

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 high school administrative team that is showing its staff how to prioritize wellness;
- a webinar on the immune system and the importance of supporting it;
- a new physical activity challenge for the fall;
- *MCPS on the Move Day*;
- how you can share your wellness success stories; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free webinar— **Boosting Your Immune System**

Join us for a webinar to identify the major components of the immune system and discuss the importance of supporting the immune system by eating healthy foods.

Thursday, September 24, 2020
 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Webinar

Please **email Well Aware** to register for the webinar. After registering, you will receive a link to the webinar in your Outlook email as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

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

Presented by: CareFirst

Wellness Champions Model Health and Wellness for Staff and Students



Administrative Team, Damascus High School

Kevin Yates, Damascus High School principal, leading the way

Wellness and self-care are essential these days. And adopting a healthy lifestyle is much easier when the example is set from the top. The administrative team at Damascus High School, led by Principal Kevin Yates, is showing Damascus High School staff how to prioritize wellness.

Kevin has made staff health and wellness a priority by leading the way.

"I believe staff has to be active to be well, especially in our current online learning environment," Kevin said. "Modeling this wellness helps staff see that we recognize the importance of being active, we live it every day."

Exactly how have the high school's administrators led the way?

"We enjoyed participating in the Well Aware physical activity challenge," Kevin said. "This past year we had two top 15 teams; we enjoyed competing against each other. This summer, my Administrative Team met weekly for bike rides on the Magruder Branch Trail. To kick off our Summer Leadership, our Instructional Leadership Team walked the Magruder Branch Trail, which was a great way to get to know new team members."

Kevin and his administrators established a committee to focus on staff *and* student wellness. Their goal is for all students and staff to engage in regular wellness activities.

"We believe this is especially important since our students and staff will be online for a majority of the day in the virtual learning environment," Kevin said.

What suggestions does Kevin have for schools looking to prioritize staff wellness?

"My first piece of advice is to form an Administrative Team for the next Well Aware physical activity challenge," Kevin said. "The challenges are highly motivating and a great way to bond as a team, while being active together and modeling wellness for students, staff, and community."

You can find information about this fall's challenge in the article, "Fall Physical Activity Challenge: Going the (Social) Distance Relay" below and on the **MCPS Well Aware web page**.

Have You Taken the [Wellness] Initiative for 2021? Alternative to Biometric Health Screening Available Starting September 8, 2020

An alternative way to complete the Wellness Initiatives biometric health screening—with an extended deadline—now is available for MCPS employees.

Due to COVID-19, Well Aware has been unable to hold onsite biometric health screenings. For that reason, beginning September 8, 2020, MCPS employees will be able to register for and complete *Wellness Initiatives: Biometrics Credit Alternative 2021 Benefit Year* training (course number 89555) on **Professional Development Online (PDO)**, in lieu of a biometric health screening. Employees who complete the training by **December 18, 2020**, will pay 1 percent less of their health insurance costs in 2021.

Employees who are able to complete their yearly physical with their doctor or at a MinuteClinic (for CareFirst members) have until **Friday, October 9, 2020**, to complete the physical and earn the 1 percent discount. **The deadline extension applies to the PDO training only.**

The Wellness Initiatives program provides employees covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan with incentives to reduce their health insurance costs. Be sure to take advantage of the rate reductions by following these steps:

1. See your doctor for an annual physical or, if you are a CareFirst member, have your physical at a CVS Minute Clinic by **October 9, 2020**;
OR
 Register and complete the *Biometrics Credit Alternative* training by **December 18, 2020**.
2. Complete the health risk assessment on your medical plan's website by **October 9, 2020**, to pay an additional 1 percent less of your health insurance costs. This is the *Real Age Test* for CareFirst, and the *Total Health Assessment* for Kaiser Permanente.

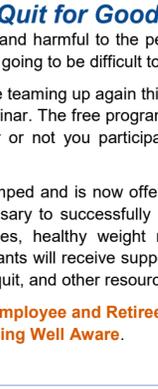
Kaiser Permanente members: Be sure to log in to the Kaiser Permanente web page to consent to your participation in the program. Without your consent, your information will not be reported.

Take the [Wellness] Initiative! **Learn more.**

Be Well 365 for Staff

MCPS has launched a well-being web page for its employees. This online resource is a one-stop shop where employees can find information to help them navigate and balance their work, home, personal, and community lives. The emphasis is on staff well-being and self-care.

The last few months have been challenging ones for all of us, and MCPS is committed to ensuring that its staff members stay safe and feel supported. **Browse Be Well 365.**

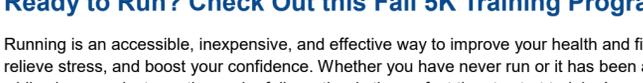


Fall Physical Activity Challenge: *Going the (Physical) Distance Relay*

These are strange times we are living in. It is certainly easy to lose focus on exercise since so many gyms have closed and races cancelled. However, it is important for adults to be active and keep moving. Not only is exercise good for us physically, it also benefits our mental health.

If your exercise routine has gotten off track, or you need some extra motivation to start a practice, this is your chance! This fall, Well Aware is challenging you to hit the reset button, reconnect with your teammates, and recommit to exercise by joining the *Going the (Physical) Distance Relay*.

Learn more about the *Going the (Physical) Distance Relay*, including incentives, rules, and more by visiting the ***Going the (Physical) Distance Relay web page***. Or, simply search for *Going the (Physical) Distance Relay* from any 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 difficult to do.

To make it easier, Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again this fall to bring you the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program via webinar. The free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or with Kaiser Permanente.

Due to the COVID pandemic, the course has been revamped and is now offered as three, one-hour webinars. The webinars cover the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free, a risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the webinars, participants will receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources.

Registration is open for fall classes. For details, visit the **Employee and Retiree Service Center website**. You must register to participate by **emailing Well Aware**.

MCPS on the Move Day is Coming!

Join Well Aware on September 18, 2020, for *MCPS on the Move Day*.

Set aside time to get 30 minutes of running, walking, or other form of exercise on that day, and encourage a coworker or family member to exercise too. Plan virtual workouts with your coworkers or go for a run (or walk) by yourself.

The goal is to get 30 minutes of exercise that day—and every day—either before work, during lunch, or right after work. Your body deserves no less!

Be sure to take photos of your *MCPS on the Move Day* activities, tweet them, and tag Well Aware @mcpswellaware!

Ready to Run? Check Out this Fall 5K Training Program

Running is an accessible, inexpensive, and effective way to improve your health and fitness, and boost your confidence. Whether you have never run or it has been a while since you last ran, the cooler fall weather is the perfect time to start training!

Following a successful spring session, the Run Farther & Faster MCPS Fall Virtual Group 5K Training Program will be held from September 14, 2020, to November 8, 2020.

Participants will receive a comprehensive seven-week training calendar, weekly e-mails with training support and running information, as well as e-mail access to certified running coaches.

The training calendar begins with run/walk intervals and progresses safely and gradually towards continuous running. It also includes strength workouts and form drills.

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 Monday, September 14, 2020.

Stress Less This Fall

These days, everyone is adjusting to a new way of life, which can be very stressful. Stress wreaks havoc on your emotional wellness, as well as your physical health. It makes it harder to think clearly, function effectively, and enjoy life.

Effective stress management, on the other hand, helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the flexibility to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one size fits all. That's why it's important to experiment and find out what works best for you.

This fall, Well Aware is continuing our online virtual live and recorded classes for your convenience. From yoga and seated yoga, to mindfulness and tai chi, there is something for everyone. Give them all a try to see what you like best.

Email Well Aware to get the full schedule of classes. Register for the daily wellness email to stay up to date on class links and other details. **Opt-in to this email distribution list.**

Online Physical Activity Classes for Fall

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your heart, your mind, and your overall wellness while helping you manage your stress.

This fall, Well Aware will continue to offer live and recorded online classes for your convenience. From Zumba and HIIT Camp to yoga and core workouts, there is something for everyone. Try them all!

Email Well Aware to get the full schedule of classes. Register for the daily wellness email to stay up to date on class links and other details. **Opt-in to this email distribution list.**

MCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

With the ongoing global health crisis, many of us are finding ourselves increasingly stressed and worried—about our health, the economy, or everyday activities that we generally wouldn't think twice about. Please know that in these uncertain times, the MCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to support the emotional well-being of you and your family members. With the understanding that we are all working to maintain our personal safety, and the safety of our family and community, a range of options are being offered including no-cost telephone counseling and teletherapy. Please see contact information below:

In-House EAP

Telephone: 240-314-1040

- Jeffrey Becker, LCSW-C, CEAP
Email Jeff
- Robyn Rosenbauer, LCSW-C, CEAP
Email Robyn

External EAP Via KEPRO

Telephone: Toll-free 866-496-9599 to speak with a call center counselor

- **EAPhelpink.com**, Company Code: MCPS

Twitter

Well Aware is proud of all of the hard work that MCPS employees are doing to live healthy and well lives. It is time to share your stories and your spirit via Twitter! Perhaps you need motivation to start exercising, change a behavior that is negatively impacting your health, or begin a virtual staff wellness program. Follow @mcpswellaware for incredible stories, wellness ideas, and encouragement from your MCPS coworkers. Read tips on living a healthy life and updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.

MCPS Recognized for Employee Health and Wellness Efforts

MCPS has recently been recognized for its work to improve employee health and wellness. Our school system was recognized at the Gold level by the Healthiest Maryland Businesses Wellness at Work awards program, and received a 2020 Health and Wellness Seal of Approval from the Alliance for Workplace Excellence.

The employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). Learn more about employee wellness by visiting our **website**. View this email newsletter as a **PDF document**. Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or **email Well Aware**.