WELL AWARE

eNews

The education you need for the health you want

October Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion, an elementary school that made wellness an ongoing theme for the 2016–2017 school year;
- a seminar/webinar on the types and benefits of yoga;
- this year's National Eat Healthy Day;
- Breast Cancer Awareness Day;
- a six-week nutrition class to help you make healthier food choices for you and your family; and
- *more!*

Wellness Champion Organizes Wellness Wednesdays to Encourage a Culture of Wellness

Belmont Elementary School

As MCPS continues to encourage a culture of wellness in its schools and offices, Well Aware is pleased to highlight a school that made wellness an ongoing theme during the 2016–2017 school year. Belmont Elementary School, led by kindergarten teacher and Wellness coach Mallengo, brought new and exciting ideas to its staff through, "Wellness Wednesdays."

"I initiated Wellness Wednesdays to provide a way for our staff to disseminate health and wellness information in an interactive way," Kim said. "My coworkers love all of the different things we are able to do."

Among other healthy activities, on Wellness Wednesdays staff participated in a healthy recipe swap; took advantage of their shared workout DVD library; and took in displays on the benefits of drinking water, eating apples, and drinking herbal teas. Belmont staff even gathered to share ideas on how essential oils can enhance wellness and made and used sleep spray, body scrubs, and immunity rollers. During another wellness Wednesday event, Belmont staff members had an opportunity to—

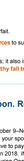
- Learn the benefits of drinking lemon water,
- Add available lemon slices to their water,
- Receive motivational cards,
- Take an essential oil-making class, and
- Celebrate "Pranks-giving" (in November, the month of plank challenges).

"I found a lot of ideas online and took an informal survey of staff interests," Kim said. "We established a health and wellness board in our conference room where staff could add or take information, recipes, tips, or motivational quotes."

How does Belmont plan to build on its success?

"I have continued Wellness Wednesdays and have expanded it to include a weekly book camp with another school," Kim said. "We also offer weekly yoga and Pilates classes held on a promotional board. "It really is easy to incorporate wellness into our days and bring health and wellness to our staff."

Hike for Your Health
During Well Aware's Fall Physical Activity Challenge



The Appalachian Trail is nearly 2,200 miles long and passes through 14 states and national forests, two national parks, and numerous state parks, forests, and game lands. Walking end-to-end would earn you nearly 5 million steps!

This fall, Well Aware invites you to *Hike for Your Health* and see how much of the Appalachian Trail you can cover. This physical activity challenge will have you choose a virtual trail to complete during the 10-week challenge.

Participants will log their activity throughout the challenge and track their progress using the online Well Aware Fitness Log. Based on participation, you will be eligible to win prizes for yourself, your team, and your school or office.

Gather your team! Although the challenge begins on Monday September 25, it isn't too late to get started! Join your coworkers as a team or train as an individual.

For more information about *Hike for your Health*, including incentives, rules, and important dates, visit the Well Aware web page. Or, simply search for "Hike for your Health" from any Montgomery County Public Schools web page.

National Eating Healthy Day Planned

Take the first step to making healthier food choices by taking part in the American Heart Association's National Eating Healthy Day on Wednesday, November 1, 2017.

On that day, Americans are encouraged to make healthy changes to their food choices and help raise awareness of the importance of good nutrition. Celebrating National Eating Healthy Day is fun and easy. Here are some ways to have healthy celebrations at your upcoming favorite events:

- Focus on fun rather than food.
- Make healthy fruit smoothies.
- Encourage veggies and low-fat dip.
- Instead of ice cream sundaes, make a yogurt parfait.

The American Heart Association has **excellent resources** to support National Eating Healthy Day.

Eating healthy is more than just eating the right things; it also is about **eating the proper portions**. Enjoy **making and eating this heart-healthy fall treat**.

Open Enrollment Will Be Here Soon. Remember to Make Your Tobacco Attestation!

Employee Benefits Open Enrollment will be held October 9–November 3, 2017. This is your chance to log in and attest to whether or not you and your spouse will be tobacco-free throughout 2017. Non-smokers who attest will not have to pay a 25 percent tobacco-user surcharge on the total cost of their health insurance in 2018. *If you and your spouse are smoke free and you do not log in and attest to that during Open Enrollment, you will face the surcharge beginning January 1, 2018*.

Ready to Quit?

MCPS and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again to bring you the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program. The free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or if you participate with Kaiser.

The program is course-based and led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Classes cover the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources. **Learn more.**

The next Quit for Good session will begin on Monday October 16, 2017. Join us at 4:30 p.m. in the Robinson Room, 45 West Gude Drive, Rockville. You must register to participate by **e-mailing Well Aware**.

Wear Pink to Raise Breast Cancer Awareness

Wear Pink Day will be held this year on October 20, 2017. Join your MCPS coworkers and wear pink that day to raise breast cancer awareness.

Among American women, breast cancer is the most common cancer, along with skin cancer. Getting mammograms regularly can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women who are 50 to 74 years of age have a screening mammogram every two years. Those 40 to 49 years old should talk with their doctors about when to start and how often to have a screening mammogram.

The Centers for Disease Control launched the *Bring Your Brave* program to provide information about breast cancer to women younger than age 45. The campaign tells real stories about young women who have been affected by breast cancer. These stories about prevention, risk, family history, and survivorship bring to life the idea that young women can be personally affected by breast cancer. Through these testimonials, *Bring Your Brave* aims to inspire young women to learn their risk for breast cancer, talk with their health care provider about their risk, and live a breast-healthy lifestyle.

- **Learn more** about the importance of family history, genetic counseling, and lifestyle choices.
- **View testimonials** from the *Bring Your Brave* campaign.

Wear Pink Day is a great opportunity to speak with coworkers, family, and friends about breast cancer warning signs and to encourage self-checks and mammograms. Also, be sure to take photos of you and your coworkers wearing pink and **share them with Well Aware!**

Stress Less This Fall

By finding positive, healthy ways to manage stress, many of its negative health consequences—heart disease, depression, anxiety, etc.—can be reduced. Each of us is different, as are the ways we choose to manage stress. Some people prefer pursuing hobbies such as gardening, photography, and creating art, while others find relief in activities like meditation, yoga, and walking.

Well Aware will offer the following classes this fall to help you stress less:

Meditation
Mondays through December 18, 2017
5:00–5:45 p.m.
Room 240
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga
Wednesdays through December 13, 2017
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Café 45
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tai Chi
Thursdays through December 7, 2017
4:30 p.m.
Café 45
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register for any of these classes, **e-mail Well Aware.**

Healthy Food, Healthy Body

Join Well Aware and CareFirst for a six-week class to help you learn more about nutrition. Participants will learn to make healthier food choices for themselves and their families by developing plans, strategies, and resources for healthy meals and snacks.

Thursdays, October 12–November 16, 2017
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Aspen Conference Room
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

This class is capped at 25 people, so register soon! For more information or to register **e-mail Well Aware.**

Depression is More Than Feeling Sad

We all feel sad from time to time. It's a normal, temporary reaction to upsetting experiences in life. Depression is different. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life—eating, sleeping, working and more. It affects not just the person with depression, but also those who care about them. Most people who experience depression need treatment to get better.

Know the signs and symptoms of depression

If you experience any of the following symptoms for two weeks or longer, you may have depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Difficulty sleeping, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering

Understanding depression

There are different types of depression and they can impact people in different ways. It is best to start treatment early, but it's important to know all forms of depression can be treated. They include—

- Major depression—severe symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, sleep, study, eat and enjoy life.
- Persistent depressive disorder—a depressed mood that lasts for at least two years.
- Postpartum depression—more serious than the normal "baby blues" many women experience after giving birth.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)—depression sets in during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. The depression typically fades during spring and summer.

Treatment for depression

Depression is usually treated with medicines and/or talk therapy (psychotherapy). Typically, there is some trial and error to find the right medication because no two people are affected the same way by depression. It can take several weeks of treatment before you begin to feel better. It is essential to follow your doctor's treatment plan to keep depression from returning.

Every situation is different; there are resources available to help:

- If you are having thoughts of death or suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or call 911 immediately.
- Talk with your doctor to find the right treatment options.

Depression Screenings

The MCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) conducts screenings for depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The screenings take less than 30 minutes and are available for all MCPS employees and their family members. Screenings are free and confidential and provide an opportunity to learn more about depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders; complete a brief screening questionnaire; and speak one-on-one with a mental health professional. If appropriate, referrals will be made for a complete evaluation.

Call the EAP at 240-314-1040 if you have questions and/or to schedule an appointment. Appointments are available from 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the EAP offices, 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 1300, Rockville.

A Healthy and Mindful Approach to Fall

Fall requires a shift inward and a slower pace, yet, for many, life gets busier at this time of year. Join us to learn strategies, tips, and exercises for the fall season that reduce stress, calm the mind, and enhance well-being.

The facilitator is Manifest Ra, The Mindfulness Motivational Speaker™ and tai chi-qigong ambassador. Manifest holds mindfulness, wellness, and personal development talks and seminars for corporations, colleges, and other groups.

Monday, October 23, 2017
4:30–6:30 p.m.
Café 45
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Wellness Seminar/Webinar—Yoga and Weight Loss

Thinking about adding a different exercise to your routine? How about yoga? Believe it or not, yoga is an excellent form of exercise and can contribute to weight loss. Come hear about the various types of yoga, the different poses involved, and the many ways it may benefit you.

Wednesday, October 11, 2017
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Bethesda Bus Depot
10901 Westlake Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Wednesday, October 18, 2017
4:00–5:00 p.m.
Webinar

Tuesday, October 24, 2017
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Shady Grove Bus Depot
16651 Crabbs Branch Way
Rockville, Maryland 20855

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:

Cigna.

Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar—Yoga and Weight Loss

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