

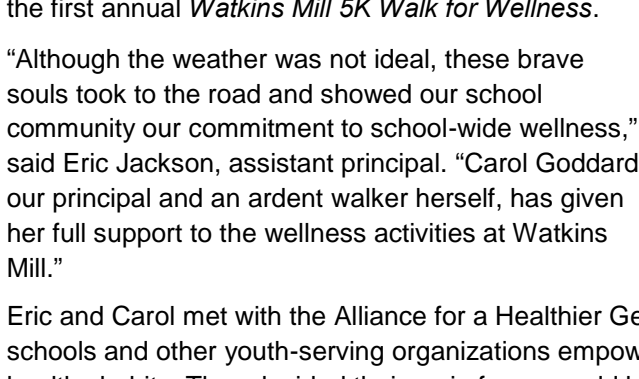
March Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion—a high school that has initiated a series of wellness opportunities for its staff and students,
- a seminar/webinar on managing emotional eating,
- details about this spring's physical activity challenge: *Le Tour de Fitness*,
- National Nutrition Month,
- the MCPS Spring 2019 Training Program for runners, and
- more!

Wellness Champion Strives to Include Staff and Students in Its Wellness Activities

Watkins Mill High School



Watkins Mill 5K Walk for Wellness Staff Participants

Watkins Mill High School (WMHS), this month's wellness champion, has initiated a series of wellness opportunities for its staff and students alike. It began last November, when school employees took part in the first annual *Watkins Mill 5K Walk for Wellness*.

"Although the weather was not ideal, these brave souls took to the road and showed our school community our commitment to school-wide wellness," said Eric Jackson, assistant principal. "Carol Goddard, our principal and an ardent walker herself, has given her full support to the wellness activities at Watkins Mill."

Eric and Carol met with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, an organization that helps schools and other youth-serving organizations empower young people to develop lifelong, healthy habits. They decided their main focus would be on promoting wellness throughout the WMHS community.

For starters, they scheduled the 5k walk on an early release day so both students and staff would be able to attend.

"It helps that we are both former PE teachers," Eric said. "We decided to do everything we can to increase health and wellness awareness in the entire school community."

Watkins Mill's next wellness opportunity was a yoga class, held in January. *Tree Pose @ The Mill* attracted a large number of WMHS staff, who were excited to continue their wellness journey.

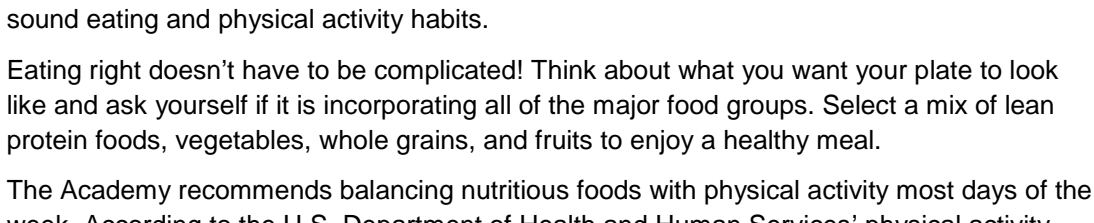
"Yoga was a big success but, in truth, we have about 40–50 participants who are in to everything that we are doing," Eric said.

Eric has some advice for those trying to encourage staff health and wellness.

"Have someone who is passionate about wellness lead the effort," he said. "People want to be healthy, they just need the proper encouragement and platform."

WMHS staff is looking forward to the school's next wellness activity, and healthy competition has definitely emerged.

"Awareness of health and wellness is up 200 percent at Watkins Mill," Eric said. "We think we will be very successful in Well Aware's next challenge."



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar—**Mood and Food**

This seminar is designed to help participants define, identify, and develop skills to manage emotional eating.

Thursday, March 14, 2019

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

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

West Farm Bus Depot
11920 Bournefield Way
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904
10:00–11:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 21, 2019

Webinar
4:00–5:00 p.m.

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.

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

Presented by: CareFirst

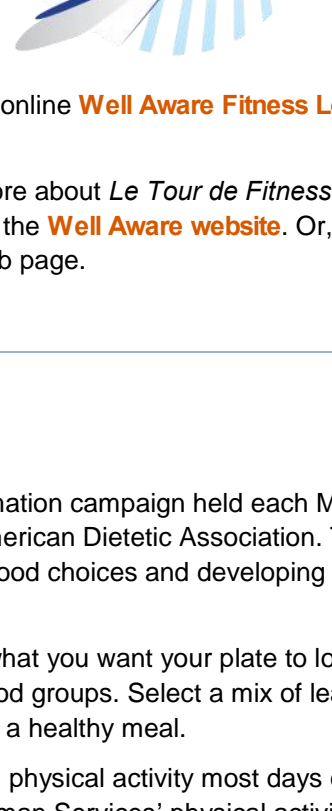
Le Tour de Fitness Begins Monday, March 4, 2019

Bonjour! Are you looking for a way to regain your health, increase your stamina, and improve your mood? Well Aware has the solution!

Hop on your bike and let's race to better health this spring as we take a virtual tour of France during Well Aware's *Le Tour de Fitness* physical activity challenge. See how much of the Tour de France you can cover—virtually.

Here's how: Go out for a bike ride and log your time in the online **Well Aware Fitness Log**. Not a big fan of the bike? That's okay! Any activity counts.

The challenge starts on Monday, March 4, 2019. Learn more about *Le Tour de Fitness* challenge, including incentives, rules, and more by visiting the **Well Aware website**. Or, simply search for "Le Tour de Fitness" from any MCPS web page.



March Is National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign held each March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, formerly the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

Eating right doesn't have to be complicated! Think about what you want your plate to look like and ask yourself if it is incorporating all of the major food groups. Select a mix of lean protein foods, vegetables, whole grains, and fruits to enjoy a healthy meal.

The Academy 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.

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

- **Healthy Eating on the Run**
- **Shop Smart—Get the Facts on New Food Labels**

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 3, 2019

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? **E-mail your stories and photos to ERSC**.

Run with Well Aware This Spring

Running is an accessible, inexpensive, and effective way to improve your health and fitness, relieve stress, and boost your confidence. Whether you are new to running or are looking to improve your finish times, the spring is the perfect time to start training!

The MCPS Spring 2019 Group Training Program is returning for its fourth year, offering training schedules appropriate for beginners as well as more advanced runners. Training begins on April 11th and runs through July 1st, with optional summer goal races, including the Montgomery County Road Runners Club Suds and Soles 5K on June 22nd and the Autism Speaks 5K on July 4th (race registration is optional and registration fee is additional).

Participants will receive:

- A comprehensive 14-week training calendar tailored to personal levels of experience and goals (5K or 10K);
- Weekly e-mail communication, including information on injury prevention, stretching, strength, nutrition, gear, and more;
- E-mail access to coaches for individual training support, questions, and advice;
- Opportunities to attend group runs on Sunday mornings in May and June at the Richard Montgomery High School track; and
- Goal race preparation and support for Suds and Soles and Autism Speaks 5K races (participation optional; registration fee additional).

Space is limited to the first 50 registrants and fills quickly. **Register here**. Registration closes when capacity is reached or on Friday, March 29, 2019.

Quit for Good! 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, **e-mail 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.

We hope you will participate in the next American Diabetes Association Alert Day on March 26, 2019.

Take the Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test now!

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—eat 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 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.

*This article is from the **Colorectal Cancer Alliance website**.*