

May Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champions, staff from an MCPS elementary school who are getting creative about health and wellness;
- a webinar to learn about creating healthier sleeping habits;
- National Blood Pressure Education Month;
- this year's Get Fit, Don't Sit Day;
- wellness initiatives; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free webinar— Strategies for Better Sleep

Join us for this webinar, in which participants will learn about negative consequences of sleep loss, the positive benefits of getting the right amount of sleep, and steps to create healthier sleeping habits.

Thursday, May 21, 2020

4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

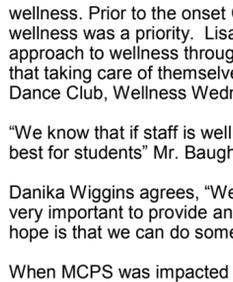
Please register for the webinar. When you register for the webinar, you will receive a link in your Outlook email as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our [printable flyer](#). Visit the [Wellness Webinar Library](#).

Presented by: Kaiser Permanente

Wellness Champions Keep it Moving!

Lisa Henry, principal, and Summit Hall Elementary School Staff



Lisa Henry, principal, Danika Wiggins, assistant principal, and Chris Baugher physical education teacher at Summit Hall Elementary School are proud of their continued dedication to staff

wellness. Prior to the onset COVID-19 pandemic, the administration made sure that staff wellness was a priority. Lisa Henry shares "We wanted to support the teacher's overall approach to wellness throughout the school year so they felt valued, supported, and know that taking care of themselves is essential. We are very proud of initiatives like the Staff Dance Club, Wellness Wednesdays, Walk it out Wednesdays and Wellness Luncheons."

"We know that if staff is well in body and mind, they can create the environment to be their best for students" Mr. Baugher adds.

Danika Wiggins agrees, "We do all that we can do for our students during the day, so it is very important to provide an outlet for teachers. Through a variety of wellness activities, the hope is that we can do something for each teacher to find a way to relieve stress."

When MCPS was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and transitioned to online learning, Summit Hall had to adapt. Ms. Wiggins identified that their approach to staff wellness was vital. "Social connection is important so that others know they are not in this alone. It is also important so they can share resources, strategies, and ways to stay healthy and well."

Ms. Wiggins continues, "Creating these social opportunities during this challenging time is vital for staff and students. Our Staff Development Teacher began hosting Staff Spirit Weeks and Social Hours for staff to connect and check-in on one another. I taught the teachers a dance and prizes were awarded for best costume for themes including Spring Break and Survivor. Making sure we stay positive and gentle with staff is very important right now. I make sure to let them know they need to focus on themselves and their family first so they can remain safe and healthy."

Lisa, Danika, and Chris have suggestions on how to keep staff engaged, connected, and well during this challenging time. They start by suggesting Twitter, a popular social platform, being used by many educators in the county to spread positivity, hope, and support.

Ms. Wiggins is proud of all of the opportunities that they have set up for their staff to connect and thrive. "At Summit Hall Elementary School, we set up a weekly recurring zoom meeting schedule for all collaborative team meetings in the building, including weekly social time with staff. This connection time enables staff to meet weekly to discuss how things are going, make adjustments, and encourage one another with the online learning platform."

Ms. Wiggins states, "We also started self-care check-ins during some team meetings as a community builder and to help everyone focus on the importance of self-care during this time. Our next plan is to host virtual Staff Dance Club sessions soon! Maybe we will even figure out a way to perform our spring PBIS assembly dance virtually!"

What is next for Summit Hall Elementary School as online learning continues? Ms. Wiggins believes that this time is giving school staff the chance to focus on making connections and relationships in new ways. She states, "I have been so impressed with our hard working staff, students and families for doing their best to keep learning during this time. I look forward to the 'new and improved normal' and creating a safe and trusted environment with staff that gives them the space and professional respect to do what they do best, teach!"

Follow Ms. Henry, Ms. Wiggins, and Mr. Baugher on Twitter, and [click here](#) to see a news story featuring Ms. Wiggins!

Physical Activity Challenge

The Superhero Challenge

Across Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), employees are experiencing better health and morale because of their involvement in Well Aware's *Superhero* physical activity challenge. Some are participating as individuals; others as members of a team. They are enjoying better health and fitness as a result.



There is still time to join the challenge. Let the MCPS Superhero Challenge inspire you to become your most active self. Participate to regain your health and win prizes!

Activity and weight loss updates need to be entered in the online Well Aware Fitness Log by noon on Monday, May 11, 2020.

Stay Tuned

Grand prize winners will be announced in the 5/20/2020 issue of The Bulletin!

Spirit Award

Do you have a coworker who has gone above and beyond the help build a culture of wellness in your school or office? We are recognizing the MCPS employees who most encouraged others to live their healthiest lives. Ten Spirit Award winners will each receive a fall Zumba or yoga class at your school or office. To request a Spirit Award nomination form, [email Well Aware](#). Nominations are due by Monday May 11, 2020.

InStep with Diabetes: Online Class Starting

InStep with Diabetes is a series of three one-hour classes that will help you better understand diabetes and the lifestyle changes needed to support healthy living. A Kaiser Permanente health educator will discuss not only why healthy eating, physical activity, and blood sugar control are important for diabetes management, but also ways to incorporate these changes into your life. The facilitator will also share resources and travel tips to further support you.

You do not have to be diabetic or pre-diabetic (or a Kaiser Permanente member) to attend this course. You can attend to support a friend or family member by learning helpful information. For more information please [click here](#).

National Get Fit Don't Sit Day: Wednesday, May 6, 2020

The first Wednesday in May is Get Fit, Don't Sit Day. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) sponsors this day to increase awareness of the dangers of excessive sitting, and the importance of getting up and moving throughout the day – especially at work.

Research shows that sitting for long periods of time increases the risk of health complications. The ADA recommends breaking up sitting time with three or more minutes of light physical activity - such as walking, leg extensions, or overhead arm stretches - every 30 minutes.

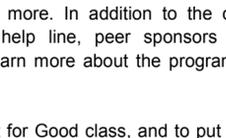
Here are some great resources with ideas to get you moving:

- [8 Ways to be More Active](#)
- [Desk Moves Handout](#)

How will your school or office celebrate the event? [Email your stories and photos to ERSC](#)

Quit for Good

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 consists of once-a-week classes from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Classes will discuss the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics will include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants will receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources. Learn more about the program by visiting the [wellness website](#).

Fall classes are forming! For more information on the Quit for Good class, and to put your name on the list for the next class, email wellness@Mcpssmd.org.

Wellness Initiatives: Health Risk Assessment and Biometric Screening

Completing your health assessment gives you the information you need to take control of your health and well-being. That's important because when you're running at 100%, you have the strength and confidence to be your true self.

Take this confidential, online questionnaire and in less than 20 minutes, you will:

- Learn your risk levels for common health problems, including heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes
- Get a clear picture of your current health status, and learn how to improve your health in the future through preventive tests, chronic condition support and online health coaching
- Discover interactive tools and educational information that can give you more details on your health status

Your Health Risk Assessment you can save 1% towards your 2021 medical and prescription premium. To get started, visit the Wellness Initiatives page on the MCPS website. Here you will find links to the Carefirst, and Kaiser Permanente Health Risk Assessments. You will also find helpful tutorials to guide you through the login process. [Click here for more](#).

To earn the additional 1% incentive for your 2021 medical premium rates you must complete the biometric screening requirements. This means that you either have an annual preventive physical exam with your primary care physician or attend a well aware health screening between October 7, 2019 and October 2, 2020. Please make sure to follow the steps outlined on the MCPS Staff Wellness Initiatives webpage. [Click here for more](#).

May is National Blood Pressure Education Month

Uncontrolled high blood pressure, or hypertension, is dangerous and far too common. In fact in the United States, one in three adults has the condition. High blood pressure usually has no signs or symptoms, but it does have consequences. The only way to know if you're at risk for high blood pressure is to know your numbers.

Blood pressure control is a journey, and there are small steps you can take every day to control high blood pressure and protect your heart. [Here are 5 ways to get started](#).

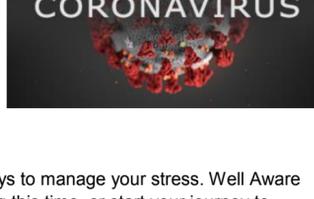
Uncontrolled high blood pressure is dangerous. Talk with your health care team about a management plan. [Click here for help during your visit](#).

During National Blood Pressure Education Month in May, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is challenging Americans to control or lower high blood pressure. Your doctor may recommend that you adopt heart-healthy lifestyle changes, such as heart-healthy eating patterns like the [DASH eating plan](#), alone or with medicines. Controlling or lowering blood pressure can also help prevent or delay high blood pressure complications, such as chronic kidney disease, heart attack, heart failure, stroke, and possibly vascular dementia.

[Click here](#) to learn a deep breathing technique to help control blood pressure at any time!

Staying Healthy During the COVID-19 Outbreak

The outbreak of COVID-19 is certainly stressful. While times are uncertain, it is important to control what you can. Leading a healthy and well life can help boost your immunity and help with your mental well-being. It is important to get enough sleep and physical activity, to eat



well, stay connected to others, and find healthy ways to manage your stress. Well Aware has many resources to help you stay healthy during this time, or start your journey to optimal health and wellness! From our video library of webinars, to our online physical activity challenge and classes, it is never too late to start. For updates on COVID-19, visit the [MCPS Coronavirus website](#). For additional support visit the [Employee Assistant Program website](#). Find our resources on the [MCPS Staff Wellness webpage](#), and follow us on Twitter [@MCPSWellAware](#) for tips and additional resources.

Stress Less This Spring

Yoga, meditation, and mindfulness are wonderful practices that help you to lower your stress levels. In addition, they help you to learn techniques for managing pressure and anxiety. Join Well Aware as we continue to practice yoga and mindfulness into the spring.

Reminder—If schools are closed, classes are canceled. If you are unsure if a class has been canceled, please check the [Wellness Calendar](#) on the [Staff Wellness](#) webpage.

Mindfulness classes are now online! [Email Well Aware](#) for links to the classes.

Can't make it to a class? Try these online resources to manage your stress this winter:

- [Yoga for Teachers](#)
- [Guided Meditation for Teachers](#)

To register for any of these classes, [email Well Aware](#).

Physical Activity Classes

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. Consider trying one of the classes below to see what kind of physical activity is best for you!

Reminder—If schools are closed, classes are canceled. If you are unsure if a class has been canceled, please check the [Wellness Calendar](#) on the [Staff Wellness](#) webpage.

Physical activity classes are now online! [Email Well Aware](#) for links to the classes.

To register for any of these classes, [email Well Aware](#).

HIITCamp Now Offered Through Well Aware

HIITCAMP is a one-hour group fitness class that includes both high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and strength training during each session. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned fitness enthusiast, this format is guaranteed to give you a great workout in every class.

Reminder—If schools are closed, classes are canceled. If you are unsure if a class has been canceled, please check the [Wellness Calendar](#) on the [Staff Wellness](#) webpage.

Physical activity classes are now online! Please [email Well Aware](#) for links to the classes.

Share Your Wellness Stories and Encourage Your Coworkers Through Twitter!

Well Aware is proud of MCPS employee for all of the hard work they are doing to lead healthy lives. It is time to share your stories and your spirit! Or, perhaps you need some extra motivation to begin a staff wellness program at your school, depot, or office, or to turn life-long unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow [@mcpsswellaware](#) for incredible wellness stories, ideas, and encouragement from your MCPS coworkers. You also will read tips on living a healthy life and receive updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.