



eNews

The education you need for the health you want

February 2012 Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the February issue of the Well Aware eNews!

Read on to learn about—

- How a wellness champion transformed a tough year into endless possibilities,
- The new fitness challenge designed to get you walking,
- Staff accomplishments through *MCPS on the Move* and *Work It Circuit*,
- How even a little exercise can help your heart, and more!

Wellness Champion Makes Major Changes



Meet Coree Ogden:
School Secretary, John Poole Middle School

Coree Ogden had a rough year in 2011. After suffering some losses in her family and undergoing major surgery, Coree was feeling tired and run-down. But an invitation to join *MCPS on the*

Move turned her life around! Coree has been a motivator for the staff at John Poole Middle School since the first day of *MCPS on the Move*. Coree faithfully exercised for one hour every day of the challenge. Her husband—and favorite walking partner—thinks she looks eight years younger. She was even able to put her wedding ring back onto her finger after ten years of being unable to wear it. Most important, Coree now enjoys playing with her two young grandchildren at the park. Says Coree, “They love their ‘new’ grandmother and I am beginning to love her too!”

Coree’s enthusiasm and ability to inspire those around her have even earned her an *MCPS on the Move* Spirit Award. Congrats, Coree! Read more about her inspiring story in an upcoming issue of *The Bulletin*!

Don’t miss it!

Heart Smart Seminar

Thursday, February 9

4:00–5:00 p.m.
Poolesville HS Cafeteria
17501 Willard Road
Poolesville, MD 20837

Monday, February 13

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

Wednesday, February 15

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

Thursday, February 16

4:30–5:30 p.m.
CESC Cafeteria
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Thursday, February 23

4:00–5:00 p.m.
Sherwood HS Cafeteria
300 Olney Sandy Spring Road
Sandy Spring, MD 20860

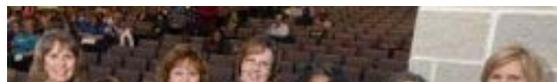
Spread the word with a printable [flyer!](#)

Presented by:



MCPS on the Move and Work It Circuit Challenges End on a High Note

An awards ceremony was held on January 24, 2012, to celebrate the successes of *MCPS on the Move* and *Work It Circuit*.



MCPS on the Move and Work It Circuit.

During the ceremony, winners claimed their prizes, including grants for physical education equipment or staff wellness programs, gift cards for sporting goods, and Wii Fit systems. Check out [this article](#) in *The Bulletin* for a complete list of grand prize winners!



“These prizes are just the tip of the iceberg,” said Lisa Cooperstein, MCPS wellness coordinator. “They provided a little incentive to start making changes for the better, but the real prizes are the benefits that have come and will continue to come from the changes participants have made.”

Payoffs from those changes have already begun to show. During the competitions, school system employees logged a total of 82,540 hours of exercise. Participants in the *MCPS on the Move* program, which was open to all secondary school and central services staff members, burned a total of 30,235,667 calories—the equivalent of burning 8,638 pounds. Coree Ogden, secretary at John Poole Middle School and this month’s wellness champion, said, “I have lost 12 pounds and two sizes. I am thinking about being healthy on a daily basis. I am actually doing it!”

Although *MCPS on the Move* and *Work It Circuit* have spurred employees to take great strides toward health improvements, it doesn’t end there. Staff members are encouraged to keep the momentum going with the next fitness challenge—*Walk This Way*. Read on to learn more about the new program!

In the above photo: Team Moving Along, from John Poole Middle School, was honored with the award for the greatest team change in Body Mass Index.

Take Care of Your Heart and Your Sweetheart with *Quit for Good*

Caring for Your Heart

February is American Heart Month. If you’re wondering how to best care for your heart, experts say quitting smoking should be your first step. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people who smoke are 2–4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers.

Quitting smoking can have positive effects on your health almost right away. Within one to two years of quitting, the CDC reports that your risk of developing coronary heart disease is substantially reduced.

Why wait? Well Aware wants to support you in your efforts to quit with the free *Quit for Good* program. 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. *Quit for Good* is free for all participants, regardless of whether or not you carry Kaiser Permanente health insurance. [Learn more about the program details.](#)



The next session begins this month. If you are interested, e-mail Well Aware as soon as possible to register at wellness@mcpsmd.org.

Caring for Your Sweetheart

You cannot quit in a vacuum—often, family members and loved ones also smoke and want to quit as well. Just in time for Valentine’s Day, upcoming sessions of *Quit for Good* will welcome all staff members **and** their spouses. Well Aware wants to help you and your spouse quit together—register as a couple to receive the tools you need to support one another in your joint efforts to quit!

New! Prepare to Make Strides with *Walk This Way*

Building on the success of *MCPS on the Move* and *Work It Circuit*, Well Aware announces the next activity competition, *Walk This Way*, which challenges employees to reach the end goal of walking 10,000 steps a day.



10,000 steps roughly equates to 30 minutes of physical activity, the Surgeon General's recommended activity level for all Americans. The program will provide incentives and encouragement to spur employees to work their way up to this goal. "Walking is one of the simplest activities you can do, yet it benefits you in so many ways," says Lisa Cooperstein, MCPS wellness coordinator.

The competition will begin in March and will last eight weeks. Each participant will receive a pedometer to track daily steps. Watch for more information from Well Aware and the volunteer wellness coach(es) at your location!

Even a Little Exercise Helps the Heart, Study Finds

Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Go for a walk after dinner. Play tag with your kids at the park.

New research shows that even small amounts of exercise— about 150 minutes, or 2.5 hours, of moderate activity a week— can reduce the risk of heart disease by about 14 percent.

Those who did more— about 300 minutes a week, or five hours— reduced their risk of heart disease, including heart attacks, angina and bypass surgeries, by 20 percent compared to people who did no exercise, the study found.



"Some physical activity is better than none, and more is better," said lead study author Jacob Sattelmair, who was a doctoral candidate at Harvard University School of Public Health, Boston, when he conducted the research.

The benefits of even more exercise continue to add up. People who reported exercising for 750 minutes a week, or 12.5 hours -- had a 25 percent reduced risk of heart disease. But that's many more hours of working out for only a small additional risk reduction, Sattelmair noted.

"The biggest bang for your buck is at the lower ends of physical activity," said Sattelmair, now director of research and strategy at Dossia, an organization in Cambridge, Mass., whose goal is to improve employee health and health care, while reducing health care costs. "If you went from none to 2.5 hours a week, the relative benefit is more than if you went from, say, 5 to 7.5 hours a week."

In the study, published online Aug. 1 in *Circulation*, Sattelmair and colleagues analyzed the results of 33 studies that assessed the health benefits of exercise. For reasons researchers aren't sure of, women saw even more protective benefits from exercise than men, although this could have been a quirk of the statistics, they said.

While 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a week is the minimum goal based on current U.S. guidelines, they found even people who did less than that (75 minutes weekly) had a decreased risk of heart disease compared to total couch potatoes.

"If you are doing nothing, do something. And if you are doing something, say, walking 10 or 15 minutes, two to three times a week, do more," said Barry Franklin, director of the preventive cardiology program at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich., and an American Heart Association spokesman.

Yet physical activity, of course, isn't the sole key to preventing heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. Eating a healthy diet, maintaining a normal body weight, avoiding high levels of stress, and keeping blood pressure and cholesterol levels in a healthy range all play a role, he added.

Just as important as an exercise program is getting physical activity while going about your day, Franklin said. Recent research has suggested that it's not only structured exercise classes or sessions, but the incidental exercise you get when you walk around the mall, go up and down the stairs, clean the house, or mow the lawn that matters for health.

"In addition to your structured exercise program, where you drive to the gym and walk on the treadmill, disguised exercise can also have a profound impact on your cardiovascular risk," Franklin said. "The take-home message is: Move more. Sit less."

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Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or wellness@mcpsmd.org.