

McGinnis Woods Buzz



February/March 2014 Volume 9, Issue 2



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

Message from Ms. Mary...1	8th Grade.....6	Sunsational Summer....10
Wildcat Chat.....2	Read Across America...6	Construction.....11
Ms. Cassandra.....2	Preschool Corner.....7	District Band.....11
3rd Grade.....3	Wax Museum.....8	Georgia Bar.....12
SACS.....3	Word of the Month.....8	
PA Update.....4	Quilling.....9	
Math and Science Night...5	12X12 Project.....10	

DATES TO REMEMBER

03/17	SACS visit
03/17	Signed Report Cards Due
03/19	Talent Show 1:30
03/22	Band-tastic 8:30-4:30
03/24	Box Tops Due
03/27-03/28	Spring Pictures
03/31-04/04	Spring Break
04/07	School Begins

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

This edition of the “McGinnis Woods Buzz” covers a lot of interesting happenings that have occurred in February and March. Now that the weather has calmed down a bit, the students seem to be back on track with regular school attendance and a more focused approach to their learning and activities. We are very pleased with their efforts.



As you know, we administer the *Stanford 10* each spring to students in 1st – 8th grades. This year the *Stanford 10* will be given the week of April 21st-25th. We do not spend a lot of time reviewing for the test nor do we teach to the tests. Some grade levels, however, are beginning to review how to take standardized tests and the different types of questions that the students might encounter on the test.

We have used the Stanford Achievement Test since 2002. It is the oldest and one of the most widely used nation-wide assessment tools. The *Stanford 10* gives us an idea of how our students are scoring in comparison to students throughout the entire country. Standardized testing is one useful tool which provides data to further assess individual student success as well as the school's curriculum. It is but one of the many ways that we assess our students each year. We do not use the test as a High Stakes Test, such as the CRCT, but we do glean important information from the test results to guide us in meeting individual student needs, recommending students for specialized programs such as Duke TIP or SIG, and to set goals and objectives for annual grade level academic goals.

We are looking forward to our five year review visit from the SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) Accrediting team. They will be on our campus on Monday and Tuesday, March 17th and 18th, to learn about our school, observe in classrooms, and meet with different stakeholder groups. We will be sure to share the results of their visit, as soon as we receive them.

Next Wednesday, March 19th, we will have our Talent Show, which was postponed due to weather this past Wednesday. Please join us at 1:30 for a wide variety of interesting talents and acts which are sure to bring a smile to your face!

Wildcat Chat

The Wildcats have begun Track and Field with a lot of enthusiasm! We have 28 students participating in running and field events. While our gym is being built, we have been traveling to Fowler Park so our students can practice on a track. Our coaches this year are Ms. Lyndsey, Ms. Sonia, Ms. Robyn and Coach C. Many team members are new to the sport and are learning the events they would like to pursue. Our first meet was a Field Event Only Meet which took place at Davis Academy on a cold day. It may have been cold outside, but our wildcats were on fire! Some of the highlights included: Teema Yassine coming in second place in the discus and 4th in the shot put. Kameron Scott and Christina Park both came in fourth place in the long jump, while Maddie Moore and Ethan Montgomery both came in third place in the triple jump. We were competing against a lot of schools, so this was a great first showing! The meet was also a fun opportunity for a lot of our students to try some events in competition for the very first time. We look forward to a great 2014 season in Track and Field this year.

GO WILDCATS!!



Teacher Highlight: Ms. Cassandra

Ms. Cassandra Hulett moved to Atlanta from Los Angeles in 1994 and has felt at home ever since. Although she misses the beach and her family and friends, she feels this has been an amazing place to raise her fabulous boys, Ryan (12) and Colin (9). Ms. Cassandra has been teaching Spanish at McGinnis Woods for the past four years and feels blessed to be doing what she loves every day.

She has a Bachelors of Arts in Spanish and is a few classes shy of completing her Masters in Spanish at Georgia State University. She has had the amazing opportunity to travel abroad to countries like Argentina and Spain, and one day would love to live in one of those countries when the boys are grown. She appreciates the Latin culture for its focus on putting family first and enjoying life to the fullest.

Ms. Cassandra lives in Sandy Springs, walking distance from Chastain Park, where she loves to take her boys as much as possible. During her free time, Cassandra enjoys running, getaways to the beach, trips to California, scrapbooking, camping, hiking, movies and popcorn, alone time with her friends, and listening to all different genres of music.



Grade Level Feature: 3rd Grade

The third grade students are taught by two excellent, long time teachers of McGinnis Woods, Ms. Sam and Ms. Kristen. Their creative and engaging teaching methods keep the Third Grade Dogs and Owls challenged, supported and learning.

Ms. Sam grew up in Sandy Springs and graduated with a B.S. in Elementary Education from Kennesaw State University. This is her eighth year at McGinnis Woods and third year teaching third grade. She has been married to her husband Brian for 15 years, and they have two children, Cole and Alexandria, and two dogs, Sophie and Koda. Both Cole and Alexandria attend McGinnis Woods. Cole is in eighth grade and Alexandria is in sixth grade. In her free time, Ms. Sam loves to spend time with her family, read, cook and enjoys watching some TV.

Ms. Kristen grew up in Woodstock and graduated with a B.S. in Elementary Education from Georgia State University. She is earning her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. This is her ninth year at McGinnis Woods and her eighth year in third grade. She has been married to her husband Steve for 14 years. They have two children, Conner and Ella, two dogs, two tree frogs, and a fish. Connor is in sixth grade and Ella is in third grade. Both are very active in sports. In her free time, Ms. Kristen loves to spend time with her family outdoors, exercise, and travel to the beach.



The Results Are In!

This past October all of our stakeholders, parents, staff, and students were encouraged to participate in our annual School Improvement Survey. This was the first year that the results of the survey were gathered and tabulated through AdvanceEd and SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). Each year, we collect and interpret this data to create and/or adjust goals, objectives and plans included in our School Improvement Plan.

We wanted to share some of the results from this helpful tool with you:

Strengths:

The parent survey results ranked Standard 5: Results for Continuous Improvement the highest with a score of 4.25/5.

Staff ranked Standard 1: Purpose and Direction the highest with a score of 4.52/5.

The Middle Schoolers ranked Standard 2 the Highest: Governance and Leadership with a score of 4.46/5. The Elementary Students ranked Standard 4: Resources and Support Systems the highest with a score of 2.93/3.

The Early Elementary Students ranked Standard 1: Purpose and Direction the highest with a score of 2.93/3.

The highest overall survey scores were:

Parents: "Our school provides a safe learning environment."

Staff: "Our school's purpose statement is clearly focused on student success."

Students: "In my school, my teachers want me to do my best work" and "My school has computers to help me learn" (Both student responses received perfect scores).

Opportunities for Improvement:

The parent survey results ranked Standard 1: Purpose and Direction with a score of 4.18/5.

Staff ranked Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning with a score of 4.18/5.

Middle Schoolers and Elementary Students ranked Standard 5: Using Results for Continuous Improvement a 4.08/5 and a 2.71/3 respectively.

Early Elementary Students ranked standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning with a score of 2.65/3.

The lowest overall survey scores were:

Parents: "Our school's purpose statement is formally reviewed and revised with involvement from the parents" received a 3.81/5 (103 total responses with 33 responses of neutral, 2 disagree and 1 strongly disagree).

Staff: "In our school, staff members provide peer coaching to teachers" received a 3.62/5.

Middle Schoolers: "In my school, students help each other even if they are not friends" received a 3.32/4.

Elementary Students: "My principal and teachers ask me what I think about school" received a 2.29/3.

Our School Improvement Team has worked to interpret the data and to create action plans to address these areas for improvement. As you know, we are always trying to recruit parents to serve on teams and to help us make our school the best that it can be. If you are interested in joining one of our site-based management teams, please contact me at mjohnson@mcginniswoods.org.

Some of the other plans we hope to implement are new opportunities for our teachers to coach one another and provide mentorship to new staff members. We are also meeting with groups of students beyond Beta Club, student council and patrols to illicit more input and suggestions from a broader group of students.

These are busy and exciting days at McGinnis Woods and we are glad that you are a part of our amazing learning environment.

PA Update

We had a great time dancing the night away at the Annual Valentine's Dance! A special thank you to all of the teachers who donated to the Teacher Auctions; a social event like this would be impossible without their contributions. Ticket prices do not cover the cost of the whole event, and our teacher auctions are the only way to make up the difference. Thank you to all who attended, contributed and bid on auctions, we hope everyone had a great time! Below is a list of all of our auction winners as well as the 50/50 raffle winner.

Auction Items	Winners		
Art with Ms. Elise	Maume	Leopards	
Fun at Splatters with Ms. Kammy	Mahoney	Bugs	
Nurse for the Day	Botcha	1st grade	
Nurse for the Day	Kershaw	Leopards	
Principal for the Day	Minnie	4th Suns	
Principal for the Day	Yassine	5th	
Mr. Josh School of Rock	Kumarakalva	Falcons	
Mr. Josh School of Rock	MJ Yassine	5th	
Super Science with Ms. Wendy	Beisner	Leopards	
La Comida with Senore Cassandra	Scott	8th	
Studio Movie Grill with Kayla & Katie	Yassine	8th	
Hike with Coach C	Amelia	Dogs	
Lunch & Games with Ms. Kim	Addison	Fish	
Lunch & Games with Ms. Kim	Bridget	Fish	
Barnes & Noble with Cece and Ruth	Kumarakalva	Falcons	
Splatters with Ms. Jacki and Ms. Robyn	Amelia	Dogs	
Bowling Party	Amelia	Dogs	
Bowling Party	Brennan	Dragons	
Bowling Party	Yassine	8th	
Nails with Ms. Tanya	Goldman	5th	
Diamond Girlz Salon & Spa with Stacey/Hiral	Addison	Fish	
Diamond Girlz Salon & Spa with Stacey/Hiral	Kumarakalva	Falcons	
Barnes & Noble with Kristen, Jenn and Sam	Freeman	Dogs	
Movie Magic with Sonia, Lindsey and Kelli	Katie	Leopards	
Movie Magic with Sonia, Lindsey and Kelli	Freeman	Dogs	
Movie Magic with Sonia, Lindsey and Kelli	Maume	Giraffe	

50/50 Raffle Winner-Davis Family! Congratulations!

Teacher Appreciation Week is March 24th -28th. Stay tuned for emails about the week's events.

We are looking for committed parents who believe volunteering benefits their children and the school. Without the countless hours from our various volunteers, the Valentine's Dance, Spaghetti Dinner and the multitude of other events would not take place. ***We are looking for you*** to help by volunteering an hour or more to help us continue the many traditions established at McGinnis Woods. Contact the PA at PA@mcginniswoods.org to let us know your interested in volunteering. We have varied positions open on the Parent Association Board as well as various volunteer opportunities that require only a few hours of your time.

UPCOMING PA EVENTS....

School PA Coffee – Friday, 3/21/14
 Teacher Appreciation Week – 3/24-3/28/14
 Otis Spunkmeyer Spring Fundraiser – 4/7-4/17/2014
 Square One Art ordering – 4/14 – 4/23/14
 Scene on the Green – 5/16/2014

Math and Science Night

Math and Science Night was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who came out and participated. We could not put on these amazing events without you! Thank you to the PA who provided a delicious spaghetti dinner before the event.

We had some awesome activities like building a bridge using cards, creating 3-D shapes using toothpicks and marshmallows, and even some exciting Science experiments put on by our Middle grades students. We even had a Lego estimation game where some really cool prizes were won. The big Lego creations were made by our Pre-K and Kindergarten classes using 301 Legos. Leighton Dancy won with a guess of 289. The Middle grades students used 1,034 small Legos. Sam Mesi won with a guess of 1,085. Congratulations to both of you!

Hopefully, you were able to check out some of the outstanding Science Fair projects the students have done. Teachers in our 4th-8th grade classes picked two Science projects to compete in our annual Science Fair competition. The projects were all amazing this year and our judges had a very tough time deciding the winners. The results were very close.

In 4th grade:

1st Place: Matilde Ribeiro

2nd Place: Sydney Wood

Honorable Mention: Himani Kalra, Nicky Leonard

In 5th grade:

1st Place: Kaitlin Marro

2nd Place: Brennan Marasco

Honorable Mention: Bizzy Jordan, Tori Kershaw

In 6th-8th grade:

1st Place: Jack Merritt

2nd Place: Ethan Montgomery

Honorable Mention: Molly Hamman, Andrew Novokshanov



8th Graders Heading to Washington, D.C.

The 8th grade students are proud to introduce McGinnis Woods spirit shoes! The spirit shoes are a fund raiser for the 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. The shoes are on display in the lobby of both the preschool and the elementary school. If you are interested in purchasing spirit shoes, please bring in white canvas tennis shoes and \$25.00. The fee can be paid by check (made out to MCGW), cash, or C.T.A. (Charge to Account). The tennis shoes will be embellished and turned into unique spirit shoes. The students may wear their new spirit shoes for the remainder of the year with their everyday uniform! The deadline for ordering the shoes is Friday, March 21st.



The 8th grade students are looking forward to their Washington, D.C. trip. While in D.C., the students will complete a robust educational curriculum and spend time interacting with their peers from across the country. They will also visit D.C.'s famous sites including Capitol Hill, the National Archives, DC's Smithsonian Museums, Arlington Cemetery, and much more!

Please show your school pride and support our 8th grade trip by purchasing spirit shoes.

McGinnis Woods participates in Read Across America



Teachers and students alike took a break from their daily routines for our annual participation in Read Across America. Read Across America is a national reading awareness initiative set forth by the National Education Association. Schools across the country use Read Across America to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday with exciting events to promote a love of reading. McGinnis Woods students were ready to provide lots of imagination for everything relating to Dr. Seuss! Various classes decorated classroom windows and doors with Dr. Seuss materials. *The Cat in the Hat* made several appearances throughout our school!

During the week, students were exposed to everything Seussical! Guest readers — including teachers, parents and school board members visited classrooms and read stories. Alison Jacowitz, a Kindergarten parent said, "I enjoyed being there and seeing all of the kids excited. They really listened and focused on the first book! I was impressed by that! The second book was so silly they couldn't help but be excited, and it was fun to see that side of them." Our budding excitement was spread across our entire campus with the help of our third graders. Students in both third grade classes shared their love of reading with children in our preschool.



McGinnis Woods had a fabulous week with a hatful of Seuss. We are so thankful and grateful to our students, teachers and parents who participated and volunteered to read. As the famous Dr. Theodor Seuss Geisel said, "You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child."



Preschool Corner



Amazing experiences have been happening at the McGinnis Woods Preschool! Our preschoolers have been learning about the Winter Olympics. They even pretended to participate in the opening ceremonies with a parade on the playground. The children carried flags from different nations and studied where Sochi is located and how far away the Olympics were. Their favorite Olympic sport was ice skating; our icy weather might have been a factor in the voting!

February was the month of love and Valentine's. The children celebrated with parties and a few yummy treats! The children talked about being kind to each other and about who they love in their family. They did a lot of cutting this month practicing how to cut out hearts.

The week of February 17th was Dental Health week, where the children learned about how to take good care of their teeth by brushing, flossing, eating good foods and drinking milk. The children had a very special visit from the tooth fairy! She told them all about how to take care of their teeth and explained what happens when you visit the dentist.

Dinosaurs were also part of the learning experience in February. The children learned about what it means to be extinct as well as how long ago dinosaurs roamed the earth. They measured how long dinosaurs were and measured their bodies to compare the size. The Reptile Guy visited on March 7th to show the children some of the animals that are living today that resemble dinosaurs.

March kicked off with Dr. Seuss and Read Across America week. The third grade elementary students came over and read to the preschoolers. It was a fun time for both the preschoolers and the third graders as well! Children love being read to by adults, but they were fascinated by the older children reading to them!

We recently had the three and four year old classes visit our Pre-K classes. The preschoolers got to sit at the tables and chairs in Pre-K and did some fun learning activities, too. This was a great experience for the preschool children to get an idea what they will be doing in Pre-K next year!

Upcoming Dates at the Preschool:

Spring Pictures: March 13 & 14.

St. Patrick's Day: March 17

Book Fair: March 17-21

Save the date:

Spring Carnival: April 26

Happy Spring!

Third Graders Create a Wax Museum



As a culminating activity for their biography book report, the third graders recently participated in third grade's first Wax Museum! The students choose their own historical figure to learn about. They read a biography, learned about their famous person's life, and learned important contributions the famous person made to society. After they read, they wrote and memorized speeches about their figure. The students came to school dressed and ready to act! They were frozen like figurines, and parents activated them by pushing a button on their hands. This started their acting and dialogues. Parents, teachers, and students had great time learning about all of these important people from history. Some of the important people represented by our fabulous third grade students were Walt Disney, Helen Keller, Orville Wright, Jackie Robinson, Marian Anderson, Marie Curie, and many more.

Word of the Month:

Forgiveness

This month's *Core Essentials* word of the month is forgiveness. Our animal for March is the salamander, and our color is green. The color green is often associated with growth, a sign of maturity, and the return of something beautiful after a devastating catastrophe, like a forest fire. The students have learned that forgiveness is deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay. Teachers will be on the lookout for exceptional students showing forgiveness to others. Students who have worked hard at this character trait will be rewarded with a Chick-fil-A coupon.



Students Learn the History of Quilling

Ms. Elise's new sculpting class learned about the art and history of quilling this past quarter. Quilling is an art form that involves rolling and shaping strips of paper to create decorative designs. Students rolled the paper around their pencils and also around weaving needles to create their designs. Some students chose representative subject matter and some chose abstract. Whichever subject matter they selected, they all produced gorgeous pieces of artwork! These pictures are just a few of the examples. The bird with the flower were created by Stephanie from 6th grade, the fish was created by Alex Beckman from 6th grade, the other bird was created by Carly Bachism from 8th grade, and the teacups and flower in vase were created by Mari Davis in 6th grade.



12x12 Love Project Success!

We did it, and we could not have done it without the amazing support of the McGinnis Woods community! *Change for Change* was a huge success and fun. Students raised over \$600, and winning classes will be enjoying pizza parties, pajama parties, non-uniform days, and silly string wars. The Jr. Beta Club will be contacting the 12x12 Love Project and submitting their check to build a home for a family in Guatemala. The students who have supported this cause have worked very hard and are so excited to get the donation in the hands of people who need it. Thank you so much for supporting our cause and helping the kids give back!



Sunsational Summer is Coming Soon!

Plan to join us this summer for our Sunsational Summer Camp. This is going to be a great camp filled with arts, crafts, games, technology, water activities, board games, sports and amazing field trips! Camp will run from May 27 through August 8. Camp hours are 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. Before and after care is also available. Campers will explore a new theme each week including: Animal Adventures, Splish Splash, Weird Science and Thrill Seekers. Field trip destinations include Atlanta Botanic Garden, tubing, horseback riding and Tanglewood Farms along with many others. Some of our favorite teachers will also be offering special academic camps to keep your skills fresh or to introduce campers to new activities such as golf, Spanish, swimming, robotics, drama, football and cooking.

This is going to be our best camp yet, so sign up today! Registration information is available at www.mcginiswoods.org and in the lobby of both the Preschool and Elementary School. We hope to see you this summer as we have loads of fun!



Kids Excited About New Gym!



Molly Hamann Earns a Seat in District Band

On February 8, 2014, one of our McGinnis Woods' students performed in The Ninth District Middle School Band Concert. Molly Hamann, a 6th Grade Frog, was the only student from our school who auditioned back in December to earn a spot in District Band. Molly, who plays the trumpet, was up against other middle school students who came from all over Northeast Georgia. She did a great job, and she earned a spot in the two day clinic and performance. It was a wonderful musical experience, and the concert was amazing considering they had only practiced one and a half days! Congratulations to Molly for a job well done!



Middle Grades Visit the Georgia Bar

The 5th-8th graders went to the Georgia State Bar Association in February. They offered a fabulous program featuring many different law lessons. Students learned about homicide during a lesson on law. These topics were explained with funny stories and interesting scenarios. Students then participated in a mock trial. Some students were able to act in the roles of attorney and witnesses as well as others. All remaining students became the jury for the trial, doing their best to determine if Jack (from beanstalk fame) was guilty of trespassing, taking (goose, harp, gold and silver) and/or Murder of the Giant. Students listened to witness testimony as all facts were given to help with their decision. We had a few future lawyers in our group!

