

Grahamwood Elementary Happenings

A Shelby County Optional School

Pete Johnson, Principal

Spring has Sprung at Grahamwood

Hard to believe that the school year is already 3/4s complete! Spring Break is just around the corner. That said, learning continues until the final bell has rung.

Third grade was taught about the history and celebration of the Chinese New Year by Annie Chen's mother Binhua Chen. Traditional decorations and food were a part of this insightful presentation.

CLUE held their annual Shakespeare Festival. The audience of parents, grandparents, friends, and fellow students were treated to a

series of student re-imagined and modernized Shakespearean tragedies such as *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*.

Sam Nied, who acted in *Macbeth* said, "It was cool being someone I am not in real life.

It made me act different and use my imagination."

Students, teachers and parents celebrated the life

and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with *A Day of Remembrance*. The program was presented by Grahamwood's 2nd graders who took turns reciting passages of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech. They then led nearly

200 adults in a moving version of the song, "Tear Down the Walls." Optional teacher Sylvia Albert who coordinated the program stated, "For several years I have had a vision of our 2nd grade students performing Dr. King's speech." The program was featured on three local news broadcasts!

P.E. teacher Andrew Martin wants everyone to know our newest club is the Skating Club. Coach Martin and parent NaKasha Bond have arranged for students to have weekly practices to enhance their skating skills. "The idea for creating a skate club was to give our students another outlet to be physically active and develop friendships with classmates," states Martin.



Optional Application & General Choice Transfers are Open

For the 2019-2020 school year, parents interested in applying for Grahamwood Elementary's 1st-5th grade Optional program can do so online at: www.scsk12.org/schoolchoice. The application process opened on Monday, January 28, 2019 and will continue to be open through summer.

If you are interested in more information concerning Grahamwood Elementary's Op-

tional or academic programs, or if you would like to take a tour, please contact Dr. Maxwell.

Optional applications that have already been completed are being processed at the BOE. In March, Optional Coordinator Dr. Maxwell will begin making calls to set up test dates and will begin testing for upcoming 1st and 2nd grade students. The subjects tested will be Reading and Math.

For new upcoming 3rd-5th grade Optional applicants, once processed at the BOE the applications will begin being reviewed in March. Parents will be notified of their child's disposition once the review is complete.

If you have questions or need information, contact Dr. Maxwell at: 901.416.5993 or maxwelldj@scsk12.org.

Beta Club Reports by Shelby Thompson

The members of Grahamwood's National Junior Beta Club donated teddy bears to the Child Advocacy Center. The center helps children who have been abused. The victims go through interviews and therapy to recover from

what has happened to them. After their interviews, the children get a teddy bear to cherish for comfort. The donated teddy bears help the children feel protected and comforted.

It was important for our club to do this service. It is heartbreaking to know that boys and girls our age or younger are abused. It was helpful to know that the teddy bears helped the children feel safe and happy.

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Grahamwood

Upcoming Events:

3rd Quarter Ends

- March 8

Spring Break

- March 11-15

4th Quarter Begins

- March 18

NWEA Map Testing Ends (Began 2/25/19)

- March 22

Report Cards Issued

- March 27

Spring Holiday

- April 19

Progress Reports Issued

- April 24

Did You Know?

- Coach Martin received a \$4000 AMPED Grant to get students active walking and running before school.
- The 10 classroom school addition is finished!
- Homework Hotline is back! Call for help: 901.416.1234
- Grahamwood is a 2018 TDOE Reward School!

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Teacher Spotlight: Sharon Long

Sharon Long is one of Grahamwood Elementary School's truly exceptional educators. She teaches our special needs pre-kindergarten (PK) class. At 3 years old, her students were identified by Colonial Hearing and Vision Center as having a Developmental Delay to qualify for Grahamwood's Special Needs PK.

Ms. Long says that a key to her success is that, "I love my students and like getting to know their families." Her class is unique in that there are a maximum of 14 students who follow the TN Board of Education IDEA 619 Program—the same guidelines as required of all pre-school programs.

"All children can learn, and deserve a warm and welcoming educational environment," insists Ms. Long. "Every child can contribute

in their own special way. I enjoy how they can surprise you." In writing this article, Ms. Long wanted to make sure her long time, outstanding teaching assistant Keith Davis was recognized for his exceptional educational efforts.



Ms. Long earned her B.S. in Special Education at the University of Memphis and a Master of Science and Social Work degree from the University of Tennessee. She has been teaching for 21 years

with the last 8 being at Grahamwood.

As for hobbies, Ms. Long has horses and rescue dogs plus cats she takes in. Needless to say, this keeps her plenty busy! Grahamwood is very fortunate to have an educator as caring and capable as Sharon Long.

Grahamwood Elementary School's Vision Statement:

Grahamwood Elementary School is an exemplary, student-centered educational community with an exceptional team of stakeholders who create a nurturing environment where all students achieve academic excellence, exhibit good character, and hopes and dreams are encouraged.

Attendance Expectations:

Please be sure to have your children at school everyday, on time and for the whole day. If your children are missing any part of a school day, our outstanding educators cannot teach them and they are denied the opportunity to learn.

Focus On: Sarah Graves

Sarah Graves is in her 10th year of teaching. For her first two years, she taught at both Downtown Elementary School and Grahamwood Elementary, before joining fulltime at Grahamwood. Previously, she taught English as a Second Language (ESL) for one year at De La Salle Catholic School which solidified her love for teaching ESL.

Having a background in counseling (she has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Samford University, and a Masters degree in Counseling from Harding University), teaching was



not her original professional path. However, she quickly found that it was a perfect fit. "I love to see the spark in students' eyes when they begin to learn to read and understand more English. It is priceless!" says Ms. Graves. Further, she always encourages her students, no matter what, to never give up.

Ms. Graves learned Spanish while living in Mexico and enjoys keeping her linguistic skills sharp teaching at Grahamwood. Along with coordinating an ESL afterschool program for newcomers with Grahamwood's Interpreter Amanda Castano for the past 5 years, they have also started an after-

school Spanish Club as well as Summer Camps for students interested in learning Spanish. "I'm very busy but I enjoy it all," says Ms. Graves.

Outside of work, she enjoys knowing what is going on around town, visiting Shelby Farms' dog park with her rescue pup named Eddie, gardening (or trying to), and traveling. "Last summer I went to Greece," said Ms. Graves. "It was probably my favorite place to visit ever!"

Ms. Graves is a strong and valued advocate for ESL students and their families. Sarah Graves is a true asset to Grahamwood Elementary School and we are all extremely proud to have her as a part of our remarkable faculty!