

January Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champions—members of wellness team *Fully Crusted Chicken Pot Pies*, whose healthy camaraderie motivates them to compete regularly in Well Aware's physical activity challenges;
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna where you will learn to maximize the benefit of your workouts;
- how you can climb Mount Everest without leaving the United States;
- the next InStep with Diabetes class;
- how you can stress less and escape the blues this winter; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar—

Making Workouts Count

Is your regular workout routine not working for you anymore? Come and learn how to maximize the benefit of your time at the gym or on the walking trail.

Thursday, January 19, 2017

10:00–11:00 a.m.

Shady Grove Bus Depot

16651 Crabbs Branch Way

Rockville, Maryland 20855

Wednesday, January 25, 2017

10:00–11:00 a.m.

West Farm Bus Depot

11920 Bournefield Way

Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Thursday, January 26, 2017

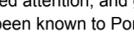
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

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:



Wellness Champions: Committed to Good Health and to Supporting Each Other

Team Fully Crusted Chicken Pot Pies

It all began with a button. Wellness team *Fully Crusted Chicken Pot Pies*,* comprised of several Central Services staff members, is getting healthy—together.

The button popped off an employee's pants during the work day. That became the tipping point.

"Our team was born when the employee requested help in getting fitter and healthier," team member Laurie Lyons said.

Since then, its members have not looked back.

In the spring of 2016, *Fully Crusted Chicken Pot Pies* won a grand prize for being one of the top 10 teams in the *Built to Move* physical activity challenge. They continued to motivate each other in the fall during the *Go for the Gold* challenge.

Peter Park, team leader for the System-wide Safety Programs unit, holds the same title with *Fully Crusted Chicken Pot Pie*. He sends his teammates wellness reminders to check out a new exercise or try a new recipe, or just to inquire as to how they are doing. Peter has been known to use a combination of humor, suggestions, personalized attention, and gentle reminders to encourage his teammates to move! He has also been known to pony healthy treats to staff from other offices.

In addition, Fully Crusted Chicken Pot Pie holds monthly competitions in which prizes are awarded to the member who performs best in a specific area, such as the highest number of logged miles or longest time spent on strength-training. These efforts have helped create a healthy camaraderie, which contributes to the team's success.

The group is fully aware of the importance of physical activity, for the body and the mind. They also understand the relationship between employee health and job safety.

"Exercise is important for good physical and psychological health, and healthy employees tend to be more productive," Laurie said. "Because we work in safety and health, we see firsthand how employee health issues can contribute to workplace injuries."

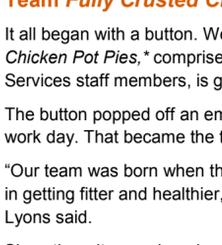
Laurie also offers some suggestions for individual and team success in a Well Aware challenge.

"Set realistic, incremental goals and hold yourself accountable for achieving them," Laurie said. "Encourage your teammates and be positive, but don't let them off the hook if they start slacking off!"

Laurie also suggests taking advantage of the online Well Aware Fitness Log to track your workouts, diet, and body metrics. Challenge participants can check the competition standings on the Fitness Log to further encourage healthy competition.

"Don't get too discouraged and negative if you slip up on a particular day by eating too much," Laurie said. "Just call it a metabolism reset day and get back on track. Also, keep your diet and exercise regimens varied to keep them interesting and avoid overuse-related injuries."

*formerly team *Back Scallops*



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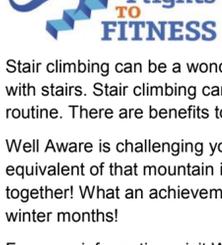
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Flights to Fitness: The Everest Challenge

Stair climbing can be a wonderful way to keep fit. Most of us work in or live near a building with stairs. Stair climbing can be done anytime throughout the day as a break in your routine. There are benefits to your heart, your mind, as well as your leg muscles.

Well Aware is challenging you to choose a mountain and climb it! We will climb the equivalent of that mountain in flights of stairs. Or, form a team and climb Mount Everest together! What an achievement that will be! What a way to stay in shape during the cold winter months!

For more information, visit Well Aware's [Flights to Fitness web page](#).

We Went for the Gold and WON!

Nearly 6,000 Montgomery County Public Schools employees spent 10 weeks in training this fall during the *Go for the Gold* physical activity challenge. They competed for prizes and, metaphorically, took the gold by adopting or maintaining healthy lifestyles. Each of the top 10 schools averaged at least 76 minutes of physical activity per employee per day. This is an increase of 6 minutes over last year!

Congratulations to all those who improved their health by participating! See a list of the winners' names in [this issue of The Bulletin](#).



Wellness Initiatives: It Is Not Too Early to Reduce Your Share of Health Insurance Costs for 2018

If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan through CareFirst, Cigna, or Kaiser Permanente, you can learn more about your health and reduce your contributions to your health insurance with the Wellness Initiatives program. To take full advantage of these rate reductions, complete a biometric health screening and a health risk assessment yearly, and, if you use tobacco, consider quitting.

The Wellness Initiatives are very simple to accomplish. To receive the maximum 2 percent reduction on your health insurance premiums in 2018, you have until October 6, 2017, to complete—

- an online health risk assessment, and
- a biometric health screening.

To find out how to complete your biometric health screening and health risk assessment, and how your results will be reported to MCPS, please visit the [Wellness Initiatives web page](#). Well Aware is continuing to offer onsite biometric health screenings to help MCPS employees fulfill this part of the incentive program. For dates, times, and locations, please visit the [Wellness Initiatives web page](#).

InStep with Diabetes

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente are partnering again to hold a diabetes educational program to help pre-diabetics, diagnosed diabetics, and caretakers of diabetics. We have helped staff members lower their A1C levels, control their sugar intake, and lose body fat.

Join us this four-week course focusing on nutrition and diabetes.

Mondays, March 6–27, 2017

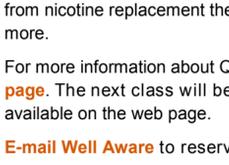
4:30–5:30 p.m.

Maple Room

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register for InStep with Diabetes, [e-mail Well Aware](#).



This Year, Resolve to Quit for Good!

If quitting smoking is among your personal goals for 2017, consider enrolling in the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program offered by Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente.

Quit for Good is a free eight-week class for MCPS staff and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you carry Kaiser Permanente health insurance. The class covers everything from nicotine replacement therapy, coping techniques, stress management, nutrition, and more.

For more information about Quit for Good, please visit Well Aware's [Quit for Good web page](#). The next class will begin in the spring. Dates will be set soon and will be made available on the web page.

[E-mail Well Aware](#) to reserve your spot.

Stress Bringing You Down?

Don't let high stress lead to the winter blues. Try these alternative ways to stress less and beat the blues.

Guided Meditation

Mondays beginning January 23, 2017

5:00–5:45 p.m.

Maple Room (unless announced otherwise)

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga

Wednesdays beginning January 11, 2017

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Café 45 (unless announced otherwise)

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tai Chi

Thursdays beginning January 12, 2017

Lower Level Gym (unless announced otherwise)

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

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

Join Us for Zumba!

Join Well Aware for Zumba at Weller Road Elementary School, Washington Grove Elementary School, or Rocking Horse Road Center! [E-mail Well Aware](#) for details.

Sleep Solutions

Suffer from Insomnia? Try These Sleep Aids

No matter what its cause, insomnia is the most common sleep complaint among Americans. According to the National Sleep Foundation, 30–40 percent of adults say they have occasional insomnia. And, 10–15 percent of Americans say they have trouble sleeping all of the time. If you struggle with insomnia, certain foods, supplements, and herbal remedies may help you get the restful sleep you need.

- Melatonin, a hormone produced by the pineal gland, is one such sleep aid. It helps regulate the sleep/wake cycle, causes drowsiness, lowers body temperature, and puts the body into sleep mode. Melatonin might help people with issues such as jet lag or shift work sleep better. It is not regulated by the FDA though, so you should only use it under close supervision by a doctor.

- The Sleep-Wake Disorders Center at Montefiore Medical Center in New York suggests sleep-inducing foods, which include a combination of protein and carbohydrates. Examples include a light snack of half a banana with a tablespoon of peanut butter, or a whole wheat cracker with some cheese. Eat one of these snacks about 30 minutes before hitting the hay.

- Some people with insomnia benefit from using lavender oil. Research shows that its calming effect can help encourage sleep. Try taking a hot bath with lavender oil before bed to relax your body and mind.

- L-theanine, an amino acid found in green tea leaves, may help combat anxiety that interferes with sleep. A 2007 study showed that L-theanine reduced heart rate and immune responses to stress. It's thought to work by boosting the amount of a feel-good hormone your body makes. It also induces brain waves linked to relaxation.

- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will hold a sleep workshop about sleep myths and proven ways you can improve your sleep and its efficiency. *Improve Your Sleep and Stop Feeling So Tired* will be held Thursday, January 26, 2017, from 4:30–5:30 p.m. in the Aspen Room at 45 W. Gude Drive, Rockville. To register, contact the EAP at 240-314 1040 or [via e-mail](#).

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 e-mail newsletter as a [PDF document](#). Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or [e-mail Well Aware](#).