

McGinnis Woods Buzz



November 2020, Volume 15, Issue 1



McGINNIS WOODS
Country Day School

*Inspiring Students with
the Passion to Excel*

DATES TO REMEMBER

11-18	2nd-4th Virtual Thanksgiving Feasts
11-19	K, K/1, 1st Virtual Thanksgiving Feasts
11-20	PreK Virtual Thanksgiving Feasts 4th Field Trip with Fernbank
11-23-11-25	No Classes/ After School Only
11-26-11-27	Happy Thanksgiving!
12-3	Vision Student Scholarship Informational Meeting on Zoom at 6:00pm
12-4	PreK Virtual Field Trip with The Art Barn
12-11	K-8 Chick-fil-A Order-In Day
12-17	Virtual Learning Day
12-18	Report Cards Sent Home
12-21-1-4	Winter Break

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



It's mid-November and we have just begun our 21st annual Thanksgiving Feast Week. This year, our feasts are being held virtually and although we miss the opportunity to gather in the gym and share a meal with family and friends, we are thankful for Zoom and the marvels of technology! Our middle schoolers shared a creative musical performance with their families during their feast today. The remainder of this week will feature more virtual feasts filled with costumes, colorful placemats, centerpieces, delicious food from Local Expedition Wood Fire Grill, and a few moments

to be reminded of the many blessings we have, especially our children, our continued health, and the McGinnis Woods School community.

Through the years, families have shared with me that they consider our school to be an extension of their own families. Just last evening, a parent I was emailing said that this is the longest that they have gone without seeing me in person in the past 10 years! At McGinnis Woods, we take this reality to heart and work to care for each of our students as only family can. We encourage, support, and listen to our students. We tie their shoes, zip their coats, and bandage their knees. We celebrate their successes and strategize ways to overcome their struggles. The staff members at McGinnis Woods realize that we must work together to teach our students to be productive members of our learning community and to flourish in this safe and nurturing learning environment. Thanks for entrusting your student to our care. We want the best for each of them and work tirelessly to craft lessons that inspire, model behavior that is worth emulating, and foster the best in each of our students.

We intentionally provide our students with opportunities to practice good character and give back to the community. Because of that, we strive to celebrate the positive character traits that they are developing and the care that they show others. We love that our students are bright and hard-working, but most of all we love to see them become people of character, because that is what our world really needs.

Please enjoy this issue of the McGinnis Woods Buzz. It is jam packed with interesting articles and items to keep you informed and excited about our school. As a reminder, there will be no classes for students in PreK4-8th grade next week. The Preschool and After School will be open and available on Monday through Wednesday. The entire school campus will be closed on Thursday and Friday in observance of Thanksgiving.

We wish you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving! We are blessed beyond measure and happy to partner with you each day.

Ms. Mary

Parent Association Update

Hello McGinnis Woods Wildcats!

It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is almost here!

Speaking of being thankful, we are so grateful for everything that our teachers and staff do for all of our students. We recently surprised all of them with one of our "Random Acts of Kindness." Each teacher and staff member was given a long-sleeve "We are Wildcat Strong" t-shirt as a way to say thanks! This was just one small way to let them know they are appreciated!

There was overwhelming interest in our spirit wear sale and we wanted to say thank you for your orders! All orders have been delivered to school and we can't wait to see everyone sporting their Wildcat Pride! Don't forget that students can wear their spirit wear on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month!

Be sure to check out our upcoming events below and get in touch if you have any questions or feedback!

3rd Annual Wildcat Fund

The 3rd Annual Wildcat Fund is in full swing and we are so grateful for all the families that have made a contribution. We created the Wildcat Fund to make a real and significant impact on our school each year. Rather than asking families to sell cookies, wrapping paper or other goods to raise funds, we focus our efforts on this single, meaningful fundraiser.

If you haven't already, please consider making a donation to this amazing fund. It is an opportunity to have 100% of your gift benefit our students, school and McGinnis Woods community. To learn more or make your donation, you can visit www.annualwildcatfund.com.

Upcoming Events

Holiday Shoppe - Early 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 the school so that everything remains a surprise! This event will be held in early December but preparation is already underway! This year will be a little different from past years but it will still be magical! More information will be coming home next week.

Meet your 2020-2021 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
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.mcginniswoodspa.org or via email at pa@mcginniswoods.org



Preschool Corner



What exciting times we have been having in the Preschool! We wrapped up October learning about Pumpkins, Leaves, and Halloween. We even had a special visit from Lee Bryan, the Puppet Guy!

We had fun going on a fall scavenger hunt looking for leaves and seeing all of the nature around us. The children enjoyed learning all about pumpkins and what their insides are like and even planted some pumpkin seeds. It was great seeing everyone in their Halloween costumes and enjoying our class parties with our friends.

During November we will be learning about Seasons, Favorite Authors, Forest Animals, and Thanksgiving. Our $\frac{3}{4}$ class loved reading "Dragons Love Tacos" and creating their own taco's for art. All of the children enjoyed bringing in their favorite books from home to share with the class.

We're looking forward to having more of our preschool friends join us back at school where each day is packed with fun and hands-on learning!



Science Olympiad Team is Working Hard



We are excited to announce that the Georgia Elementary Science Olympiad is returning to McGinnis Woods this year, but it will be a bit of a different experience. Instead of participating in a large competition, this year the Georgia ESO is hosting a series of non-competitive events called Expedition ESO. There will be monthly "missions" that will encourage students to explore a variety of traditional Science Olympiad events through online interactive games and simulations. There will be two events released every month, beginning with the popular "Barge Building" being released this month.

Due to these changes, the McGinnis Woods Elementary Science Olympiad Team will morph into different grade leveled clubs! We will have an Elementary Club for 3rd and 4th graders (up to 10 members) and a Middle School Club for 5th and 6th graders (up to 10 members). Each club will meet once a week, with Elementary meeting on Tuesdays after school from 3:00pm – 3:45pm and Middle School meeting on Wednesdays from 3:30pm – 4:15pm. Ms. Anne, 5th-8th science instructor will be coaching our teams.

Although Georgia Elementary Science Olympiad will not host any competitive events, students in each club will work to earn badges for each mission completed, so the more they learn, the more they will earn! We hope our students have an amazing Science Olympiad experience this year.

Wildcat Chat



Hello and welcome back to another Wildcat Chat. This chat is going to focus on the conclusion of this year's unique Fall Sports, our upcoming Winter Athletic opportunities, and an exciting announcement regarding Winter Athletics. So, stay tuned to find out the big announcement.

My what a whirlwind 2020 has been. COVID-19 has certainly drastically changed the way in which we all approach our daily lives, and wouldn't you know it, the same held true for Wildcat sports this Fall. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 concerns the M.A.A.C was unable to compete in Fall sports this year, despite the efforts of multiple athletic directors and administrative personnel across the conference. Instead, I had the unique opportunity of providing the Wildcat community with after school options which included volleyball, soccer, and conditioning and Discovery Clubs designed for our kindergarten through 4th grade students featuring P.E. games and football.

Despite the change, middle and elementary school students relished the opportunity to compete against and grow with one another this Fall. The Volleyball coaches, Ms. Lane and Ms. Jenn, raved about the team and "what might have been" from day one. They shared their enthusiasm for the team's camaraderie, energy, and effort, and emphasized the importance of growing with the team despite it being a year when not every school in our conference had the same opportunity. Mr. Gallivan, the soccer coach, shared similar inspiration with the soccer club. He spoke highly of the team's focus and commitment to improving within the confines of this unique season and was proud of the development the team made throughout the weeks.



Now as we enter November, we are in transition from Fall to Winter sports and, of course, COVID-19 continues to rear its ugly head. Despite the issues still surrounding the pandemic, the M.A.A.C is proposing a bubble tournament for this upcoming basketball season beginning in January 2021. Practices and scrimmages have been permitted to begin as early as December 1st, therefore, my hope is to spend December scrimmaging against teams we may face in the bubble tournament. Members of M.A.A.C. are still determining whether they will participate in the season, as are we. Once all information is finalized, I will inform interested players and their families.

Lastly, the M.A.A.C has decided to add a second sport to this Winter's athletics because of the uncertainty of the basketball season. League members have decided to add eSports. Esports is a form of athletic competition that utilizes video games as its platform. It is played across the globe at every age/level and is played collectively by middle schools, high schools, and colleges throughout the United States. It even has a professional sector that continues to grow in popularity and gain viewership. The M.A.A.C is currently working with an organization to assist us in establishing a league and is in the process of gathering information from each school to determine if conducting our inaugural season this year is feasible. Given our society's continued fight against COVID-19 the M.A.A.C hopes to offer eSports this year because of its accessibility as it can be played from home or in any socially distanced environment.

I will continue to keep you posted on the status of the upcoming basketball and eSports seasons and will send out registration forms if/when applicable.



Go Wildcats!

Coach Andrew

Go Wildcats

Annual Spelling Bee



November kicked off our annual Spelling Bees. Students from every grade were given specific word lists to practice and review for their big day. The class bees included students attending face to face and through ClassFusion in grades 1st through 4th. The third grade will complete their bee this week.

Class bees for students in 5th –8th only included students attending face to face because the winners will be invited to attend the face to face Spelling Bee on December 15th. The winner and runner up of this competition will advance to compete in the annual GISA Middle School Spelling Bee which will take place on February 4, 2021.

We are so proud of all our students for their hard work preparing for the class Spelling Bees. The winners of the class bees are:

1st grade: Leul Takele
2nd grade Superheroes: Miles Greer
2nd grade Fish: Abhi Kakalarpudi
3rd grade– bee will be later this week
4th grade: CJ Myco
5th grade: Allie Schofield and Adam Lane
6th grade: Avery Rawlins and Mackenzie Yurasits
7th grade: Akhil Nagamohan and Benny Hamann
8th grade winners are Alex Skomorokhov and Lane Fowler



Congratulations, Wildcats!



Story Ship Visits McGinnis Woods



Friday, October 30th the Kindergarten, K1 and 1st grade children enjoyed an in-house field trip with the Story Ship. Pirate Goodie and his Parrot Pete took the children on an amazing undersea adventure. Pirate Goodie couldn't remember how to open his magic chest full of treasure. So he called on the students and his animated friends to help. The show kept the children laughing and singing with puppets and songs, while the children learned about kindness, respect, honesty, and cooperation.

We can't wait until our next visit from Story Ship!



PreK Teachers Make Each Day of Learning 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 fortunate to have five committed, experienced PreK teachers here at McGinnis Woods.

Ms. Abby and Ms. Liz are the 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 married and moved to Chicago. Happily, 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. Abby was honored as the 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Liz lives in Alpharetta and has been part of the Windward community for 18 years. She has 21 years of experience in preschools. This will be her third year with the McGinnis Woods family. She has three grown children and two grandchildren. She is currently completing her CDA and is enjoying another year with the All Stars.

Ms. Robyn and Ms. Valorie teach 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 twelfth year at McGinnis Woods. Her hobbies include reading, bowling, and sports "Go Falcons". She enjoys spending time with her family and has two children Amber, and Zeffery. Ms. Valorie is from Woodstock. She has three children: our very own Ms. Amy, our afterschool/summer camp director, Chris, and Zachary. Ms. Valorie completed her CDA in 2011. She has been with McGinnis Woods for eleven years. Her hobbies include reading and anything 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 eighteenth year teaching in the elementary school. Her hobbies include reading and cooking. She enjoys spending time with her husband Chris and their children Madison (17), Emerson (15), Bryson (7) and Allison (5) who have graduated from McGinnis Woods or are currently attending.

This teaching team is amazed by our current students attending both face to face and through ClassFusion. Their resiliency and progress is truly inspiring and rewarding to see.



Pajama Day in PreK!

Discovery Club Fun!



Our first session of Discovery Clubs has come to an end. This session included some wonderful activities that the students enjoyed. Jr. Robotics with Ms. Wendy is always a fun club that the students enjoy while using their creative minds to build unique structures. Mr. Andrew's Sports Club was a favorite as students loved learning about different sports and playing games that matched the sport they learned. The Cooking Club led by Ms. Valorie enjoyed making many tasty treats including cookies, ice cream, pizza and more. Discovery Clubs always prove that learning is fun!

The Second Session of Discovery Clubs began on November 2. This session includes some exciting and unique clubs as well. Jr. Robotics, STEM Club, Cooking, Cartoon Drawing, and Sports are all taking place. We also have a new club for 4th grade and middle school students where they are able to write songs and music with Mr. Daniel. This session of clubs will end the week of December 18, unless make up classes are needed. We look forward to another wonderful session. If you would still like to sign up, it's not too late, just ask the front office for a form.



Exciting Partnerships Continue



We're proud to announce the recertification of our Outdoor Classroom for 2020 as a certified Nature Explore Classroom. The Outdoor Classroom weaves together connections between the child, supportive adults and the environment, where children may practice hands-on and minds-on learning. Our classroom was initially certified in 2018.

Since those early days, we have had a former student-lead his troop in building the school a storage unit in the Outdoor Classroom as his Eagle Scout Project, parents have created fairy houses along our ¼ mile trail, and our staff has added learning and activity stations, too. We have added whimsical signs and even held a contest to name the creek that runs throughout the property. It is now officially recognized as The Wildcat Waterway on local maps!

We have also enjoyed working with a local community organization, Keep Forsyth Beautiful, in learning about the environment, local watershed and participating in frog research.

In Spring of 2020, our school was recognized as Gold Level in their Green School Award Program. Our Green School sign was presented to us by Ms. Apryl in October when she visited the school to teach the students about the rain cycle and environment. The new sign is presently on display in the elementary school foyer.

Our students use the outdoor classroom throughout the year in so many ways to deepen their love of nature, extend their STEM learning, draw, read, collect leaves, and enjoy music. The possibilities are endless....

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 suc-

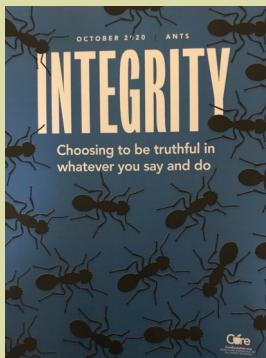
cesses!

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, Cooking, and STEM.

McGinnis Woods will be open for after school students on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, November 23-25th. After care will not be available on Thanksgiving Day or Friday, November 27 in observance of Thanksgiving. If you would like your child to attend during the break, please email elementaryschool@mcginniswoods.org.



Learning About Integrity and Gratitude



The Word of the Month for October was *Integrity*. Our students learned that integrity is *choosing to be truthful in whatever you say and do*. The students learned the importance of gratitude 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, in each class, who worked hard to master this character trait was chosen

as the Citizen of the Month and was treated to a special lunch from Your Pie. Our Kindergarten through 8th grade Citizens, for the month of October were: Elias Taylor, Ellie Pure, Paolo Triulzi, Gabrielle Greene, Padraig Gallivan, Rushil Tatipaka, CJ Myco, Leah Arun, Yael Veneziano, Bailee Rogers and Ms. Wendy, Teacher of the Month, from the 4th grade Happy Campers.

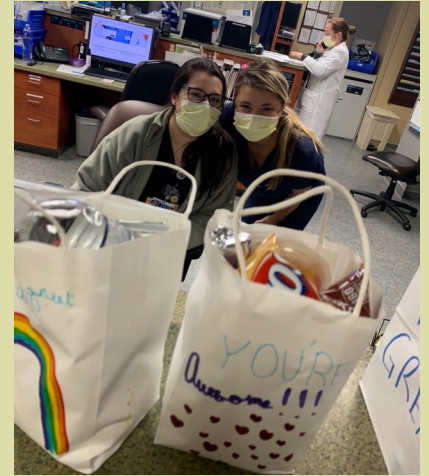
The Word of the Month for November is *Gratitude*. Students have been learning that *gratitude is letting others know you see how they've helped you*. We have been encouraging the students to make notes and pictures to express their gratitude to friends and family. We celebrated our Citizens of the Month a bit earlier this month on Monday, November 16 due to the upcoming Thanksgiving Break. Congratulations to our special citizens: Saige Jones, Leul Takele, Matthew Walldren, Noah Dame, Abhi Kakarlapudi, Aleyah Pure, Shviti Chilkimari, Peyton Brown, Joseph Gallivan, Sam Pate and Teacher of the Month Ms. Kristen from the 2nd grade Superheroes.

Jr. Beta Club



Our Jr. Beta Club has been hard at work. We have been so excited about our fall project of snack bags for the staff at Emory Johns Creek Hospital. This project wouldn't have been possible without the generous donations from our amazing McGinnis Woods Families. Thank You!

Jr. Beta Members have been busily decorating bags with uplifting messages and assembling them with all sorts of treats. On Monday, November 16th over 150 bags were delivered along with our messages of thanks for the amazing first responders. Due to the overwhelming response, we plan on making additional deliveries closer to the holidays.



Our winter project this year will be a food drive in January when donations often fall off at many local food pantries. Be on the lookout for more information after winter break. Thank you again for your support as we teach our students to care for and serve others in our community.

Student Council Sponsors Red Ribbon Week



We have had a very busy start to the school year in Student Council. Our elections in October gave us many amazing candidates for office, and after all the votes were counted, we appointed our new board. The officers for the 2020-2021 school year are Joseph Gallivan (President), Benny Hamann (Vice-President), Addison Evangelista (Secretary), and Avery Rawlins (Treasurer).

The first order of business for this newly elected group was planning for our annual Red Ribbon Week. This year the theme was Be Happy, Be Brave, Be Drug Free. Our officers chose special items to give to the students and a variety of fun spirit theme days which included wearing red, neon and sunglasses, pajamas, and crazy hair and socks. The week concluded with Halloween parties

which we hope will scare off drugs!

Class representatives met with officers on Wednesday, November 11th for our first virtual meeting. We created small tokens of appreciation for the entire staff at McGinnis Woods to show our gratitude for all they have done to adapt to the new landscape and ensure success for each student and family. Be on the lookout for our student run school store, where you can get everyday school supplies as well as novelty items. Lastly, we will be organizing an Order-In Day for our face to face students on December 11th. Order forms have been sent home and can be returned to your homeroom teacher anytime before Wednesday, December 2nd.

Middle School Buzz Write up



This school year has been unlike any school year we have experienced before, yet in the middle school, our teachers and students have made the most of this new and unique situation! Thanks to Teams and Apple Classroom, teachers and students have made HUGE strides in the use of new technology and apps. Many of these apps and websites have taken the place of typical textbooks, workbooks and paper activities of old. This has enabled each of our students the ability to do the same work and activities whether they are working on campus or remotely, through ClassFusion. Another benefit of the digital tools is it has streamlined the amount of paperwork our students need to keep up which has been ideal since we are not

using lockers due to Covid 19 protocols.

Despite these changes, our students have continued to work on projects and even group work. Our students have also been able to continue to enjoy field trips through Zoom, learning about everything from carnivorous plants to spies to 3D printing! We are so proud of how resilient and hard working our students have been throughout this new learning experience



McGinnis Woods Welcomes Mr. Daniel to the Team



McGinnis Woods has been pleased to have Mr. Daniel Garneau join the team as the music instructor. Mr. Daniel has been involved in music since 4th grade, beginning on the trumpet but quickly transitioning to the French horn. Throughout high school he taught himself piano and guitar and began studying music theory. After high school, he moved to Montana for his first 2 years of college studying music composition and completed his degree in Savannah, GA at Armstrong State University in 2016. Mr. Daniel is well suited to impart his love of music and his vast knowledge of music theory to the students.

While in school, he began teaching private lessons to all ages on guitar, piano and French horn. Since graduating Daniel's primary focus has been on K-8 education. Prior to McGinnis Woods, he taught music at another private school in Roswell. In addition, he started his own business with the goal of starting after school music programs.

Mr. Daniel is married to his high school sweetheart, Courtney. In their free time, they enjoy spending time with family, friends, and their dogs, cats, horses and cow.

3rd Annual Technology Fair Success



We recently held our 3rd Annual Technology Fair at McGinnis Woods ably led by Mr. Jason and Ms. Anne. This year, parents were able to log in and virtually view their student's presentation and Awards Ceremony. What an exciting time we had learning from one another as the students presented their projects and answered judges' questions regarding their creative processes, research techniques and design. It was very evident that the students had stretched themselves and learned so much writing code, animating and producing videos, and creating graphic designs and Apps. Students who placed 1st or 2nd in their category will have the opportunity to compete at the Forsyth County Technology Fair in 2021 which will be held virtually and could possibly advance from there to the Georgia State Technology Fair.

Congratulations to our winners:

Animation

Honorable Mention:

Christian Koehnke

2nd Place:

Leon Schultz

1st Place:

Elsa Zhang

Digital Photo Production

Honorable Mention:

Lane Fowler

2nd Place:

Joey Musolino

1st Place:

Nathan Walldren

Internet Applications

Honorable Mention:

Aashna Patel

2nd Place:

Marty Ho

1st Place:

Sarah Jiang

Robotics

Honorable Mention:

Ben Reiter

2nd Place:

Yael Veneziano

1st Place:

Hunter Nobile

Digital Game Design

Honorable Mention:

Anish Bathula

2nd Place:

Carson Kim

1st Place:

Simon Triulzi

Graphic Design

2nd Place

Ella Krauth

1st Place:

Benny Hamann

Mobile Apps

Honorable Mention:

Arjit Kandalai

2nd Place:

Afsheen Mohammad

1st Place:

Afsheen Shaik

Video Production

Honorable Mention:

Liam Jacobs

2nd Place:

Bailee Rogers

1st Place:

Avery Anderson



Project Showcase Amazes!



Project Showcase is one of our favorite projects each year. Each year students in PreK and Kindergarten explore a topic in their class and then prepare a display featuring their findings. Students in 1st-4th grades are asked to research a topic of their choice and prepare a display and speech on the topic which they then present to their class. For many of the students this is their first public speaking experience and despite some nerves, they did a fantastic job teaching their classmates about topics which included dolphins, butterflies, trains, the moon and so much more. We believe this project helps prepare our students for high school and beyond as they learn to read, write and speak in a clear manner before an audience. The students felt so proud of their accomplishments and had fun learning along the way.



Pictures from Around the School

