

## May Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion—a classroom teacher who has participated in every Well Aware physical activity challenge since joining her school's staff,
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna that will give you a fresh perspective on nutrition,
- Well Aware's plans for three physical activity opportunities this summer,
- this year's Bike to Work Day,
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month, and
- more!



### Don't Miss It

**This month's free seminar/webinar—  
A New Approach to Nutrition**

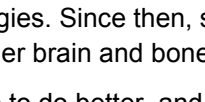
When you make the choice to eat a balanced diet, you help set the foundation for improving your health and your quality of life. No matter what your age or your weight, now is a good time for a fresh perspective on nutrition.

**Thursday, May 12, 2016**  
10:00–11:00 a.m.  
Shady Grove Transportation Depot  
16651 Crabbs Branch Way  
Rockville, Maryland 20855

**Thursday, May 19, 2016**  
4:00–5:00 p.m.  
Webinar

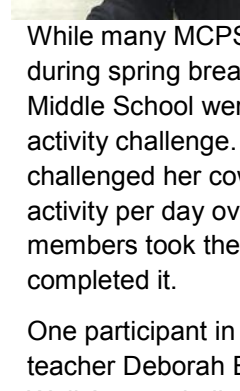
Please register for the seminar/webinar by e-mailing **Well Aware** with the date and time you plan to attend. If you register for the webinar, you will receive a link in your Outlook e-mail as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our **printable flyer**. See the **Wellness Webinar Library**.



## Wellness Champion Stays Active to Be Her Best Self

**Deborah D. Belcourt, classroom teacher, A. Mario Loiederman**



While many MCPS employees were home relaxing during spring break, staff at A. Mario Loiederman Middle School were participating in their own physical activity challenge. Their wellness coach, Pam Altman, challenged her coworkers to average 50 minutes of activity per day over the break. More than 40 staff members took the challenge and successfully completed it.

One participant in the Loiederman challenge, classroom teacher Deborah Belcourt, has participated in every Well Aware challenge since joining the Loiederman staff. Always vigilant about her personal health and fitness, she doesn't play in competitive sports. She sees the challenges as a safe way to get moving.

"When I read about the first Well Aware challenge, I thought, 'This is perfect! No bats, balls, or people flying at me!' Deborah said. 'The wellness challenges are a great way to hold myself accountable because the team is counting on me. I like that MCPS promotes wellness and I want to be part of that message.'"

Wellness has been a priority for Deborah since she was young. Her father served as an important role model.

"My dad always stayed fit, and even now at 75 years old, that man can carry his own kayak on his shoulder and can paddle around on the water for hours," Deborah said. "I continuously join various classes to keep my workouts interesting and fun, and I make sure my entire family is active and eating healthy."

About four years ago, Deborah began noticing some health issues that were affecting her weight and overall well-being. She continued to eat healthy and stayed active, but it was becoming difficult. She sought out alternative professional advice to help balance her hormones. In the process, she discovered she had food allergies. Since then, she has been using various strategies to continue to stay active and keep her brain and bones strong.

"The wellness challenges help me stay on track, motivate me to do better, and be better!" Deborah said.

The challenges also have helped motivate Deborah to maintain her energy levels, which she says is particularly important in her job as a teacher.

"Staying active and eating healthy give me energy," Deborah said. "I am able to run circles around my middle school students and keep up with the demands of teaching. I am more patient with students *and* adults; I feel I am so much more effective at being a teacher when I am my best self."

Deborah is gratified to see her coworkers getting active, eating healthy, and staying fit and encourages other MCPS staff to consider taking part in the wellness challenges.

"It's never too late to get involved," Deborah said. "I love participating and look forward to each challenge. It's wonderful to be involved in something that promotes healthy living!"

## Three Ways to Get Fit This Summer

### Sit and Be Fit

Try a new and exciting physical activity class this summer with Well Aware! Sit and Be Fit is a total body resistance training workout for beginners who may have limited mobility or for those who are working up to a traditional resistance training class.

**Tuesdays**  
June 28–August 2, 2016  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Café 45  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Come learn basic yoga techniques in a comfortable environment.

**Wednesdays**  
June 29–August 3, 2016  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Café 45  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Join Well Aware as we continue our tai chi practice this summer. Are you new to tai chi? No problem! You may join any class to enjoy this stress-relieving practice.

**Thursdays**  
June 30–August 4, 2016  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Café 45  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register for any of these classes, e-mail **Well Aware**.

## InSTEP with Diabetes

Diabetes affects more than 25 million adults in the United States. Are you or your spouse living with diabetes? Join Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente for InSTEP with Diabetes, a four-week on-site program to better understand diabetes and learn skills for healthy living, including: diabetes facts, nutrition and food choices, physical activity, testing your blood sugar, diabetes medicines, and recommended care.

Registration is open now for our summer class. InSTEP with Diabetes will be held—

**Wednesdays, June 1–22, 2016**  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Aspen Room  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Do you work in a school? Take advantage of your summer break and gain control of your health and wellness! Are you a Central Services employee? Take this opportunity to end your work day well by joining us for InSTEP with Diabetes.

Space is limited! For more information or to register for the class, e-mail **Well Aware**.

## Bike to Work Day Will Be Here Soon!

Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association invites you to join more than 10,000 area commuters on Friday, May 20, 2016, for a celebration of bicycling as a clean, fun, and healthy way to get to work. Attend one of 80 pit stops throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia to receive refreshments and enter a raffle for free bicycles. Free T-shirts also are available at pit stops for the first 15,000 who register and attend.

**Learn more and/or register for the event.**



## Wellness Initiatives: Have You Completed an Assessment and Screening to Save on Your Health Insurance in 2017?

Completing your medical insurance provider's **health risk assessment** each year gives you the information you need to take better control of your health and well-being. And that is important, because when you are running at 100 percent, you have the strength and confidence to be your true self.

By completing the confidential, online questionnaire, which takes less than 20 minutes, you will—

- learn your risk levels for common health problems, including heart disease, colon cancer, and diabetes;
- get a clear picture of your current health status and learn how to improve your health in the future through preventive tests, chronic condition support, and online health coaching; and
- discover interactive tools and educational information that can give you more details on your health status.

In addition, when you complete your health risk assessment within each year's designated time frame\*, you will pay 1 percent less of the total cost of your health insurance during the next calendar year. To get started, visit the **Wellness Initiatives web page**. Here, you will find links to the CareFirst, Cigna, and Kaiser Permanente health risk assessment. You will also find helpful tutorials to guide you through the log-in process.

To save even more, complete a **biometric health screening** within the same time frame. If you do, you will receive another 1 percent reduction in total cost of your health insurance. To complete a biometric health screening, you either visit your primary care physician for an annual preventive physical exam or you attend a **Well Aware biometric health screening**. If your medical insurance is with CareFirst, make sure to **submit the physician form** as instructed. If you are covered by Kaiser Permanente, log in to **HealthWorks by Kaiser Permanente** to complete the requirements.

**Learn more about Wellness Initiatives.**

*\*You must complete your health risk assessment and biometric health screening between the first day of fall Open Enrollment and the Friday before the next Open Enrollment begins a year later. For the current year, you have from October 12, 2015, and October 7, 2016, to complete the requirements and receive the incentives effective January 1, 2017.*



**We are Built to Move, so Let's Move!**

Each week, across Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), more and more employees are participating in Well Aware's *Built to Move* physical activity challenge. Some are participating as individuals, others as members of a team. They are enjoying better health and fitness as a result.

Let *Built to Move* inspire you to become your most active self. There is still time to join us to regain your health and win prizes! Enter your activity and weight loss updates in the online **Well Aware Fitness Log** by 12 noon on Monday, May 16, 2016.

**Learn more**  
Visit the **Well Aware website** to learn more about *Built to Move*, including incentives, rules, and more.

**Stay tuned**  
Grand prize winners will be announced in the June 3, 2016, issue of *Well Aware eNews*.

**Spirit Award**  
Do you have a coworker who has gone above and beyond to help build a culture of wellness in your school or office? As part of *Built to Move*, Well Aware is recognizing the MCPS employees who most encourage others to engage their healthiest selves. Ten Spirit Award winners will each receive a fall Zumba or Yoga class at their schools or offices. To request a Spirit Award nomination form, e-mail Well Aware. Nominations are due by Monday, May 16, 2016.

**Keep going!!!**  
Maintain your active lifestyle and look for information this fall about a new physical activity challenge for 2016–2017. You will find it on the **Well Aware website**, in the **Well Aware eNews**, and in **The Bulletin**.

## National Day of Action: Roll Up Your Sleeves!

As part of National High Blood Pressure Education Month, which is held in May each year, the American Medical Group Foundation (AMGF) is asking you to Measure Up/Pressure Down. AMGF will hold a National Day of Action on Thursday, May 5, 2016. Take the time on this day to get your blood pressure checked.

**Learn more about blood pressure and the Measure Up/Pressure Down campaign.**

Learn more about Blood Pressure:

- **Know Your Risk**
- **Reduce Your Stress**
- **Take Your Medication**

## Time for This Month's Brain Break, Through Music

Music can have a profound effect on both the emotions and the body. Faster music can make you feel more alert and help you to concentrate better. Upbeat music can even make you feel more optimistic and positive about life. A slower tempo can quiet your mind and relax your muscles, soothing you while you release the stress of the day. Music is effective for relaxation and stress management.

Research confirms these personal experiences with music. Current findings indicate that music around 60 beats per minute can cause the brain to synchronize with the beat causing alpha brainwaves. This alpha brainwave is what is present when we are relaxed and conscious. To induce sleep (a delta brainwave), a person may need to devote at least 45 minutes, in a relaxed position, listening to calming music.

While a visiting scholar at Stanford University, Gabe Turow said that "listening to music seems to be able to change brain functioning to the same extent as medication." He and his colleagues noted that music is something that almost anybody can access, which makes it an easy stress-reduction tool.

Since we rarely know the beats per minute of a particular composition, how do you choose the relaxation music that is best for you? The answer partly rests with you: You must first like the music being played, and then it must relax you.

For this month's brain break, listen to the following samples of relaxation music to see if you feel more relaxed as a result:

- **A moment for peace meditation**
- **Echos of Time meditation**
- **The Winding Path**
- **Earth Drum**

## You Can Quit for Good



MCPS and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again to bring you the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program. The free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or if you participate with Kaiser.

The program is course-based and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Class leaders and participants also discuss the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources. Learn more about the program by visiting the **Quit for Good web page**.

For more information on the Quit for Good class and to add your name to the list for the next class, **e-mail Well Aware**.

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). To learn more about employee wellness, visit our **website**. To view this e-mail newsletter as a .pdf document, click **here**. Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or **e-mail Well Aware**.