

September Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion—a security assistant at Parkland Middle School who found an excellent support system in his coworkers and lost more than 40 pounds due, in part, to their encouragement;
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna on the basics of cholesterol and the nutritional supplements and foods that will and will not improve your numbers;
- a new physical activity challenge for the fall;
- this year's RUN@WORK Day;
- a 5K training program for the fall; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar—
Cholesterol: Smart Choices

There are plenty of supplements and vitamins out there that promise healthier heart choices, but what is the truth behind these promises? Are there foods that naturally provide the same benefit? We will cover the basics of cholesterol and learn what does and does not improve your numbers.

Thursday, September 22, 2016
 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

Thursday, September 22, 2016
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Shady Grove Bus Depot
 Rockville, Maryland 20855

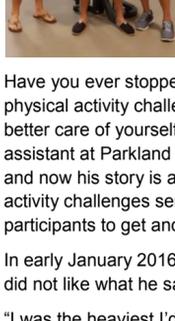
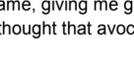
Wednesday, September 28, 2016
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Bethesda Bus Depot
 10901 Westlake Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20852

Please register for the seminar or 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.

• **Printable flyer**. See the **Wellness Webinar Library**.

Presented by:



Encouraged by His Coworkers, Wellness Champion Loses Weight, Regains His Health

Carlos Repreza, security assistant, Parkland Middle School

Have you ever stopped to wonder if Well Aware's physical activity challenges could motivate you to take better care of yourself? Carlos Repreza, security assistant at Parkland Middle School (above center), did and now his story is a perfect example of how the activity challenges serve to motivate and encourage participants to get and stay healthy.

In early January 2016, Carlos stepped on the scale and did not like what he saw.

"I was the heaviest I'd ever been," Carlos said. "With diabetes in my family and a history of high blood pressure, it was scary to realize at the age of 32 that I was on a path to serious health problems."

A colleague told him that Jose Rodriguez, a physical education teacher at Parkland Middle School, had formed an awesome team of people who had accepted the challenge to get fit. Carlos asked if he could join the team and was quickly added to the roster.

"My teammates all welcomed me, and it was a great feeling to see that I was not alone in my quest to get fit and, more importantly, get healthier," Carlos said.

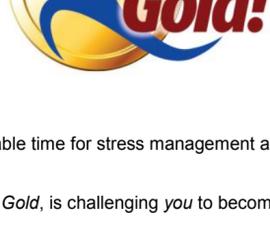
The team became a great support system for Carlos. Mr. Rodriguez helped Carlos maintain proper form during his workouts and provided helpful routines to ensure success while minimizing the potential for injury. Chad Beswick, content specialist at the school, also worked with Carlos—helping him with his technique and to establish good eating habits.

"Chad has been right there by my side to remind me that fast food is usually not the best option," Carlos said. "He eats well and has helped me do the same, giving me great ideas and food substitutes that were actually okay! Who would have thought that avocado toast and broccoli sprouts were delicious?"

Parkland staff member, Brendan Flanagan, classroom teacher and runner, serves as another great motivator and role model for Carlos. He has run in many races, from local 5Ks to some of the most well-known marathons in the world. His example has motivated Carlos to train for his first race—the Parks Half Marathon.

"Jose, Chad, and Brendan have been part of my 41-pound weight loss," Carlos said. "I was on the verge of having to take blood pressure medication for the rest of my life. With the help of Jose's intense early 6 a.m. workouts, Chad's knowledge in nutrition, and Brendan's strength and motivation, my doctor was happy to say that I can forget about any medication; my risk for heart problems has drastically diminished!"

Go for the Gold: Well Aware's Fall Physical Activity Challenge



What makes someone an Olympic champion? Is it speed, strength, athleticism? What about commitment? Champions are committed to making health and wellness a priority.

They demonstrate that dedication by—

- scheduling time in their day for physical activity,
- carefully planning their meals, and prioritizing valuable time for stress management and sleep.

Well Aware's fall physical activity challenge, *Go for the Gold*, is challenging you to become a champion and prioritize your health.

Learn more about *Go for the Gold*, including challenge incentives, rules, and more by visiting the **Well Aware website**. Or, simply search for *Go for the Gold* from any Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) web page.

Quit for Good!

Isn't It Time You Quit for Good?

Most smokers know that smoking is bad for their health and harmful to the people around them. They know they should quit, but they also know it is going to be hard. To help make it easier, Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again to bring you the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program.

Quit for Good is a free, course-based tobacco cessation program open to all MCPS employees and their spouses. The program is eight weeks long and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner, with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Class size is limited to ensure the personal attention necessary to support you in your goal of quitting. Sessions are open to all MCPS employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you carry Kaiser Permanente health insurance.

Class discussions cover the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free, risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the classes, participants receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources.

The next session of Quit for Good begins on Wednesday, October 19, 2016, from 4:30–5:30 p.m. in the Maple Room at 45 West Gude Drive, Rockville. To register, e-mail **Well Aware**.

To learn more about the program, including the week-by-week course content, visit the **Well Aware website**.

RUN@WORK Day is Coming!

Among the health benefits to be gained by running, illness prevention is significant. Running actually reduces the likelihood of everything from the common cold to cancer. And, by treating your heart and lungs to this form of physical conditioning, your stamina will increase. Running can help you to feel better mentally and emotionally as well as physically. Like many forms of exercise, running is a great cure for stress, emotional strain, even mild depression.

Have you considered running to curb illness and help you feel better?

Join Well Aware on September 16, 2016, when the Road Runners Club of America presents the 9th Annual RUN@WORK Day nationwide. Well Aware encourages you to plan fun runs and walks around your office or school with your coworkers. The goal of RUN@WORK Day is to encourage adults to get 30 minutes of exercise each day, in accordance with the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, either before work, during lunch, or after work.

Review the RUN@WORK fact sheet.

To participate, simply make time for 30 minutes of running or walking on September 16, 2016, and bring a coworker or family member with you. Is your school or office participating? **E-mail Well Aware** with your story and photos!

Get Ready to Run! Sign up for a 5K Training Program

Whether you have never run or it has been a while since you last ran, the cooler fall weather is the perfect time to begin training. Following a successful spring session, Run Farther & Faster and MCPS are bringing you a training program this fall to help you get started.

The MCPS Fall Virtual Group 5K Training Program will begin on September 18, 2016, and will run through November 6, 2016. The training will culminate with the Rockville 5K, an optional race to celebrate completion of your training.

As a participant, you will receive a comprehensive seven-week training calendar, weekly e-mails with training support and running-related information, as well as e-mail contact with certified running coaches who will address your questions or concerns. The training calendar begins with run/walk intervals and progresses safely and gradually towards continuous running. It also includes strength workouts and form drills. In addition, those who are interested will have access to a private Facebook group to facilitate finding running partners.

The program is appropriate for new runners or runners who are returning after a hiatus. Space is limited to the first 50 registrants. **Register here.** Registration closes when capacity is reached or on Friday, September 16. Registration for the 5K race is not included, but a discount will be provided for those who participate in the MCPS Fall Virtual Group 5K Training Program.

Wellness Survey:

Share Your Ideas and Interests with Well Aware

Be sure to tell Well Aware about any programs, activities, and/or incentives you would like us to consider in the coming year. **Complete our survey** so we can offer wellness programming that interests you. Let us hear from you whether or not you have participated in wellness activities in the past. Your responses will be kept confidential. Help us provide you with the wellness program you most need and want.

Take the Wellness Initiative and save on your health insurance!

Remember to Take the [Wellness] Initiative

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program provides you with incentives to reduce your health insurance costs. If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan, complete a biometric health screening and your insurance provider's online health risk assessment by October 7, 2016—and every year—to take advantage of the rate reductions. Take the [Wellness] Initiative! **Learn more.**

Stress Less This Fall

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the ever-increasing demands of life. Surveys show that many Americans experience challenges with stress at some point during each year.

Your brain has an alarm system for your protection. When your brain perceives a threat, it signals your body to release a burst of hormones to fuel your capacity for a response. This has been labeled the "fight-or-flight" response.

Once the threat is gone, your body is meant to return to a normal relaxed state. Unfortunately, the nonstop stress of modern life means that your alarm system rarely shuts off.

That is why it is so important to find and use an effective method for managing stress. Stress management gives you a range of tools to reset your alarm system. Without stress management, all too often your body is always on high alert. Over time, high levels of stress lead to serious health problems.

Don't wait until stress has a negative impact on your health, relationships, or quality of life. Start practicing a range of stress management techniques today. Here are a few classes to get you started:

Meditation

Mondays, September 19–October 24, 2016
 5:00–5:45 p.m.

Maple Conference Room
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga

Wednesdays, September 14–December 7, 2016
 4:30 p.m.

Café 45 (Lower Level)
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tai Chi

Thursdays, September 8–December 8, 2016
 4:30 p.m.

Café 45 (Lower Level)
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Sleep Solutions

Most of us know that getting a good night's sleep is important, but too few of us actually make those seven to eight hours a priority. Many of us with sleep debt have forgotten what being truly rested even feels like.

To further complicate matters, stimulants like coffee and energy drinks, alarm clocks, and external lights—including those from electronic devices—interfere with our natural sleep/wake cycle.

Sleep needs vary across ages and are especially impacted by lifestyle and health. To determine how much sleep you need, it's important to assess not only where you fall on the **sleep needs spectrum**, but also to examine what lifestyle factors—such as schedules and stress—are affecting the quality and quantity of your sleep.

Watch this short video to learn why you need to sleep and how much of it you need. **View these tips** for better sleep.