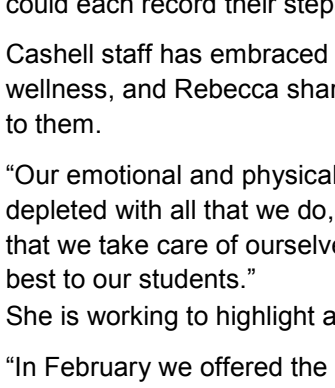


## March Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion, staff from an MCPS elementary school who have set a goal to climb 5,000,000 steps by the end of the month;
- a seminar/webinar to help you overcome workout or weight loss plateaus;
- National Nutrition Month's *Eat Right Bite by Bite* campaign;
- Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month;
- this year's National Walking Day; and
- more!

## Wellness Champions Climb Their Way to Fitness



**Rebecca Gumbs, second grade teacher, and Cashell Elementary School staff**

Staff from Cashell Elementary School kicked off 2020 in a healthy way. They set a goal to climb 5,000,000 steps by the end of January. Rebecca Gumbs, second grade teacher and wellness coach, led the charge.

"Following the holidays, we all felt like we wanted to walk off the pounds," Rebecca said. "The staff responded with a lot of enthusiasm. I created a Google spreadsheet and shared it with them so they could each record their steps."

Cashell staff has embraced a culture of health and wellness, and Rebecca shared why it is so important to them.

"Our emotional and physical resources are quickly depleted with all that we do," Rebecca said. "It is vital that we take care of ourselves first so we can give our best to our students."

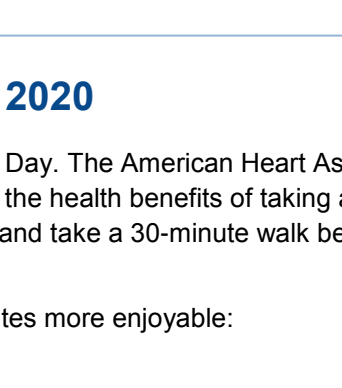
She is working to highlight a different health and wellness event at the school each month.

"In February we offered the staff some heart healthy awareness suggestions, including an apple a day and celebrating Wear Red Day," Rebecca said. "When the weather gets warmer we look forward to more physical activity opportunities as well as a nutrition challenge based on the Whole30 diet."

Rebecca has some advice for schools and offices looking to start a wellness program.

"Don't give up, even if you're the only interested person," she said. "Interest tends to grow when there are passionate people involved!"

## The Super Hero Challenge is Underway!



It is time to come out of your mild-mannered shell (think Clark Kent) and become the fit and fierce warrior you are destined to be. The Well Aware *Superhero* spring challenge is here to motivate you to take action so you can feel great!

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

2020 is all about making yourself a priority by living a healthy and well life. Join the *Superhero* challenge! All activity counts!

Participate as an individual or band together with your colleagues for some friendly team competition. For your efforts, you could win exciting prizes, including fruit platters, grants to promote wellness at your school or office, and other recognition.

Although the challenge started on Monday, March 2, 2020, it is not too late to join us! Learn more about the *Superhero* challenge, including incentives, rules, and more by visiting the [Well Aware website](#). Or, simply search for "Superhero challenge" from any MCPS web page.

## March Is National Nutrition Month

The theme for this year's National Nutrition Month is *Eat Right Bite by Bite*. Good nutrition doesn't have to be restrictive or overwhelming. Small goals and changes can have a cumulative healthful effect, and every little bit (or bite!) of nutrition is a step in the right direction.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) recommends balancing nutritious foods with physical activity most days of the week. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' physical activity guidelines, adults should participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week.

Each March, the academy holds National Nutrition Month, a nutrition education and information campaign. The campaign focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Enjoy these tip sheets from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

- [20 Health Tips for 2020](#)
- [Shop Smart—Get the Facts on New Food Labels](#)
- [Nutrition Month Sudoku](#)

How will your school or office celebrate National Nutrition Month? Get creative and send us a picture of how you chose to have a healthy celebration.

## National Walking Day: April 1, 2020

The first Wednesday in April is National Walking Day. The American Heart Association (AHA) sponsors this day to remind people about the health benefits of taking a walk. Wear your sneakers to work—or take them with you—and take a 30-minute walk before or after your work day or during a break.

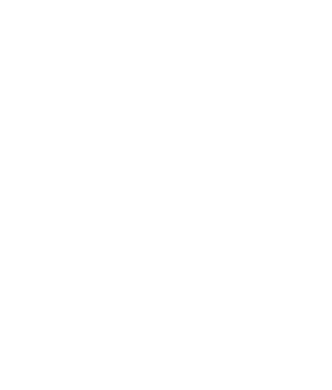
Here are some great ways to make that 30-minutes more enjoyable:

- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Take a friend to pass the time.
- Make sure to stretch those muscles.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Move your arms too.
- Make sure you have good posture.

As part of AHA's efforts to promote healthy living, National Walking Day was started in 2007. [Learn more.](#)

How will your school or office celebrate the event? [Email your stories and photos to ERSC.](#)

## Your Chance to Quit for Good Begins Soon!



The U.S. Surgeon General has said, "Smoking cessation [stopping smoking] represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives."

It's hard to quit smoking, but you can do it. To have the best chance of quitting and remaining a nonsmoker, you need to know what you're up against, what your options are, and where to go for help. We can help!

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente have teamed up to produce an eight-week tobacco cessation class for our staff and significant others. To register for an upcoming session of the *Quit for Good* class, [email Well Aware](#).

Once you (and your spouse) have been tobacco free for 12 months, you can re-attest and stop paying the 25 percent tobacco-user surcharge on the cost of your health insurance. [Learn more.](#) It's also true that tobacco-users who complete *Quit for Good* can have the 25 percent waived and, depending on when the program is completed, refunded. [Learn more.](#)

## A Diabetes Wake-up Call: Are You at Risk?

One in three Americans is at risk for developing type 2 diabetes, a serious disease that can lead to complications such as kidney disease, blindness, and amputations. But type 2 diabetes doesn't have to be permanent; it can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle modifications.

Held the last Tuesday of March each year, the American Diabetes Association Alert Day is a one-day wake-up call asking Americans to take a Diabetes Risk Test to find out if they are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. The Diabetes Risk Test asks participants to answer simple questions about weight, age, family history, and other potential risk factors for prediabetes or type 2 diabetes. Preventive tips are provided for everyone who takes the test. Those at high risk are encouraged to talk with their health care provider.

- [Take the Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test now!](#)
- [Learn risk factors for Type 2 diabetes](#)

Be sure to participate in the next American Diabetes Association Alert Day on March 24, 2020.

## 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—a balanced diet, get regular exercise, and avoid smoking—you can turn any bad numbers around.

You can learn about these vital health 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, consider 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](#).

## Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colon cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in men and women combined in the United States. The American Cancer Society estimates that this year 95,520 people will be diagnosed with colon cancer, 39,910 will be diagnosed with rectal cancer, and 50,260 will die from this disease.

On average, the lifetime risk of developing colon cancer is about one in 23 for men and women combined (4.5 percent), however, this varies widely according to individual risk factors.

With regular screening, colon cancer can be found early, when treatment is most effective. In many cases, screening can prevent colon cancer by finding and removing polyps before they become cancer. And if cancer is present, earlier detection means a chance at a longer life. Generally, the more advanced colon cancer is at detection, the lower the five-year survival rates are.

Since the mid-1980s, the colon cancer survival rate has been increasing, due in part to increased awareness and screening. By finding polyps and cancer in the earlier stages, it is easiest to treat. Improved treatment options have also contributed to a rise in survival rates. [Learn more](#) about colorectal screenings.

## Stress Less This Spring

Yoga, meditation, and mindfulness are wonderful practices that help you to lower your stress levels. In addition, they help you to learn techniques for managing pressure and anxiety. Join Well Aware as we continue to practice yoga and mindfulness into the spring.

### Spring into Optimal Health with Mindfulness Strategies

Wednesday, March 25, 2020  
4:30–6:30 p.m.  
Maple Conference Room  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Mindfulness and Meditation

Mondays through June 15, 2020 (except holidays)  
5:00–5:45 p.m.  
Conference Room 223  
Carver Educational Services Center  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Seated Yoga

Wednesdays  
4:30 p.m.  
Café 45 (Lower Level)  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Yoga

Wednesdays, March 11 and 25  
3:30 p.m.  
Weight Room  
William H. Farquhar Middle School  
17017 Batchellors Forest Road  
Olney, Maryland 20832

### Yoga

Fridays  
3:45 p.m.  
-Main Gym  
Redland Middle School  
6505 Muncaster Mill Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20855

\*There are a limited number of mats, blocks, straps, and blankets. If you have your own, please bring them.

### Yoga

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

### Yoga

Fridays  
2:50 p.m.  
Dance Studio  
Springbrook High School  
201 Valley Brook Drive  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

### Yoga

Wednesdays  
3:25 p.m.  
Dance Studio  
Tilden Middle School  
11211 Old Georgetown 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](#)

To register for any of these classes, [email Well Aware](#).

## 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!

### Zumba

Wednesday, March 18  
3:30 p.m.  
Weight Room  
William H. Farquhar Middle School  
17017 Batchellors Forest Road  
Olney, Maryland 20832

### Zumba

Fridays  
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  
3:00–4:00 p.m.  
Dance Studio  
John F. Kennedy High School  
1901 Randolph Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

### Zumba

Tuesdays  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Gymnasium  
Wheaton Woods Elementary School  
4510 Faroe Place  
Rockville, Maryland 20853

### Zumba

Mondays  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Gymnasium  
Flora Singer Elementary School  
2600 Hayden Drive  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

### Zumba

Fridays  
5:00 p.m.  
All Purpose Room  
Rocking Horse Road Center  
4910 Macon Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

To register for any of these classes, [email Well Aware](#).

## HIITCamp Now Offered Through Well Aware

HIITCAMP is a one-hour group 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  
3:30 p.m.  
Francis Scott Key Middle School  
910 Schindler Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20903

Wednesdays  
4:00 p.m.  
Cedar Grove Elementary School  
24001 Ridge Road  
Germantown, Maryland 20876

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

Well Aware is proud of MCPS employee 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 life-long unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow [@mcpsewellaware](#) for incredible wellness stories, ideas, and encouragement from your MCPS coworkers. You also will read tips on living a healthy life and receive updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.

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 Aware](#).