# WellAwareNews

The education you need for the health you want

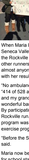
## January Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the January issue of the *Well Aware eNews!* Read on to learn about—

- this month's wellness champion, a 72-year-old paraeducator who at Seneca Valley SK ahead of 114 other runners;
- a seminar/webinar on creating a fitness plan within your time and budget;
- taking the [wellness] initiative with Fitness Fridays;
- how you can climb the wellness ladder at Flights to Fitness;
- who won the *Minutes in Motion* challenge; and
- more!

## Wellness Champion: "Nothing Feels Better Than the Finish Line"

**Maria E. Pena Faustino, paraeducator, Seneca Valley High School**



*Following her impressive 5K run, Maria E. Pena Faustino (left) poses for a photo with her proud daughter.*

When Maria E. Pena-Faustino, paraeducator at Seneca Valley High School, crossed the finish line in the Rockville 5K this fall, she did so ahead of 114 other runners. While this might be rewarding for almost anyone, 72-year-old Maria was beyond thrilled with her results.

"No ambulance!" Maria said in a text following the run. "414 of 528 at 72. . . . The best was to see Little Maria and my granddaughters at the finish line with [their] wonderful banners!"

By participating in Well Aware's 5K the training program, she was more than ready for the Rockville run. In fact, she started running last this year after Well Aware's 5K training program was advertised. Until the 5K training, Maria had not participated in any organized exercise program.

"Before the 5K, my activity came from not sitting down for six hours while at school!" Maria said.

Maria now believes that physical activity is extremely important for everyone—in particular, for school staff.

"Physical activity keeps you vibrant and energetic," Maria said. "There is definitely a connection between exercise and mood. In addition, I enjoy being a good role model for the students."

Maria has advice for anyone starting an exercise program.

"Just do it," Maria said. "No tomorrow, no later; just go with it little by little, taking small steps. Nothing feels better than the finish line."

Need help to start? Join the Well Aware Spring 5K training program this spring. Look for details in the *Well Aware eNews* on February 7, 2020.

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

Stair climbing can be a wonderful way to keep fit. Most of us work in or live near a building with stairs. Stair climbing can be done anytime throughout the day as a break in your 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 share your sense of achievement! It is a great way to stay in shape during the cold winter months.

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

## Wellness Initiatives: It Is Not Too Early to Reduce Your Share of Health Insurance Costs for 2021

If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan through CareFirst or Kaiser Permanente, you can learn more about your health and reduce your contributions to your health insurance with the Wellness Initiatives program. To take full advantage of these rate reductions, complete a biometric health screening and a health risk assessment yearly, and, if you use tobacco, consider quitting.

The Wellness Initiatives are very simple to accomplish. To receive the maximum 2 percent reduction on your health insurance premiums in 2021, you have until October 2, 2020, to complete—

- an online health risk assessment; and
- a biometric health screening.

To find out how to complete your biometric health screening and health risk assessment and how your results will be used by MCPS, please visit the **Wellness Initiatives web page**. Well Aware is continuing to offer onsite biometric health screenings to help MCPS employees fulfill this part of the incentive program. For dates, times, and locations, please visit the **Wellness Initiatives web page**.

## *Minutes in Motion*: Final Results

More than 6,000 Montgomery County Public Schools employees spent 10 weeks this fall getting active for the sake of their health during the *Minutes in Motion* physical activity challenge. They competed for prizes and, more importantly, adopted or maintained healthy lifestyles. Each of the top 15 schools averaged and health. I see that now. In addition, I enjoy being a good role model for the students." This is an increase of two minutes over last year!

Congratulations to all those who improved their health by participating! See a **list of the winners**.

Although *Minutes in Motion* has come to an end, the challenge continues! Well Aware's next physical activity challenge will begin in March. Look for details in future issues of the **Well Aware eNews** and **This Bulletin**, and on the **Well Aware website**. In the meantime, the **Well Aware Fitness Log** continues to provide a resource for you to track your physical activity and diet.

## The Best Time to Quit … Is Now!

Are you ready to quit? *Quit for Good* is 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 when the program is completed, 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.

## 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. Join 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, **e-mail Well Aware**.

**Mindfulness and Meditation**

Tuesdays and Thursdays in June 10, 2020
10:30–11:45 a.m.
Conference Room 223
Career Educational Services Center
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**Seated Yoga**

Wednesdays beginning January 8, 2020
4:45 p.m.
(with 45 centers indicated otherwise)
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**Yoga**

Fridays beginning January 10, 2020
3:30 p.m.
Main Gym
Redland Middle School
6505 Muncaster Mill Road
Rockville, Maryland 20855

**Yoga**

Fridays beginning January 3, 2020
2:50 p.m.
Dance Studio
Springbrook High School
201 Valley Brook Drive
Silver Spring, Maryland 209

**Yoga**

Wednesdays beginning January 8, 2020
3:25 p.m.
Dance Studio
Tilden Middle School
11211 Old Georgetown Road
Rockville, Maryland 20852

**Yoga**

Wednesdays, January 15 and 29, 2020
3:30 p.m.
Weight Room
William H. Farquhar Middle School
17017 Batchellors Forest Road
Olney, Maryland 20832

**Yoga**

Mondays and Thursdays beginning January 6, 2020
5:00 p.m.
All Purpose Room
Rocking Horse Road Center
4910 Macon Road
Rockville, Maryland 20852

## 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 have 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 these classes, **e-mail Well Aware**.

**Zumba**

Wednesdays, January 8 and 22, 2020
3:30 p.m.
Weight Room
William H. Farquhar Middle School
17017 Batchellors Forest Road
Olney, Maryland 20832

**Zumba**

Fridays beginning January 3, 2020
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Washington Grove Elementary School
607 Oakmont Street
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

**Zumba**

Mondays beginning January 6, 2020
5:00 p.m.
Cafeteria
Career Educational Services Center
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**Zumba**

Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning January 7, 2020
3:00–4:00 p.m.
Dance Studio
John F. Kennedy High School
1901 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

**Zumba**

Tuesdays beginning January 7, 2020
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Gymnasium
Wheaton Woods Elementary School
4010 Faroe Place
Rockville, Maryland 20853

**Zumba**

Mondays beginning January 6, 2020
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Gymnasium
Rock Creek Forest Elementary School
2000 Hayden Drive
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

**Zumba**

Mondays beginning January 3, 2020
5:00 p.m.
All Purpose Room
Rocking Horse Road Center
4910 Macon Road
Rockville, Maryland 20852

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). Learn more about Well Aware programs and services at **www.wellaware.com**. Contact ERSC at 301-517-5160 or **wellaware@mcps.org** with questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-5160 or **wellaware@mcps.org**.