

March Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion, who rides his bike and coaches others to raise awareness of diabetes and money for finding a cure;
- a seminar/webinar that will show you how to use food to enhance your well-being, relieve minor symptoms, and reduce stress;
- nutrition journaling;
- the latest Million Mile Challenge incentive: a 10-week spring challenge; and
- more!



Wellness Champion Cycling for a Cure and for His Health

**Meet Jeffrey Johns, Band Teacher,
Northwood High School**

Jeffrey Johns, Northwood High School's band teacher, has proven true the old adage that once you know how to ride a bike, you don't forget it. For him, that fact is helping him to live a much healthier life.

As a kid, he enjoyed the freedom his bike gave him, but once he had his driver's license, he gave up the two-wheeled vehicle for a four-wheeled one. He also gave up his active lifestyle. Years later, his doctor urged him to begin exercising to help control his type 2 diabetes. That's when he discovered that some skills—like bike riding—really do stay with you. He bought a bike and started with 15-minute rides, and within five months was riding 20-30 miles each day. He also began keeping track of what he ate, lost weight, and was able to go off of his diabetes medication.

He plateaued at that point for more than a year. Then, distracted by graduate school and a new baby, Jeffrey said he "fell off of the fitness wagon" and put some of the weight back on. He now has a plan to take it off and get back in shape.

"I'm using this year's Tour de Cure (see article below) in May as motivation to get myself back in gear, lose the weight I've regained, and break through that plateau," Jeffrey said. "Most of my teammates are planning to ride the 32-mile course this year, and I aim to join them. By September, I hope to participate in a 100-mile ride."

In addition, Jeffrey is serving as a Tour de Cure team captain. His team, Team Red, is a national team for Red Riders, who are Tour de Cure participants with type 1 or 2 diabetes, their family, friends, and others hoping for a cure. Along with motivating his teammates and scheduling team training rides, he is planning fund-raising events, sending e-mails to raise awareness and funds, and riding his bike—indoors on a trainer during the winter months—to make sure he's ready for the May ride.

"The Tour de Cure provides a wonderful sense of community to us Red Riders," Jeffrey said. "No one should have to face a disease like diabetes alone, and even for people with supportive families and friends, nothing compares to the camaraderie of those who are going through the same thing you are."

Million Mile Challenge

The 10-week Spring Competition is On!

Help MCPS Reach One Million Miles of Activity this School Year!

Well Aware set an ambitious goal for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff last fall. By asking employees to help us collectively reach one million miles of activity this school year, the MCPS wellness program aims to put a lot of distance between you and diseases like coronary heart disease, osteoarthritis, cancer, and type 2 diabetes. To date, 6,039 employees have registered to take the challenge. Most are walking, running, bicycling, climbing, and even gardening their way to better health. Are you?

ALL employees are invited to join this challenge!

Register now and begin logging your activity on the [Well Aware Fitness Log](#).

If you have already registered on the Fitness Log, even for a previous challenge, you do not need to register again. Simply begin logging your activity. Approximately 15 minutes of activity equals one mile. Any activity can count toward our goal of one million miles, whether you are walking your dog, planting a rosebush, or training for a marathon. As long as you are moving, your activity can count toward our collective goal.

Spring Incentive: It's Not Too Late to Register Your Team!

We have entered the third phase of the MMC: the 10-week spring incentive competition. Team registration for the spring competition began Monday, February 4, 2013, and the competition started Monday, February 25, 2013. Like the fall incentive, individuals and teams are competing for prizes while maintaining or regaining their health.

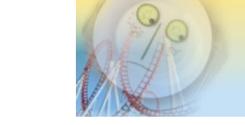
If you took part in the MMC last fall or are participating in the New Year's resolution challenge now, keep logging your activities this spring. If you have not registered or have not been logging your activity, it is not too late! Join a team or challenge yourself individually.

Help us reach our goal of collectively logging one million miles of activity this school year!

[Register now or sign in to log your miles on the Well Aware Fitness Log.](#)

Along with your health, what else can you win by competing? Each week, we are giving away random prizes to those who log their activity, as well as weekly grants to schools, offices, and depots to promote employee wellness. You also will be competing to win grand prizes for your school, office, or depot. Teams are once again competing to win bragging rights and the coveted Golden Sneaker trophy.

For more information on the prize structure, or the rules of the challenge, visit the [Million Mile Challenge web page](#) on the Well Aware website. Start now. Log your activity. Where will one million miles take you?



Don't miss it—

Free Seminar/Webinar

This month:

The Food Mood Connection

Eating is sometimes like a rollercoaster with ups and downs—at times we eat too much, at other times we eat too little, and there are times when we simply eat the wrong foods. A diet with too many extremes can have a negative impact on our physical and emotional health. One of the easiest ways to find out if your diet is out of balance is to listen to your moods. Attend this seminar, which is focused on the link between food and your frame of mind. Learn how you can use food to enhance your well-being, relieve minor symptoms, and reduce stress.

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Shady Grove Bus Depot
16651 Crabbs Branch Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20855
10:00–11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

Webinar
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 14, 2013

Randolph Bus Depot
1800 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902
10:00–11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

CESC Cafeteria
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850
4:30–5:30 p.m.

Please register for the seminar and/or webinar by e-mailing [Well Aware](#) with the date and time you plan to attend. If you register for the webinar, you will be sent a link to it as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our [printable flyer](#). See archived webinars [here](#).

Presented by:



**MCPS:
Now a
Healthiest
Maryland
Business!**



Tour de Cure

Join Wellness Champion Jeffrey Johns and the American Diabetes Association as they cycle for a cure at the Maryland Tour de Cure ride on Saturday, May 4, 2013! You can join Team Red (see Wellness Champion story above), form a team, or ride as an individual.

WHAT	Maryland Tour de Cure
WHEN	Saturday, May 4, 2013
WHERE	Gary J. Arthur Community Center at Glenwood 2400 Route 97, Cooksville, Maryland
ROUTES	10, 22, 32, and 63 miles
REGISTRATION	\$15 to register (until March 31st)
MINIMUM	\$200 to ride

The money raised during this ride will help the American Diabetes Association by funding research for a cure, educating thousands of newly diagnosed patients and their families, and establishing new advocacy programs here in Maryland. Every mile you ride and dollar you raise brings us one step closer to stopping diabetes. Help raise awareness and funds by registering to ride on May 4! Join [Team Red](#) or start [a team of your own](#).

Are you unable to ride, but want to get involved in other ways? Volunteer to help by e-mailing either [Jeffrey Johns](#), Team Red captain or [Ali Tighe](#), Tour de Cure event coordinator. You can donate to Team Red [here](#).

To learn more, visit [Tour de Cure](#).

Know Your Numbers

Health Screenings Planned for March

CareFirst will offer health screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, and body fat, and will also provide health coaching on Friday, March 15, 2013, from 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. in the Maple Room located at 45 West Gude Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850. The screenings are available to all MCPS employees by appointment. To register, e-mail [Well Aware](#).

Nutrition Journaling on the Well Aware Fitness Log

Track Your Way to Your Goals With a Food Journal

Food Journaling can help you understand your starting point and provide realistic mile markers on your weight loss journey.

If your goal is to lose weight, you know you will have to consume fewer calories. But that isn't always easy to gauge—you need an understanding of your nutritional starting point and an objective way of keeping track of the nutritional changes you make. Keeping a food journal and tracking what you eat and drink during the day is the first step to looking and feeling better.

Food journaling will help you—

- identify if you have a calorie surplus or deficit,
- understand your source(s) of calories,
- get a feel for portion control,
- identify situations when you binge, and
- analyze an objective record of your habits and make the necessary adjustments.

Keeping a food journal is simple to do and free of charge. You can choose to keep a journal by hand—any notebook will do—or you can take advantage of the free nutrition journal offered on the online [Well Aware Fitness Log](#). That way, you can track your food and activity in one simple place, and see and analyze complete reports about your habits. For a video that walks you through each step of using the nutrition journal, visit the [Million Mile Challenge web page](#).

No matter which tool you choose to use, follow these simple steps to get started:

Be honest and precise. Be sure to include what you ate and the portion size. If you are unsure, use a kitchen scale or the [helpful guides on the Choose My Plate website](#) to gauge your portion sizes.

- Do not forget liquid calories! A large flavored latte at your favorite coffee chain could be more than 300 calories, and one small glass of wine could be around 100 calories. These calories count, too, and are overlooked easily.
- If you are journaling by hand, include a note about the time of day you ate the food and whether or not you were hungry. This will help you understand when you are consuming your calories.

Track as you go. Do not think that you will remember everything that you ate at the end of the day.

To get the most out of your food journal, you will need to commit to journaling for at least one week. This way, you will have enough information to analyze your habits and look for patterns. Make your journal work for you! Pay attention to places where you did not realize you were consuming so many calories or foods on which you can cut back to reduce your caloric intake. Use your food journal analysis to create a personalized plan that helps you assess where you are, keep track of where you are going, and understand how to reach your weight loss goals.

Need some extra motivation? Read [this article](#) from CareFirst to learn about take-out food and its connection to obesity.

Frequent Buyer Cards Provide Incentive to Eat Well

It has been one of those days. You forgot your lunch, so are headed to McDonalds to grab a quick but high-fat meal. You know there has to be a healthier solution, but what?

Did you know that many MCPS cafeterias offer staff an à la carte menu of low-calorie entrées? The best news is that after purchasing 10 entrées, you receive the next one free!

During the MCPS On the Move wellness challenge in 2010–2011, Well Aware partnered with the Department of Food and Nutrition to create a frequent buyer program for elementary school staff purchasing à la carte entrées. The program was such a success that coordinators decided it should continue and expanded it to include the Carver Educational Services Center and a number of middle and high schools.

Pick up a frequent buyer card from your wellness coach or cafeteria manager. Out of cards? E-mail [Well Aware](#) to request more. Also, be sure to see the [March à la carte menu](#).

Is your cafeteria participating? If not, contact your cafeteria manager to make the request.

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 welness@mcpsmd.org.