

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



August 2019, Volume 14, Issue 1



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

9-2	Labor Day McGinnis Woods Closed
9-4	PreK Field Trip to INK
9-10	4th Field Trip to Lake Lanier
9-12	2nd Field Trip to Chattahoochee Nature
9-13	5th-8th Field Trip to Atlanta History Center
9-13 PA	Parent Association Pizza Bash
9-18	Kindergarten Field Trip to Art Barn
9-24	Student Council Elections
9-26	International Day Celebration 8:45-9:45 in the Gym
9-30	Project Showcase and Tech Fair Information Sent Home

## 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.*

## The latest buzz . . .

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## A Message From Ms. Mary

The first month of the 2019-20 school year has come and gone and what a month it has been. We have had a wonderful start to the year as is evidenced by our happy students, teachers and staff. The students have already experienced field trips, a visit from an author and illustrator, the start of Discovery Clubs, our first Volleyball and Soccer games, and many opportunities to get involved in serving the school community through Patrols, Recycling, Student Council and Jr. Beta Club.

We are also very pleased to announce that McGinnis Woods Country Day School has again earned continuing accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) during the recent AdvancED Accreditation Commission meeting held on June 19, 2019. McGinnis Woods has been accredited since 2003.

SACS CASI provides nationally-recognized accreditation, the purpose of which is continuous school improvement focused on increasing student performance. To earn accreditation, schools must meet SACS CASI's high standards, be evaluated by a team of professionals from outside the school and implement a continuous process of school improvement. Accreditation is granted on a five-year term and demonstrates to our students, parents and community that we are focused on raising student achievement, providing a safe and enriching learning environment, and maintaining an efficient and effective operation staffed by highly qualified educators. SACS CASI also assures parents that the school is meeting nationally accepted standards for quality and successful professional practice. Needless to say, our committed staff is very pleased with the results of our AdvancEd Engagement Team visit last April and look forward to many more years of providing a warm and nurturing, hands on, data driven learning environment.

We hope that you will plan to join us for some new upcoming events. Our PA is hosting our first ever PA Pizza Bash on Friday, September 13 at 6:30 pm. This free community building event will include games, pizza and the new Aladdin movie, so you will not want to miss it! We will also be celebrating International Day on Thursday, September 26 at 8:45 in the gym. We have changed our format so that students will be able to showcase what they have learned about other countries during the morning assembly, so mark your calendars now for a great time.

Here's to another great year,  
Ms. Mary

# *Parent Association Update*



Welcome back McGinnis Woods Families!

We hope you're excited as we are about the start of a new school year! In case you weren't able to visit with us during Curriculum Night, we wanted to share some information on the Parent Association (PA).

Our core mission is to enhance the McGinnis Woods experience. We do that a number of ways including community social events, fundraisers and more. The daily operations, planning and strategy of the PA are managed by the PA Board. Every parent of a student at McGinnis Woods is automatically a member of the Parent Association so we encourage you to get involved and offer your talents, feedback and ideas!

There are also countless opportunities to volunteer throughout the year. Volunteering at school is a great way to give back and show our students the importance of parental involvement. We understand everyone has busy lives so we have volunteer opportunities that take as little as 30 minutes. There's no way we could achieve all that we do in a school year without the help of great parents just like you. So, if you can help, please visit our website or email us to get involved.

Lastly, we'll be sure to include upcoming events, important announcements, and fundraising updates with you in every newsletter. You can find the updates for this month below!

## **Upcoming Events**

*PA Pizza Bash - Friday, September 13 @ 6:30pm*

Join us for an evening of pizza, games and a movie! This event is a great opportunity to learn about the PA while having a bunch of family fun! The Pizza Bash is entirely free for McGinnis Woods families and more information will be coming home soon. We hope to see you there!

*2nd Annual Wildcat Fund - Starting September 16th*

Our 2nd Annual Wildcat Fund kicks off on September 16th and we couldn't be more excited! The Wildcat Fund is a unique and exciting opportunity to make a direct impact on your child's experience at school. We have plenty of information that will be out in September so keep an eye on your mailbox!

## **Spirit Wear Update**

Thank you to all of the families that purchased some of our amazing Spirit Wear! We sincerely appreciate your support! These items are a fantastic way to show off your McGinnis Woods Wildcat pride both on and off campus. Don't forget that, if you purchased spirit wear, students are free to wear it on the first and third Monday of every month!

## **Meet your 2019-2020 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  
Lisa Varshine - Board Member  
Jacki Freeman - Board Member / Teacher Liaison  
Elysia Gallivan - Board Member  
Mary Johnson - Principal  
Tonia Usher - Preschool Director

## **Get In Touch**

You can get in touch with the PA Board through our website at [www.mcginniswoodspa.org](http://www.mcginniswoodspa.org) or via email at [pa@mcginniswoods.org](mailto:pa@mcginniswoods.org)

## Preschool Corner



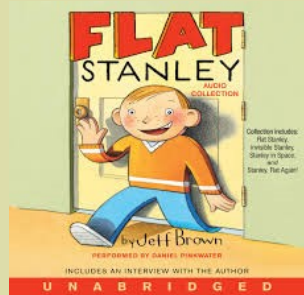
The 2019 summer was packed with plenty of extra special activities in the Preschool including a weekly visit from the Ice Cream Truck, waterpark fun, observation of our summer garden, a magic show and other special surprises. Now the preschool is back in full swing for the school year! We are very happy to welcome all of our new families and staff to McGinnis Woods as we partner together to provide our preschoolers with an amazing learning experience which emphasizes developmentally appropriate, hands-on learning.

To kick off August, we learned all about Friends both old and new. We also learned that every family is unique and that there are many cultures in our world which our diverse families share. Some of the classes had their parents provide a favorite dish from home which highlighted their family to share with the children. The children also enjoyed learning about “Our 5 Senses”. One activity the children loved was when they guessed what different objects were by relying on their 5 senses while they were blindfolded.

Fall photos were taken this week and we will send out the proofs as soon as we receive them for your enjoyment. Thanks to the many families who participated in the first Parent’s Night Out of the year. We had a great time together. We are planning our next Parents Night Out on September 27th so plan to have your little one join us then.



## Flat Stanley is on the Move



Students in our second grade class kicked off the school year by reading the story, Flat Stanley, by Jeff Brown. In the story, Stanley has an unfortunate accident and is flattened by a falling bulletin board in his room, but he discovers that being flat is actually good news, as he can now be mailed in an envelope to visit his friends all over the country and all over the world!

In conjunction with the 2nd grade geography and language arts standards, the second graders sent Flat Stanley all over the world to visit with friends, family and even the rich and the famous! In class they created replicas of Flat Stanley and packed him into suitcases accompanied with a letter from each of the students and the teachers that explained his story and their “ask”. Students asked Flat Stanley recipients to take photos of Flat Stanley sight-seeing and then to send the photos of Stanley back to the students.

Who doesn’t love mail from afar, and especially mail that helps us gain a better understanding of the world? Some of our past Flat Stanleys through the years have visited places from right here in Georgia, to California and as far away as Russia! He has spent time with Mickey and Minnie Mouse, several Presidents, Princess Kate, Paula Dean, the Atlanta Falcons, Carrie Underwood, and Mary Pope Osborne, the author of the Magic Treehouse books. What a fun and exciting way for our second graders to map the world we live in. The students are so excited to see the exciting people and places that they will hear from this year! Stanley is already traveling around the globe, so stay tuned!





## *Wildcat Chat*



Leaves are falling, temperatures are dropping, school is back in session and sports are too! Fall is here and our volleyball and soccer teams are looking forward to spending it competing. Both teams have a great number of participants and wonderful coaches helping the students learn and grow this year.

The volleyball team has thirteen players this season. On the court the team will be led by our three eighth graders who have spent the last few years honing their volleyball and leadership skills. Off the court the team couldn't be in better hands. Our three volunteer coaches, Ms. Jenn, Ms. Alyssa and Ms. Kim, are outstanding and have been coaching the teams for a number of years. Throughout their time they have seen a lot of success including last year's first place finish in the Metro Atlanta Athletic Conference (M.A.A.C.) Division Three Championship. We are looking forward to another successful Volleyball season.

The soccer team has fifteen players this year and consists of a large number of fifth grade athletes, which is fantastic! On the field the team will be led by our four eighth graders. These individuals have played for the Wildcats in the past and are excited about the opportunity to mold the players of the future. Off the field the team will be led by Mr. Roger Gallivan, Ms. Robyn and Mr. Andrew. Mr. Roger has coached the team in the past and has been coaching for a number of years. His experience and expertise will help the team in their pursuit of another conference championship as well.

This fall promises fun and exciting adventures. We are looking forward to watching all of our athletes compete and imagine we will see a lot of growth and development throughout the year. We hope that all of the athletes relish the opportunity to learn from their coaches, represent their school, get to know their peers and play their favorite sport. We believe that wins are great, but sports are about much more than that. They are about camaradery, responsibility, humility, and integrity. If our coaches can demonstrate and teach our athletes these characteristics, then we've all won the championship!

Thank you for your time and participation in our athletic programs thus far. We are pleased to see the Sign-Up Geniuses fill up with volunteers willing to help the teams in any way possible! Your generosity and hard work goes a long way in encouraging our teams and the coaches.



## *Pre K Teachers Make Everyday Special!*



Who has patience galore, loves answering endless questions, and loves teaching four and five year olds? Our fabulous Pre-K 4 & 5 teachers!!! We are lucky enough to have five of them here at McGinnis Woods!!!!

Ms. Abby and Ms. Liz are both teachers in PreK4-A. Ms. Abby is a Georgia native. She grew up in East Cobb and went to Pope High School. She graduated from Georgia Highlands College with a degree in Education. She worked at McGinnis Woods in 2015-2016 then got married and moved to Chicago. She is happy that her husband's job brought them back to Georgia and to McGinnis Woods! She loves spending time with her husband Mike, her dogs Kona & Picasso, and her cat Casper.

Ms. Liz lives in Alpharetta and has been part of the Windward community for 17 years. She has 20 years of experience in preschools. This will be her second year with the McGinnis Woods family. She has three grown children and two grandchildren. She is currently completing her CDA and is looking forward to this school year with the All Stars.

Ms. Robyn and Ms. Valorie are both teachers in PreK4-B. Ms. Robyn is originally from Savannah, GA. She has been in Atlanta since 1985. Ms. Robyn has degrees in Early Childhood Education from Ashworth College and Grand Canyon University. She has taught Pre-K for many years. This is Ms. Robyn's eleventh year at McGinnis Woods. Her hobbies include reading, bowling, and sports, "Go Falcons". She enjoys spending time with her husband Curtis and has two children Amber, and Zeffery. Ms. Valorie is from Woodstock. She has three children: our very own Ms. Amy (our fearless afterschool/summer camp director) Chris, and Zachary. Ms. Valorie received her CDA in 2011. She has been with McGinnis Woods for ten years. Her hobbies include reading and any thing outdoors. Ms. Valorie loves to spend time with her husband Ryan and family going on different vacations. In her spare time, she is outside playing with her three Chihuahuas.

Ms. Lisa is the teacher in PreK-5. Ms. Lisa is originally from Port Charlotte, Florida. She attended Florida State University and received a degree in International Affairs. Ms. Lisa has been with McGinnis Woods since May of 1999. This is her seventeenth year teaching in the elementary school. Her hobbies include reading and cooking. She enjoys spending time with her husband Chris and her children Madison (16), Emerson (14), Bryson (5) and Allison (4).





## *Discovery Clubs News*



Our first session of Discovery Clubs is underway and the students are having a wonderful time learning new skills and developing new talents. This session will run from August 26th through October 11th.

Discovery Clubs run four times each year and feature teacher led experiences that focus on many of the students' interests. Currently we are offering many unique clubs designed with the students in mind. This sessions' offerings include: Jr. Robotics, Music in Me, Cartoon Drawing, Drama, Football, Robotics Team, Band Practice Club, and Cooking.

If you would like for your child to participate in one of the many after school activities we offer, it's not too late to sign up. We can't wait to see what our busy students will learn and create in the coming months!



## *After School at McGinnis Woods*

McGinnis Woods Country Day School is proud to offer an excellent After School program in which children are encouraged to complete homework, learn something new, enjoy some exercise, and have fun playing with friends. Students are grouped with children of similar ages and grade levels for each of their activities.

Each day, the students are greeted by their After School Teachers who serve them a healthy snack and then begin their Homework Club. Homework Club is a time for the students to begin their assigned school work or quietly read a book. Teachers assist the children and lend support when necessary. Teachers also check student binders to make sure that all homework is started.

Many students take advantage of the Discovery Clubs which we offer four times a year in eight week sessions. These clubs provide a great opportunity for students to learn something new in a fun and engaging environment. Some of our most popular clubs include: Robotics, Team Sports, Tennis, Cooking, STEM, Art Classes, and Drama.

We would be so happy to have your child in our After School Program and look forward to helping your child grow every day!

## *Middle Schoolers Kick Off the Year at Sky Zone*



On Friday, August 9th, the Middle School students attended their first field trip of the year at Sky Zone. It was a fun-filled experience and the students were able to jump, run, climb, swing, and play dodgeball on the trampolines! They also worked up their appetites and devoured pizza for lunch.

In addition to the fun of playing, students had a great time learning about physics and magnetism during hands-on lab time. They completed labs and experimented by creating trampoline-like effects using the repulsive force of magnets. The Sky Zone staff have completed STEM training and led various STEM lessons and labs which were tailored to the grade-level science standards for each group. The students were excited to participate and show off their prior knowledge as they learned a new way to look at physics, too.



## *Sunsational Summer Camp 2019*



Our 2019 Sunsational Summer Camp was a hit! Campers spent the summer learning about interesting themes, going on exciting field trips, attending weekly STEM and Art classes and much more. We really enjoyed cooling off in our water park and other weekly water activities. Throughout the summer, we had several guests visit us and we had many in-house activities, related to our weekly themes. Some of the guest speakers and special visits included: Crickets Petting Zoo, Magician Ken Scott and Kona Ice. As another special treat, the ice cream truck visited the campers every Friday.

We offered a wide variety of Specialty and Academic Camps to help sharpen our campers' skills and to expand their minds. Some of these camps included swimming, Cooking, STEM, Jr. and Sr. Robotics, Shark Week and Digging for Dinosaurs. Campers also enjoyed weekly field trips to many interesting places. Our campers ventured out to Zoo Atlanta, Art Barn, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Launch Trampoline Park and Treetop Quest, to name a few.

Our Sunsational Summer Camp at McGinnis Woods is the highlight of each year, and we are so thankful to have been able to spend our summer days with your special campers this year!



## *Middle School Students Enjoy an Ice Cream Social*



The Middle school students had an eventful start to the school year. They finished week one with a great field trip and closed out week two with an ice cream social, so that they could celebrate their great start and deepen friendships! The students in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade enjoyed their opportunity to hang out while enjoying a frozen treat. An ice cream bar completed with sauces, whipped cream, candy and sprinkles brought out the students' creativity.

The Middle School Social Committee, led by Ms. Nicole, plans social events catering to ONLY our upperclassmen! The students on the committee help with planning the events, as well as, setting up and running them. Past socials have included pizza parties, gym and elec-

tronic games, a "Just Dance" party, various contests, and an annual campfire. These events create an outlet for the middle school students to spend time with classmates, hang-out and just have FUN!

Congratulations to our first semester Social Committee Members who were chosen by their peers: Casey, Carson, Pearson, Lane, Eric, Gianni, Violet, Addison, Taz, and Sarah. We are looking forward to more exciting reports from this committee.



## *Learning About the Big Three*



The Word of the Month for August was not a word, but rather three very important character traits which we referred to as "The Big 3". Our students learned that The Big 3 are: "Treating others right, making smart decisions and maximizing your potential". Students learned the importance of these Big 3 throughout the month during morning announcements and in class. We use the Core Essentials character curriculum at McGinnis Woods to help us frame the importance of good character in our world each and every day.

Throughout the year, teachers will identify students who demonstrate our character focus of the month. These special students are recognized and rewarded with special Chick -fil-A coupons during our morning announcements. Additionally, an exceptional student who has worked hard to master these character traits and be a role model in the classroom will be chosen as the Student of the Month and will be treated to a special lunch at Cheeseburger Bobby's.

Our first group of Citizens of the Month enjoyed their celebratory lunch today, along with our Teacher of the Month, Ms. Abby Matthews, PreK4A Allstars teacher. Congratulations to Tal, Shubhda, Meredith, Rithvi, Mayson, Miraya, Sarah, Sam and Pearson for their efforts while at school!

September's Word of the Month is Trust.



## *Safety Patrols*



As you have probably noticed there are lots of amazing students helping with our carpools in the mornings and afternoons this year. Students in fourth through eighth grade are eligible to help with Safety Patrol. These dedicated and eager members arrive at school early or stay late to help with many tasks such as hanging or taking down and properly folding the flag, escorting Pre K students to their classrooms in the mornings, and helping with car doors.

Please be extra aware of their presence as you drive through campus and the carpool line and feel free to ask them for help should you ever need a hand. Developing caring citizens who wish to give back to their community through service is one of our school goals each year, so please encourage our students for their efforts.

## *Parents Night Out Fun*



Our Parents Night Out on August 23rd was a huge success. Thirty-one of our students in Pre-K - 5th grade joined Ms. Jenn and Ms. Wendy for a night of playing games, making Pokemon themed crafts, enjoying a dinner of spaghetti or hot dogs, fresh fruit and ice cream sundaes for dessert, and watching a movie. The featured movies were Wonder Park and Detective Pikachu. Part of the fun of Parents Night Out for students is being in the school after hours. The evenings are always filled with surprises which make for happy memories!

Our next Parents Night Out is scheduled for Friday, September 27th, so be on the lookout for all of the details so that your child can join in the fun while you enjoy an evening of fabulous child care.



## *Student Council*



Student Council is a well recognized organization which mobilizes students and helps them to impact change at their school while developing leadership skills and personal responsibility. The Student Council at McGinnis Woods works hard to plan many fun activities such as the Student vs Staff Basketball Game and the annual Talent Show and also runs our school store.

Our school store is open on Fridays with many items from crayons and notebooks to fun school supplies. Items begin at \$0.25 and most are priced below \$3.00. The Student Council officers also purchase trendy items to sell at the store each year.

As we head into September, we are also gearing up for Student Council elections. Fifth through eighth graders who would like to throw their hat in the ring to become an officer will spend the month making posters, taping commercials, and talking to voters. Campaigning will be September 19th -23rd with voting taking place on September 24th. Teachers will also select two students to become class representatives. These representatives will attend monthly meetings and assist with the many projects we have planned.

## *Jr. Beta Club*



The Jr. Beta Club members from the 2018-19 school year began its year with a project to help our school community. They hosted an Ice Cream Day to raise funds to be used in planning other projects.

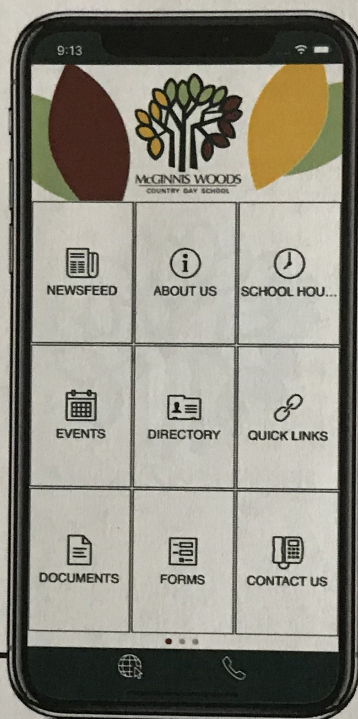
Jr. Beta is a National organization striving for service and excellence. Our chapter is open to students in fifth through eighth grade. These students must exhibit excellence in academics and behavior. At the end of the first quarter, report cards will be looked at and eligible students will receive an invitation to join. Current members are in the planning stages of many fun events to celebrate World Day of Bullying Prevention and much more. Keep an eye out for more information on our celebration.





# MCGINNIS WOODS SCHOOL

There's  
an **App**  
for  
that!



**Download  
for Free  
Today!**



Download on the  
**App Store**



GET IT ON  
**Google play**

## **STAY INFORMED**

Notifications from administrators and teachers make it easy to stay on top of what's going on at school and in the classroom.

## **QUICK AND EASY ACCESS TO GRADES, MENUS & MORE**

Quick access to everything school-related including calendars, directions to events, important documents, menus, grade systems, sports scores, school resources and more!

## **EASY SCHOOL CONTACT**

One click to call, email and submit important forms directly to us. Subscribe to receive important notifications from groups that are important to you.

## **EASY TEACHER CONTACT**

One click to call, email and visit teacher websites and class resources. Subscribe to receive important notifications from teachers.



## *Pictures from Around the School*

