

## June Well Aware eNews

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

- about this month's wellness champion—members of a Well Aware physical activity challenge team who made small changes and are seeing big results;
- about a webinar from Cigna where you will discover the benefits of positive, collaborative communication with your doctor;
- when and why Wear Blue Day is being held;
- about a challenge to Reach the Beach this summer;
- the names of the Small Changes, Big Results challenge winners; and
- more!



### Don't Miss It

**This month's free webinar—Doc Talk**

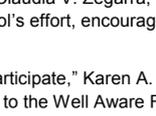
When you visit your doctor, two-way communication can go a long way toward improving your health. Join Well Aware and Cigna to discover the benefits of positive, collaborative communication with your doctor.

**Thursday, June 11, 2015**  
4:00–5:00 p.m.

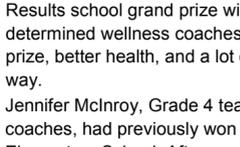
Webinar

Please register for the webinar by e-mailing [Well Aware](#). You will receive a link to it 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 Find Many Ways to Stay Motivated



### Ritchie Park Elementary School's Physical Activity Challenge Participants

Ritchie Park Elementary School's physical activity challenge participants burst onto the scene in the fall 2014 and wound up one of 10 Small Changes, Big Results school grand prize winners. Three very determined wellness coaches led the group to the big prize, better health, and a lot of camaraderie along the way.

Jennifer McInroy, Grade 4 teacher and one of Ritchie Park Elementary School's wellness coaches, had previously won another Well Aware challenge while employed at Watkins Mill Elementary School. After convincing Ritchie Park Elementary School staff how easy it is to participate in—and win—a challenge, Jen and fellow coaches Claudia V. Zegarra, school secretary, and Ethline Black, school nurse, organized the school's effort, encouraged other staff to join the challenge, and helped them get started.

"Ritchie Park's wellness coaches made it very easy for us to participate," Karen A. Gramzinski, Grade 4 teacher, said. "They helped us figure out how to log in to the Well Aware Fitness Log, for instance. Often, there is a reluctance to add one more thing to our plates, but they did and their support made it easy."

Once underway, the group from Ritchie Park found many reasons to stay motivated. The drive to get and stay healthy continues to be a primary motivator.

"The biggest motivation for me is staying fit and healthy," Ethline said. "Being part of a challenge keeps me focused on my choice of foods and also keeps me moving!"

Others also appreciate the incentives Well Aware offers as well as the value of teamwork.

"You can win cool prizes for your staff and school to help you keep fit," Sally A. White, paraeducator, said.

"The incentives are huge motivators, but I think being part of a team is what motivates all of us the most—we keep each other in check," Claudia said.

Teamwork leads to a commonality of purpose that includes sharing healthy eating and exercise tips, along with each other's successes.

"I love to share what I am doing to stay healthy and hear what others are doing, Sarah L. Porter, Grade 2 teacher, said. "One teacher brought me her healthy leftovers! It's great to meet at the copy machine and compare biceps or do a burpee!"

"The challenges are a great way to work together towards a common goal, and they're fun," Caroline B. Capoccia, counselor, said.

Since winning the school grand prize in last fall's challenge, Ritchie Park Elementary School employees have seen many positive changes at their school. They encourage other schools to get on board in the fall.

"People have come up to me, after a challenge is over, to tell me they can't wait until another one starts," Jen said. They really enjoy it!"

## InSTEP with Diabetes

Diabetes affects more than 25 million adults in the United States. Are you or your spouse living with diabetes? Join Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente for InSTEP with Diabetes, an eight-week, on-site program to help you better understand the disease and learn skills for healthy living. Topics will include: diabetes facts, nutrition and food choices, physical activity, testing your blood sugar, diabetes medicines, and recommended care. You do not need to be a Kaiser Permanente member to participate.

Registration is underway for our summer class. Take advantage of your summer break and gain control of your health and wellness! Space is limited for the eight-week class, which will take place on Wednesdays, June 24–August 12, 2015, at 12:30 p.m. For more information or to register for the class, [e-mail Well Aware](#). Print and share our [flyer](#).

## Stress Less This Summer

Join Well Aware and treat your body to a relaxing tai chi or seated yoga class this summer. Unlike a traditional workout, yoga and tai chi focus on precise movements that allow the body to slowly transition from one position to the next. Both practices attempt to coordinate the muscles, bones, heart, and mind with the positive energy that surrounds the body.

### Seated Yoga

Have you ever wanted to take a yoga class but were worried about getting on and off the floor? Perhaps you assume that to practice yoga you must be super flexible and perfectly calm?

You can now get all of the benefits of yoga without all of the worry. Join Well Aware for Seated Yoga, a series where you will learn how gentle breathing and simple exercises from a chair can lower your stress and strengthen your body. The series will be held—

**Wednesdays, June 17, June 24, July 1, July 8, July 15, August 5, August 12, August 19, 2015**  
4:30–5:30 p.m.

Café 45  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Tai Chi

If you are looking for a way to reduce stress, consider tai chi. Originally developed for self-defense, tai chi has evolved into a graceful form of exercise that is now used to reduce stress and to treat or prevent many health problems. Often described as meditation in motion, tai chi promotes serenity through gentle, flowing movements. Join Well Aware for our ongoing tai chi classes to be held as follows—

**Thursdays, June 25–August 13, 2015**  
4:30–5:00 p.m. and 5:00–5:30 p.m.

Café 45  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

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

## Summer Zumba

Join Well Aware and Cigna for a six-week summer zumba class!

**Thursdays, June 18, June 25, July 2, July 9, July 16, July 23, 2015**  
4:00–5:00 p.m.

Argyle Middle School  
2400 Bel Pre Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20906

[E-mail Lisa Cooperstein](#), wellness coordinator, **WEEKLY** to RSVP and hold your space. There is a limit of 40 students per class. Each week, after 40 participants have signed up, you will be waitlisted and notified of openings via e-mail.

## Reach the Beach

Are you looking for a physical activity challenge to keep you active over the summer? Well Aware has got you covered! Join us from June 22–August 7, 2015, for a six-week summer physical activity challenge.

Ocean City, Maryland is about 150 miles from Montgomery County, Maryland. Your goal is to average about five hours of physical activity per week to virtually get from Montgomery County to Ocean City. Each hour of activity equals five miles, and with six weeks to get to Ocean City, you have plenty of time!

Enter your activity in the online [Well Aware Fitness Log](#). At the end of the six weeks, we will choose five winners at random from those who have completed the 150 miles and reached Ocean City. The winners will receive a healthy smoothie party sponsored by Cigna Healthcare.

## June is Men's Health Month: Wear Blue on Friday, June 12

It is a fact, men live sicker and die younger than women.

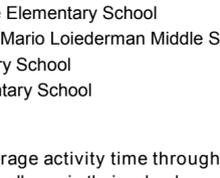
On Friday, June 12, 2015, Montgomery County Public Schools employees are invited to wear blue to encourage men's awareness of making healthy lifestyle choices, visiting the doctor annually, getting educated about heart disease and diabetes, and initiating general health conversations with male family members and friends. Wear Blue was established by Men's Health Network to raise awareness about the importance of men's health and to encourage men to live longer and healthier lives.

In addition, as the month that includes Father's Day, June is a great time to remind the men in your life to schedule health screenings. Give the gift of health to your dad, husband, son, or brother. See a [schedule of important screenings](#) for men (and women).

[E-mail Well Aware](#) with photos of your coworkers wearing blue on June 12.

## Let Us Help You Quit for Good

Sometimes, accepting help is the best thing you can do for yourself.



Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again this fall to bring you the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program. This free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or have medical coverage with Kaiser Permanente.

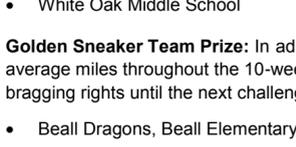
The program is course-based and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Discussion topics will include the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco free, risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy 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](#).

The next Quit for Good session will begin Wednesday, October 14, 2015. Meetings occur weekly, starting at 4:30 p.m. in the Maple Room of 45 West Gude Drive, Rockville.

To participate, register by [e-mailing Well Aware](#).

## Wellness Initiatives Can Save You Money!

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program provides you with incentives to reduce your health insurance costs for 2016 and beyond. If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan, complete your biometric health screenings and your insurance provider's annual health assessment by October 9, 2015—and yearly thereafter—to take advantage of the rate reductions, effective January 1, 2016. *Take the Wellness Initiative!* [Learn more](#).



## Small Changes, Big Results Winners List

Nearly 6,150 Montgomery County Public Schools employees made small lifestyle changes to accomplish big results in Well Aware's spring physical activity challenge. They competed for prizes and, more importantly, adopted or maintained healthy lifestyles. Each of the top 10 schools averaged 88.5 minutes of physical activity per participant per day. This is an increase of 7.5 minutes over last fall!

Congratulations to all those who improved their health by participating!

The following 10 **Overall Lifestyle Change Award** winners each will receive a \$200 gift card for having the greatest decrease in Body Mass Index over the course of the challenge:

- Nancy E. Ale, content specialist, Earle B. Wood Middle School
- Mary Dempsey, classroom teacher, Winston Churchill High School
- Linda K. Gardner, fiscal assistant, Division of Bethesda Maintenance
- Wayne E. Gregg, assistant supervisor, Bethesda Maintenance Depot
- Sean J. Kinney, Grade 1 teacher, Harmony Hills Elementary School
- Christopher Lyons, physical education teacher, William B. Gibbs Elementary School
- Laura A. Money, physical therapist, Washington Grove Elementary School
- Mary Kate Ryan-Griffith, special education teacher, A. Mario Loiederman Middle School
- Keryn P. Saffell, kindergarten teacher, Beall Elementary School
- Norma A. Villavicencio, Grade 4 teacher, Beall Elementary School

Grand prize winners are as follows:

**Team Grand Prize:** The top 10 teams with the most average activity time throughout the 10-week challenge will receive a \$1,000 grant to promote wellness in their schools or offices. Teams needed to log at least 30 minutes per person/per day of activity to be eligible for the prize. They are:

- Beall Dragons, Beall Elementary School
- Blocks of Granite, A. Mario Loiederman Middle School
- Goal Diggers, Parkland Middle School
- HHES Goal Getters, Harmony Hills Elementary School
- Kindercise, Harmony Hills Elementary School
- No Days Off, Neelsville Middle School
- Prestige Worldwide Part Duh, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
- Silver Spring International, Silver Spring International Middle School
- Spring Chickens, White Oak Middle School
- 2 Fast 1 Furious, Harmony Hills Elementary School

**School Grand Prize:** The top 10 schools with the most average activity time throughout the 10-week challenge will receive a \$1,000 grant to be used for physical education equipment or to support staff wellness. Schools needed to log at least 30 minutes per person/per day of activity to be eligible for the prize. They are:

- Carderock Springs Elementary School
- East Silver Spring Elementary School
- Fairland Elementary School
- Harmony Hills Elementary School
- A. Mario Loiederman Middle School
- Neelsville Middle School
- John Poole Middle School
- Ritchie Park Elementary School
- Rosemary Hills Elementary School
- White Oak Middle School

**Golden Sneaker Team Prize:** In addition to a grant, the top team overall with the most average miles throughout the 10-week challenge has won the Golden Sneaker Trophy and bragging rights until the next challenge. The winner is:

- Beall Dragons, Beall Elementary School

Although the Small Changes, Big Results challenge has come to an end, the [Well Aware Fitness Log](#) continues to provide a resource for you to track your physical activity and diet. Well Aware will begin a new and exciting year of wellness activities and challenges this fall. Watch for details in upcoming issues of the *Well Aware eNews* and *The Bulletin* and on the [Well Aware website](#).

## Thank You, Well Aware Participants, for Making It a Healthier School Year!

Well Aware staff would like to thank you for your participation in its wellness programs during the 2014–2015 school year! Not only have you taken the steps to improve your own health, you also are doing your part to help Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) build a lasting culture of wellness.

This year, we worked together to—

- become recognized by the American Heart Association, the Alliance for Workplace Excellence, and Healthiest Maryland Businesses;
- lose and log more than 3,350 pounds;
- give grants to further wellness programs at 145 schools and offices;
- help many InStep with Diabetes participants successfully manage or prevent diabetes;
- climb 821 flights of stairs in the world's tallest buildings;
- grow our educational video library; and
- much more!

Thank you again for your participation and your feedback this school year. We encourage you to keep active and eat healthy this summer. Remember that the online [Well Aware Fitness Log](#) is available to you over the summer.

We look forward to sharing new and exciting programs with MCPS staff in the fall.

The 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](#).