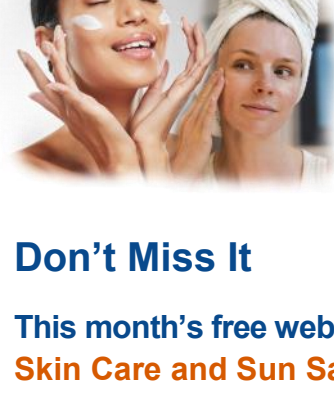


## June Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the June 2023 issue of *Well Aware eNews*! Read on to learn about—

- this month's wellness champions, three middle school physical education teachers whose team completed several Well Aware physical activity challenges and won prizes as a result;
- a webinar on skin care and sun safety;
- Kaiser Permanente's worldwide wellness physical activity challenge;
- how to reduce your risk of skin cancer;
- how to give the men in our lives the gift of good health this Father's Day; and
- more!



### Don't Miss It

#### This month's free webinar—**Skin Care and Sun Safety**

Skin is our largest organ. It protects us and is part of our identity. During this webinar, we will dive into top skin care techniques. Learn how good nutrition and simple practices can leave your skin healthy and keep it safe.

**Wednesday, June 14, 2023**  
4:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

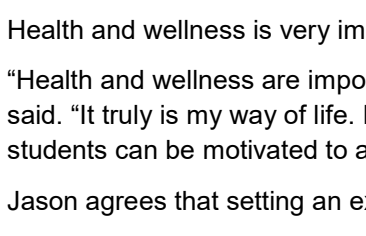
Please **email Well Aware** to register for the webinar. After registering, you will receive a link to the webinar in your Outlook email as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

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

*Presented by: Kaiser Permanente*

## Wellness Champions Model Healthy Habits for Students

**Mr. Jason B. Oliver, physical education resource teacher, Mr. Edward A. Hernandez, classroom teacher, and Mr. Keith J. Obendorfer, physical education teacher, Ridgeview Middle School**



L to R: Jason B. Oliver, Edward A. Hernandez, Keith J. Obendorfer

In 2020, three teachers at Ridgeview Middle School formed a team to participate in Well Aware's physical activity challenges. They since have completed several of the challenges as team winners.

Mr. Jason B. Oliver, physical education resource teacher, Mr. Edward A. Hernandez, classroom teacher, and Mr. Keith J. Obendorfer, physical education teacher, continue to motivate each other in their wellness efforts. In addition, they encourage their coworkers and the school's students to live healthy and active lives.

Health and wellness is very important to each member of this team.

"Health and wellness are important to me because it is the essence of my being," Edward said. "It truly is my way of life. It is also important to me to lead by example, so that students can be motivated to adopt that same philosophy."

Jason agrees that setting an example for others—particularly students—is essential.

"As a physical education and health teacher, I know how important physical and mental health are to one's well-being," Jason said. "I think it is important for physical education and health teachers to model healthy behavior."

Jason thinks the pandemic provided the impetus for them to join the Well Aware physical activity challenges.

"We have been working together at Ridgeview for nine years," Jason said. "It was the pandemic that really brought us together to participate in the challenges. We weren't together at school but stayed in touch to continue motivating each other to work out."

With the grant money they have won, the team has been able to do a lot for Ridgeview staff and students.

"I have encouraged the rest of the staff at our school to participate in the Well Aware challenges, and I think the challenges have helped motivate a lot of people to move more during the day," Jason said. "We are using the money we won to modernize and upgrade our fitness room and buy new equipment for staff and students to use."

Edward also acknowledges the opportunities the challenges provide.

"We have been able to create a better fitness program and upgrade our equipment as a result of our commitment to health and wellness," Edward said.

With their experience, they have great advice for school staff looking to start a wellness journey.

"My advice would be, 'something is better than nothing,'" Keith said. "It's okay to start small. Build on each day and on all accomplishments. I really enjoy working with my coworkers and being able to hold each other accountable during the wellness activities."

The team members are very grateful for each other, their other coworkers, and the MCPS wellness program.

"We are very grateful for the opportunity to participate in [Well Aware] programs," Edward said. "It has really helped our program in the department as well as our whole school."

## MCPS to Join Kaiser Permanente's *Worldwide Wellness Physical Activity Challenge*

Kaiser Permanente's *Worldwide Wellness* physical activity challenge will give you the sense of going somewhere—not just virtually, but also in your overall health and well-being. It is an ideal way to experience progress toward personal goals while working on travel priorities.

Join the eight-week challenge, which begins on Monday June 26, 2023.

**Email Well Aware** for more information.

## Stay Active (and Stress Less) This Summer

Summer is a great time to get back into walking, biking, yoga, or swimming. Getting active now will make it easier to keep it up when we get back to our hectic schedules in the fall. From Zumba and yoga to tai chi, Well Aware is offering you several options to help you get fit this summer.

For a class list and schedules, visit the **Well Aware Toolbox**

## Learn About Sun Safety

Spending time outside is a great way to be physically active, reduce stress, and get more vitamin D. You can work and play outside without raising your skin cancer risk by protecting your skin from the sun. **Find out what you need to know about sun safety. Learn to identify characteristics of unusual moles** that should be seen by a doctor. Add to your fun in the sun by posting your **#sunsafeselfie** to social media to show others how to practice sun safety.

## June is Men's Health Month: Attend to Men's Physical and Mental Health

In June, we celebrate Father's Day and honor the men in our lives. What better way than to give them the gift of good health, both physical and mental? Have your husband, father, brother, son, or male friend **review these [checkup and screening guidelines for men](#)**, and encourage him to stay on top of his health.

It is equally important to make men's mental health and wellness a priority. Depression, anxiety, stress, and mood disorders can strike anyone. Introduce him to ***Your Head: An Owner's Manual*** from the Men's Health Network. In it, men's health and wellness experts offer insight into men's emotional needs, and how they can find help while maintaining their dignity.

## Wellness Initiatives: Don't Miss Your Opportunity to Attend Free Summer Health Screenings!

The Wellness Initiatives program provides employees covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan with incentives to reduce their health insurance costs. Be sure to take advantage of the rate reductions by following these steps:

1. **Complete a biometric health screening**—See your doctor for an annual physical or, if you are a Cigna member, have your physical at a Quest Diagnostics Patient Center by October 6, 2023; OR attend a Well Aware on-site biometric health screening by October 6, 2023.

2. **Complete a health risk assessment**—Visit your medical plan's website by October 6, 2023, to complete either the *My Health Assessment* for Cigna members, or the *Total Health Assessment* for Kaiser Permanente members.

Kaiser Permanente members will need to sign the HIPAA Waiver on the **Kaiser Permanente wellness web page**. Be sure to log in to consent to your participation in the incentive program. Without your consent, your information will not be reported.

**Learn more about the Wellness Initiatives program.**

## Medical Plan Online Resources

If you are a subscriber of an MCPS-provided medical plan (Kaiser Permanente or Cigna), you have access to a wealth of free health and wellness resources. Kaiser Permanente and Cigna have stress management tools including guided meditations, podcasts, and more. **Learn more about their [stress management tools](#).**

## Montgomery County Offers MCPS Employees Free Access to its Recreation Facilities

As a permanent MCPS employee, you have free access to all Montgomery County (MC) recreation facilities, including swimming pools and gymnasiums. You also are eligible for a 20 percent discount on an annual pool pass for your family members.

Interested? **Learn more** by visiting the **MC Recreation website** for general information. You may **apply online** for the individual Total Rec Pass. The **Employee Family Pool Pass application** also is available online. Both passes are valid for one year; you need to reapply each year to continue your access to the facilities.

## Well Aware Toolbox

Well Aware, the MCPS employee wellness program, brings you the Well Aware Wellness Toolbox, a web page with many resources for MCPS staff. These tools include physical and mental health resources, lists of free exercise and mindfulness classes, links to resources for improving sleep, nutrition, and more. MCPS staff are encouraged to take the time for self-care. Studies show that self-care is essential to wellbeing, especially during times of uncertainty and transition. Check out the **Well Aware Toolbox** to see which self-care resources will work best for you!

## Share Your Wellness Stories and Encourage Your Coworkers Through Twitter!

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 extra motivation to begin a staff wellness program at your school, depot, or office, or to turn lifelong unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow **@mcpswellaware** for incredible stories, wellness ideas, encouragement from your MCPS coworkers, tips on living a healthy life, or for updates on MCPS staff wellness programs. Follow the hashtag **#mcpsstaffwellness** for tweets!

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). Learn more about employee wellness by visiting our **website**. View this email newsletter as a **PDF document**. Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or **email Well**