

McGinnis Woods Buzz



September 2018 Volume 13, Issue 2



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

The latest buzz . . .

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DATES TO REMEMBER

10/1	Project Showcase and Technology Fair Information Sent Home
10/1- 10/5	National Bullying Prevention Month
10/5	No School Parent Teacher Conferences
10/8	No School
10/9	5-8th Field Trip to Alliance Theater
10/10	New Student Open House 2nd Field Trip to Funk Heritage Museum
10/11- 10/12	3rd Overnight to the Tennessee Aquarium
10/15	Spirit Shirt and Jeans School wide Photo
10/16	Spooky Science
10/20	Fall Festival 1:00-4:00pm
10/22- 10/26	Red Ribbon Week
10/31	Halloween Parties

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

Fall has arrived, the first quarter of school is coming to a close, Parent Teacher Conferences are underway, and Report Cards will be sent home next week. We have hosted guest speakers, gone on field trips, held class meetings and celebrated International Night. It always amazes me how quickly time passes once the school year settles in and it is always a joy watching the students master the curriculum and learn in many unique, hands on ways.

Another rewarding thing that happened this month was the culmination of a multi-year project, the certification of our Outdoor Classroom. Many years ago, our staff participated in a professional development training about the importance of connecting students with nature and the world. The training led us to dream about creating an area for our students to learn about and spend time in nature. That eventually led to the partnership between the Parent Association and school in developing our Outdoor Classroom.

Since that time we have hosted work days, built a learning structure, had a former students complete his Eagle Scout project by building us a storage unit and tables, created learning activity stations, partnered with Keep Forsyth Beautiful to learn about frogs and invertebrates, and finally completed the certification process with Nature Explore. We are so pleased to be one of only 400 Nature Explore Classrooms throughout the United States. This recognition coupled with our commitment to STEM learning provides us with great resources to inspire our students to learn about their world.

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our annual Fall Festival scheduled for October 20 from 1:00pm-4:00pm and the upcoming Halloween parties which are scheduled for the last hour of the school day on October 31.

Please take a few moments to read about the many things happening at our school. There always seems to be something exciting going on.

Happy Fall,

Ms. Mary



Parent Association Update

Happy October McGinnis Woods Families!

We are grateful to all of the families that have participated in our first two fundraisers of the year: Spirit Wear and Square 1 Art. Your support is invaluable and we appreciate each and every one of our parents. You can find updates on each of these events in this update.

It's hard to believe, but the holiday season is nearly upon us. In the spirit of the season, we have two major events coming up: the 1st Annual Wildcat Fund and the Holiday Shoppe. Be sure to read all about these events below.

Don't forget that we're always in need of help from great parents just like you. So, if you can help, please visit our website and click the Sign Up button under the volunteer section on the main homepage.

Thank you again for getting this school year off to such a great start! We're just getting warmed up and have many more exciting things in store!

Upcoming Events and Fundraisers

1st Annual Wildcat Fund - Begins later this month

Nothing makes us happier than being able to take fundraising dollars and immediately put them to work. This year, we're starting a very special fundraiser where we'll ask each family and some alumni to make a donation to the Wildcat Fund. There will be three major goals for the fund and parents can decide which goal their donation is applied to. At the end of the fund drive, we will immediately take those dollars and implement the goals of the drive. More information will be coming soon and this will be a very exciting way for each family to have a direct impact.

Teacher Appreciation Luncheon - November 2nd

One of our favorite things to do is say "Thank You" to our teachers. The appreciation luncheons are just one small way we do that. Our teachers will enjoy a delicious lunch complete with drinks and desserts.

Holiday Shoppe - December

Our annual holiday shoppe is one of the most beloved events at McGinnis Woods. Students will have the opportunity to shop for family, friends, teachers and pets for the holiday season. All gifts are wrapped and bagged right at school so that everything remains a surprise! More information will be coming home in November and we'll be in need of many volunteers!

Spirit Wear Fundraiser Update

Thank you to all of the families that participated in our Spirit Wear fundraiser! We're pleased to announce that McGinnis Woods Families purchased over \$3,000 in Spirit Wear! Go Wildcats!! Thank you for supporting the PA and for showing off your Wildcat pride!

Square 1 Art Fundraiser Update

A huge thank you to everyone that joined in the Square 1 Art fundraiser and purchased some wonderful items featuring your student's one-of-a-kind masterpiece! We had over 60 orders and are so excited to see all the products when they arrive. Orders should arrive to the school around the middle of the month and we'll get them distributed as soon as they arrive!

Meet your 2018-2019 PA Board

We've got a great team of people serving on your PA Board this year! Are you interested in becoming a part of the PA Board? We'd love to hear from you! Feel free to reach out to any of the Board members listed below to learn more.

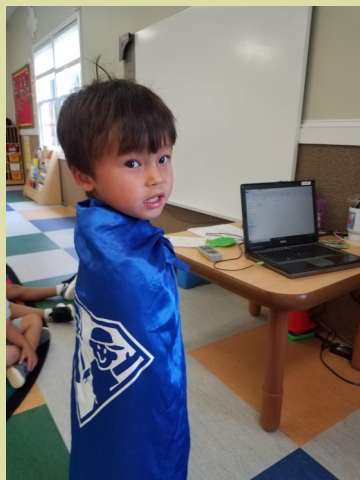
Jason Harper - President
Jaclyn Anderson - Vice President
Wendy Haye - Treasurer
Kelly Rawlins - Secretary
Dena Newberg - Volunteer Outreach
Jill Reiter - Volunteer Outreach
Lisa Varshine - Family Outreach and Communications
Lakshmi Nagamohan - Family Outreach and Communications
Jacki Freeman - Room Rep Coordinator
Elysia Gallivan - Trusted Advisor
Mary Johnson - Principal
Tonia Usher - Preschool Director

Get In Touch

You can get in touch with the PA Board through our website at www.mcginiswoodspa.org or via email at pa@mcginiswoods.org



Preschool Corner



September has been an exciting month! With themes like “Woodland Animals”, “Fall is in the Air” and “Johnny Appleseed” the preschool really has been getting into the Fall season. The children especially loved making homemade apple playdough, apple tasting and finger painting with applesauce. We also enjoyed our visit from the Children’s Museum of Atlanta.

This month we want to feature our 3B classroom. Ms. Rebecca’s class decided to participate in Cape Day which is a fundraiser for CHOA. As you know Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta provides care for sick and injured children. Each year they have Cape Day when all the children are Super Heroes! Ms. Rebecca’s class has so far raised enough to sponsor 8 children. Cape day is on October 19th this year and all the 3B students will make and wear their very own capes to celebrate this cause and their achievement! We are so proud to support this great cause.

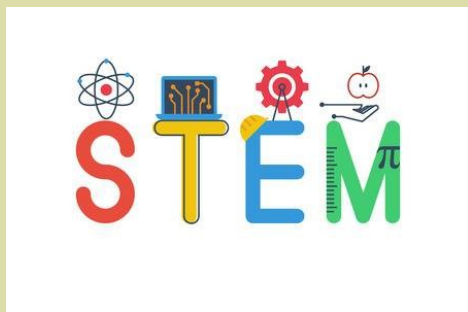
The preschool is eagerly watching our garden grow and we can’t wait to harvest and taste our very own vegetables. We have planted yellow squash, lettuce, chives and wildflowers. Ms. Angie and Ms. Cara and their 3/4 and 3A classes are tending to the plants daily.



Our annual Fall Festival is almost here! Mark your calendar now and don’t forget to purchase your wristbands for this amazing event which is on Saturday, October 20th from 1-4 p.m.



STEM and Robotics



The STEM program at McGinnis Woods is theme based, developmentally and age appropriate, hands on and unique. It is also proven to inspire students to consider STEM related career fields in the future. Laura Ascione, Managing Editor, Content Services at eSchool Media recently wrote, “Research indicates that early exposure to STEM courses helps students stick with these studies even as the material becomes more challenging in high school and college”. This is why STEM instruction is a curriculum priority at McGinnis Woods. All students in PreK 4-8th grade spend time working with Mr. Alex, our STEM teacher, either weekly or quarterly. This is in addition to the many STEM activities which occur each week with their teachers.

During the month of August, our STEM classes focused on creating engineering structures of paper, plastic, and popsicle sticks. Students spent class time designing, building, and destroying towers/bridges/structures.

In September, we learned about liquids, the environment and weather. The lessons included such fun activities as making water-cycle-bags, creating slime, and generating our own whirlpools. During this time period we also discussed current events including Hurricane Florence and Typhoon Mangkhut. Our next unit will focus on the physics of light and sound. Some of the activities which will be explored include ultraviolet lights, efficiency of light bulbs, frequencies and color spectrums.

Wildcat Chat

The fall season of team sports is quickly coming to an end, but what a great season it has been! Our Girls Volleyball and Coed Soccer Team have developed so much under the able leadership of their coaches.

The Girls A and B Volleyball teams have been led by Alyssa Lane, Kim Kershaw and Jenn Evangelista. The girls have really excelled in the fundamentals and team play. They have received many compliments on their teams' esprit de corps and genuine comradery. The girls have held tough during many matches and lost only one set all season! We are so proud of them!

The Soccer team has been led by Coach Andrew Humber. Andrew was a collegiate athlete in Golf, so Soccer was new to him, but you would never have known that, as he is a quick study and has been working with a super talented team of players. The Soccer team has won all of their games and showed incredible resiliency during very scrappy games and much larger players at times.

Tournaments for both Volleyball and Soccer are being set up, so we will let you know how we fair, once the results are in.

We are now beginning to look to our Winter Sports schedule which will feature Girls and Boys Basketball. Sign up sheets were sent home recently and the teams are beginning to form. We hope that your athlete will be a part of the teams.

We want to give special thanks to the many fans, parents and students, who attended games and matches both near and far, as our conference covers a vast area in Metro Atlanta. The fans often provided the encouragement needed to keep the teams battling through to another win. They also keep the concession stand workers busy, which is an added bit of fun.

We hope to see you at our basketball games sometime soon.



The First Grade Team Lays a Strong Foundation for Learning



The First Grade Team at McGinnis Woods is comprised of two lead teachers, Mr. Josh and Ms. Christy as well as an assistant teacher, Ms. Tabi. This year they are working extra closely to team teach the group in the areas of math and reading and all of their field trips and parties are also being planned together.

Mr. Joshua Reiter is the fearless leader of the 1st grade Falcons. He has worked at McGinnis Woods for the past 16 years. Josh is originally from Buffalo, NY. He completed two undergraduate degrees (Human Communication and English Literature) from Fredonia State University of NY, before entering the field of education, originally as an assistant teacher at McGinnis Woods. He enjoyed teaching so much that he completed the certification process and then went back to school at Mercer University in 2003 and eventually completed his Master's Degree in Elementary Education.

Josh met his wife, Jill while in his master's program at Mercer. They were married in June of 2007. Since that time they have expanded their family to include Violet, a 5th grader, Benjamin, a 3rd grader and Max a Prek student all at McGinnis Woods. Josh loves spending time with family and friends and he also enjoys his fantasy football league and, of course, the Buffalo Bills and the Falcons!

Christy VanderWeele is the lead teacher in the First Grade Pandas room. This is Christy's fifth year teaching at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Christy grew up in Louisiana and is a graduate of LSU with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Elementary Education. She has 13 years of experience teaching in both public and private schools. Christy has been married to her husband Doug for 21 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!

Tabi Torres is the assistant teacher and leads the First Grade after school class. This is her second year at McGinnis Woods. Her hobbies include playing guitar, writing songs, and making people laugh. Ms. Tabi is married to her husband Kevin and they have a daughter named Adeline. Ms. Tabi and her family live in Gainesville, where they raise chickens and tend to their vegetable garden.

September's Word of the Month: Initiative



Seeing what needs to be done and doing it seems like a fairly easy concept to master, but honestly, even many adults struggle with this concept. During September, we discussed on the morning announcements how important it is to solve every day problems by taking initiative.

Some of the ideas we discussed during the broadcasts were: picking up trash if we saw it, even if it didn't belong to us and starting on homework right away. During the school days, we recognized students for helping others without being asked and including students who were being left out before being asked to do so. We encouraged everyone to be willing to do more than is asked of them and always be prepared to help. If everyone would take the initiative to adopt this great character trait, the world would be a kinder and more efficient place!

MaxScholar & Learning Ally Make a Difference

Ms. Kristen Craig is the Learning Support Teacher at McGinnis Woods. She works closely with the classroom teachers to determine the students who would benefit from additional academic support. Kristen works with the students in a variety of groupings including one to one and in small groups in order to achieve their goals and close the learning gaps. The students in Ms. Kristen's class use a variety of apps and programs during her class and have been particularly busy working with our specialized 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.

In class most of the students use Ms. Kristen's classroom ipads for their work. The older students set reading goals for themselves and enjoy special rewards when they are achieved. Ms. Kristen enjoys using MaxScholar with her students and has found it to be a great addition to her other lessons. One of the best aspects of MaxScholar is that the students can access the program at home or on a portable device which strengthens the school/home partnership which is so valued at McGinnis Woods.

In addition to MaxScholar, our academic enrichment program has also incorporated Learning Ally. Learning Ally is a national non-profit dedicated to helping students with print disabilities, including blindness, visual impairment and dyslexia. Learning Ally improves the way students learn both at home and in the classroom at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Kristen has found that Learning Ally helps students reach their learning objectives and encourages a love of life long reading. The program allows students to listen to books read aloud while the text is being highlighted. Students can also control the speed at which the books are read to them. Not only does Learning Ally have books students enjoy reading, but it also has texts books available for them to listen to and understand better.



MAXSCHOLAR
Reading Intervention Programs

Learning Ally 
TOGETHER IT'S POSSIBLE

Keep Forsyth Beautiful Visit



Keep Forsyth Beautiful came to McGinnis Woods on September 18th to speak to our students about the Enviroscope, and how water and pollution can affect our environment. Through the use of a large interactive table top model, students learned how pollutants in storm water run-off affects water quality. Learning objectives covered included identifying pollutants and best management practices to minimize pollution.

Apryl, from Keep Forsyth Beautiful, explained and demonstrated to the students how small amounts of pollution can have large and lasting effects on our water supply. One

unique fact the students learned was that pollution that starts at the water source can be carried for many miles to our drinking supply and contaminate it.

It was a wonderful opportunity for our students to learn about science in creative way, while learning about their own community and the world around them. We look forward to seeing Apryl again in November when she returns to teach the students about Macroinvertebrates.



International Night Draws a Large Crowd



McGinnis Woods Country Day School hosted its 15th annual International Night on Tuesday, September 25. More than 300 people joined us for this unique celebration as we learned about the four featured countries of Italy, Mexico, Israel and Countries of the Caribbean.

Each of the grade levels chose a country which their class learned about. They gathered cultural artifacts, provided traditional foods, learned games and activities from four different countries. Participants received a passport stamp from each country they visited during the evening. 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 beautiful presentations from the students which included songs and providing unique facts about each country. We are already looking forward to next year’s event and the many countries we will explore!



4th Graders Navigate the Water of Lake Lanier



On Friday, September 21st, the 4th grade llamas travelled to Lake Lanier to investigate its water. The next unit in Science includes the water cycle and weather so the trip was a nice preview. Before embarking on the boat students were told a legend of Lake Lanier about how some Native American burial grounds might be lost below the surface. Students used binoculars to look for clues, as well as to search for animals, like the osprey, in their natural habitat. While on the boat the students worked in groups to test the water to make sure there wasn’t too much soil in it, which could endanger many animals’ ecosystems, as well as harm our water supply. The 4th graders also fished for plankton and

observed the small creatures under microscopes, using pictures to try and identify the different types they caught. Our students were even given the chance to see some chemistry in action by seeing how chemicals can affect and treat our water! The day was capped with a relaxing picnic by the lake.



Did You Know?



One of the proud traditions we have at McGinnis Woods is that of our 2nd graders partnering with Canine Assistants as they train their dogs to help those in need of a therapy dog. This is the 7th year that we have worked with the K-9 Kids! Program.

The K-9 Kids! Program is a motivational reading program. Canine Assistants service dogs and representatives visit different schools throughout the metro Atlanta area each week during the school year to listen to the children read. Children who are uncomfortable reading in front of their peers for fear that they might make a mistake are quite at ease reading in front of a dog. Reading to dogs often gives children the confidence needed to overcome challenges in reading. This program benefits the dogs and the students and is a highlight of every week!

One of our favorite dogs is Borders. Borders has been visiting us for a few years and has a calm, friendly demeanor. He loves our students and we look forward to his visits!



Wild Bots Robotics Team



The McGinnis Woods Robotics Team, “The Wild Bots” have been hard at work setting up and preparing for our FIRST LEGO League (FLL) competition. The theme this year is *Into Orbit* and we, along with 100s of other teams, are working toward answering this question:

What does it take to live on a space station or travel to another planet? Can you and your team create the critical innovation that will get earthlings to Mars?

The missions are designed with critical thinking, innovation and teamwork in mind. During each robotics session team members program our robot to solve problems such as adjusting solar panels, using 3D printers, safely deploying a lander, and more. They also practice running missions, spend time researching and preparing for their short competition presentation which highlights their space innovation and have fun!



Spanish Education at McGinnis Woods



Have you ever wondered why McGinnis Woods values teaching our students another language? We asked Ms. Monica Velez, our Spanish teacher, this very question and this is what she shared about the topic.

Much research has been conducted throughout the years which supports the impact of learning a second language. The importance of learning a second language is not merely limited to the ability of communicating with people who speak different languages. Studies show that learning a second language results in students achieving greater levels of divergent thinking, creativity, and cognitive development compared to monolingual children. A number of studies have also shown that when students learn a second language they have a tendency of outscoring those who are proficient in only a single language on tests of nonverbal and verbal intelligence.

Experts agree that foreign language learning can give kids a leg up in many areas of their lives, with benefits ranging from academic achievement and career success to better interpersonal relationships. Research also supports the fact that they become better thinkers, learners, and citizens of the world.

Language is one of the main components of the civilization and culture of the people who speak it. Hence, learning a second language can be a comparatively easy and wonderful way of absorbing another culture. It also enables us to comprehend what role language plays in shaping our thought patterns. Often, other languages have better methods of expressing ideas, concepts, or thoughts compared to English, thus enabling speakers to communicate better even in their own language!

Benefits of being Bilingual:

Higher I.Q	improved reading/writing
Improved language skills	improved math skills
Larger vocabulary	more university opportunities
Improved memory	more job opportunities
Better problem-solving	improved travel experiences
Increased perception	more flexible viewpoints
Improved reasoning	broader world view
Cognitive flexibility	stave off age-related dementias
Improved multi-tasking	



Middle School Happenings

The Middle School is always busy with learning, but there is more going on than just reading and writing! In October, students will travel to The Alliance Theater to see their middle school fall production, *Paige in Full*. This performance blends poetry, dance, media and music to tell the tale of a multicultural girl's journey through hip-hop to self-discovery. Students will learn how ethnicity and pop-culture help to shape our identities.

Each Halloween, the middle school students participate in a Halloween costume contest. The middle school social committee helps run the event and votes on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each of four categories. Our social committee is also working on other events and socials for the fall and winter months.



Student Council Update



September was a very exciting month for the Student Council. As you probably noticed around school, we held our elections to determine the Student Council officers for the 2018-2019 school year. There were many amazing candidates who threw their hats in the ring. After all of the votes were counted Emerson Aber was named President, Drew Evangelista was elected as Vice-President, Bridget Gallivan as Secretary, and Julie Kershaw will take on the role of Treasurer. In addition to the elected position, representatives for each class will be identified in October. The first Student Council Representative meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 17th.



of bullying and, of course, drug free.

These Student Council officers started out their terms running and immediately began to plan activities for both National Bullying Prevention Month which is being recognized during the first week of October and Red Ribbon Week which will be the focus on October 22-26. These national weeks recognize topics of great importance for our students as we strive to provide a safe learning environment free



2nd Graders Spend the Night in a Cave!

Many of our second graders, their parents and their teacher, Ms. Kim spent last Thursday night sleeping in a cave in Alabama. The students and their parents had a fantastic time together playing wacky games in between the raindrops and exploring the fantastic cavern that has a long and varied history.

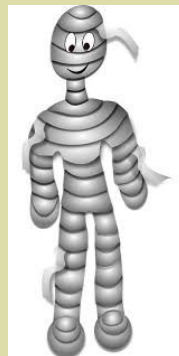
DeSoto Caverns located in Childersburg, Alabama was the first cavern recognized in the United States as early as 1796. The cave was, however, recognized before that by explorer Hernando de Soto and his expedition in 1540 which also marked the beginning of European recorded history in Alabama. Since that time the cave has been used by indigenous people including the Coosa Indians, has been mined for various rich minerals and was even used as a speakeasy and dance hall during prohibition. The cavern is 60 degrees year round!



Save the Date for Parents Night Out!

Monsters, Mummies, and Milkshakes, Oh My! is coming your way, so please save the date and have your child join Ms. Wendy and Ms. Jenn for a fun-filled night of playing, crafts, movies, and milkshakes! Friday, October 26th, will be a night of spooktacular fun as the next Parents' Night Out is held at McGinnis Woods. This evening will be a great opportunity for parents to enjoy an adult dinner out while their children are enjoying a great night of their own!

Hotel Transylvania 3 and The Nightmare Before Christmas will be the movies for the evening. Fun spooky crafts and activities are also being planned around this crazy theme. Hot dogs, pasta, chips, lemonade, and fruit for dinner. And for our dessert we will enjoy delicious milkshakes. Be on the lookout for flyers coming home mid-October.



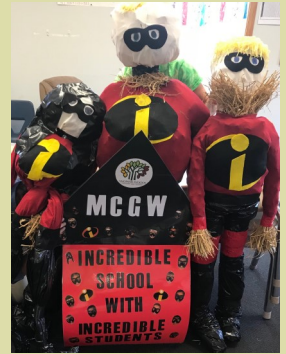
Scarecrow Fun



Each fall Alpharetta hosts the annual Scarecrow Harvest Festival in downtown Alpharetta. The annual festival is a time when the community comes alive with colorful and creative life size scarecrows. Schools are encouraged to create unique scarecrows that display a theme or design of their choosing. This year McGinnis Woods entered four scarecrows in the contest; one each from the Preschool, Pre-K, Elementary and Middle Schools. The scarecrows are currently displayed on Milton Ave off of North Main Street and will be there until November 2. If you have not had a chance to visit them, please do so as a lot of hard work by the teachers and students went in to creating these adorable scarecrows.



During the Harvest Festival the county awarded winners in the following categories: most creative, best constructed, best personality, best “tech” crow, schCOOLest (school with most participating classes) and little “hands-on” crow (most student involvement). We didn’t win in any of the categories this year, however, we are excited to get creating and planning for next year so we can try to take home a prize.



DON'T FORGET THE Annual McGinnis Woods Fall Festival

Is

Saturday, October 20th

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Activities include:

A Haunted House



Games



Costume Contest

Pony Rides



Petting Zoo



Bungee Jump



Crafts

Refreshments



and so much more!

Pre-admission \$7.00 for adults and \$12.00 for children or \$35 for family of 4

Pictures from Around the School

