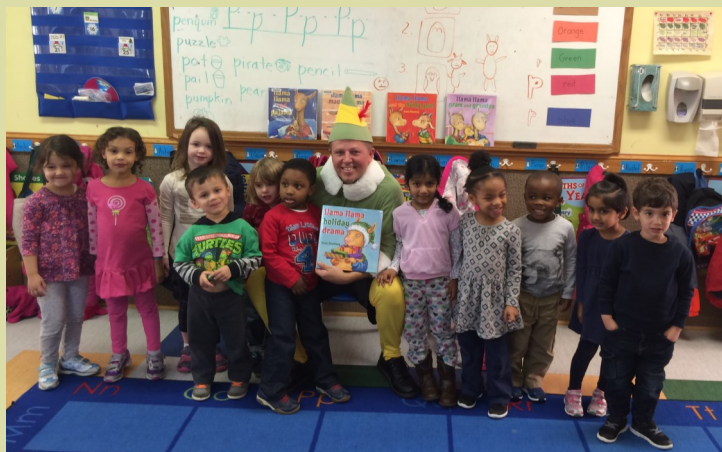
We also learned about animals that only live in the cold and had fun making "footprints in the snow" art. There are so many fabulous books that bring this time of year to life including "The Mitten", "Polar Bears Home" and "Winter Wonderland".

Polar Express week was great fun as we read "The Polar Express" and learned about trains, Santa and the North Pole. We had a special pajama day and movie viewing of the Polar Express to wrap up that fun topic.

Our spotlighted authors during December was Anna Dewdney who is famous for none other than the Llama Llama series and Karma Wilson who wrote "Bear Counts", "Bear Snores on" and "Bear Sees Colors". We love to read in the Preschool!

Other highlights in the Preschool included:

- Our Scholastic book fair which was a huge hit (Thanks to all who support our school through the book fair).
- Our visit from "Buddy, the Elf" and wow the kids were so excited to have him read "Llama Llama Holiday Drama"
- Our Gingerbread House competition which greets you on the front desk of the Preschool!
- Our second Parent's Night Out which featured dinner, the movie "Frozen" and an Olaf craft.
- Our Holiday Festivities on the Friday before Christmas included a book exchange, decorated gingerbread men, and special gifts made with love for moms and dads.



Wildcat Chat With Coach Croom



We are already half way through our season and our wildcats are going strong! We have enjoyed a lot of excitement this season. Thank you cheerleaders for cheering and making our banner! We loved our half time cheers! Our girls have had extremely exciting and close games, where we have come out on top. We are five games into the season and we have won four out of five! What makes it so much fun and exciting is that we have only won by 2 or 3 points. Nothing is as fun as a close and competitive game. Did I hear you ask what makes it even more fun? It is watching the score from our new score board! Our leading scorers are Kate Poag, Mari Davis and Alberta Pagliotti. Mari has swished 29 points in the basket, Kate has put up 20 points, and Alberta has scored 13. We have played aggressively and we fight to the end! We have three games left of our regular season. Our next home game is January 14th at 4:00pm. Come out and support our wildcats.

Our boys are having a great season this far. We are undefeated in our league and have only one loss. We have four more to play in January before the tournament. We are a young team with only one eight grader. Our leading scorer Sergejs has never played basketball before, but he has proven to be a natural, leading our team with 43 points. Not far behind Sergejs, is Tate with 30 points. George has already scored 16 points and we have a lot of basketball left to play. Our coach, Mr. Chason, is proud of our players, as they have been playing as a team. Come watch them play and you will hear our players calling out plays like “waffle” as we confuse our opponents. Our boy’s team only has eight players and they have all been working hard! This January we look forward to adding some new players to our roster! Let’s go Wildcats!!



Parents Night Out



Parent's Night Out for December took place on Friday, December 11th, from 5:45-9:30 pm. This group of festive children wearing pajamas were treated to a holiday movie, "Arthur Christmas". The students completed several projects around the theme of Christmas: candy cane reindeers, Christmas trees made from craft sticks, Santa portraits with beards made of cotton balls and a STEM Holiday project that involved making Christmas trees using gum drops and toothpicks. Participants also enjoyed a dinner of hot dogs, chips and salad. A special dessert was included, too. We decorated sugar cookies with frosting and sprinkles! A great time was had by all! The next scheduled Parent's Night Out will be on January 22nd, 2016.



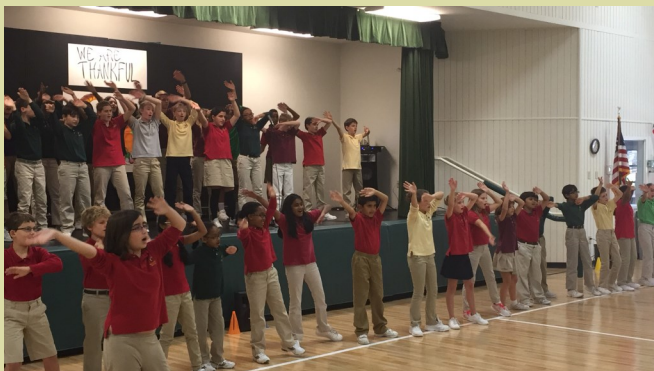
Service and Sweets, A Middle School Tradition



During the Thanksgiving season, McGinnis Woods collaborated with The Place of Forsyth County and provided needy families with Thanksgiving meals. In the annual Service and Sweets event, students worked together to create decorations for the families and crafted bags for packaging the donations.

Middle School students began the program with songs celebrating Thanksgiving and then joined their families for tasty treats. McGinnis Woods Middle School families provided the sweets for the celebration.

At the close of the activity, the donations were delivered to The Place. McGinnis Woods Middle School students and families helped provide Thanksgiving meals for over 360 families. We are so proud of the middle school students for their giving spirits and for helping bring Thanksgiving into the homes of disadvantaged families.



Sharing With Our Community



Who wants to go on a field trip to Build-A-Bear workshop? (Wild cheers!) Who wants to give away the beautiful stuffed bears that they just made? (Cricket sounds!) Teaching young children about giving of yourself to help those in need is not an easy task, however, there are few lessons more important for children to learn then these:

- 1) the importance of giving of yourself and showing compassion
- 2) helping others in need
- 3) learning to be grateful for the things you have

These were the core lessons being taught through the Build-A-Bear Donation Project that we have undertaken in our first grade classrooms. During the month of December, the first grade classrooms took a field trip to the Northpoint Mall to make bears to be donated to the Children's Wish Foundation. This wonderful charity

matches our bears up with children in hospitals who truly need a "bear best friend".

As teachers, we do our very best to help the children understand how much their acts of kindness means to someone else. We let the children know that the kids that received their gift are having a difficult time with their health and probably spend much of their time alone at the hospital. The bear they give that child provides them a friend who will be there at all times, keeping them from being lonely and scared. We believe it is so important for children to learn to appreciate the fact that they are healthy, get to sleep in their own warm bed each night, and are surrounded by a family that loves and cares for that them.



This is the season of giving and the word of the month here at school is Compassion. So when better than now to teach these youngsters about empathy, philanthropy and understanding?

Learning About Compassion



This month's Chick-fil-A word of the month is Compassion. The students are learning that compassion is defined as, caring enough to do something about someone else's needs. Students have been learning the meaning and importance of compassion throughout December during morning announcements. Students and families have also shown their compassion this month through our NFCC Wish Tree and went above and beyond for the less fortunate this holiday season. Teachers are constantly on the lookout for exceptional students showing their compassion to others throughout the day. These special students will be rewarded with a Chick-fil-A meal card during the morning announcements in January.

2015 First Lego League Robotics Club: Trash Trek Challenge

The Wildcats Robotics Team had their first competition of the year on December 5, 2015. We received many compliments from other teams and the volunteers at the event, and the children did a fabulous job on all three presentations (robot design, Trash Trek project, and teamwork).

The Trash Trek robot game was challenging because we competed against some older, seasoned teams. Out of the five game rounds, our highest score was 113 points putting us into 21st place out of 26 teams. The mission which placed us in the 21st place was problematic due to the fact that our robot was missing a wheel and had points taken off. Ms. Lindsey was very proud of the children's ability to problem solve in such stressful environments and in just two and a half minutes in which teachers are not allowed to help in any way.

Overall, it was an exciting and intense day, but we still tried our best and did a fantastic job! During the day, the team completed many team building exercises that brought our children together as a team, and they were all smiling and happy even though it was quite stressful. Now, we are preparing for the Sumobot Challenge competition which takes place next semester.



STEM and Art in PreK-5



When the word STEM is spoken in a classroom the excitement in the classroom is evident. The children love the unique hands on projects. They love to experiment with materials to make something out of nothing. It gives the children self-confidence to tackle a project and succeed without any help from an adult.

PreK-5 had an exciting STEM and Art day exploring simple machines. S(Science)- the children learned about different simple machines by going on a scavenger hunt around the school. T (Technology)- the children played a simple machines look and find game on Game Pop Jr. E(Engineering)- the children engineered a pulley, vehicles using Kinex (wheel, axle, screw), and an inclined plane. They explored with levers (scissors) to cut paper and wedges (plastic knives) to cut playdough. M(Math)- the children graphed his/her favorite simple machine. Art- the children used an inclined plane to create marble art paintings. They turned out AMAZING!!!!



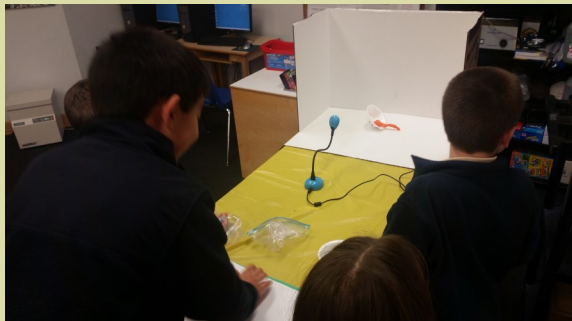
3rd Session of Discovery Clubs Start in January



Our third of four discovery club sessions will begin the week of January 11. If the club is offered on a Tuesday through Thursday, the clubs will end the week of February 16. Monday clubs will end on February 29 since there is no school for MLK or President's Day. All clubs held on Fridays will end on February 26. The due date for this session was December 14.

We are pleased to offer some new clubs this session: Basketball Hoops club with Coach Chason, our boys middle grades team coach. This session we also added Varsity Football and Advanced Robotics for the students that have already completed Jr. Robotics. We will once again offer Animation, Arts & Crafts, Comic-Con Art, Cheerleading, Chess, Cooking, Drama, JV Football, and STEM.

We will also be offering Mandarin Chinese on Thursday mornings for all ages with an instructor from Lango. There will be a free 30 minute demo class on Thursday, January at 7:45am. Please email elementaryschool@mcginniswoods.org if you would like to attend or return the form that will go home this week.



Twelve Ways to Stay Health This Winter



1-Wash hands often- Clean hands save lives.

2-Stay warm-Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems. Dress in layers.

3-Manage stress- Balance work, home and play. Get support from friends/family.

4-Smoke-free-Avoid smoking and being around others smoking.

5-Get check-ups and vaccinations-Medical assessments help prevent illnesses.

6-Travel safely-Always wear seat belts. Have children in appropriate booster seat for height, weight and age.

7-Watch the kids-Children are always at high risk for injuries. Watch carefully with crowds, eating, toys.

8-Prevent injuries-Watch for fire hazards, climbing, stoves, heaters.

9-Handle and prepare food safely-wash hands/surfaces often, keep food proper temperature.

10-Eat healthy-use balance and moderation. Choose fruits, limit fat, sugar, salt.

11-Stay active-Find fun ways to stay moving like dancing. Walk to special events.

12-Stay positive and do for others-this motivates us and makes us feel happy and have energy.

Happy Holidays,

Nurse Penny

PA Purchases 3D Printer for STEM Room

We are happy to announce that 3D printing is coming to McGinnis Woods! 3D printing is an exciting technology that will allow our students to create physical objects from three-dimensional models. What does this mean exactly? Essentially, students will be able to design an object in software and have the opportunity to actually create that object out of plastic. The possibilities for what they can create are limited only by their imaginations!

This incredible addition to our STEM lab will not only allow our students to harness their own creativity on a whole new level, but will enable them to explore problem solving through design, engineering and production. Whether it's designing and printing parts for a robot, creating a one-of-a-kind gift or developing prototypes of their own inventions, students will learn and apply diverse skills to make their creations come to life.

Look for future updates where we will share some of the amazing ways our teachers and students have put our 3D printing station to good use!

Books, Books and Monsters Oh My!



Our Scholastic Book Fair made its annual appearance and showed us that monsters like reading too with our Fall theme of “Monster Book Fair.” Wish lists were created by students who visited the book fair to find the latest and most exciting reads. Our very own teachers created classroom wish lists and truly enjoyed the books their classes received as gifts from students.

All funds raised from the book fair assist with purchasing books and other materials for our library and classrooms. Due to your overwhelming support books were sent to every classroom in our school.

Thank you for your continued support for our book fair and for all you do to encourage reading.

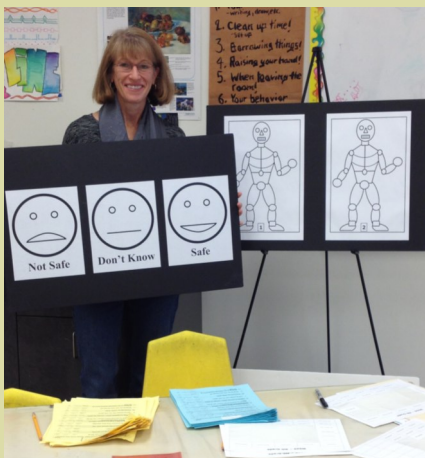
Have a wonderful break and remember to read!



Reading is so much
fun it'll give you
Goosebumps!



Revved Up Kids Visits McGinnis Woods



2nd and 4th grade students who signed up were able to participate in a self-defense workshop presented by Revved Up Kids. The class took place in the gym as part of a grant which has been awarded to the program.

The students completed a survey before and after the training. Students were taught and practiced personal safety skills, using their voice and body with power and strength, trusting their instincts, being aware of surroundings and easy targets to stay safe.



Be Smart, Be Strong and Be Safe is the message from

www.RevvedUpKids.org. See their website for more information or to sign up for workshops off-site.

The Second Grade Teaching Team

Ms. Sonia, Ms. Kim, and Ms. Natalie are our second grade teachers. They are working together to challenge this group of bright second graders and love all the fun opportunities they get to have while *inspiring students with the passion to excel* each day.

Ms. Sonia teaches the Second Grade Leopards. She became a teacher because she has a passion for learning, likes helping others and enjoys seeing her students succeed. Her goal is for each and every student to share that same passion. Ms. Sonia earned her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education at Gainesville State College which is now The University of North Georgia. She was a substitute teacher for a short period before starting at McGinnis Woods as an assistant with Ms. Kim. She then became a lead teacher for the Second Grade Leopards and is in her 5th year teaching! Ms. Sonia loves working with her students, but when she is not teaching, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Jeremiah, who is also a teacher, and her daughter Alayna, who just turned nine months old. Ms. Sonia also has a dog and a cat and she loves taking her dog for runs and to the lake to swim. She rounds out the remainder of her free time with friends, watching movies, and being outdoors.

Ms. Kim teaches the Second Grade Fish. She grew up outside of Rochester, NY and graduated with her undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and Sociology from SUNY Brockport. She married her husband of 16 years, Brad, and moved to Atlanta. She completed her Masters in Early Childhood Education at Georgia State while working here at McGinnis Woods. This will be Ms. Kim's 17th year at the school. She has taught everything from Pre-K up to 6th grade. She is very much at home teaching second grade as this will be her eleventh year at this grade level. Ms. Kim has two precious girls, Tori who is in the 7th Grade and Julianna who is in the 4th Grade. Outside of school, Ms. Kim loves to travel with her girls, attend concerts and sporting events, play fantasy football and scrapbook with her girlfriends. Her husband, Brad, works as a homicide detective in Dekalb County. They enjoy spending their weekends playing with their girls and being with friends and family.

Ms. Natalie teaches the Second Grade Fish as Ms. Kim's assistant. She was born in Washington D.C. and lived in Maryland until she was five. Her family moved down to Georgia and has been here ever since. She grew up in Gwinnett County. In May, Ms. Natalie graduated from Kennesaw State with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. She plans to pursue her degree by working with children. Throughout college, she was very involved with KSU Relay for Life. It is a huge passion of hers to fund and raise awareness about cancer. In Ms. Natalie's free time she enjoys being with her family and friends, exercising, and traveling.



McGinnis Woods Support Staff Make Every Day a Great Day!



Each and every day, a team of committed individuals faithfully work to clean the building, prepare food, wipe up spills, deliver lunches and snacks, inventory and order food items, and do so with a smile. The Support Staff at McGinnis Woods share more than 35 years of expertise and experience working at McGinnis Woods and is comprised of: Ms. Shirley, Ms. Brenda, Ms. Brittany, and Ms. Carolina, our kitchen staff; and Mr. Jay, Mr. Gene, and Mr. David, our custodial staff.



Our Support Staff is the strong foundation that helps to keep the school moving forward without interruption. They work closely with our administration to make sure that all cleaning and cooking protocols are followed and handled correctly. They also help to retrieve balls from beyond the playground fences, set up and take down chairs and tables, assemble and move furniture, and fill in as needed.

Although much of their work is completed behind the scenes, these staff members play a vital role in the life of the school at McGinnis Woods! The students and staff appreciate their kind and thoughtful ways and are very glad that they are here each day!



McGinnis Woods Partners with North Fulton Community Charities

As a school, McGinnis Woods believes in supporting each other and our community. Due to that belief, each year McGinnis Woods participates in the North Fulton Community Charities (NFCC) Holiday Program.



As a school, we adopt several families who are in need of support for the holiday season. It is a great lesson to show our children and students the importance of stewardship in helping others.

Our school families helped bring holiday wishes to several families and we have received their words thanks and gratitude for our support.

Your assistance means a great deal to these families and also to our school. Without it we would not be able to provide help to these families in need. Thank you for believing in this cause and supporting it with us.



Jr. Beta Club Supports Furkids

Thank you for supporting our first Jr. Beta Club Ice Cream Day. This fundraiser will help a nonprofit pet rescue organization called Furkids. On January 22nd the group of students supporting this organization will travel to Furkids to deliver our donation, drop off the blankets they made for the animals, and complete some tasks like laundry, cleaning, and dog socialization. We are excited to partner with this organization.

We also have a group of students continuing their support of an assisted living facility in Alpharetta called Dogwood Forest. We will be traveling to meet with residents in early February. We also have a fifth grade group who is doing several smaller projects. They are making plans for a bake sale in February which will support our beautiful Jr. Beta Club garden located outside of the middle school.



Student Council Update



The Student Council has been very busy planning events for second semester. The officers have many surprises in store for the students of McGinnis Woods including contests and whole school events. During our December Representative meeting we made hot cocoa treats for our teachers.

We also have some new items in our school store. Most items in the store range in price from \$0.25 to \$2.00. The School Store is open each Friday from 8:00-8:30.

Arts and Crafts of the Season Club



Ms. Sam and her club students have had a wonderful time during their Arts and Crafts of the Season Club. They have made some neat gifts for family and friends and used many different mediums along the way. Painting, gluing, crafting, and creating have been the hallmarks of this club and fun has been had by all!

If you like to make unique projects, be sure to sign up for the new session of the Arts and Crafts club beginning in January.

Ms. Jacki, School Media Center

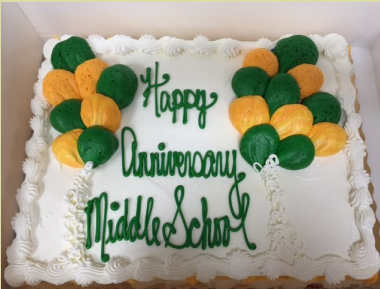


Jacki Reid Freeman has been at McGinnis Woods since 2001. This is her 7th year as school librarian. She is originally from Augusta, GA (home of the Master's golf tournament). Ms. Jacki has twin girls who attend McGinnis Woods. Kristen and Marian have attended McGinnis Woods since they were 5 months old and are now in fifth grade!

One of Ms. Jacki's favorite places is the school library! That's no surprise. She believes that reading is one of the most enjoyable aspects of life, as is helping students find the perfect book. Currently, she is finishing her master's degree in Library Sciences from the University of West Georgia.

Ms. Jacki and her family currently live in Milton. She loves reading, spending time with her girls and her Akita, Arie.

Middle School Social Committee Activities



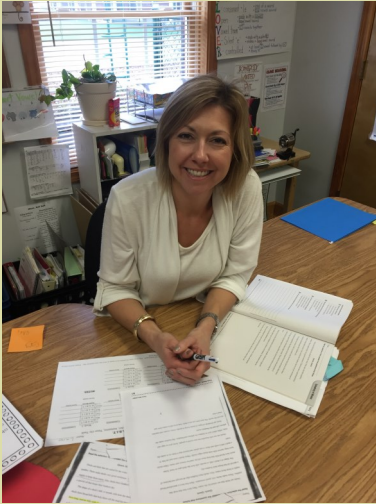
With the first semester coming to a close, second semester social committee members had to be chosen. These new members are charged with planning and running the Middle School socials until the end of the school year. Our new members are: Evan, Shivani, Monet, Matilde, Ashley, Tori, Mari, Molly and Sergejs. Both the first and second semester members met together to discuss future plans.

On December 4th, our Middle School Students enjoyed a spirit day to commemorate the one year anniversary of the Middle School's Ribbon cutting ceremony.

The students will also enjoy a little friendly competition on the last day of school with a gingerbread house decorating contest. The winners will be announced when we return in the New Year.



Enrichment Teacher, Kristen Craig



Kristen Craig has been the Enrichment and Academic Support teacher at McGinnis Woods for the past 5 years and has taught for fifteen years. She is a graduate from the University of Alabama and is a big Alabama fan (Roll Tide)! Kristen has a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education and is an Orton-Gillingham tutor. She taught in Gwinnett County and two other Atlanta private schools before joining us at McGinnis Woods.

Kristen and her husband, Sean, moved to Alpharetta from Buckhead 4 years ago and have found McGinnis Woods to be a great fit for their family. They have a seven year old son named Houston, a four year old daughter named Calista and two Golden Retrievers.

Kristen currently works with about twenty-five PreK-8th grade students each week. In addition to working one-on-one with the students, she also provides academic support with small classroom reading groups.

Kristen enjoys working with both the students and teachers each day. When she is not teaching, she enjoys spending time with her family, decorating, making crafts, and playing tennis.

Winter Holiday Break Activities

Staying in town for the holidays? Spend your holiday break with us at McGinnis Woods! Come enjoy fun activities, exciting adventures and time with your good friends. We have exciting field trips planned throughout the break. On Tuesday, December 22nd, students will go to Monkey Joes for an hour and a half of jumping and playing and we'll end our trip with a pizza lunch. The children will also venture out on Tuesday, December 29th to Stars and Strikes for thrilling games of bowling. We hope that you choose to spend your holiday break making memories with us!



Pictures from Around the School

