

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



September 2016 Volume 11, Issue 2



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## The latest buzz . . .

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

10/5	Kindergarten Field Trip to Kinsey Farms
10/7	No Classes Parent/Teacher Confer- ences
10/10	No School Afterschool Only
10/11	5th-8th Field Trip Funk Heritage
10/12	2nd Field Trip Funk Heritage
10/14	PreK Field Trip Big Springs Farm
10/14	Fur Kids Fund Raiser
10/17	Student Council Rep Meeting 8:00 am
10/18	3rd Field Trip Tellus Museum
10/19	PA Denim Day
10/21	1st Field Trip Uncle Shucks Corn Maze
10/24 - 28	Red Ribbon Week YOLO: Be Drug Free

## 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 are happy to welcome fall and the cooler weather it is bringing. The first quarter of school has flown by and is about to wrap up, signaling that it is time for Parent/Teacher Conferences and the excellent opportunity they provide each of us to build on our strong school/home partnerships. It is our goal to inspire our students to excel every day and this is only made possible with your strong support as shown through emails, classroom assistance and ensuring that your student is on time, prepared, and ready to learn each day. We hope to have 100% attendance at our conferences, so please be sure to sign up for a time with your classroom teacher.



International Night on September 22 was a great success with over 400 in attendance. The featured countries this year included: China, Mexico, India, Poland, Malta, Denmark, and Jamaica. The food, crafts and games provided our school community with a great learning experience and reason to get together and enjoy meeting new people and deepen existing friendships. Thanks to the many families who supported this wonderful event by volunteering in so many ways. Be sure to read more about the evening in this newsletter.

Our Discovery Clubs have started. We have teachers leading clubs in: Robotics, Drama, Cooking, Soccer, Volleyball, and Cross Country. We also have students participating in Ballet and PLAYBALL. Last week, our Early Morning Band Practice Club began under the leadership of Mr. Dean and Mr. Matt. As you can see, our school is a very busy place each and every day.

Please be sure to save the date for our upcoming Fall Festival on October 29 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. You will not want to miss this family event. It is always the highlight of the season and includes pony rides, arts and crafts, a costume contest, games, cake walk, amazing raffles, a haunted house and great food. We look forward to seeing you there!

## *Parent Association Update*

The crisp morning air confirms fall's arrival and we are ready! What a wonderful time of year! Your PA Board has a lot to catch you up on!

Thanks to all of the wonderful families who joined us for our PA Pizza Party! It was so nice to get to know you better and share ways to make our great school even greater!

Our first fundraiser of the year, Square One Art, got off to a fantastic start. All of the orders have been submitted and now Square One is working to turn your little artists' masterpieces into precious keepsakes. We are still calculating our total proceeds but thank you all for your support and we look forward to putting the money raised to work for our students!

Our Kendra Gives Back event at the Kendra Scott store at the Avalon made for a fun night and was a fundraising success! It was so great to socialize with some of our McGinnis Woods families away from the school while shopping for a great cause. The best part of all is that we were able to raise over \$500 for the school in just three hours!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 30th and plan to cross family photos off of your to-do list! Tanner Photography is once again partnering with McGinnis Woods to offer a portrait seating for \$20 which includes a 16X20 portrait. They are offering an outdoor setting again this year. The best part of this fundraiser is that 100% of the money comes right back to the school. Sign up information will be coming your way soon.

October also brings with it the McGinnis Woods Fall Festival. McGinnis the Money Turkey will be making his triumphant return with his feathers well-fluffed with \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20 bills. Be sure to enter our raffle for a chance to bring him home!

The school year has gotten off to a wonderful start and we are so excited by how many of you have indicated a willingness to get involved and volunteer this year. You can always reach us through our website [www.mcginniswoodspa.org](http://www.mcginniswoodspa.org). We'd love to hear from you! With your help the 2016-2017 school is poised to be our best yet!



## Preschool Corner

The preschool has been bursting with Fall fun and we are excited for the weather to match it. We celebrated football starting up again with our Football Friday and everyone wore their favorite sports team. Go Falcons! We had our monthly in house field trip which was a wonderful STEM activity and the children were enthralled as they watched a Mentos experiment and made the Invisible worm.

We had a great turn out for Parent's Night Out this month and the kids enjoyed a movie, crafts and fun with their friends while the moms and dads enjoyed a night out!

The themes for the month were:

Leaves and Apples and we had plenty of fun with tasting apples, painting with apples and making leaf rubbings. Students also went on a nature walk searching for leaves. One of our classes even made homemade applesauce.

Weather week we learned about all types of weather. Students searched the weather channel on our interactive whiteboards and created twisters, rainbows and rain clouds.

Autumn begins where the week was all about Fall. The children painted marble fall art and sang and danced to the song "Jump in the leaves." The classes talked about their favorite things about fall and most of the children said Halloween! Students also googled corn mazes and made fall trees.

Last week was Bugs. Oh how the children enjoyed learning all about the creepy crawly creatures!

The preschool conducted the Trike-A-Thon fundraiser which raises money for St. Jude Research Hospital that provides medical care for children with cancer at no cost to the families. We had an amazing turn out and a lot of fun riding for the cause. Thank you to all who contributed.





## Wildcat Chat Fall 2016



Our Cross Country team has participated in a number of meets and has improved on their 2 mile times. Team members have been working hard and learning how to pace themselves in order to finish their races strong. It takes a lot of self-discipline to train as a runner, especially in the heat. Our runners are fortunate enough to be able to train on our nature trail while they try to beat the heat. They have also traveled to parks such as Webb Bridge Park, to practice running on different terrains. Our Championship meet is going to be at Excel on October 3rd. Wish the Cross Country Team luck!

Volleyball this year has been very exciting! Our players have been up against some tough competition. They seem to take our opponents to 3 games and most matches have been within 2 points. The teams have won a few and lost of few; You cannot ask for better volleyball matches than that! Our A and B teams have been improving and it has shown on the scoreboard! We are developing leaders on our teams and get stronger with each match. We have also enjoyed a lot of home games where it is great to see all the support we are getting from our fans. We have a number of games left to play and will wrap up the season on October 6th. Come out and support your Lady Wildcats!



Soccer has been a great learning experience for our soccer Wildcats. Coach Roger has been teaching our Wildcats how to play as a team. We are learning how to distribute the ball and proper soccer techniques. The improvement our players have made as a team has been outstanding when compared to the beginning of our season. Our seasoned players have stepped up and become leaders on our team as they have worked with and encouraged our beginners. We are currently undefeated in our MAAC league. We have come up against some very tough competition from our NAML league though. We are a young team and are playing against 8th grade teams, so we believe this is a rebuilding year, but our time will come! We are proud of the resiliency of our players. The Soccer Finals will be hosted at Brandon Hall this year on Thursday, October 13.



*Go Wildcats!*

## *PreK 5 Bubble Fun and STEM*

During STEM lab, The PreK-5 class conducted the Big Bubble Wand Challenge. The students were challenged to use pipe cleaners to make a bubble wand that would create the biggest bubble possible. The PreK 5 children came up with a variety of creative ideas for their wands and were happy to share their ideas with their peers and borrow some good ideas along the way, too. There are many future engineers in our midst.



## *It's Science Olympiad time at McGinnis Woods!*

McGinnis Woods is excited to begin our second year of Science Olympiad! Our elementary team will consist of third, fourth, and fifth graders who are excited to meet the challenges of this STEM-inspiring competition! We had a great first year as a team, taking second place at our regional competition.

Science Olympiad challenges are designed to spark the imagination and inspire creativity, all while working to solve a problem. Some of the challenges from last year are returning, including Straw Egg Drop and Water Rockets. There will be new events, as well, including Crime Busters and Deep Blue Sea. There is even an event for the math lovers - the 24 game!

Our team meetings will begin in October, and will continue through Spring. If our team qualifies at our regional competition, we will continue to the Elementary Science Olympiad State Tournament at Kennesaw State University, on May 13, 2017.



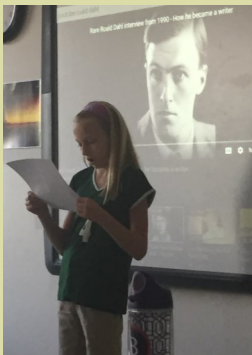


## *Parents Night Out*

The first Parents Night Out for the 2016-2017 school year was held on Friday, September 16th, with a group of more than 30 happy and eager students! The movie for the night was Angry Bird, and we enjoyed a delicious dinner of pasta, hot dogs, chips, fruit and lemonade! For a special treat, we made ice cream sundaes with all the toppings! One of the highlights of the evening was scooter racing on the playground along with hula hooping and jump roping contests! We all had a fabulous time! Stay tuned for information about the next Parents Night Out!



## *Happy Birthday, Roald Dahl!*



100 years ago, one of the greatest children's story tellers was born and changed the literature world with his splendidflorous imagination. From Friendly Giants, to Fantastical Foxes, Roald Dahl became a much beloved author for children and adults alike. This year, McGinnis Woods celebrated his 100th birthday with some "phizz-whizzing" activities! Ms. Jacki delighted students with various activities from the world of Dahl and looked just "peachy" as the Giant Peach! Ms. Melisa delved into the history of the author and how he became a writer, hopefully inspiring our talented middle schoolers! The 4th grade SUNS read from Roald Dahl's "Revolting Rhymes" and created their own rhyme with "Humpty Dumpty". In 1st grade, Mr. Josh led some "Jumpsquiffing" activities with his "Human Beans" as they created their own Dahl inspired words and dream jars based upon the novel "The BFG". In 3rd grade, the HEROES and Dogs dressed as their favorite Dahl character and created "filthsome" beards from the novel "The Twits", recreated a scene from "Matilda", and created their own recipe to make a Golden Phizzwizard dream from the novel "The BFG".

What a fun and unique way of learning about authors and their work! It truly was a "Whoopsy - Splunker" Day!



## *Guest Speaker Teaches About NASA*



Kindergarten through 8th grade had a guest speaker from NASA on September 8th. Mr. "Gabe" George Gabrielle spoke to the students about his belief that education and motivation are the keys to overcoming all barriers. He shared cool videos about the space program as well as personal stories. His website [www.educatemotivate.com](http://www.educatemotivate.com) states that "Gabe is an engineer, an educator, and a motivational public speaker. He tells stories wrapped around the space program at NASA which inspire kids, teachers, professionals, and others. Gabe's laid-back and honest approach reaches people at all levels. He encourages everyone, no matter the circumstances, to live his or her dream!" "We found that to be very true as he taught the youngest student to the oldest to

always think outside the box and dream about the possibilities. He spoke quite a bit about the International Space Station during his presentation. Learn more about the ISS here: <https://spotthestation.nasa.gov>

As always, the students wrote thank you letters to Mr. Gabe. They also included some questions for him. We look forward to receiving his responses. Please feel free to submit any additional questions your students may have and we will forward them to Mr. Gabe.



## *International Night*



McGinnis Woods Country Day School hosted its 14th annual International Celebration on Thursday, September 22. International Night featured cultural artifacts, traditional foods, games and activities from each grade levels' country of study. This year the countries featured included: China, Mexico, India, Poland, Malta, Denmark and Jamaica. Visitors received a passport stamp from each country visited. We want to extend a special thanks to all of our "Woods" families who helped make the night such a great event. The evening concluded with a beautiful presentation of Classical Indian Dance and song. We are already looking forward to next year's event and the many countries we will explore!





## *Student Council and Beta Club Updates*



Jr. Beta Club Update: Our students are supporting Dogwood Forest Assisted Living Facility and Furkids dog and cat shelter again this school year. Several students will be traveling to Dogwood Forest on Monday, October 24th to serve cookies at lunch and play BINGO with the residents. This is such a nice opportunity for different generations to connect and learn from each other.

Another group of Beta students is in the process of planning a trip to the Furkids shelter. We will be hosting an ice cream fundraiser on Friday, October 14th to donate to this important cause. All money raised will be given to the shelter on our first visit. Be on the lookout for the ice cream preorder form in early October. Unfortunately, we will only be able to fill preorders. Thank you for your continued support of our efforts.



Student Council Update: Elections are in full swing. We have many talented candidates with amazing ideas running this year. We work very hard to run positive campaigns, so please take a minute to let a candidate know how impressive it is that they are running. Campaigning will begin on Monday, September 26.

In other news, class representatives will be chosen after our school election day and our first meeting will be Monday, October 17th. We will hold our first Chick fil-A order in lunch on October 26th. Be on the lookout for a flyer in early October. Red Ribbon Week also takes place in October. Our theme this year was chosen in conjunction with the national Red Ribbon Week theme, YOLO: Be Drug Free!

## *First Graders Visit Elachee Nature Center*



The First Grade Falcons and Cats had the pleasure of taking a fabulous field trip to the Elachee Nature Center. Students experienced the program, "Wheel of Animals", was both an indoor and outdoor adventure! We started our visit off with an interactive lesson on animal classification. This program spotlighted species native to Georgia and helped teach the children how to identify animal adaptations that make each animal suited to a particular habitat.

Next they visited Elachee's reptile and amphibian exhibit. There were bearded dragons, gopher tortoises and much more! The students also thought they saw an actual falcon, but it turned out to be a red-tailed hawk that was part of Elachee's rehabilitation program. For a moment, the First Grade Falcons thought they might get a new class pet!

After that, we went on a nice hike in the woods led by our knowledgeable tour guide. She did a wonderful job of explaining to the children what was going on in the forest around them. She talked about the different plants we saw, discussed the habits of the local animals we came across, and taught us how to determine the age of a fallen tree.

Finally, we enjoyed a pleasant picnic lunch in a shaded area of the Chicopee Woods. Everyone agreed that it was a perfect day for a field trip. Elachee is the place to be!





## *Middle Schoolers Visit the Michael C. Carlos Museum*



The September Field Trip for the middle school students included a visit to Emory University for a tour of the Michael C. Carlos Williams Museum. One of Atlanta's best-kept secrets, the museum houses a unique collection of art and artifacts from around the world. Students learned that all of the Egyptian artifacts are from original collections. The docents shared interesting facts with students including how each part of the assortment made its way to Emory and the efforts the museum has made to collect data from each of the artifacts. The museum also contains Roman, Greek, Mesopotamian and Persian relics.

If you would like to visit the Michael C. Carlos Williams, we have passes for one adult and one child. There is no expiration date on the pass. Please see Ms. Melisa if you would like a pass. Visit the website at [carlos.emory.edu](http://carlos.emory.edu) or call 404-727-4282 for details about exhibits.

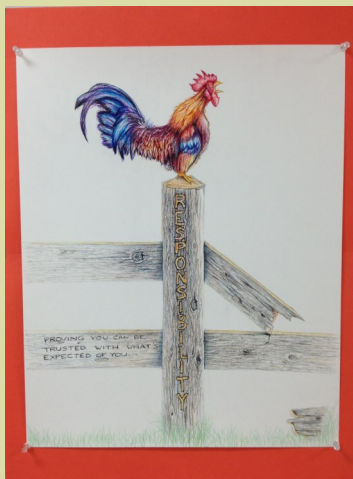
At the end of the visit, each docent made a point to tell us that our students were great. Our middle school students did an outstanding job representing McGinnis Woods.

The students asked great questions and were able to contribute to the topics of discussion. It is always exciting when others in the community acknowledge McGinnis Woods Middle School students. We are incredibly proud of our group this year.

There are more trips to come this year! Watch the monthly calendar for details of upcoming trips.



## *Our word of the Month: Responsibility*



This month's Chick-fil-A word of the month was Responsibility. The students learned that responsibility is defined as *proving you can be trusted with what's expected of you*. Students learned the importance and meaning of responsibility throughout the month during morning announcements, in class and during guidance counseling. Teachers were on the lookout for exceptional students showing great responsibility traits throughout each day, too. These special students were recognized and rewarded with Chick-fil-A coupons on the morning announcements!

A great responsibility quote to think about is... "You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself." - Jim Rohn

## *Welcome Ms. Sandra, Technology*



Ms. Sandra Varajic joined the McGinnis Woods staff on September 12. She has hit the ground running as she has assumed the role of Computer Lab Instructor and the robotics team coach. She is so excited to be back in the classroom inspiring students to use technology in meaningful ways.

She was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina and moved to Germany at the age of 6. At the age of 11, her family moved to the United States. She attended Kennesaw State University where she received a Bachelors Degree in education.

Sandra has taught all grades at the elementary level and worked with students through 9th grade in science and video game programming. While teaching, she also collaborated with teachers and created professional developments for educators in various subject areas and technology. After attending Walden University and receiving a Master's Degree in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment and a Specialist Degree in Teacher Leadership, she began working for Walden University. There she worked with teachers working towards their Master's Degrees in education for 2 ½ years. She is currently finishing her Doctorate Degree in Teacher Leadership.

Ms. Sandra is married to her high school sweetheart and has two incredible daughters Tavi (3 ½) and Aila (11 months) who attend the McGinnis Woods Pre-School. Ms. Sandra is very happy and excited to be part of the McGinnis Woods community so, be sure to take a few minutes and introduce yourself to her and welcome her to our school.

## *Welcome New Assistant Teachers*



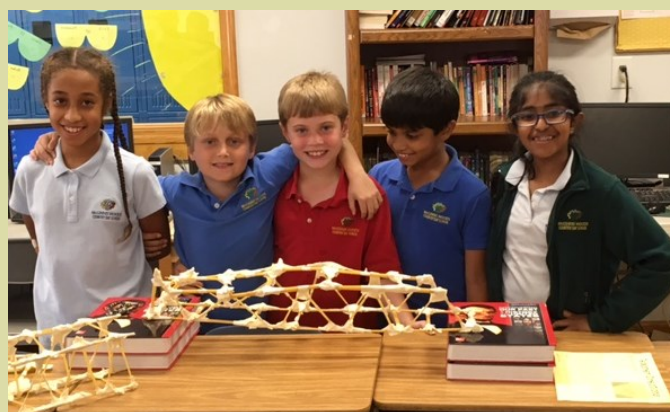
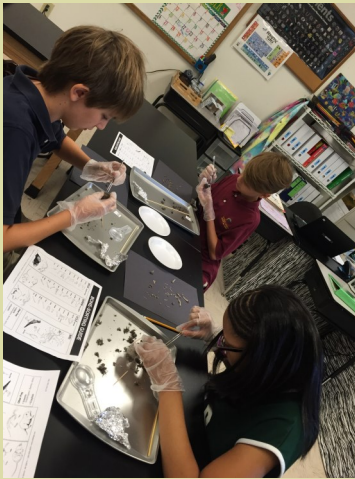
This year we have added a number of new assistant teachers to our staff. We are so thankful to have these committed individuals who have joined us as we work to meet the individual needs of our students. Please welcome Ms. Christina, 1st and 2nd Grade, Ms. Lee, Middle School, Ms. Callicott, 3rd Grade, and Ms. Nancy, Kindergarten. Each of these teachers is well prepared for the classroom and are very excited to be working with our students.

We have also added additional after school help. Ms. Ashley is working with the older students each day and has brought a special spark of fun to the group.





## Pictures from Around the School





## *Thank You for Your Donation!*

McGinnis Woods would like to give a big shout out of thanks to these two companies for providing us with hundreds of pounds of mulch to use in our outdoor classroom! Their generosity has helped us with the maintenance of the classroom as we get ready for cooler weather and more opportunities to explore in the woods.



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