Well Awareness

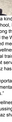
THE education you need for the health you want

February Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the February issue of the *Well Aware Wellness Report* on to learn about:

- this month's wellness champion, a kindergarten teacher who has taken her wellness movement at her school, inspiring her coworkers to live healthy lives;
- a seminar/webinar on how sodium hiding in foods and how to make healthy dietary changes;
- healthy habits to prevent heart disease;
- ways to assess this year's wellness;
- the importance of knowing your numbers; and
- more!

Wellness Champion Sparks a Wellness Movement Among Her Coworkers



Golnaz Zaber, Kindergarten teacher, Bethesda Elementary School

Golnaz Zaber, designed and members of the Bethesda Elementary School Wellness Workout Club.

Golnaz Zaber, a kindergarten teacher at Bethesda Elementary School, has sparked a wellness movement among her school's staff. In the fall, Golnaz formed the Wellness Workout Club and has led coworkers in exercise classes, and discussions of health and wellness. From power walking, high-intensity interval training (HIIT), to yoga, she ensures that everyone feels comfortable in her classes. Golnaz has inspired her coworkers to live healthy lives.

"Wellness is important, not just at my school but beyond, in everyday life," Golnaz said. "Physical and mental wellness go hand in hand and are important factors for both students and colleagues."

The school's wellness program began organically during a conversation between coworkers who were discussing their goals. As a ballet dancer with interest in her own health and wellness, Golnaz shared her goals with the school administration.

"Since beginning our wellness program, the outcomes have been amazing," Golnaz said. "It is imperative to remember that we need to care for our enjoyable life and manage stress."

As the group of Bethesda staff interested in wellness grows and participants bond as a result of their mutual interest, they are leaning on each other to add to their daily lives. Golnaz sends regular emails to her colleagues with healthy eating practices and short workout ideas they can do while teaching. She also sends reminders to staff before holidays to encourage them to practice mindfulness and healthy eating during the break.

In addition to after-school exercise classes, Bethesda Elementary School staff had the opportunity to organize a complimentary teacher class at a Bethesda studio to try new techniques and to have a fun, challenging, and, as a result of their efforts during a Well Aware physical activity challenge, they won a complimentary smoothie demonstration for their school.

Golnaz has some suggestions for schools thinking about starting a staff wellness program.

Just start! Golnaz said the hardest part is the planning. Find a committee member, or perfect opportunity, just go! Time is passing and is super precious, so seize the day and make your health a priority. No one else will take care of you like you, so take the day and make it your priority!

Today Is National Wear Red Day!

The American Heart Association (AHA) is holding its yearly National Wear Red Day today, Friday, February 7, 2020, to call attention to heart disease. According to AHA, "Heart disease and stroke cause 1 in 3 deaths among women each year, killing approximately one woman every 80 seconds." It doesn't have to be that way, however. AHA tells us that "80 percent of cardiac and stroke events are preventable with healthy lifestyle choices."

Well Aware encourages all Montgomery County Public Schools employees to make their heart health a priority. Schedule your preventive check-up, know your cardiac health, measure your blood pressure, and check your cholesterol. Be alert for signs of heart disease and your risk for stroke and other illnesses.

Do your part to educate yourself, your friends, and your family this year. Join the movement to end heart disease and stroke in women because it isn't just a man's disease. Even if you didn't wear red today, we can all Go Red Here's how:

1. Get Your Numbers
2. Own Your Lifestyle
3. Realize Your Risk
4. Educate Your Family
5. Don't Be Silent

Share pictures of your coworkers participating in National Wear Red Day by **emailing them to Well Aware**.

- **Watch this video** to learn more about National Wear Red Day.
- **Go Red for Women: Well-Woman Visit Guide**

The Best Time to Quit … Is Now!

Are you ready to quit? Take the dare to a free, eight-week tobacco cessation class for MCPS staff and their spouses. The class covers everything from nicotine replacement therapy, coping techniques, stress management, nutrition, and more. Tobacco-users who complete the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program can have the 25 percent tobacco user surcharge waived and, depending on their health plan, the program fee completely refunded. **Learn more.**

For more information on the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program, visit the **Quit For Good web page. Email Well Aware** to reserve your spot in the next class.

Flights to Fitness: Climb the World's Tallest Buildings!

Stair climbing can be a wonderful way to keep fit. Most of us walk or in her near a building with stairs. Stair climbing is an efficient workout that can be a great addition to your daily routine. The activity benefits your heart, your mind, as well as your leg muscles.

Well Aware is challenging you to climb the tallest buildings in the world! If traveling around the world is not possible, you can climb the equivalent of these buildings in flights of stairs. Form a team and complete the buildings together to make your time and your sense of achievement is a great way to stay in shape during the cold winter months.

For details, visit Well Aware's **Flights to Fitness web page**.

Stress Less This Winter

Winter is a daunting time of the year. Shorter days and colder weather, coupled with life's stressors can lead to sadness and anxiety. Managing stress with deep breathing and movement helps to stimulate brain chemicals that help you feel happier and less anxious. Visit Well Aware for one or more of the following classes and learn how to better manage your stress. To register for any of these classes, **email Well Aware**.

Mindfulness and Meditation
Mondays through June 15, 2020 (except holidays)
5:30-6:45 p.m.
Conference Room 223
Carver Educational Services Center
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga
Wednesdays
4:30 p.m.
(45-60 minutes indicated otherwise)
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tai Chi
Wednesdays, February 5 and 19
3:30 p.m.
Second Floor
William H. Farquhar Middle School
17017 Bachelors Forest Road
Olney, Maryland 20832

Yoga*
Friday
3:45 p.m.
Gym
Redland Middle School
6505 Muncaster Mill Road
Rockville, Maryland 20855
*Times are a limited number of mats, blocks, straps, and blankets. If you have your own, please bring them.

Yoga
Friday
2:50 p.m.
Dance Studio
Springbrook High School
2436 凯 Block Drive
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Yoga
Wednesdays
3:25 p.m.
Dance Studio
Tilden Middle School
11211 Old Georgetown Road
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Yoga
Mondays and Thursdays
5:30 p.m.
All Purpose Room
Wyoming Horse Head Center
4910 Macon Road
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Can't make it to a class? Try these online resources to manage your stress this winter:

- **Yoga for Teachers**
- **Guided Meditation for Teachers**

Wellness Initiatives: Get to Know Your Numbers

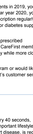
We live our lives by the numbers: phone numbers, PIN numbers, and our social security numbers.

But do you know the heart health numbers that could literally save your life? Healthy numbers mean a healthy heart. If you follow a healthy lifestyle—eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise, and avoid smoking—you can turn any bad numbers around.

You can learn about heart health and heart numbers and reduce your financial contribution to your health insurance in 2021 by participating in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program. To take full advantage of the program, complete a biometric health screening and health risk assessment yearly. And, if you and/or your spouse smoke, complete a quitting. Doing so will go a long way toward improving your numbers.

For more information on the Wellness Initiatives program and to see a schedule of upcoming on-site biometric health screenings, visit the **Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page**.

Join the Superhero Spring Challenge!



It is time to come out of your mid-mannered shell (think Clark Kent) and become the fit and fierce warrior you are destined to be. Well Aware is challenging employees to a friendly challenge where fitness is the goal and everyone can be a winner. Fitness is the goal, but the challenge is open to individuals or teams of any fitness level. Participants will be asked to take action so you can feel great!

Superheroes are courageous, patient, hardworking, and team-minded. It is time for you to take action, set goals, and take the steps to become your own superhero!

Join us at our kicking yourself in gear party by living a healthy and well life. Join the *Superhero challenge! All activity counts!*

Participate as a solo superhero or as part of a team. Teams will compete for some fitness competition. For your efforts, you could win exciting prizes, including fruit platters, grants to promote wellness at your school or office, and other recognition.

Take these steps to get started:

- **Register on the online Well Aware Fitness Log**. If you registered previously for another challenge, you do not need to register again. Simply make sure your location is updated in your profile, especially if you changed schools or offices.
- **To join a team, designate a colleague as the team captain.** The captain will use the Fitness Log to create and register your team. Accept the e-mail invitation when it arrives from the Fitness Log.
- **Log your activity** in the Fitness Log each week beginning March 2, 2020.
- **Earn prizes while improving your health!**

Learn more about the challenge, including incentives, rules, and more by visiting **the Well Aware website**. Or, simply search for *Superhero* challenge from any MCPS web page.

Diabetes Management Program for CareFirst Members

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) employees who have diabetes and are covered by the CareFirst medical plan have the option of participating in a diabetes case management program to have their compositions for diabetic supplies and medication waived.

To participate in the program, MCPS employees who are diabetic and covered by a CareFirst medical plan are required to—

- maintain their participation in the diabetes management program, and
- use medications prescribed to treat their diabetes exactly as their doctor has instructed without missing any days.

If you are a CareFirst member with diabetes who met these requirements in 2019, you are still paying copays for your diabetic supplies in 2020. If, during calendar year 2020, you do not miss any days between prescription refills, i.e., you refill your prescription regularly to ensure you have medication on hand, your copays for diabetic supplies for the remainder will be waived during calendar year 2021.

A key component in managing diabetes is maintaining regular use of prescribed medications. By meeting these two requirements every year, diabetic CareFirst members will continue to receive diabetic supplies via co-insurance without copays while more closely managing their diseases.

If you want to participate in the diabetes case management program or would like to confirm your status as a program participant, please contact CareFirst's customer service department.

Healthy Habits to Prevent Heart Disease

February is Heart Disease Awareness Month. Did you know that every 40 seconds, someone in the United States has a heart attack? One of the most important lifestyle modifications that can significantly reduce the risk of developing heart disease, is regular exercise—which can be hard to fit in to our busy lives!

Click on each link below for important tips on fighting heart disease, as well as simple exercises you can do at your desk, in your classroom, or on your bus.

- **You Can Fight Heart Disease**
- **Dedication**
- **Too Much Sodium flyer (English)**
- **Too Much Sodium flyer (Spanish)**

Physical Activity Classes

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can relieve immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your heart, your mind, and your overall wellness. Consider trying one of the classes below to see what kind of physical activity is best for you! To register for any of the classes, **email Well Aware**.

Zumba
Friday
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Washington Grove Elementary School
8712 Oakmont Street
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

Zumba
Mondays
4:00 p.m.
Cafeteria
Carver Educational Services Center
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Zumba
Tuesdays and Thursdays
4:45–6:00 p.m.
Dance Studio
John F. Kennedy High School
1901 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Zumba
Wednesdays
4:35–5:35 p.m.
Gymnasium
Christian Woods Elementary School
4510 Faroe Place
Rockville, Maryland 20853

Zumba
Mondays
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Gymnasium
Flora Singer Elementary School
2525 Hayden Drive
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Zumba
Fridays
5:15 p.m.
All Purpose Room
Wyoming Horse Head Center
4910 Macon Road
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Zumba
Wednesdays, February 12 and 26
3:30 p.m.
Second Floor
William H. Farquhar Middle School
17017 Bachelors Forest Road
Olney, MD 20832

HIITCamp Now Offered Through Well Aware

HIITCAMP is a new fitness class that includes both high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and strength training during each session. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned fitness enthusiast, this format is guaranteed to give you a great workout in every class.

Tuesdays
5:30 p.m.
Francis Scott Key Middle School
910 Schindler Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20903

Share Your Wellness Stories and Encourage Your Coworkers! Write Well Aware!

Well Aware is proud of MCPS employees for all of the hard work they are doing to lead healthy lives. It is time to share your stories and your spirit! Or, perhaps you need some motivation to fulfill staff wellness programs at your school, office, or office, or to turn life-long unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow **@cowellness** for incredible wellness inspiration, tips, and motivational quotes. Write **Well Aware** and we will need tips on living a healthy life and recipes updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.

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