



Wildwood Christian Academy's *The Wolf Cry*

May 2004 Vol.1 Issue 1

Life at Wildwood Christian Academy

Message from the Headmaster ~

Wildwood Christian Academy Does NOT Teach Academic Subjects

What? I knew that would get your attention. However, it's true. We don't teach academic subjects; we teach children. There is a difference. It is one thing to simply take a textbook and teach the material on each page; it is quite another thing to teach children to think, question, analyze, and love what they are doing. That's what we do at Wildwood Christian Academy.

I see that we are teaching children every time I see...

- The kindergartners pouring over library books showing each other the marvelous pictures, words, etc. they have found
- Excitement over treasures found on a nature walk or during an archeological dig
- The questioning of several ways to figure out the answer to a math problem
- Older children always being concerned about the welfare and safety of younger ones
- Creative juices flowing in art class as children's individual talents are encouraged
- The acquisition of a foreign language in an atmosphere that allows students not to be self-conscious about experimenting with new sounds
- The unfriendly beasts and other characters performing without the least bit of nervousness
- The wonder in the faces of the children during that very special half hour on Friday mornings and the questions and comments as they think about God's love for them
- The anticipation of the older children as they read together yet another novel, seven so far this year
- The pride on the kindergartners' faces as they write sentences from dictation
- Teachers saying "You must put away your library books, now and no, you can't take them to lunch."

These things happen at WCA, but I am not the one who makes them happen. The ones who make them happen are our talented and dedicated faculty members and volunteers. They are engaged in teaching children from the moment they arrive until they leave in the afternoon with very little actual

planning time at school – that happens at night at home. Even when there is an opportunity for a few minutes of planning, more often than not, the teachers gravitate toward interaction with the children on the playground or dealing with that one child who needs a little extra help.

Amazing things are happening at Wildwood Christian Academy...because we are teaching children.

"And we know that all things work together for good for them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."

Romans 8:28

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Opening Day September 2003

Opening Day for Wildwood Christian Academy, its students, faculty and parents was truly like watching a dream unfold after three years of planning and developing. The carpool line formed in front of the Scout Hut, beautifully set back in the woods just outside the gates of Big Canoe off of Steve Tate Highway.



Students jumped out of their cars with great excitement and enthusiasm about their first day in a brand new school. It seemed very fitting for Wildwood Christian Academy to open its doors in a “one room classroom” type of setting. Even though the location was temporary, the students, faculty and parents hold very dear memories for the time they spent at the Scout Hut.

The Move to our Whitley Road Campus

While classes were in session at the Scout Hut from September through December, much was happening on a daily basis at the Whitley Road South campus as Wildwood was trying to get ready for classes to resume after the Christmas break. From grading to landscaping and everything in between, we managed to accomplish what was necessary for the carpool line to form on January 5, 2004 at the Whitley Road location. Our Whitley Road campus currently consists of (1) our learning center which includes our Headmaster’s office, reception/secretary office, teachers’ lounge, library, technology and media center and storage (2) the classroom building consisting of four extra large classrooms, our multi-purpose activity room, chapel and lunch room and (3) the bathroom facilities. The Whitley Road campus also includes the home of “Geisen Park” which hosts a state of the art playground facility and original wooden train with six cars including the engine, a dining car, a tunnel car, box car, and caboose. Surrounding the 13-1/2 acre campus is our nature trail where we have been studying the trees, rocks, snakes, and bugs, and have even been involved with an archeological dig under the watchful eye of an archeologist. Our basketball court and baseball field provide a place for outdoor exercise.



Expansion Plans at Whitley Road

During the summer of 2004, expansion will take place for Wildwood in order to accommodate the enrollment for the next school year and the addition of a sixth grade. A boys and girls restroom and locker room facility will be constructed on the property in place of the current bathroom facility. Also, additional classrooms will be provided. Our plans also include the construction of our outdoor classroom in an amphitheater setting.

Meet Wildwood's Faculty and Headmaster

After reading about our fabulous faculty and headmaster, one could conclude that Wildwood Christian Academy has been in existence for several years – after all, how many newly established private schools can boast that all of their classroom teachers, chaplain, art teacher and headmaster have a minimum of a Masters Degree and an average of 25 years teaching experience? Read on and see if you don't agree.

Lyn Cates, our kindergarten teacher, has taught at Westchester Elementary School in Dekalb County, Decatur United Methodist Kindergarten, Agnes Scott College, and Emory University.



From left to right: Teacher Chuck Taylor, Donna Taylor, Lyn Cates, Headmaster Nancy Hammer, and Chaplain Sam Rothermel

Since 1982, she has taught and worked in various roles at The Westminster Elementary School where she developed and implemented a new reading curriculum and taught Children's Literature and Language Arts. Lyn has a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Emory University with a certification in Gifted Education from Georgia State University.

Carmen Crouch, our Spanish teacher, is an experienced linguist and educator who is fluent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Originally from Argentina, Carmen has taught Spanish for Kidspeak International, Spanish as a second language to children aged 3-15, and Spanish at Dunwoody Elementary School in DeKalb County. Carmen has a Bachelor's Degree from Indiana University.

Nancy Hammer, our headmaster, has taught for 20 years at the elementary and middle school levels at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta and for the last ten of those years has been Director of Studies overseeing the curriculum and academic program. She has helped with faculty hiring, faculty development, and has worked on the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation for both Westminster and the Atlanta International School. Nancy has a Bachelor's Degree in English and Latin from Wake Forest University, a Master's Degree in English Education and a Specialist's Degree in Reading from Georgia State University.

Judith Morris, our art teacher, has taught art in public schools in Wisconsin, at Wesleyan Day School in Atlanta, and at Carthage College in Wisconsin. She has had student art work represented for Youth Art Month in Wisconsin at the state capitol and at the High Museum in Atlanta. Judith has a Bachelor's Degree in Art and a Master's Degree in Art Education from the University of Wisconsin.

Charles Taylor, our 4th and 5th grade and science and math teacher, has worked in the Dekalb County School System since 1979, teaching, coaching, and serving as principal for two elementary schools. He implemented a successful Montessori program as part of Huntley Hills Elementary and designed and implemented a writing skills program for 5th and 7th graders. He was named Georgia Distinguished Principal for 2003. Charles has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Southern Illinois University, a Master's Degree in Middle Childhood Education and a Specialist's Degree in Administration and Supervision from Georgia State University. *Continued on next page*

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Donna Taylor, our 1st and 3rd grade and language arts and social studies teacher, has taught at the Chesnut Elementary School in Dekalb County since 1982. She has designed and implemented lessons in all disciplines for 3rd through 7th grades and has taught Early Intervention and Prevention reading and math within the general classroom setting. Donna has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Southern Illinois University and a Master's Degree in Middle Childhood Education from Oglethorpe University.

Joy Smith a volunteer for this year and teacher for next year, has taught for 30 years in Dekalb County elementary schools. Besides regular classroom teaching for 4th through 7th graders, she has organized educational field trips, implemented drug education programs, served as leader of the 4-H club and sponsor for Odyssey of the Mind, and organized and implemented fine arts programs and performances. Joy has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Florida State University and a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Georgia State University.

Wildwood's Chaplain, Sam Rothermel Brings in Visiting Clergy Weekly

Every Friday morning Wildwood Christian Academy conducts its chapel program. Wildwood's chapel programs are unique because Sam Rothermel, Wildwood's Chaplain, invites clergy and spiritual leaders from surrounding communities to assist our chaplain in our chapel programs. This year's chapel programs have been very exciting for the Wildwood students, faculty and parents. Each of our clergy and visitors has preached, lectured and presented incredible lessons, sometimes using props from fishing poles to pumpkins to get the lessons and messages through to the children (and adults --- we always have many visitors). It is so gratifying to watch the students learn lessons from the Bible. Some



of our visiting clergy and spiritual leaders were Dr. George Callahan, Trinity Evangelical Church, Dick Tash, spiritual leader and wonderful supporter of Wildwood, Phill Ellington, Associate Chaplain of the Big Canoe Chapel, Rev. Charles Walker, Pickens County historian and former pastor of First Baptist Church in Jasper, Charlie Boggan, First Baptist Church in Jasper, Herb Flanders, Jasper United Methodist Church, Rev. Lyndon Eubanks, Methodist Church in Sautee, Ga., Dr. Jim McCormick, Chaplain of the Big Canoe Chapel, John Realle, Pastor, Foothills Community Church, Dr. Jeremiah Ashcroft, President of the Southern Catholic College,

Rev. Eddie Martin, Cool Springs Baptist Church, Reverend Lamar Helms, music director of the Big Canoe Chapel, Ron Rucker, Pastor of the Cornerstone Baptist Church, Mike Allen, New Lebanon Presbyterian Church, Father Frank Wilson, Holy Family Episcopal, Bill Mostellar, musician and spiritual leader from Cornerstone Baptist Church, and Dr. James (Jimmy) Allen, Chaplain Emeritus of the Big Canoe Chapel. *Continued on next page*

Our Friday chapel programs are open to all parents, friends, supporters, and visitors beginning at approximately 8:30 a. m. with Sam Rothermel's energetic spirit and smiles, the pledges to our American flag, our Christian flag and our Bible. After that, we sit back and enjoy the teachings from all of our visiting teachers and Sam Rothermel. Feel free to visit our Chapel program at any time.

Wildwood Performs its First Christmas Pageant

For months the students of Wildwood practiced the music and drama of the play entitled *The Unfriendly Beasts*. The practices and production were directed by two of our faculty members, Chuck and Donna Taylor, both experienced in drama productions. The theme of the play involved stable animals that were



Wildwood Students perform the "Unfriendly Beasts"

upset that Mary and Joseph had to stay in the stable for the birth of Jesus and take up space that belonged to the animal domain. Each student was adorned in an adorable home-made costume imaginatively created by a Wildwood parent, Dee Hoover. Parents, grandparents and friends gathered together at a nearby stable owned and graciously donated for the day by Fay Bohlayer. The stable created a bit more authenticity to the play, including the cold and all the smells. By the way, the play ended with all of the animals rejoicing as they finally understood the importance of the birth of Jesus.

Why Wait? Wildwood Embarks on Creating a Scholarship Fund Now

Wildwood Christian Academy feels it is critical and necessary to create and be able to provide scholarships (full and/or partial) sooner rather than later to children who, with their parents, desire to apply to Wildwood but cannot because of their inability to pay the tuition or because of other financial constraints. Wildwood knows that there are some very deserving students in and around the community that would not be able to attend the school unless financial help were available. Wildwood wants to help make dreams come true for those who really want them. Most new schools don't even consider creating a scholarship fund so early in their operation, but Wildwood wants to get this program up and running as early as the 2004-2005 school year.

Wildwood has established a general scholarship fund. All donations are tax deductible. In addition, a "named scholarship" can be set up in your name, in the name of a loved one or in the name of an organization if you are interested in a named scholarship fund. Several of you have either given to the scholarship fund or indicated a willingness to make a tax deductible donation to the school. What a wonderful gift to the children. Some children need only a partial scholarship, some need help with their uniform costs, and others need help financially with most of their tuition. One child given the chance can change the world for a better place.

Christian Emphasis Week- March 29 – April 2, 2004

The theme for Christian Emphasis Week was “Fruit of the Spirit” which is a part of Wildwood’s Crest. Our Chaplain, Sam Rothermel planned the entire week for Wildwood. Each morning during the week invited guests brought a message and music to start the day. In addition to the Fruit of the Spirit, the lives of Peter and Paul were discussed by the students. It was an amazing week for everyone and a great way to kick off Spring Break and the Easter Holidays.

Field Trips and Special Events

The students have had opportunities to learn “on the road” this year with exciting field trips as well as being a part of some very special events. Students visited the Marble Festival Fine Arts Exhibit, walked in the Cow Parade at the Foothills Fall Festival, visited Burt’s Pumpkin Patch and Amicalola Falls State Park and enjoyed a day of classes in the Old “one room” School House in Talking Rock.

Other events in which the Wildwood students participated included riding in a horse drawn carriage in the Jasper Christmas Parade, attending the “Nutcracker” in Atlanta, and touring the Capitol and meeting with the Georgia Governor, Sonny Perdue. The day ended with lunch at the famous “Varsity”. The children also conducted an archeological dig under the watchful eye of an archeologist, visited the Hightower Forest in Dawsonville, attended a concert at the Atlanta Symphony, visited the Cyclorama, the Atlanta Zoo, and even conducted studies along a creek bed. Yes, it has been quite a learning experience “on the road”.



Wildwood's Parents Action Council –The “Wolf Pac”

Even though this is our first year in operation, it did not take long for several Wildwood parents to get together and form the Parents Action Council better known as the “Wolf Pac”. Clay Eubanks, the PAC president along with Patricia Geisen, Tracy Bost, and Dee Hoover serve as the board of directors and officers this year. The Wolf Pac jumped right into action at the beginning of this year. They developed their Mission Statement and determined the services they

would provide for the school. The purpose of the Wolf Pac is to create a communication link between the parents and the headmaster and faculty as well as a link to the Board of Directors of Wildwood. The Wolf Pac will perform services through the use of committees composed of Wildwood parents. Some of the committees include the Welcome/New Family Orientation Committee, the Grounds/Maintenance Committee, Special Events/Fundraising Committee, and the Transportation Committee.

We are very proud to have such dedicated and committed parents on the Wolf Pac board. It is quite an accomplishment to have this non-profit organization formed and working this early in the life of Wildwood. Thank you to all of those who have stepped forward to make this happen!

Wildwood Goes Out to Lunch

Thanks to our talented Wildwood parents, John and Cindy Lupi, owners of the local Appalachia Grill, the Wildwood students have not been hungry this year. Since January, John and Cindy have been providing the students (and faculty, who can't seem to resist) with a hot lunch program. The students have been served with wonderful, tasty treats with the Appalachia Grill's special touch! Some of the menu items include chicken on a stick, quesadillas, Appalachia hamburgers and hotdogs, turkey wraps, spaghetti and meatballs, John's special macaroni and cheese, and Appalachia pizza. In addition, the students also receive a vegetable, dessert (such as homemade cookies!) and juice or milk. All of this has been provided this year for just \$3.00/day per student. Thank you John and Cindy for the awesome commitment you have made to Wildwood in preparing and serving wonderful lunches every day!

Wildwood Plays Chess!

Thanks to one of our Wildwood parents, Paul Castell, a local builder as well as an experienced chess player and father of Louis Castell, an accomplished chess player at the ripe old age of 7, Wildwood started its first after-school enrichment program this year. Paul Castell formed the Chess Club which meets every Tuesday after school for an hour. The Chess Club welcomes all school-age children, not just Wildwood students, to learn and play the game of chess and exciting strategic moves taught by Coach Castell. A special "Thank You" goes to Paul Castell for providing Wildwood and the chess club members with his dedication, time and effort!



"Keep Pickens Beautiful" Awarded to Wildwood

Don Russell presented Wildwood Christian Academy with the prestigious "Keep Pickens Beautiful" award this spring. Wildwood has been awarded Whitley Road South as its Keep Pickens Beautiful project and the same is denoted by the Keep Pickens Beautiful signs at either end of Whitley Road South. Wildwood feels very strongly about being a positive force in its community and helping whenever possible with projects that affect our community.

Wildwood Welcomes Many Visitors Throughout the Year

Throughout the year, Wildwood Christian Academy has been blessed by many talented people who have taken their personal time to share, to teach and/or to visit with our students. Our students have been so enriched by the gifts that our visitors have left behind. Here are a few of those special visitors:

Peg Ewing, Dog Therapy
Cynthia Cero, Environmental Science teacher
Kathy Brigman, Dental Hygienist
Don Russell, Keep Pickens Beautiful and Recycling
Big Canoe Security, Big Canoe fire truck
Ron Rucker – Radio Demonstration
Steve Webb - Archeologist

Awesome Volunteers!

Without our wonderful volunteers, this school year would not have been nearly as smooth and successful as it has been. Our volunteers have been faithful to Wildwood Christian Academy and enhanced the quality of our program. Many thanks to Cynthia Cero, Joy Smith, (who will be joining the staff at Wildwood full time next year), Julia Havron, Mary Jones, Darlene Tabor, Bonnie Callahan, Phyllis Seitz, and Barb Weagley.

Wildwood Kudos

Wildwood has had a lot of help from its inception to now. Many services have been provided free of charge by people who want to be a part of the success of Wildwood Christian Academy. Some of these people are listed below to whom we are so grateful and owe a "Great BIG" Thanks.

- Sean Powell and PortraitPainter.com - carpentry, decks, our train, web page design, database design, and much more
- Elements and Michelle Castell - cabinets in our classrooms and teachers' lounge
- Chris Villani and Audio Video Lifestyles of Atlanta - phones, security computer wiring, and fire protection
- Jim Mahaffey - bathrooms and locker room facility, big screen television
- Gray Reese and Design Reese Architects - architectural drawings and design work
- Carlos Walker and On-Site Communications - computers, consultation, computer donations
- Crown Construction - grading and development supervision
- Steve and Ann Young - Big Canoe, hardware equipment
- Larry Brogdon, Fred Young and Arliss Brigman - services for air conditioning and electrical; built picnic tables and always smiled
- Fireside Café, Richard Dickey - provided food for special events
- Appalachia, An American Grill - provided food for special events
- Lake Sconti Restaurant - provided food for special events
- Jasper Toy Company, Phil and Laura Branson
- Jasper Family Steak House - provided food for special events
- Nick Born and Any Sign Now – signage
- David Baysden and Harry Norman Realtors – color copier for copies, copies, copies, and copies

And the many donations of money, equipment and services provided by many of the Wildwood supporters!

Upcoming Events

PAC TO HOST FIRST ANNUAL WINE TASTING EVENT

The Wildwood Parents Action Council will raise money for special events for the school by hosting its first wine tasting event and silent auction on May 21, 2004 at the Chimneys in Big Canoe. Tickets are available for \$20.00 per person. Call Tracy Bost at 706 268-2956 or Patricia Geisen at 706 268-1484 for more information.

CHEROKEE BANK SPONSORS GOLF TOURNAMENT TO BENEFIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Cherokee Bank and its Foothills lending office have agreed to sponsor a charity golf tournament to be held on June 9, 2004 at the Big Canoe Golf Club. Net proceeds will go the Wildwood Christian Academy Scholarship Fund. You may contact Gaye Cantrell at Cherokee Bank at the Foothills Lending Office, 770-893-3400 for your entry form. We need sponsors that want to purchase a tee sign to be placed on one of the golf holes. This would be an ideal way to help with the funding and also let people know that you or your company cared enough to help our community children who need financial aid in order to attend Wildwood Christian Academy. In addition, we need teams and players, so sign up today before it is too late.

Wildwood Christian Academy Calendar 2004-2005

August 26-27 – Faculty Forum

August 30 – First day of school

September 6 – Labor Day holiday

October 28 – Student dismissal at 11:30; parent conferences in the afternoon

October 29 – Student dismissal at 11:30; parent conferences in the afternoon

End of nine week grading period

November 1 – GISA Conference – student holiday

November 24-26 – Thanksgiving holidays

December 20-31 – Christmas holidays

January 17 – MLK holiday*

End of nine week grading period

February 18 – Student dismissal at 11:30; faculty in-service in the afternoon

March 25 – Easter holiday

End of nine week grading period

April 4-8 – Spring Break

May 30 – Memorial Day holiday

June 3 – Last day of school

*May be used for snow day

March 23 and 24 will be holidays if not needed for snow days.

Footnote From the Founders

As you read this, know that as the founders of Wildwood Christian Academy, Pamela and I have come a long way with Wildwood Christian Academy in a short time with the Grace of God and all of your prayers and support. Know that Wildwood has succeeded in its spiritual and physical development because of each of you and God's blessings.

Wildwood Christian Academy is such a wonderful asset to our community, which includes Pickens and all of the surrounding counties. We only hope that you are as proud of your school as we are. Pamela and I have made life long friends and have watched friendships grow exponentially over the last three years. The love that each of you has shown to us has been nothing short of spectacular. Your love and friendship will always be with us. It is the fuel that we need along with God's gentle nudging from time to time that keeps us going and seeking more and more for the children and Wildwood Christian Academy. You see, it is all about the children. We have watched children that have never been to any organized type of school learn how to become social citizens and learn that "learning" is not only necessary but a wonderful experience. We have taken our slogan of a "School of Excellence" and grandly met the goal. Our children have grown so much spiritually, emotionally, physically, academically and lovingly.

As founders, Pamela and I know that our journey has only just begun. When you see us out and about, please remember that it is your encouragement, your prayers and financial support that has and will continue to make Wildwood Christian Academy a "School of Excellence" not only academically but also spiritually. We need you, Wildwood needs you and the children need you.

God bless each of you and from the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

Pamela B. Ruff Larry L. Ruff

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