

# McGinnis Woods Buzz



January 2020, Volume 14, Issue 4



**McGINNIS WOODS**  
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with  
the Passion to Excel*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

2-3	Science Fair Information
2-5	PreK Field Trip to the High Museum
2-6	GISA Round 1 Spelling Bee
2-6	4th Field Trip to the GA Capitol
2-8	Family Valentine Dance 6-9pm, Polo Clubhouse
2-10	5th-8th Field Trip to the GA Bar Association
2-11	2nd Field Trip to MLK Center and Mary Mac Tea Room
2-12	3rd Field Trip to the Carter Center
2-14	Student/Staff Holiday After School Only
2-17	No School in Observance of Presidents Day
2-19	1st Field Trip to High Touch—High Tech
2-25	Winter Science PreK - 4th
2-28	Career Day

## 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

January ushered in a new year and a new decade. At McGinnis Woods we greeted the new year with some fantastic changes, as well. We released our newly designed [mcginniswoods.org](http://mcginniswoods.org) website, introduced our incredible Innovation Lab and Makerspace, moved everything to the cloud, trained our staff and students in how to use Office 365 and distributed iPads to students in 3-5 and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. These moves have opened some amazing opportunities for our staff and students and have brought some healthy challenges, too. Everyone is learning and growing together!

This week we celebrated National School Choice Week. This movement began in 2011 and has grown in both size and influence since that time. At McGinnis Woods, we are pleased to be a part of the School Choice movement by being an excellent school option which instills a love of learning, high expectations coupled with hands on learning and a close partnership with parents each day. Our teachers and staff are dedicated to making each day of learning count through individualization of materials and providing students with whatever they need to succeed. We thank each of our families for choosing McGinnis Woods as your school of choice!

Each of our students participated in Moving Up Day which was a lot of fun and a great opportunity for the children to visit new classrooms and meet teachers who teach in the next year's grade level. During their visit to the classes they participated in STEM lessons, made unique art projects, and played Kahoot games to test their knowledge of the curriculum. This opportunity was perfectly timed with our PreK Open House and our annual Saturday Open House which was well attended and had great energy.

We hope that you will join us at the PA Valentine Dance next Saturday, February 8 from 6pm-9pm. The event is at the Polo and Golf Country Club and features a delicious buffet, lively DJ, dancing, a photo booth, and a Silent Teacher Auction which is always filled with exciting opportunities. You do not want to miss this special community event!

*Ms. Mary*

# *Parent Association Update*



Hello Wildcat Families!

It was a very exciting winter break around The Woods! Thanks to the generosity of our 2nd Annual Wildcat Fund donors, so many wonderful things happened.

Our brand-new Innovation Lab was completed, and we hope you've had a chance to see it! We completely remodeled the old STEM classroom to transform it into a modern, flexible Innovation Lab for all our students to enjoy. The Innovation Lab includes a vast makerspace, digital media stations, coding activities, engineering kits, hydroponics station, a Lego wall and so much more! This new space will allow our students to unleash their creativity and critical thinking.

We also installed our brand-new sound system in the gym over break. This new system offers crisp, room-filling sound that is sure to make a big difference at all our events. We installed new speakers, microphones, media players and more. We also have plenty of wireless over-the-ear microphones for our students to use during the musical.

Speaking of the musical, we also received all our new lighting equipment and can't wait to put it to use for Aladdin Jr. later this spring. Our lighting and sound systems will give students an opportunity to get involved with the technical side of theatrical production. We still have a few more things we're working on so stay tuned for more updates. Thank you so very much to our donors who have made all these incredible things possible.

We also hope everyone can join us for our Annual Family Valentine's Dance coming up on February 8th! More details are below!

## **Upcoming Events**

*Annual Family Valentines Dance - Saturday, February 8th*

Our annual Family Valentine's Dance will be here before you know it! We have booked our dance at the Polo Club again this year. The venue is gorgeous, and our families always have a fantastic time. We take pride in this being a family event where parents, students and staff members are invited to join us for an evening filled with food, music, dancing and fun! More information will come home in January but be sure to save the date!

## **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  
Aimee Nobile - 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.mcginiswoodspa.org](http://www.mcginiswoodspa.org)]  
[www.mcginiswoodspa.org](http://www.mcginiswoodspa.org) or via email at [pa@mcginiswoods.org](mailto:pa@mcginiswoods.org).

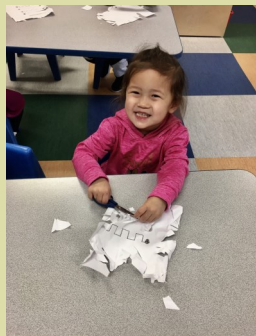
## Preschool Corner



Happy New Year! During the month of January, we learned about Ringing in the New Year, National Bird Day, Ice and Snow, Polar Animals, and Chinese New Year. Each of our little ones have learned so much through our hands-on learning activities.

Our Nursery class with Ms. Jazmine has been extra busy this month. The babies have been achieving developmental milestones including sitting up, holding their own bottles, and saying their first words; we can't wait to watch them achieve even more in the coming days! The Transitional classrooms with Mrs. Erin and Mrs. Kavitha worked on their fine motor skills and practiced their cutting skills with scissors. They cut along different types of lines, such as a straight lines and zigzag lines. Our 3B class with Ms. Angie went outside to search for items in nature to create their own birds nest. They always enjoy

being able to incorporate nature into the curriculum and putting their imaginations to use! Our 3/4 A class led by Mrs. Melanie and Mrs. Lisa participated in an activity to help "rescue" frozen arctic animals by adding water to ice to help thaw the ice and set the plastic animals free.



We have so many fantastic teachers in the Preschool. This month we are highlighting, Mrs. Pilar. She teaches Spanish class to all children from Infants through 3/4. Each class she and the children sing songs and do activities that focus on learning Spanish names for numbers, shapes, colors, and much more. Be sure to ask your little one what they learned this week!

We are so excited for more fun to come and are looking forward to seeing all of our families at the PA Family Valentines Dance February, 8th at the Polo Fields. The dance features great food, a DJ, auction items and best of all, teachers and friends from McGinnis Woods!



## Science Olympiad Team is Working Hard



The McGinnis Woods Elementary Science Olympiad team is actively preparing for our regional competition, which will be held in late March or early April. Our team consists of nineteen students, which includes 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, adult volunteers and Ms. Anne as Lead Coach. They have been meeting weekly to practice activities in teams and individually.

The students are preparing to compete in 18 events this year. Some events will test their knowledge of science topics, such as *Weather or Not*, *Crime Busters*, *Rock Hounds*, and *Backyard Biologists*. Others will require excellent math skills, such as *24 Game*, *Data Crunchers*, and *Grab a Gram*. Building events like *Egg Drop*, *Mystery Architecture*, and *Bridge Building* will challenge students to design, build, and test different types of structures.

The state tournament will be held at Kennesaw State University on May 9, 2020. Schools who place in the top spots at regionals will be invited, so the McGinnis Woods team is working hard!





## Wildcat Chat



January is coming to a close and so is our basketball season. Both basketball teams' seasons have been rewarding and challenging for our student athletes. They have run into some great competitors in the M.A.A.C. Division Three.

The girls had a fantastic season. Their numbers were small, yet they always played with heart and effort. They had a good regular season finishing with an overall record of four wins and five losses and an impressive conference game record of two wins and one loss. They qualified for the Division Three basketball playoffs and entered the tournament ranked number two out of the four teams playing. They won their semifinal game against Herit-

age Preparatory fifteen to two and advanced to take on Arbor Montessori in the championship game. They were unable to defeat the six-time Arbor champions, but they played a great game and gave Arbor a run for their money. The girls duplicated last year's results finishing second in the M.A.A.C. for division three basketball. The season was successful for our lady Wildcats. A huge thanks goes to Mr. Jim Stuart and his assistant, Mr. Charlie Lang, for coaching the girls. They did a great job of teaching them the fundamentals of the game and demonstrated great patience with them. Coach Stuart coached them through their last minutes of play, even in the championship game!

The boys team also had a season to be proud of as well. They finished their regular season with an overall record that included eight wins and six losses; with a conference game record of three wins and three losses. Highlights of the season included the team's fast start, winning five of the first six games of the season, JJ Louis' game winning shot against Tapestry Charter and his half-court buzzer beater in the semifinal game. The team's eight and six record proved good enough to advance them to the Division Three basketball playoffs. They entered the tournament ranked fourth out of the four teams who qualified and were faced with the tough task of playing Heritage Preparatory, the reigning champions in the division, in the semifinals. The team was unable to defeat Goliath (this time) and the season came to an end.

Although they were defeated, the boys had a lot to be proud of this year. They learned and improved with each week and game and the result of the semifinal game was a testimony to how much they grew. When they first faced Heritage at McGinnis Woods back in November, the score was fifty-two to fourteen; a thirty-eight-point margin. In the semifinal game, the team kept them to 45 points and only lost by a twenty-five-point margin (45-20). Well done Wildcats!

Two individuals from each of the teams have been selected for this year's M.A.A.C. All-Star Basketball game; Jeremiah Louis was selected from the boys' team and Mikayla Stuart was selected from the girls. They will participate in the All-Star game on Sunday, February 9 at the Atlanta Jewish Academy from 9:45 a.m.-2:00 p.m. They will join participants from every school in the M.A.A.C. across all three divisions. Each player will be a part of a team practice, a skills competition and, of course, the game. This opportunity is a true honor for these young athletes. They will represent themselves, their families and McGinnis Woods with skills, class and genuine sportsmanship. Go Wildcats!



## *Annual Spelling Bee Even More Challenging*

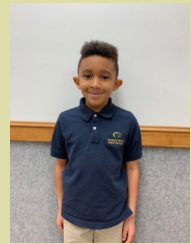


What are smelters? Do you happen to know? That word and many others were vocabulary words students needed to know for our Annual School Spelling Bee. This year our middle school students not only learned the spelling of words but also their meanings. Students competed in oral spelling rounds mixed with vocabulary questions.



Students in second thru fourth grades only had a spelling component; however, it was just as challenging. This year, Scripps Spelling Bee also created more challenging spelling lists for the students. Scripps decided to switch from specific lists for each grade level to having leveled lists for combined grades. McGinnis Woods students certainly benefitted from this change. Being exposed to more words at various levels helped students gain competency and improved their reading skills.

After a week of bees, the grade level readers were: Chetana Polineni (1st), Saanvi Guntipalli (2nd), Trip Bowie (3rd), Sunay Konda (4th), Benny Hamann (7th) and Mikayla Stuart (8th).



Our school champion for the 2019-2020 school year is Benny Hamann. The first runner-up is Mikayla Stuart. Benny and Mikayla will both represent our school at Round 1 of the GISA Middle School Spelling Bee on February 6, 2020. Our school will once again host one of the Round 1 competitions. Please congratulate all of our spelling bee participants and grade level champions for a job well done!



## *4th Graders Learn About Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



The fourth grade students enjoyed a field trip to the Martin Luther King Jr National Historic Park where they participated in a program about the Civil Rights Movement and change through nonviolence. They listened to and interacted with friends and family of Dr. and Coretta Scott King as they shared personal and humorous stories about the life of Dr. and Mrs. King which highlighted the choices, decisions, and experiences that shaped their development as young people and ultimately led to their becoming global leaders.

After enjoying an intimate question and answer session, the students toured his childhood Sweet Auburn home of Dr. King, visited the tomb where he and Mrs. King are buried, and also toured Ebenezer Baptist church where Martin Luther King Jr. preached his first sermon and where one of his funeral services was held.

The visit was an experience that all the students immensely enjoyed and will certainly remember.



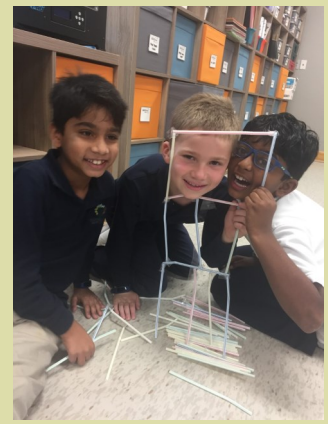
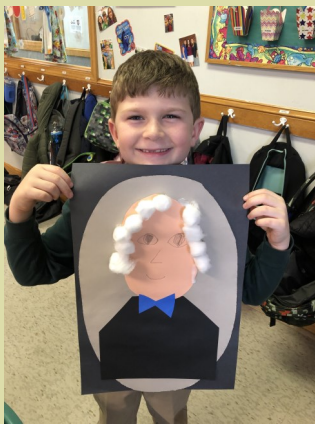


## *100 Days and Counting!*



Many students in our younger grades have been counting the days of school each day during circle time, and they were excited to reach the 100th Day of School on January 15th! Students in Pre-K to second grade celebrated this special event with fun and creative activities that taught across the curriculum.

Math projects in Pre-K and kindergarten included counting to 100 by ones, fives and tens and counting out a special 100th Day snack. Kindergartners wrote their numbers to 100, which is quite an accomplishment. They also prepared t-shirts or posters at home which featured 100 things that they shared with their classmates. They rotated classes along with the first grade classes to complete math and writing activities. The second grade students completed a language arts activity where they drew a picture of what they would look like and do when they were 100 years old! Finally, the students built towers with 100 cups or straws and then measured and documented the size of the towers. It was a very fun day which helped develop an understanding of the number 100 that included both learning and fun!



## *High Touch, High Tech Visits McGinnis Woods*



The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade children had so much fun last week when we had our in house field trip with High Tech, High Touch. Scientist E came prepared with lots of great centers for us to explore and learn all about Plant and Animal Life Cycles.

At our first station we were able to stamp out the life cycles of a frog, a chicken, a beetle, a butterfly, and even a grandpa. The kids loved the activity. Next, we planted grass, wildflower and clover seeds in our very own terrariums and have been able to watch them grow without even watering them this week.... Amazing.

We also explored the stages of a beetle's life from larvae to pupa to adult. Finally, we went to another center with life cycle puzzles to build, life cycle models to explore and magazines to read.

Scientist E and her many learning centers helped our students learn all about the circle of life in unique, memorable hands-on ways. We are looking forward to her next visit!



## *Keep Forsyth County Beautiful Visit*



Our students enjoyed another visit with Ms. Apryl from Keep Forsyth County Beautiful on January 22. The Kindergarten, First and Second grade students learned about our blue planet and made a neat necklace. On one side of the necklace there was a picture of water and on the other side, land. The students played a game to prove that the earth is covered with more water than land. They rolled a plastic globe from student to student to see if their finger landed on water or land and then flipped their necklaces according to the results. They then lined up to form lines representing land and sea. Through this activity students were able to see that our world is covered by about 70% water.

In Third and Fourth grade the students learned about rain and water conservation. They learned that in order to conserve our water it begins with small steps at home such as turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth, taking a brief shower instead of a bath, and checking pipes for leaks. Another way to conserve water that they discussed was using a rain barrel at home that will catch water when it rains that can then be used to water flowers and gardens or to wash your car. To mimic the sound of rain the students made rain sticks. They filled a cardboard tube with twisted aluminum foil and placed beads and rice inside. When the tube was turned upside down, it sounded just like rain. The students thoroughly enjoyed this activity.

The middle school students learned about macro-invertebrates and stream health. Macro-invertebrates are animals that lack a spine but are large enough to be seen with the naked eye. Examples of macro-invertebrates are crayfish, clams, insects and dragonflies. The students used beads and rubber bands to represent the animals and they were then classified into three groups based on their ability to withstand water pollution. They placed the animals into "water streams" to determine if the environments within that stream would allow the macro-invertebrate to survive. The students had a wonderful time learning about streams in Georgia and how living macro-invertebrates survive in the different conditions.



## *3rd Grade Superstars' Teachers Shine*



The third grade Superstars enjoy learning each day as their teachers Ms. Trish and Ms. Rori encourage them to work hard, think outside the box and be kind to one another.

Ms. Trish has been with McGinnis Woods since 2011. She has had the opportunity to teach many grades from K-6. Ms. Trish is certified in the state of Georgia and has a degree in psychology. She started teaching in Boston Inner City Schools after graduating from the University of Massachusetts. From there, she taught at Horsholm International School of Denmark for 3 years, and was also head of the Curriculum for the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. In 1999, she moved to Atlanta and continued teaching until she started her own family. In her spare time, Ms. Trish enjoys spending time with her husband Thomas, and her 3 children, Jakob(17), Nicholas(15), and Christina(12). She loves read-

ing, traveling, and running.

This is Ms. Rori's 2nd year at McGinnis Woods. Ms. Rori was the assistant in Kindergarten last year and is very excited to be a part of third grade team this year. She was born in Atlanta and grew up in Mableton, Georgia. She studied Sociology and Psychology at Valdosta State University. Ms. Rori has many interests and some of her favorites include traveling, thrifting, going to festivals, and trying new restaurants.



## *After School at McGinnis Woods*



McGinnis Woods 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. Homework time is a time for the students to begin their assigned schoolwork 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. Each month, After School classes that meet their homework goals have a reward to celebrate their successes!

Many students take advantage of the Discovery Clubs which we offer four times a year. 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, and Drama.



## *Learning About Knowledge*



The Word of the Month for January is knowledge. Our students have learned that knowledge is *learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do*. The students learned the importance of knowledge throughout the month during morning announcements and in their classes. Teachers identified exceptional students who have shown this trait throughout the month. These special students were recognized and rewarded with special Chick-fil-A coupons on morning announcements. One exceptional student who worked hard to master this character trait and was a fantastic role model was also chosen as the Citizen of the Month and enjoyed special lunch at Mangia. Our Kindergarten through 8th grade Citizens, for the month of January were: Arya Parihar, Mishka Patel, Chetana Polineni, Ariel Kayakov, Kiernan Dunn, Kendall Pate, Avery Rawlins, Lane Fowler, and Marley Pratt. Coach Andrew accompanied them and was celebrated as the Teacher of the Month.



## *Jr. Beta Club Helps Stamp Out Hunger*

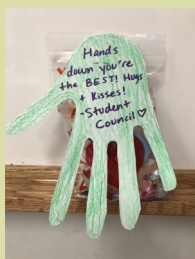


Jr. Beta Club had a very busy month finishing up our food drive project. With the generous help of our community donations, we were able to make 111 weekend food bags for our partner elementary school. Each bag contained two breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 4 snacks and will help children stay nourished over the weekends and when school is out on break. The public school we partner with is currently sending bags home with 96 students each week. Along with the bags we delivered, we sent an additional 15 jars of peanut butter for extended breaks. Be on the look-

out for information about upcoming ice cream days which we will host to help us raise additional funds, so that we can continue to support these children.



## *Student Council Spreads Joy*



Student Council officers hosted a grand opening of the new and improved store this month in its new location in the Wildcat Market, formerly known as the concession stand. The school store is open every Friday from 8:00 am to 8:25 am. The officers ordered many new novelty items, like cute pens, journals, notepads, change purses, posters, and candy highlighters for the store. Many of the items feature paw prints in recognition of our school mascot the Wildcat! The school store also carries many staples

including crayons, markers, filler paper, and index cards. Most items range in price from \$0.25 to \$2.00.



Student Council also held a Representative Meeting during which the representatives made Valentine's treats for our staff to show how much we appreciate them. The treat were festooned with a hand that read "Hands Down, You're the best! Hugs and Kisses, The Student Council" The goodie bags included hand sanitizers and candy kisses; a great combination.

Representatives will have a big job during February because our annual Candygrams are right around the corner! Candygrams are special valentines that students can order to be delivered to their friends in other classes. Each candygram costs only \$0.25 and comes with a note that the student fills out. Then, after filled out cards are returned to classroom teachers, Student Council Officers and Representatives add candy and deliver it to the special recipient on Valentine's Day. Candygram order forms were sent home on Monday, January 27th . Please consider having your child participate in this special activity.



# *McGinnis Woods Students Excel at the Forsyth County Regional Technology Competition*



Each year Forsyth County Schools holds a Regional Technology Competition which serves as a qualifier for the Georgia State Technology Competition. This year's event was held at Whitlow Elementary School on January 25, 2020. Over 30 schools, both public and private were represented by students whose work fit into fifteen unique categories. Twelve students from McGinnis Woods participated in the competition. These students had placed either 1st, 2nd or honorable mention in the McGinnis Woods Tech Fair this past November.

Each of our students presented their projects before a panel of judges who asked questions about how they created their projects, what programs and apps they used and how they could improve upon their work. The judges then provided the students with summary sheets that outlined the highlights of each project and suggestions for improvement.



Violet Reiter, a 6th grader at McGinnis Woods won first place in the Graphic Design category for 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grade. Violet will be advancing to the Georgia State Technology Competition which will be held at Kennesaw State University in March. Other McGinnis Woods participants include: Yael Veneziano, 3D Modeling; Sarah Burkett, Multimedia; Drew Evangelista, Graphic Design and Eric Jacobs, Animation. Students who placed in their age brackets and categories were Liam Jacobs, 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Audio Production; Benny Hamann, 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Graphic Design; Arjit Kandalai, 3<sup>rd</sup> place for Multimedia Applications; Avery Anderson, 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Project Programming; Hunter Nobile, 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Robotics; Samuel Pate, 3<sup>rd</sup> place for Video Production and Mikayla Stuart who placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grade Digital Photo Production category.



The students were thrilled to share their projects at this level and we are so proud of their hard work. This was a fantastic opportunity for each of our students to learn, grow and shine!





## *Middle School Goes High-tech*



Exciting things are happening in the middle school with the arrival of our new iPads and the use of Office 365. Our 5th and 7th grade students were the pilot iPad classrooms for the middle school. This means a light and portable piece of technology that holds a multitude of possibilities and apps has been added to the teachers instructional tools. The teachers are also learning to use Apple Classroom to bring the world into their classrooms each day!

Apple Classroom gives the teachers the capability of monitoring the students in live time as they work on assignments. It also enables teachers to project student exemplars on our whiteboards in real time so students can see other work as the progress on their own assignment or to lock iPads so students can give their full attention to important instructions. It has already proved to be a wonderful tool for the classroom.

Each of the middle school students are using Office 365 which has been a game changer in class. Students have begun sending and receiving work through email, contacting classmates about assignments, completing worksheets online, and are even using their online calendars to make note of due dates for tests, quizzes, and projects. Students in 5th -8 th grade are also completing digital reading logs for Language Arts and have completed some digital tests and quizzes in other content areas. The students and teachers are excited about these new tools and are eagerly embracing their educational impact.



## *Session 3 Discovery Clubs Winding Up*

Our third session of Discovery Clubs is well underway and the students have participated in some clubs which they have immensely enjoyed!

Jr. Robotics with Ms. Wendy is always a crowd favorite of the many students who love building and programming our Lego Robots. The students in Jr. STEM Club have explored many unique experiments and have created unique designs along with her.

Ms. Tanya has taught an exciting painting club where students have been exploring with different mediums and subjects to draw and create, while adhering to different themes.

For the students who enjoy cooking and getting their hands dirty in the kitchen, our cooking club with Mrs. Valorie is always the perfect choice. She enjoys introducing the students to fun, delicious and healthy recipes that often feature unique ingredients and beautiful presentations. They have made smoothies, mini pizzas, cookies and much more.

Mr. Josh led our football club again this session, since it was such a big hit last session. The participants love this club, learning about football strategies, positions, play calls and ending the session with their own super bowl game.

The next session will be based upon these same exciting skills and principles. One exciting club for our older students who love robotics, programming and tinkering around while building things, will enjoy joining the Sumobot Club. Club members will enjoy competing with their creations to see whose will be the overall Sumobot champ.

Please look for our new discovery club flyer towards the end of February. I'm sure our last session will prove to be our best one yet!!!

## *Pictures from Around the School*

