

## February Well Aware eNews

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

- ◆ this month's wellness champion, a Million Mile Challenge team that excels at modeling and promoting healthy living for students as well as staff;
- ◆ taking the steps to prevent heart disease;
- ◆ National Wear Red Day®;
- ◆ the latest Million Mile Challenge incentives: a six-week New Year's resolution challenge and 10-week spring challenge;
- ◆ Well Aware's online survey;
- ◆ and more!



### Wellness Champion Models and Promotes Healthy Living

#### Meet Team *The Weight is Over*: Million Mile Challenge school team winner, Carl Sandburg Learning Center

The staff at Carl Sandburg Learning Center has taken advantage of Well Aware's wellness programs consistently and now is home of the "team to beat!" The members of team *The Weight is Over* averaged more miles than any other team in the 10-week Million Mile Challenge fall incentive, earning them the Golden Sneaker Award and bragging rights throughout the next challenge.

"Our group was formed with consistent, dedicated, fun, active, health conscious, and motivated members," said Jade Pridgeon, *The Weight is Over* team member. "Our group members are dedicated to leading and promoting healthy and active lifestyles."

Ms. Pridgeon—along with teammates Kim Whitfield, Kristen Millios, Laura Salteris, Lindsay McGrew, Margarita Gomez, Nina Barbosa, Sabrina Baker, and Sarah Deckert—checked in with each other daily to give simple reminders about diet, exercise, and logging their activity. They also shared motivational pep talks. The group has gone a step further to help motivate their coworkers by sharing ideas for healthy breakfasts and snacks and replacing high calorie meeting treats with fruit trays. They also can be found running relays with students at recess or playing tag during sensory breaks.

"This challenge, as well as the previous challenges, has changed the way we operate at Sandburg," Ms. Pridgeon said. "We are a more health conscious school and we will continue to lead, model, and promote healthy living for our students as well as our staff."

This health-conscious attitude is creating culture of wellness at Carl Sandburg. The school's physical education department, for example, was so motivated by the Million Mile Challenge that they soon will be starting a health challenge of their own. Staff and students will be encouraged to run/walk the track during recess and sensory breaks. For every mile they complete, a foot mark will be made on a wall. Students and staff will be able to win great prizes and, of course, a healthier way of life!



**Don't miss it—**

**Free Seminar/ Webinar**

**This month:**

#### Healthy or Harmful? 10 Myths About Health and Wellness

This seminar covers 10 common myths about health and wellness and teaches strategies to live a healthier and happier life.

**Tuesday, February 5, 2013**

Clarksburg Bus Depot  
13100 Shawnee Lane  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871  
10:00–11:00 a.m.

**Wednesday, February 13, 2013**

45 West Gude Drive  
Maple Room  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
4:30–5:30 p.m.

**Monday, February 25, 2013**

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

**Wednesday, February 27, 2013**

Webinar  
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Please register for the seminar and/or webinar by e-mailing [Well Aware](mailto:WellAware@mcpsmd.org) with the date and time you plan to attend. If you register for the webinar, you will be sent a link to it as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our [printable flyer](#). See archived webinars [here](#).

Presented by:



**MCPS:  
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### New Year's Resolution Incentive

## Our New Year's Resolution Incentive Continues; the Spring Challenge is Only a Few Weeks Away

Are you ready to put some distance between yourself and disease?

#### New Year's Resolution Incentive: It's Not Too Late!

Montgomery County Public Schools employees are now in the midst of the second phase of Well Aware's Million Mile Challenge (MMC): the New Year's resolution incentive. Each week, the individual who records the most miles for that week wins a six-week exercise class for his or her school or office. Along the way, participants are helping MCPS log one million miles of activity this school year. Are you ready to keep your resolve?

[Register now or sign in to log your miles on the Well Aware Fitness Log.](#)

If you registered on the Fitness Log for a previous challenge, you do not need to register again. Simply sign in and begin logging your activity. Approximately 15 minutes of activity equals one mile. Any activity can count toward our goal of one million miles, whether you are walking your dog, gardening, or training for a marathon. As long as you are moving, your activity will count toward our collective goal.

#### Spring Incentive: Team Registration Begins February 4!

Later this month, we will enter the third phase of the MMC: the 10-week spring incentive competition. Team registration for the spring competition begins Monday, February 4, 2013. The actual competition starts Monday, February 25, 2013. Like the fall incentive, individuals and teams will compete for prizes while maintaining or regaining their health.

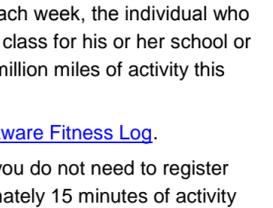
If you took part in the MMC last fall or are participating in the New Year's resolution challenge now, keep logging your activities this spring. If you have not registered or have not been logging your activity, it is not too late! Join a team or challenge yourself individually.

Help us reach our goal of collectively logging one million miles of activity this school year!

[Register now or sign in to log your miles on the Well Aware Fitness Log.](#)

Along with your health, what else can you win by competing? Each week, we will give away random prizes to those who log their activity, as well as weekly grants to schools, offices, and depots to promote employee wellness. You also will be competing to win grand prizes for your school, office, or depot. Teams once again will compete to win bragging rights and the coveted Golden Sneaker trophy.

For more information on the prize structure, or the rules of the challenge, visit the [Million Mile Challenge web page](#) on the Well Aware website. Start now. Log your activity. Where will one million miles take you?



## Take the Steps to Prevent Heart Disease

February is Heart Health Month. The American Heart Association's [movement](#) to encourage healthier lifestyles to prevent heart disease offers a number of ways to get involved.

As part of that effort, this month, Well Aware will participate in National Wear Red Day® (see article below) and promote heart health in other ways.

But first, the grim facts.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States; one in every three deaths in this country occurs as a result of heart disease and stroke, equal to 2,200 deaths per day. It is also a leading cause of disability and is very expensive. Together, heart disease and stroke hospitalizations in 2010 cost the nation more than \$444 billion in health-care expenses and lost productivity.

Heart disease is the number one cause of death for men and women. The focus used to be on men's risk of developing the disease, which often meant women were not getting the information needed for prevention. Today, both sexes are strongly encouraged to take the necessary steps to prevent heart disease.

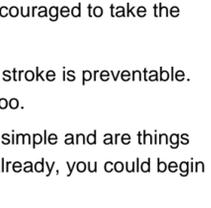
Here is some good news: 80 percent of premature heart disease and stroke is preventable. People are fighting back against heart disease and stroke. You can, too.

Most of the things we can do to prevent heart disease and stroke are simple and are things we know we should be doing, anyway. For instance, if you have not already, you could begin taking the steps instead of the elevator.

Here are some additional steps to get started:

- ◆ **Quit Smoking**
  - ◇ Need help? Well Aware has a program called Quit for Good. Contact Well Aware for more information.
- ◆ **Exercise Regularly**
  - ◇ You do not have to become a super athlete, but your body needs to move.
  - ◇ Thirty minutes of accumulated activity is your goal. Take a few 10-minute walks and take the stairs instead of the elevator, and you already have achieved your goal!
- ◆ **Manage Stress**
  - ◇ Take steps to keep stress in check, such as taking time each day to relax and unwind with friends, loved ones, or a treasured hobby.
- ◆ **Eat Heart-healthy Foods**
  - ◇ You do not need to go on a special diet to eat healthy. Just make sure you focus on eating fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, fish, beans, peas, nuts, and lean meats.
- ◆ **Get Enough Sleep**
  - ◇ Poor sleep has been linked with high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, heart failure, heart attack and stroke, diabetes, and obesity.
  - ◇ If you can't sleep, get out of bed. Go easy on alcohol and caffeine; avoid nicotine. Exercise in the late afternoon.
- ◆ **Know Your Numbers**
  - ◇ High blood pressure and cholesterol can damage your heart and blood vessels. But without testing for them, you probably won't know whether you have these conditions. Regular screening can tell you what your numbers are and whether you need to take action.
- ◆ **Maintain a Healthy Weight**
  - ◇ Even a small weight loss can be beneficial. Reducing your weight by just 10 percent can decrease your blood pressure, lower your blood cholesterol level, and reduce your risk of diabetes.

Be on the lookout for the Well Aware Heart Health Month poster (pictured above). It will remind you to take the STEPS to prevent heart disease.



## Wear Red on February 8!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States. National Wear Red Day® was established to increase awareness and donations to organizations that combat heart disease.

Get involved! Wear red on Friday, February 8, 2013, and encourage your coworkers to do the same. Support one another by discussing heart disease risk factors, taking a lunch time walk together, watching this [presentation](#) about lowering blood pressure, and/or reading this [article](#) about how anger can raise cholesterol levels. You also can get involved in the national program. Visit the [Wear Red Day® website](#) to learn more.

The official National Wear Red Day® will be held on February 1, 2013. Montgomery County Public Schools will observe the event on February 8, 2013.

®National Wear Red Day is a registered trademark of HHS and AHA.

### Wellness Survey

## Share Your Wellness Ideas & Interests With Us!

You now have a chance to tell Well Aware about any programs, activities, and/or incentives you would like us to consider in the coming year. Click [here](#) to complete a survey so we can offer wellness programming that interests you.

Please let us hear from you whether or not you have participated in wellness activities in the past. Your responses will be kept confidential. Help us provide you with the wellness program you most need and want.

The more employee wellness newsletter is brought to you by the Employee and Retiree Service Center (ERSC). To learn more about employee wellness, visit our [website](#). To view this e-mail newsletter as a .pdf document, click [here](#).

Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or [wellness@mcpsmd.org](mailto:wellness@mcpsmd.org).