

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



September 2017 Volume 12, Issue 2



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## ***The latest buzz . . .***

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## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

10-6	No Classes After School Only Parent/Teacher Conferences
10-9	No Classes After School Only
10-11	2nd Grade Field Trip Funk Heritage Center
10-11	New Student Open House 9:30-10:30 am
10-13	PreK Field Trip Warbington Farms
10-13	Report Cards Sent Home
10-16	Discovery Forms Due
10-17	1st Grade Field Trip Uncle Shuck's Corn Maze
10-18	Kindergarten Field Trip Kinsey Farms
10-22- 10-27	Red Ribbon Week Your Future is Key, so Be Drug Free!

## **A Message From Ms. Mary**

This school year seems to be on fast forward, as we are welcoming cooler temperatures and many lovely changing leaves. We are wrapping up our first grading period and Parent/Teacher Conferences are in full swing. We always enjoy conference time at McGinnis Woods, because we find that collaborating with each of you is an important component of each student's success. Thank you for making your conference a priority.



We hope that you will join us for our annual Fall Festival which is scheduled for Saturday, October 28 from 1:00-4:00pm. This is a wonderful event with fun activities for everyone in the family. Pony rides, obstacles courses, tasty fair food, the ever popular, Spider Jump, a not so scary Haunted House, a cakewalk, McGinnis the Turkey raffles, and crafts galore are just some of the featured activities. Wristbands will be available for purchase in the near future.

Students should be actively preparing for Project Showcase for students in 1st through 4th grades or our new Technology Fair for our students in 5th through 8th grades. Students have selected their topics of study and have been researching and planning their final displays, power points or technology creations. Please stop by and check out the amazing projects which will be on display the week of November 6th. More information will be sent out about the Tech Fair sometime soon.

Be sure to read this issue of the McGinnis Woods Buzz because it covers so many of the important happenings that have been going on here at school. It will also aid you as you plan for the upcoming events which will be happening during October.

Happy fall,  
*Ms. Mary*

## **McGinnis Woods Mission Statement**

*Our mission is to provide  
superior academics  
through hands-on  
approaches, which foster  
self confidence and self es-  
teem that inspire a lifelong  
love of learning.*

## 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 McGinnis Woods Brick Bash and Mangia Spirit Night. It was such a fun night of bonding and building and raising money for our great school. Teams of parents and children raced to compete in Lego-based challenges like building the tallest tower, the train with the most capacity and the fastest remote-control tank. Congratulations to all of our fabulous winners:

Event	Winner
Overall Winner	Agneta Chipulla
Tower Challenge	Alex Jacowitz
Train Challenge	Evan Spilka Jenna Spilka Rose Mehraban Lola Hazard Violet Reiter
Sculpture Challenge	Harley and Malcolm Klein
Mosaic Challenge	Max and Elodie Nunez
Tank Challenge	Aiden Bishop
Scooper Challenge	Benny Hamann Nathanael Hazard

We are excited to kick-off our next fundraiser, Square 1 Art. Your children have been working hard with Mr. Dan to create beautiful works of art that Square One will replicate onto a variety of keepsakes. Information on how you can purchase mugs, stationary, phone cases, ornaments and all sorts of other fun things personalized with your children's artwork will be coming home soon. These one-of-a-kind items make great holiday gifts!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 15th 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 \$25 which includes a 11X14 portrait (a \$65 value). They are offering an outdoor setting again this year at Mill Creek Park. The best part of this fundraiser is that 100% of the money comes right back to the school. New for 2017, your friends, family and neighbors can now take advantage of this great offer and our school will benefit! Simply pass along the sign-up link and they can register their own families and receive the same \$25 package that supports our school.

Sign up Link:

<http://www.mcginiswoodspa.org/index.php/about/our-events/family-photography/photography-signup>

Your generous support of our events like Brick Bash, Square 1 Art and Tanner Photography assist us in reaching our 2017-2018 fundraising goal of revving up recess! We hope to be able to purchase new playground equipment for our elementary school and to build an outdoor social space for our middle school students this year.

We are also making plans for our upcoming Holiday Shoppe. We will be partnering with Betsy's Hallmark again this year, so be sure to volunteer some time to help with this big undertaking scheduled for November 29-December 1st!

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.mcginiswoodspa.org](http://www.mcginiswoodspa.org). We'd love to hear from you! With your help the 2017-2018 school is poised to be our best yet!

## *Preschool Corner*



Fall in the Preschool is magical! We are enjoying the cooler weather and are busy learning about the seasons changing, exploring all the wonderful colors and patterns of the leaves and observing the trees as they change colors before our eyes! Vocabulary words like chlorophyll, photosynthesis and hypothesis are hard to say, but very fun to learn about!

We are also learning about Communities and what makes them unique and special, like our school community! Fire fighters, EMT's and many more Community Helpers will be visiting us on Friday, October 27, so that we can talk to them and see what they do to help protect our community. In honor of our Community Helpers, we will be baking cookies to give them when they

visit!

While we are learning about Community Helpers our teachers have helped our children create handprint firemen and footprint police badges. We also learned about fire safety in our 3 year old classes and how to "stop, drop and roll".

All of our classes are working on mastering great manners and are being reminded to say "please" and "thank you" and to use their words to ask for more lunch or to be excused from the lunch table. We continue to work on sharing with others and holding the door for our friends.



Some students have had the opportunity to get together with their Buddy Classes from the Elementary School. They have loved being read to and playing games with "the big kids".

The children are especially enjoying their Specials Teachers who are teaching them about Music, Art, Computer Lab, Library, Health and Spanish. We are so fortunate to offer our students such a well rounded program.

Please be sure to stop by this Friday, October 6th at 3pm, to cheer on our riders in our Annual St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Trike-A-Thon. We love to provide our little ones with an opportunity to show their love and concern for others while having a great time riding their trikes. Please do your part to help us raise funds. We hope to exceed last year's \$1600.00 donation. Donations are being accepted in the Preschool and online.

Happy Fall!



## *After School Fall Break Fun*



The week of September 25th was Fall Break for Forsyth County Schools. Many after schoolers joined us for their break and had an exciting week of group games, arts and crafts and fun field trips. We ventured out to Build-a-Bear where we made and named our very own teddy bears followed by lunch at Chick-fil-A. We went to Warbington Farms where we fed and pet baby goats, went on a hayride to feed cows, successfully made our way through the corn maze, and spent time on the outdoor play equipment. We ended our week with thrilling

arcade games and bowling at Stars and Strikes and then we saw the Lego Movie at Aurora Theater.

Holiday breaks are coming up in the next couple months and we would love for your child to join us on these breaks. Please let the front office know if your child will be joining us.





## *Wildcat Chat*



Hello Wildcat Fans!

We are currently winding down our Fall sports seasons but are still on the go.

The volleyball team has had several wins and a few close losses. We are heading to the championship currently scheduled for October 11th and are hoping to bring home the gold! Our athletes have worked so hard and are gelling at the right time in the season.

The soccer team has had several close games and has been very competitive against much larger teams.

They played in the championship on October 3rd at Custer Park and won the Division 3 Championship! Their spirit and teamwork helped them compete well and finish strong.

The cross country team has been running their hearts out and putting out great performances during some very hot weather. Each practice they work to beat their personal bests and try to apply the pointers that Coach Alden gives them. Their final meet will be October 17th and we anticipate another great performance by our runners.



There are fewer teams in Division 3, however, we are often invited to compete against larger schools in which we are just as competitive as they are. I am very proud of the efforts of our student athletes and the sportsmanship they display. We have been complimented by other teams, parents and referees on many occasions. That alone is something to be very proud of as an athlete, parent, and school.

We are getting ready for basketball season so stay tuned for more information to come for signing up. I am looking to increase our schedule by playing in the higher divisions. It is a terrific opportunity and hope we have a big turnout for

the teams.

It's been a great Fall season and now it is time for a great Winter season!



*Go Wildcats!*





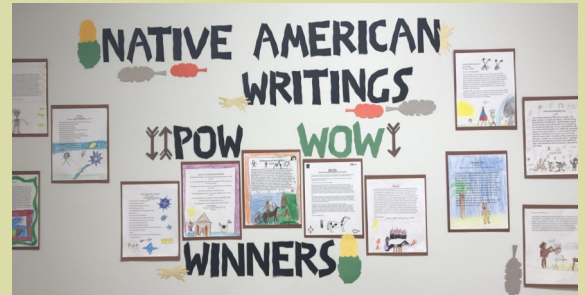
## *3rd Graders Win Writing Contest!*



Stone Mountain is celebrating 18 years of bringing the incredible Native American Cultural Festival to their park. To encourage creative writing and learning, Stone Mountain Park recently ran their "Write your own Ticket" competition which awards four winning classes from area schools a complimentary educational field trip to the Native American Festival and Pow-Wow.

The 3rd Grade HEROES were eager to enter the contest since we had already planned to attend the upcoming Pow Wow! The students wrote narrative pieces which capitalized on their senses and imagined themselves as Cherokee Indians. Five students' pieces were chosen by the class and who submitted to the competition. We were so pleased to discover that our class writings were chosen from the many submissions from all over Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama.

The students won a free field trip to the Stone Mountain Pow-Wow and will also be featured on the Stone Mountain Park website! We are proud of all the HEROES for participating in the contest and for being great writers!



## *Middle School Social committee*

At the start of the school year many of our middle school students volunteered to head up the first 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 when these events will take place, as well as, setting up and running the events.

To kick off this school year the students in 5th -8th grade enjoyed an ice cream social. Past social events have included pizza parties, gym and electronic games, "Just Dance" parties, contests and an annual campfire. These events allow our middle school students to spend time with classmates, hang-out and just have FUN with their peers!

Congratulations to our first semester committee members: Valerie, Hyojun, Sedona, Nathanael, Marian, Pearson, Joshua, Kendall, Tanvi, and Ishan.



## *Technology Fair Comes to the Middle School*



This year 5th through 8th grade will be showing off their tech skills by making movies, coding, creating their own website, or even designing a robot as part of the 1st McGinnis Woods Technology Fair! The Tech Fair replaces Project Showcase and allows students to be as creative as they want by using any element of technology they want. Students chose from 1 of 11 categories that they can base their project around and are now currently working hard on their projects.

Do you want to see what our students create? Then join us for our first McGinnis Woods Tech Expo held on Tuesday, November 7th 2017 at 1pm in the gym! Students will showcase their work and our elementary students can get excited to see what wonderful technology they can use when they join the middle school.

During the Expo, a team of judges and teachers will not only grade the students' work, but also decide on two winners - one from 5th-6th grade and another from 7th-8th grade who will be entered into the Forsyth County Technology Fair with a chance to go to the Georgia Educational Technology Fair in March 2018. This is a great opportunity for all students and we are very excited to bring a new project to the students that helps them explore their techie side. For more information on the Technology Fair or to volunteer as a judge for our first Tech Expo, please email either Ms. Sammi at [swesterlind@mcginniswoods.org](mailto:swesterlind@mcginniswoods.org) or Mr. Alex at [aklein@mcginniswoods.org](mailto:aklein@mcginniswoods.org)

Important Dates for our Middle School Students:

October 23rd – Note cards and Project overview

November 7th – Final Project Due.

## *Meet Ms. Brittany, Music Teacher*



Ms. Brittany Whittemore is the music teacher at McGinnis Woods. She recently joined the school to teach our infants through 8th graders. She has been a music teacher for the past 4 years, working with various ages in many different settings. Her most recent experience was working at an Independent boarding school in Tallulah Falls, GA.

Ms. Brittany was born and raised in Tennessee. There she obtained her degree in Music Education from Belmont University in Nashville. Her education includes choral, instrumental, and general music. At McGinnis Woods Ms. Brittany sees all the students for general music and conducts both the band and chorus. She also leads the morning practice club each Wednesday morning.

Ms. Brittany lives in Brookhaven, GA where she enjoys outdoor activities, cooking, and reading. She is also engaged and will be married this upcoming summer! Her fiancé is an attorney in downtown Atlanta. Ms. Brittany is thrilled to be a part of such a wonderful school where she can help the children grow in their musical pursuits.



## *A Trip to Oakland Cemetery*



The Middle School students learned so much during their recent visit to the historic Oakland Cemetery located in the heart of Atlanta. The graves located there are from significant time periods in Atlanta's unique history. The tour guides thrilled the middle schoolers and teachers with tales of families from the past needing to hide underground in shell shelters to avoid the bullets and cannon blasts of the Civil War. They also enlightened the students about the different architecture of the many mausoleums and tombstones. Students also saw burial sites laid out like beds. The tour guides explained that the Victorians thought of death as eternal sleep, so they carved headstones in the shape of pillows. At the

end of the tour, the students viewed the civil war section of the cemetery, and were informed that the tombstones were once made of wood and had to be remade from stone.



## *Student Council Updates*

We just wrapped up a very exciting month in which we held our Student Council elections. A number of amazing candidates ran impressive campaigns. Their posters, morning broadcast commercials and answers to interview questions gave the other students a good idea of their platforms and who they would most like to vote for. After tabulating the many votes the results are in.

The 2017-18 Student Council officers are:

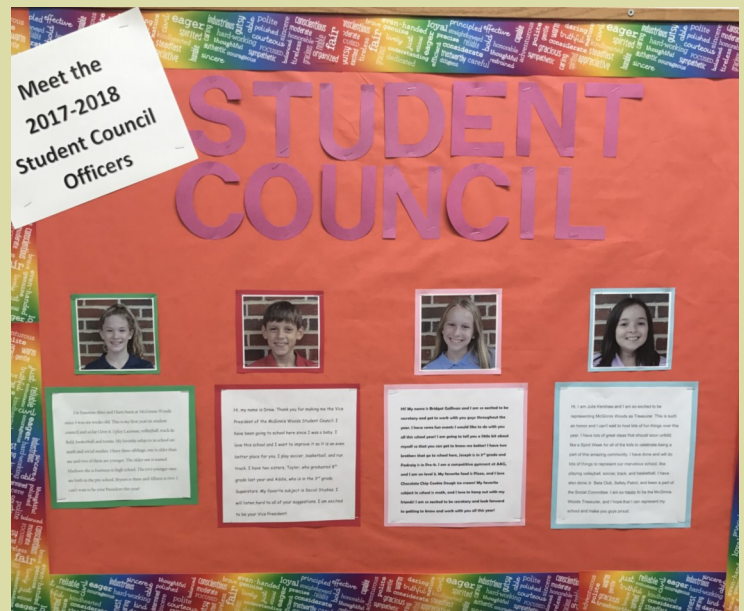
President: Emerson Aber

Vice-President: Drew Evangelista

Secretary: Bridget Gallivan

Treasurer: Julie Kershaw

The officers are already hard at work planning Red Ribbon Week and our first Chick fil-A Order In Day of the year. We will have our first classroom representative meeting on Monday, October 23rd at 8am when room representatives from each of the Kindergarten through 8th grade classes will join the Student Council Board to brainstorm and get busy making McGinnis Woods an even better place to learn and grow.





## *Words of the Month: Friendship and Creativity*



During September, students learned the importance of being a good friend as the word of the month was “Friendship”. Throughout September during morning announcements and in class teachers identified exceptional students who worked at being a good friend by demonstrating genuine care and concern for others in tangible ways. These special students were recognized and rewarded with special Chick-fil-A coupons on morning announcements and one exceptional student who worked hard to master the character trait was chosen as the Student of the Month and enjoyed a special lunch at Cheeseburger Bobby’s.

The Word of the Month for October is Creativity. Our students are learning that Creativity is defined as “using your imagination to do something unique”. We are very excited to see who will be honored for this trait the last week in October.

## *Students Lead Hurricane Relief Efforts*



The 4th grade and Jr. Beta Club heard about the devastation in Houston, Texas because of Hurricane Harvey and they wanted to help. They quickly worked together to organize a Bake Sale to benefit the hurricane victims, but then as the week of September 11th was approaching they realized that Hurricane Irma was headed our way, too! So, after a minor delay, they were able to lead a successful Pajama Day and Bake Sale which resulted in them raising \$1,389.60.

The students then reached out to and connected with one school in Houston and three schools in the Florida Keys who were reeling from the devastation left behind in the hurricanes wake. The schools were very pleased to hear that a school from Georgia was thinking of them and wanted to help in their recovery. Currently our school is in the process of purchasing and sending school supplies to Braeburn Elementary (Houston), Gerald Adams Elementary, and Poinciana Elementary. The students will

also be sending book donations to Stanley Switlik Elementary, as this is what they are in need of.

We are very excited to help others in need, while learning how great it is to give when others are struggling. Thanks so much to each of the families who contributed to this effort and taught our students that they are never too young to make a difference.



## *Meet Mr. Alex*



Mr. Alex Klein is our school STEM lab teacher, computer lab teacher, and FIRST LEGO League (FLL) robotics team coach. He recently joined McGinnis Woods near the end of the summer. Mr. Alex has been working in schools for over 5 years. His most recent experience was as a teacher and IT employee at another Independent School Georgia. He obtained his education degree from Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. He holds an active P-12 Georgia teaching certificate. His education experience includes teaching middle school, high school, lower school aftercare, as well as band camp, coding camp, and robotics camp. Mr. Alex handles all of the STEM classes for PreK4 through 4th grade, as well as all of the computer lab classes for 3-year-olds through 8th grade. He is excited to be a part of the McGinnis Woods Family.

Mr. Alex was born in New Orleans, LA. He was raised in Roswell, Georgia where he married his wife and had 2 children. He and his family have been living in Duluth, Georgia since 2014. His daughter Harley is in the Kindergarten Pandas classroom, and his son Malcolm is in the 3A classroom in the preschool. Alex's wife Brittany is a hair stylist at a local salon. Mr. Alex and his family attend North River Baptist Church in Roswell.

Mr. Alex is pleased to be a part of the staff at McGinnis Woods and is enjoying working with the amazing students as he develops their 21st Century skills.

## *Mr. Dan and his Students Love to CREATE!*



Our ever endless paint palette in the art room has been filled with colorful and extraordinary artwork. This work has been translated into some wonderful keepsake items by the Square 1 Art fundraiser. The students worked in a variety of different art medias that ranged from paint to pastels, with markers and color pencils in between to create wonderful keepsakes. The younger grades, PreK4-2nd grade, experimented with using their handprints and fingerprints to make images and textures. In our third through eighth grades, students created artwork that included images of animals, optical illusions, and seascapes. The students showed incredible craftsmanship by using bright colors, mechanical skills, all the while having fun.

Up next on our palette, during the last week of November, we will be journeying into our annual Art Show! We will be tackling images and animals from around the world. Our classes will be filled with discussions and art projects constructed with a skillful artist's hand as they create colorful and depictive illustrations. I look forward to seeing what each artist will develop and how the artwork will be turned into a framed masterpiece! Please stay tuned for save the date information.



## *Our 3rd Grade Team is Inspiring Minds!*



The third grade team at McGinnis Woods has been inspiring the new crop of third graders from the first day of school. The teachers have led the students in engaging lessons, stimulating discussions and challenging hands on activities each and every day.

Ms. Sammi teaches the 3rd Grade Heroes. Ms. Sammi has been a part of McGinnis Woods since 2015 and has taught 3rd and 4th grade here at the Woods. Previously, she worked at a private school in Marietta where she taught for 3 years in the middle school as their social studies teacher. Ms. Sammi is originally from the UK where she earned her degree in teaching. Since that time, she has received her teaching certificate in Georgia. Sammi has since traveled around the world to gain more experience in teaching and has taught in the UK, Egypt, and here in the USA. She has a passion for technology and STEM and has earned teaching certificates in coding and in STEM including recently becoming a Google Certified Teacher. She hopes to add more tech in her lessons with the 3rd graders and the whole school. She recently contributed to the creation and implementation of the first McGinnis Woods Tech Fair for the middle school.

Ms. Sammi has been married to her husband Kevin for over 4 years and they have a beautiful girl, Evey, who is 3 and in Ms. Rebecca's 3B class in Preschool. She loves everything nerdy and regularly attends conventions in Atlanta.

Ms. Trish teaches the 3rd Grade Superstars. This is her 6th year at McGinnis Woods but her first year as a full-time teacher at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Trish has a BA in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts and a Georgia teaching certificate. She has taught in a lot of different cities, including Boston Massachusetts, Copenhagen Denmark, and Atlanta Georgia before having children. In her spare time, she loves to travel, read, and spend time with her family. Ms. Trish is passionate about teaching and is super excited to be part of the McGinnis Woods family full-time.

Ms. Callie Rowe works as an Assistant Teacher with the 3rd Grade Heroes and 3rd Grade Superstars. Callie earned her Bachelors degree in Rhetoric from Georgia College and State in Milledgeville. This is her second year at McGinnis Woods, and she also works with third grade afterschool students. Ms. Callie is passionate about communications and creative opportunities, and loves all corny jokes! She is a masterful artist and loves gently guiding her students in their learning. She looks forward to another year as a member of the McGinnis Woods community.

## *Save the Date*



Please plan to join us at the Fall Festival on Saturday October 28 from 1:00pm-4:00pm. This is the event of the season filled with games, activities, costumes, a haunted house, food, a McGinnis the Money Turkey raffle, and food. Be sure to purchase your entrance wristband so that you can enjoy the fun!



## *Pictures from Around the School*

