MACS Newsletter

MACS Basketball

The MACS middle school basketball boys team had one of the best seasons in a long time. With a record of 19 wins and 5 losses, they were a dominant force in the WPIAL. After a successful season, rumors have it they are the second best team to enter MACS. This team isn’t perfect; they had their ups and downs, but they worked through all of that and had an excellent season with the coaching of Philip Braxton and Nehemiah Brazil. They not only built, trained, and developed this team’s skills, but also built strong character and leadership in these young men which led to an amazing year on and off the court. For the players, practice was hard, but they knew at the end it was worth it. They pushed, worked, and played hard to get a great record and make the school proud.

The MACS Mustangs basketball team: Tawaan T., Imari W., Amaiis P., Raekwon S., Marques D., Michael K., Jayme L., Isaiah W., Dorian B., Micah B., DeAndre G., Juaron T., Jamar F., Bryce B., and Marte H.

We hope that these players not only continue playing basketball, but also expand their basketball skills to the next level and show their leadership, teamwork, and confidence in other areas in their lives. Let’s see what they will do in the future!

eTextile Project with Fourth Grade

The 4th grade class at MACS was chosen to participate in an eTextile project put on by South Fayette through a grant received from The Grable Foundation. Electronic Textiles, or eTextiles, are fabrics with programmed digital components attached by thread. South Fayette wanted a collaboration project between rural, urban, and suburban schools. Thanks to our board member, Norton Gusky, MACS was chosen as the urban school. South Fayette served as the suburban school and Fort Cherry the rural.

Under the direction of MACS teachers, Mrs. Javens and Mrs. Batyko, South Fayette teachers, Ms. Unger and Ms. Owens, and lots of generous parent volunteers, each of the 4th grade students created a t-shirt unlike any other in their closet. Students received a plain white t-shirt and Lilly Pad Simple kit which included a circuit board, LED lights, a buzzer, sewing needles, and thread.

The project had three focuses: computer programming, circuitry, and sewing. Students used a computer program called Modkit to program their LED lights and choice of music. Conductive thread, made of stainless steel, was used to sew their circuits onto their t-shirts. The circuit could include any arrangement of the LED lights and buzzer from the Lilly Pad Simple Kit. Over the course of about two months, students worked on their t-shirts about once a week, often making classic mistakes like sewing the front and back of their shirts together! The 4th grade was the target class because circuitry is included in the 4th grade science standards. (Continued on page 3)
**Black History Celebration**

MACS was buzzing in February during Black History Month. Pictures and bios of significant athletes, politicians, musicians, actors, and leaders covered the walls and windows, and students gained a better understanding of and appreciation for the individuals who paved the way for equality in our country.

Second grade teachers, Mrs. Paladin and Ms. Davis, worked with their students to create presentations to share with their classmates, staff, and families. In Mrs. Paladin’s class, students worked together in groups to create PowerPoint presentations on individuals of their choice, such as George Washington Carver, Rosa Parks, and Ray Charles. On presentation day, students dressed up as their chosen individuals and shared all about their history and significance with visitors. In Ms. Davis’ class, students put together brown paper bag presentations. Students prepared their presentations by packing brown paper bags with items such as stuffed animals, medals, pictures, and shoes to present to the class and share about individuals such as Michael Jackson, Michael Jordan, and Jackie Robinson.

Also, thanks to all who joined us for Black History Family Night! Some highlights included the Poetry Café, Friendship Dream Chain, Kente Cloth making, and African Djembe Drum making.

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**100th Day of School**

MACS celebrated our 100th day of school on Tuesday, February 11, 2014. Students filled their classrooms with chatter and laughter while creating collages and pictures using 100 items, coloring crowns, making fruit loop necklaces, and counting to 100 by 1’s, 2’s, 5’s, 10’s, and 20’s. Some kids declared the 100th day of school, and we quote, “the best day of their lives!”

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**MACS Cheerleaders**

The elementary and middle school cheerleaders did a fabulous job this year cheering on our MACS Mustangs all stars! Both teams cheered with tremendous spirit at numerous boys and girls basketball games throughout the season and also performed dances at MACS’s "Raise the Jolly Roger" PSSA/Terra Nova Pep Rally held on March 21st. The Middle School girls performed a creative routine to "My Baby" by Disney Star Zendaya, and the elementary girls performed a high-energy number to Pharrell’s hit song "Happy." Both Cheerleading and Dance Team tryouts will be held at the end of this school year to get ready for our second Cheer and Dance season starting in fall 2014. - Ms. Tabor

Girls in grades 3-5 are welcome to try out for the elementary team, and 6-8 grade girls can try out for the middle school team. A huge shout out to Mrs. Paladin and Ms. Tabor for coaching our girls this year!
**Important Dates**

- **May 30**  Last day of MYDC After School Program
- **June 3**  Kindergarten Graduation, 10am  
  Eighth Grade Graduation, 7pm  
  Grade 6 & 7 Finals (6/3 - 6/5)
- **June 6**  Kennywood Day
- **June 7**  MACS Carnival, 10am-3pm
- **June 11**  Students Last Day  
  Recognition Day, 9am
- **June 13**  Teachers Last Day
- **Aug 18**  Teachers First Day
- **Aug 25**  Students First Day

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**Game Jam with Fifth Grade**

The MACS fifth grade class joined other middle school students from Fort Cherry and South Fayette to participate in the **SCRATCH** program. The **SCRATCH** program allows users to create interactive stories, games, and animations that can be shared with people around the globe. For local Pittsburgh middle school students, this was an exciting and unique opportunity to do something different and interact with other students from other local schools.

Students were placed into groups and assigned the following roles:

- **Captain** – Communicates with the team to get the job done. Responsible for communicating with neighboring teams in order to connect the machines.
- **Assistant Captain** – Communicates with team to get the job done. Responsible for communicating with adults when necessary.
- **Programmers**  
  • Input – Responsible for starting the machine  
  • Output – Responsible for ending the machine
- **Engineers**  
  • Large Materials – Responsible for retrieving/utilizing the large materials  
  • Small Materials – Responsible for retrieving/utilizing the small materials
- **Creativity** – Responsible for the visual appeal of the machine

The day started with a video that explained the design challenge for the day. Students learned that they would be creating a track for a physical marble and virtual ball to travel through using items such as plastic tubes, paper towel rolls, boxes and a laptop with the **SCRATCH** program and an attached motor and motion sensor. When a real marble came close to the motion sensor, the marble stopped and a virtual ball moved across the laptop screen. When the virtual ball hit a point on the screen, the external motor next to the computer started and another real marble was once again propelled down the track. Check out the pictures taken by Mr. Reid, 5th Grade Teaching Assistant, for a better idea of how the track and design were created.

Planning began during lunch when students ate with their teammates to brainstorm ideas. Each team created their own design, and all the designs were connected to create one large track for the marble and ball to travel through. Teams sketched out their plans on whiteboards and worked with adjacent teams to know where to start and where to end. After all the details were determined, teams built their designs and prepared for Game Jam to watch their design come to life.

“Manchester Academic Charter School was so honored to be a part of this year’s **SCRATCH** program. Our fifth graders grew as individual thinkers and problem-solvers and gained valuable new skills that can be used in the future! The program ended perfectly with Game Jam. The day was an incredible opportunity for all students to work together as a team, using the skills they had gained over the course of the program to accomplish a perfect culminating activity. The entire room was filled with engaged students who were passionate and creative. It was one of the most inspiring days of my teaching career so far, and I felt blessed to witness such a wonderful display of learning.”  
- **Mrs. Kruk, 5th Grade Teacher**

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**eTextile Project with Fourth Grade**

The third graders gathered to see what the eTextile project was all about. Fourth graders showed off their lights, bells, and whistles and explained to the incoming 4th grade what is in store for them next year.

“I learned how to be patient.”
“I learned how to sew.”
“Hard work is good work.”

**A note from MACS board member Norton Gusky:** Jaycen Randall and Thailand Hopper with their Fourth Grade teacher, Lauren Javens, represented MACS at Kids & Creativity Network Rally on April 7. The event included learning projects from a variety of schools and out-of-school providers in the Pittsburgh region. Jaycen and Thailand shared their eTextiles project, a personally designed and programmed t-shirt that incorporated lights and sound, that was part of a unit on Circuits. The t-shirt design was the culminating activity that was funded by the Grable Foundation as part of a collaborative project with the South Fayette School District.
SOCIAL STUDIES NIGHT

THE MACS FAMILY

WHAT WE LEARNED NIGHT
MACS second graders celebrated Spring Day with a whole bunch of fun activities, including “The Great Egg Drop.” Students worked individually and in groups to create devices to hold raw eggs that protect the eggs from cracking when dropped from the second floor of MACS. These devices were made out of items such as boxes, bubble wrap, pencil cases, tissue paper, and fabric. Some students and teams were successful in preventing their eggs from cracking, and others could have used a little extra cushion for their eggs!

Congratulations to DJ Gather and Caleb Robinson from Mrs. Paladin’s class and to 4 of the 5 teams from Mrs. Davis’ class for successfully protecting their eggs!
**OUR MISSION:**
We foster the dreams of all children by providing an outstanding and dynamic education in a nurturing environment.

**OUR VISION:**
We will continue to be an educational center of excellence and become a community pillar of support where students excel, families are engaged, teachers are empowered, and alumni flourish.