



eNews

The education you need for the health you want

Welcome to the June Well Aware eNews!

It's here! Thanks to you and your coworkers, the wellness program officially has a name, logo, and slogan. We're excited to introduce you to Well Aware in this issue of eNews.

Read on to learn about—

- the wellness program name, logo, and slogan;
- the wellness champions whose creativity is responsible for the new wellness identity; and
- how men can improve their health with a little friendly support.

Don't miss it!

Be a Warrior for a Lifetime
Thursday June 9, 2011
4:30–5:30 p.m.

**Carver Educational Services
Center (CESC) Auditorium**
850 Hungerford Dr.
Rockville, MD 20855

Presented by:



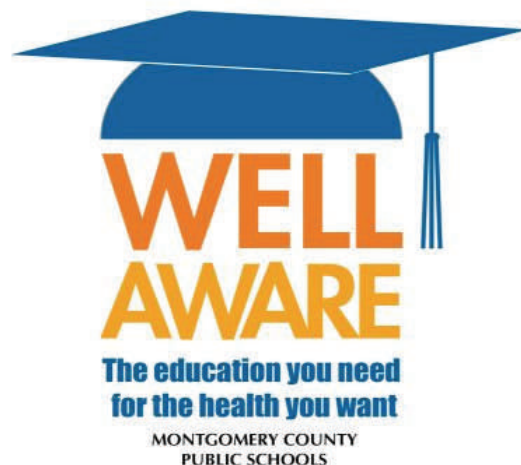
The Employee Wellness Program Now is Called Well Aware

The new wellness program name, logo, and slogan are here!

We're proud to introduce you to your new employee wellness program, Well Aware, offering you "The education you need for the health you want."

The new program identity was created by you and your coworkers. Judges met last month to evaluate entries for the Weighing in on Wellness contest, which asked employees to submit creative entries for the program name, slogan, and logo for the MCPS employee wellness program.

Contest judges had a lot to choose from: employees from across the county got involved to offer their creativity, resulting in nearly 50 entries. Entries were extremely diverse, and focused on many aspects of the wellness



program, from nutrition to fitness and everything in between.

“The decision was definitely not easy,” said Lisa Cooperstein, MCPS wellness coordinator. Judges ultimately chose the winning entries for their focus on—what else?—education. “The judges liked the way that this logo and slogan both emphasize that our employees—who are responsible for educating our students every day—also benefit from education about health and wellness,” said Lisa.

Three winners were chosen: one winning slogan entry, one winning logo entry, and one winner randomly selected to enjoy a prize. You’ll see their handiwork on all MCPS wellness materials, including the website, monthly e-mail newsletter, and even flyers you might see posted at your location. Read on to learn more about each of our winners—each honored this month as wellness champions!

Wellness Champions: Meet Your Weighing in on Wellness Winners



William Butler
Energy Management Supervisor
Division of Maintenance
Winning Slogan: The education you need for the health you want.

William and his energy management team are responsible for the heating and air conditioning of about 200 of the MCPS schools and centers, ensuring that not only are systems functioning properly but also that they are being used in the most energy-efficient manner. Ultimately, William and

his team contribute every day to ensuring students and staff across the county have comfortable school environments that are conducive to learning.

William joined MCPS in 2010. According to William, the Weighing in on Wellness contest was not only a chance to flex his creative muscles, but also “an opportunity to take an active role in the MCPS ‘community’ as opposed to simply being here to work.”

This focus on being part of the MCPS community doesn’t end with his participation in the contest, but will extend to his prize as well. As a winner of the Weighing in on Wellness contest, William received the choice of a six-week yoga or Zumba class. He has opened up the choice to a group of his coworkers who also will be enjoying the prize. But, William says, “I am keeping my fingers crossed for Zumba; it looks like a lot of fun, and I could stand to burn a few extra calories.”



Martin Bish
Online Learning Applications Developer
Winning Logo

Martin has been an MCPS employee since 1990. During his time here, Martin has gained experience both inside and outside of the classroom. He began his career as a special education paraeducator, and then moved on to working in school-community based programs at several different MCPS high schools. Currently, Martin is an applications developer, working

on online learning initiatives for students and professional development for educators. Martin creates interactive content, learning games, and tutorials for teachers and students alike.

Over the years, Martin’s career changed and developed. Likewise, he views wellness as an ongoing process of change. According to Martin, wellness is “a lifelong work in progress.”

For Martin, entry in the Weighing in on Wellness contest had personal implications. Martin says he was “partly inspired by the creative challenge, but also by a recent re-commitment

to my health after a candid conversation with my doctor following my annual physical.” That recommitment has led Martin to increase his physical activity and successfully lose 20 pounds. He’s not stopping there: he plans to lose another 20 pounds by this summer. Martin’s choice to enjoy the six-week yoga class with a group of his coworkers should certainly help him reach his goal.



Liz Henry
Paraeducator at Damascus High School

Congratulations to Liz Henry, who was randomly selected from contest entrants to receive a prize. Liz has elected to receive a six-week Zumba class with her coworkers. Says Liz, “I just tried Zumba for the first time over spring break and had a ball.” Now the fun can continue at her work location. Thanks to Liz and all the contest entrants who Weighed in on Wellness. Enjoy the Zumba!

With a Little Help From Your Friends: How Men Can Improve Their Health

Did you know? June is Men’s Health Month!

Want to live longer? Keep exercising and eating your vegetables, but make lunch plans with an old friend, too. Numerous studies have shown that people with strong social networks live longer and recover more quickly from illness than those without these ties.

Men—who tend to have fewer close friends than women—stand the most to gain from developing relationships. Some researchers suggest that loneliness is a risk factor for heart disease, just like high blood pressure or elevated cholesterol. People without many friends also are more prone to depression.

Social isolation—a risk factor for men

Researchers at Harvard School of Public Health studied more than 28,000 men to see if social ties had an impact on their health. Half enjoyed a large social network of family, friends, and community connections; the other half did not. After 10 years:

- Deaths in the group with few social ties were 20 percent higher than in the highly social group.
- The more-isolated men were 53 percent more likely to die from a heart-related disease than the others.
- Of those who developed heart disease, the less social men had an 82 percent higher risk of death than the other group.
- Men with the fewest social contacts had more than double the risk of dying from accidents and suicides than men in the other group.
- Married men had a lower risk of death from any cause and half the risk of death from accidents and suicides than the unmarried men.



In addition, an American Heart Association study looked at 3,267 men (average age 62). The study reported that those with few social ties had much higher levels of a blood marker for inflammation—known to be associated with heart disease—than men with bigger social circles.

Known risk factors for heart disease were taken into account.

All the same, choose your friends wisely. Other studies show your risk of heart disease can go up if your relationships are stressful.

People who need people

As many as one in four Americans say they have no one to confide in about personal problems. For them, making more friends could have clinical benefits similar to making lifestyle changes.

How do friends help us stay healthy? No one can say for sure, but theories include the following:

- Close friends and relatives encourage you to take care of yourself. They may get you to give up smoking, heavy drinking, or a poor diet.
- Having friends may boost self-esteem and ward off depression.
- Having social support may reduce stress and hormone levels tied to high blood pressure.
- You're more likely to be physically active if you have people with whom to do things.
- Some men see doctors only because a wife, partner or friend convinces them to do so.
- A social circle is a valuable resource when you are sick. Friends can take you to the doctor or help out while you recover.

Generally, women are better at sharing their feelings and maintaining friendships than men. But anyone can increase their social network with a little effort. Joining a book club, bowling league, or poker group can widen your contacts. So can taking a class or doing volunteer work. Building good relationships could make you healthier in much the same way as a daily walk or a low-fat diet.

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The Well Aware 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 email as a .pdf document, click [here](#).

Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or wellness@mcpsmd.org.