

McGinnis Woods Buzz



December 2017 Volume 12, Issue 4



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

12/21- 22	Winter Break After School Fun!
12/25- 26	McGinnis Woods Closed Merry Christmas!
12/28	Stars and Strikes Field Trip
1/1- 1/2	McGinnis Woods Closed Happy New Year!
1/4	Build a Bear Workshop Field Trip
1/5	Teachers' Workday
1/8	School Resumes

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.*

A Message From Ms. Mary

I love the holidays. I love the music of the season, the special gatherings and the crisp feeling in the air. I especially enjoy school during this fast paced period of the year. The feeling in the halls is one charged with anticipation and excitement. Thankfully our amazing teachers channel this excitement and energy in positive ways through unique lessons, special field trips and projects which focus on being thankful and generous during the last days of the calendar year.



This issue of the Buzz is filled with articles highlighting many of the neat activities that have taken place during the past weeks. We were so pleased to host our annual Thanksgiving feasts over 4 days during November where we fed and entertained more than 640 family and friends. The students performed fun songs of thanks and showcased their artistic skills and manners each day.

Since that time we have enjoyed a wonderful Art Show, a Book Fair, Band and Chorus Concerts, home Basketball Games, Field Trips which included A Christmas Carol and a trip to the College Football Hall of Fame, a snowy early release day, Spelling Bees, our annual Sing A Long and Holiday Parties. Students have made blankets to donate to a dog shelter, presents for family members and bears at Build A Bear Workshop which they gifted to others.

Daily we are reminded that *inspiring students with the passion to excel* goes well beyond learning words on a page or calculations to perform in math. Inspiring the students to be kind, caring, thoughtful individuals is equally important to mastery of the curriculum and good grades, as these traits are what make life meaningful and magical.

From all of us at McGinnis Woods, we wish you a joyous holiday season, safe travels and special moments with family and friends. We look forward to seeing you on January 8, 2018 when school resumes.

Happy Holidays,

Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update



Happy Holidays to our McGinnis Woods Family!

How is it possible that the first half of the school year is already behind us?! It seems like just yesterday we were sending our children off for their first day with freshly sharpened pencils, new school supplies, and shoes that were still white! Since that day in August, friendships have formed and strengthened in our halls and classrooms, community has been built, and funds have been raised to benefit our wonderful school.



Speaking of fundraising, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all that made the 2017 Holiday Shoppe such a success! It was so much fun to help our little shoppers select the perfect gifts for their loved ones. We hope you enjoy their selections as you open your presents over the holidays. A multi-day event like the Holiday Shoppe is simply not possible without the support of our families and parents. THANK YOU to all of our wonderful volunteers who generously shared their time, energy and holiday spirit with us!

Now it is time to turn our attention to 2018! We hope a resolution can be to volunteer in the coming months. We have an exciting second semester planned and many hands make light work! We will have opportunities both large and small and would love for you to join us in any capacity!

Although our Teacher Appreciation week is still several months away, this week-long event takes quite a bit of planning and assistance from our McGinnis families. We will kick January off with our first planning meeting and would love your help and input as we plan how to make the most of our opportunity to show our fabulous McGinnis Woods teachers and staff how much we appreciate all that they do for our children. Details for the planning meeting will come home with your students after the New Year, so please keep an eye out for it!

We are thrilled to report that our Valentine Dance will return to the beautiful Polo Golf and County Club on Saturday, February 10th. Please mark your calendar and plan to come dance the night away with your fellow McGinnis Woods families!

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a new year filled with much love and happiness. We are excited for what the remainder of the school year will bring! In the meantime, please feel free to reach out through our website www.mcginiswoodspa.org. See you in January!



Preschool Corner



December has been such an exciting month for our little preschool friends. We have had a great time learning and exploring from Fairly Tales to Multicultural Holidays! The classes have had fun with activities such as using gum drops to practice counting, building gingerbread houses, using gingerbread cookie cutters for an art project and theme related letter tracing.

The children explored all the different Holidays that are celebrated within our school community. They made dreidels, Christmas trees, wreaths, menorahs and read plenty of Holiday books. Without a doubt the highlight of this month in the preschool was our very first "Snow Day." It was a wonderful experience being able to see our little ones play in the snow; loving every minute of it. What great lessons resulted from that day, as we learned about snow, temperature

and the atmosphere.

Wrapping up this fun filled month we had our annual Holiday classroom parties. We love and appreciate all the parent involvement and support. Some classrooms had book exchanges and others decorated cookies with mom and dad. It was such a great way to celebrate this special time of year! We even had a special guest reader in one of our classes. (Thank you Miss Mary).



We wish you all a safe and Happy Holiday and look forward to a fabulous 2018!

Reading is a Priority at McGinnis Woods!



It was time for lots of fun and s'more books at our recent Scholastic Book Fair! Everyone was super excited about the arrival of our book fair. We kicked off a week early with a Scholastic Book Fair Spirit Week. Students came dressed as their favorite book characters. It was as if our school turned into its very own storybook!

During the book fair, students and teachers camped out to their wish lists. Parents perused the fair for book for themselves and great holiday reads for students.

Our middle school students were excited to find captivating books in our Teen Reads section. This section is dedicated especially to our middle school students to suit their specific interests.



While shopping many of you supported our classroom by purchasing books from teacher wish lists as well as donating gift certificates to classrooms. All of your purchases and donations helped place books in the hands of McGinnis Woods students. Thank you for your continued support in making reading a fun, exciting and wonderful way to learn.



Wildcat Chat



Hello Wildcats! Our winter basketball season is in full swing. Both the girls' and boys' teams are young and have been thriving against very competitive opponents. Collectively we've had many successes throughout the season.

Under the leadership of Coach Jim Stuart, the girls' team has improved tremendously coming together nicely as a group, supporting and encouraging each other.

Under the leadership of Coach Chason Smith, the boys' team is developing into a strong team that, at times, is unstoppable.

Typically, the girls and boys play their games against the same school on the same day. It has been nice to see how much they support each other in each of their efforts to not just get the win but to improve as players and teammates.

After the holidays we will start up again and have 5 remaining games until the play-offs, which will be held on January 23rd and January 25th.

We appreciate the energy of our fans and those who have been able to help out with scoring and concessions. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to you all!!

Go Wildcats!!



Max Scholar Program Enhances Our Enrichment Program



The students in Ms. Kristen's class have been busy working hard using our new reading program called MaxScholar. MaxScholar is an interactive comprehensive, multi sensory, and language-based reading program. The entire program uses an Orton-Gillingham approach to learning which is why it is so effective.

MaxScholar has three main components: MaxPhonics, MaxReading, and MaxWords. In MaxPhonics the students learn consonants, vowels, blends, and digraphs using various visual, auditory and tactile drills. In MaxReading the students highlight, summarize and outline the text they read. In MaxWords the students learn syllabication, spelling rules, prefixes, suffixes and roots.

The best part about MaxScholar is that the students can access the program at home or on a portable device. In class most of the students use Ms. Kristen's classroom ipads for their work. The students have been setting weekly goals for themselves and will set monthly goals in 2018.

Ms. Kristen enjoys using MaxScholar with her students and has found it to be a great addition to her other lessons. The students love Max Scholar and are always asking to use it when they come to her class.



Winter Weather Wear Tips from Nurse Angie

The winter season is approaching (and has already made a debut this December). Georgia temperatures fluctuate, so please be mindful of the temperatures predicted for the day. Have your children dressed appropriate to the weather forecast. Keep in mind this COLD acronym when choosing winter wear for your children:

C-Clean clothing: clean clothes retain insulation.

O-overheating: avoid wearing too many layers and becoming overheated. Remove layers as necessary. Sweating causes moisture that leads to cooling of your body.

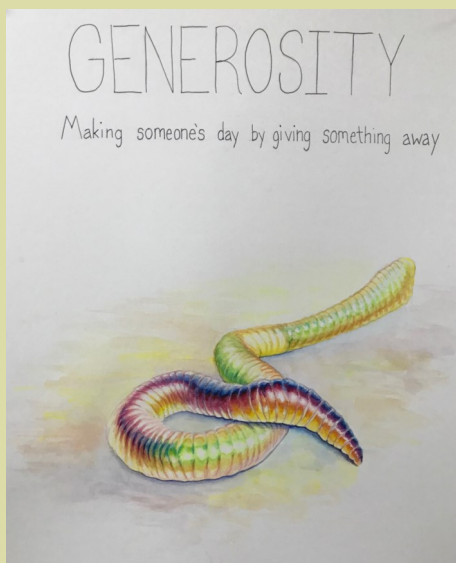
L-Layer clothing: wear clothing loose and layered. Loose layers provide more insulation than one thick layer. These layers trap air and keep in heat. Layered clothes can be removed if overheating occurs.

D-(stay) dry: remove wet clothing immediately. Avoid sweating and producing moisture build up.

Practice this acronym and stay warm, dry, and safe this winter season!



Character Word of the Month: Generosity



The Word of the Month for December is Generosity. Generosity is defined as “making someone’s day by giving something away.”

Students have been learning about the meaning and the importance of generosity throughout December on the morning announcements and also in counseling classes with Ms. Jenn. Our school is filled with many generous students and the teachers are on the lookout for exceptional students showing generosity towards others. These special students were acknowledged with special Chick-fil-A coupons on the morning announcements. One generous student was chosen from each class as the Citizen of the Month and taken to a special lunch at Cheeseburger Bobby’s on December 19th.

The Word of the Month for January is Commitment.

Student Council and Jr. Beta Club Updates

Student Council Update: We spent the majority of December gearing up for the New Year. Be on the lookout for some exciting events coming up. We have a representative meeting in January and Candygrams coming in February. In addition, the officers have been prepping the school store with some new items. We are open from 8:00-8:30 most Fridays and offer novelty school items and replacement items like paper and crayons. We look forward to seeing you at the store.

Jr. Beta Club Update: We will start the New Year off helping some great charities. We will be hosting a coat drive to benefit The Place of Forsyth County, a social services organization that offers assistance to needy families in our community. In addition, we will lend a hand to Hope Thru Soap, a non-profit organization that offers hot showers and essential items to the homeless in Atlanta. Please check out the organizations we will be supporting on line and on Facebook. Take a minute over break and collect your coats and travel sized hotel toiletries because we will be looking for them in January.

Robotics Competition Success



This past Monday, December 18th, the McGinnis Woods WildBots competed in the 2017 FIRST LEGO League (FLL) RoboMustang Regional at Meadowcreek High School. The team members include Sasha Edwards, Sanah Jain, Vedant Kalipatnapu, Sinclair Koehnke, Peter Lisi, Pranish Mandava, Topher McDowell, Leon Schultz, Ritvik Shah, Aadi Sharma, Aarav Sheth, and Ben Tseng. Due to our snowy weather the week before, this event was rapidly re-scheduled. Even still, most of the members were able to attend!

The team competed in the Hydro Dynamics robot game which featured missions that dealt with water, waste, filtration, transportation, and conservation. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen software issues on the part of the host, we were not able to receive full results—so there was no awards ceremony. Nonetheless, our team had a great time meeting other teams, watching the robot table games being judged, and spending time with their peers at a fun field trip. While we did not win the robot table portion of the competition, we did well, scoring above multiple other teams. The experience should serve as a springboard for students wanting to return to compete next season.

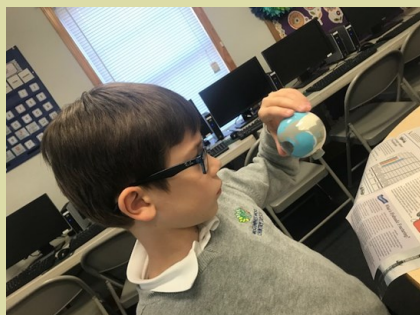


New Session of Discovery Clubs Starts in January



Our second session is sadly coming to an end and included some wonderful activities that the students all enjoyed. Jr. Robotics and STEM with Ms. Wendy are always such a fun club that the students enjoy using their creative minds to build unique structures. Ms. Crystal offered a crafting club where students were able to make cute and unique crafts. The students cooking with Ms. Valorie enjoyed many tasty treats from cookies and ice cream to pizza and quesadillas. Our Spanish club enjoyed traveling and learning about different countries, where they got their passport stamped and made musical maracas! All students had such a great time.

The third session of discovery clubs begins the week of January 8. This session will include some exciting and unique clubs. We will offer Jr. Robotics, Spanish Club, Football club, STEM club, Escape the classroom, Chess, and Drama. All clubs will end the week of February 23, unless make up classes are needed. We look forward to another wonderful session.



Winter Break Fun is on the Way!



Winter Break is quickly approaching and we have a lot in store for our after school students. Our students will have fun filled days of group games, arts and crafts in Art Class, and exciting field trips.

On Thursday, December 28th, we will go to Stars and Strikes for exciting games of bowling, a pizza lunch and an hour of arcade games. On Thursday, January 4th, we will head over to North Point Mall to Build-a-Bear to make special furry friends to take

home. Students will need to bring a packed lunch for this field trip.

If your child will be coming to McGinnis Woods over our Winter Break, please let the front desk know and sign a permission slip for the field trips.

McGinnis Woods will be closed for the holidays on December 25th and 26th and January 1st and 2nd.



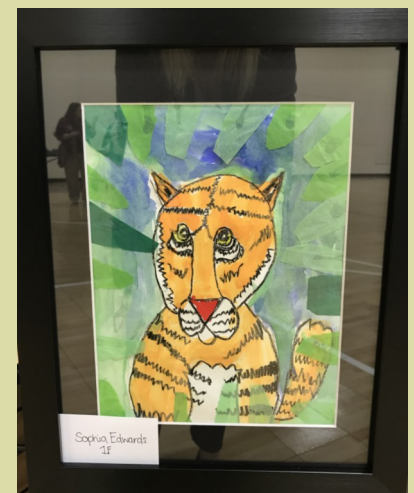
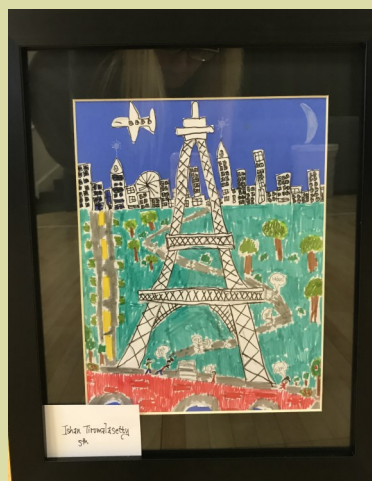
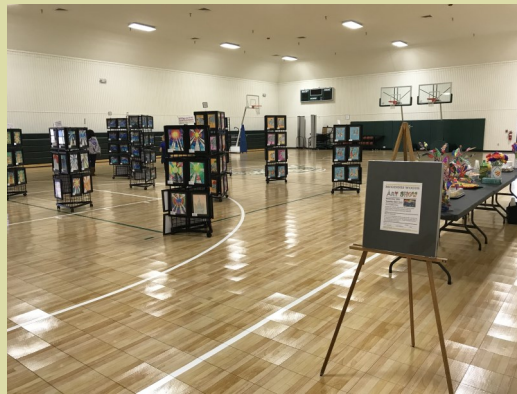
Art Show Featured Animals and Locations from Around the World



The Art Show was a huge success. The student's artwork was beyond extraordinary and greeted the many people who attended the show in the gym. The lively, expressive pieces along with the light refreshments that were served were enjoyed by all. The students were eager to show their family members and friends their beautifully framed pieces.

Each of the grades created art work based on the show's theme. There were animals from different continents including chameleons, koi, elephants, and tigers. Some of the locations featured included Times Square and New York, Lighthouses on the coasts, Paris, Russia, and many unique locations where the Northern Lights can be enjoyed.

Mr. Dan, art teacher, said "I would like to take a moment and thank all the parents for coming out and purchasing a true keepsake masterpiece. The students really enjoyed the whole process from our discussions on the unique themes to creating colorful and detailed images, along with creating flowers for centerpieces leading up to the show. Their efforts and ideas were inspiring to each other, their families, the faculty, and mostly to me!"



Music of the Season



McGinnis Woods loves the Arts and we always look for opportunities to showcase our students' and staffs' talents. Over the past two weeks, audiences have enjoyed Band, Chorus, and Recorder concerts, led by Ms. Brittany, that have helped to get us into the holiday spirit.

The Band Concert included songs played by the 4th and 5th-8th grade bands. Each group played some trademark songs of the season from Jingle Bells to We Wish You a Merry Christmas. We also got to see two of our teachers reveal their musical abilities as Ms. Wendy and Mr. Alex played along with the bands. There were also some small groups and solo players who showed off their skills. Jessica Muniz, Suhani Sharma, and Lindsey Marro dazzled with their renditions of popular Christmas carols. Alex Capell, Topher McDowell, Bailee Rogers, Christian Thompson, and Joshua Wright demonstrated the techniques they had learned in their elective class, playing the bucket drums to Jingle Bell Rock.



The Chorus Concert helped us to understand the true meaning of the holiday season. The 4th grade made us smile with their up-tempo song Here Comes the Snow, complete with student created choreography. They then touched our hearts with their angelic voices singing Golden Ribbons, Silver Bows in a beautiful round. The 5th-8th grade gave us the rock and roll side of Christmas with their rhythmic We Will Jingle and later surprised us all with their mid-song kazoo break during I Have a Little Dreidel. The students speaking parts between songs tied everything together and helped us to

feel the love and joy that the holidays truly bring. At the end both choirs combined and led a rousing rendition of We Wish You a Merry Christmas.

The Recorder Concert featured our 3rd graders who have worked hard to master the recorder in preparation for other instruments in the coming semester. They started off with a lively version of Fum, Fum, Fum that made us all want to dance. Then they transitioned to some slower pieces, before ending with a surprise song of both singing and playing called Hear Those Bells!

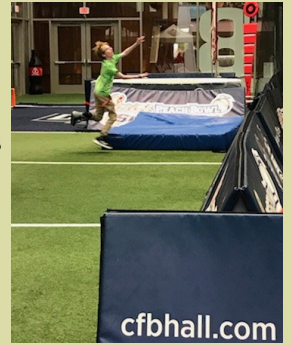
With such wonderful music being heard around the school, it's not hard to feel the excitement of the holidays!



Middle Schoolers Visit the College Football Hall of Fame



The middle school students visited the College Football Hall of Fame on December 1st. The students began their visit with a ten-minute video which explained the relationship between the game of football and character education. The film included famous football players describing how football training made them focus on their own values including respect, hard work, and perseverance. The players also talked about the importance of teamwork on and off the field and how it is an important trait to learn in order to be a successful adult. The students also explored an entire floor full of hands-on activities. They learned about the science behind the diet of the football players and their game strategies.



To conclude their visit they played a game of football! The students felt very privileged to practice their throws and punts with professional football players. This trip was truly a unique opportunity that will not be soon forgotten.



Holiday Sing-A-Long



Each year at McGinnis Woods, one of our favorite traditions, is gathering for our Holiday Sing-A-Long! Students of all ages, teachers and parents, joined together on our last day of school before Winter Break and performed a variety of holiday songs. Some were very traditional holiday songs and some were just super silly, but they all added to our festive spirit as we got ready to head home for the holiday break!

This year Pre-K performed “We Wish You a Merry Christmas”, Kindergarten performed “Jingle Bells”, First Grade performed “Frosty the Snowman”, Second Grade performed “I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas”, Third Grade performed “Jingle Bell Rock”, Fourth Grade performed “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” ‘ and finally our 5th – 8th graders were our grand finale with “The Twelve Days of Christmas”.

What a wonderful time was had by all as we celebrated “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year”! Thank you to all our parents who joined us and helped us sing our way into our holiday break! See you in 2018!



First Grade Tradition Continues



For well over a decade, the first grade classes at McGinnis Woods Country Day School have been taking an unusual field trip each December. Most of our field trips complement, and bring to life, our Science and Social Studies curriculum; but not this one.

Every December, our school's first grade classes go to the Build-A-Bear Workshop at the North Point Mall. Now, every six and seven-year-old that you know, would certainly love to head to the mall and construct a new, stuffed buddy for themselves! But this trip isn't about that. This field trip is about understanding. It is about empathy, compassion and giving.

Difficult though it may be, all of the stuffed bears that our first grade students made are to be given to families in need. Thanks to a partnership with the wonderful people at The Children's Wish Foundation, each of these special bears that our first graders made are matched up with a child who could really use a furry friend.

Not only does this field trip provide an opportunity to give back to the community around us, it gives us a chance to teach the children how to take a step back to see all the good things that they have in their own lives. We want to teach the students not to take for granted all the little luxuries that they enjoy each day, to simply make them conscious of it. They all have a warm place to stay. They all have their health. They all have a family who loves them.

So this field trip, different though it may be, is perhaps the most important trip we take each year. It helps open the children's eyes to see how truly lucky they are and, just as importantly, helps those who need it most during the Holiday Season. We are so proud of our Falcons!



Regional Technology Fair Success!



Following the success of our first Technology Fair in the Middle School, students who placed 1st in our competition were entered into the Forsyth County Regional Technology Fair. Anthony Musolino, Nathanael Hazard, and Jessica Muniz traveled to Whitlow Elementary school with Ms. Sammi and Mr. Alex to compete against over 200 participants from the Forsyth County area.

Being our very first time competing in such an event we were excited to learn from more experienced students and take in the fair. Our students received great feedback regarding their projects and we were so thrilled that each of our students placed in their respective categories. Nathanael Hazard placed 3rd in Project Programming, Anthony Musolino placed 2nd in Audio Production, and Jessica Muniz placed 1st in Video Production.

Jessica will be moving on to the State Technology Fair held at the Middle Georgia State University in Macon, in March of 2018. We are so proud of the hard work and dedication that each of our students put into improving and perfecting their projects. Congratulations to Jessica, Nathanael, and Anthony!



Meet the Kindergarten Team

McGinnis Woods has an amazing Kindergarten Team! They are kind and nurturing to our younger students while really emphasizing phonics, reading, math and science skills. They incorporate lots of hands-on activities to bring learning concepts alive in a fun and active environment!

Christy VanderWeele is the lead teacher in the Kindergarten Pandas room. This is Christy's fourth year teaching at McGinnis Woods. Christy grew up in Louisiana and is a graduate of LSU with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Elementary Education. She has 12 years of experience teaching in both public and private schools. Christy has been married to her husband Doug for 20 years, and they have two children. Christy enjoys spending time traveling with her family. She is a huge college football fan and loves cheering on her favorite team, the LSU Tigers!

Wendy Hamann is the lead teacher in the Kindergarten Cats room. This is her 11th year at McGinnis Woods. Wendy grew up in Virginia and is a graduate of Virginia Tech with a Bachelors of Arts degree. She also has her Masters of Education from the University of Richmond. Overall, she has more than 20 years of teaching experience in both the public and private schools. Wendy has been married for 16 years to her husband Mike who is also from Virginia. They have two children: Molly (16 years old) and Benny (9 years old). Molly is a McGinnis Woods graduate-she was here from Kindergarten through 8th grade, and Benny is currently in the 4th grade Dolphins class. Wendy enjoys playing the trombone, scrapbooking and reading!

Christina Carden is the assistant teacher in the Kindergarten Cats classroom. This is her 2nd year at McGinnis Woods. Christina grew up here in Forsyth County, and has had childcare experience since she graduated from North Forsyth High School in 2012. Christina loves traveling, the outdoors, crafting, and music. Christina also enjoys taking her dog, Haggard, for walks by the lake.

Hiral Patel is the assistant teacher in the Kindergarten Pandas room. She has been with McGinnis Woods for 9 years and has been working with Pre-K for 8. This is her first year in Kindergarten, and she is really enjoying it! She is originally from California where she went to Cal State University Fullerton and earned her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. Hiral has been working with children from ages 3-12 for over 10 years. She has two children of her own, Dylan who is 4 and Anya who is 1. She has been married for 8 years to her husband, Nilesh. In her spare time she loves spending time with her children, traveling and going shopping.



Pictures from Around the School

