

May Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champions—five teachers from South Lake Elementary School who trained for and ran last month's Rock 'n' Roll half marathon;
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna on the causes of sleep disorders and how to have a restful sleep without medication;
- opportunities for physical activity this summer;
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month,
- this year's Bike to Work Day;
- an update on the Spring Training challenge; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar— Up All Night

Do you have a hard time falling asleep at night? Are you not getting enough sleep? Learn about the causes of sleep disorders and some relaxing tactics that will help you have a restful night without medication.

Wednesday, May 17, 2017
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

West Farm Bus Depot
 11920 Bournefield Way
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

Thursday, May 18, 2017
 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

Thursday, May 25, 2017
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Shady Grove Bus Depot
 16651 Crabbs Branch Way
 Rockville, Maryland 20855

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.

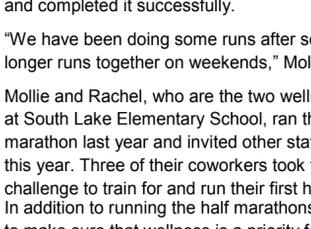
Spread the word with our **printable flyer**. See the **Wellness Webinar Library**.

Presented by:



Wellness Champions Run Half Marathon, Help Make Wellness a Priority at Their School

Rock 'n' Roll D.C. Half Marathon Group, South Lake Elementary School



From left to right: **Yelena Coulibaly, Mollie Gansky, Rachel Sidney, Tanya Ventura, and Sydney Sims**

Last December, five teachers from South Lake Elementary School began training for Rock 'n' Roll D.C., a half marathon held on March 11, 2017. Yelena Coulibaly, Mollie Gansky, Rachel Sidney, Sydney Sims, and Tanya Ventura worked hard to prepare for the race and completed it successfully.

"We have been doing some runs after school and longer runs together on weekends," Mollie said.

Mollie and Rachel, who are the two wellness coaches at South Lake Elementary School, ran the half marathon last year and invited other staff to join them this year. Three of their coworkers took them up on the challenge to train for and run their first half marathon.

In addition to running the half marathons, Mollie and Rachel have gone above and beyond to make sure that wellness is a priority for the staff at South Lake. They now refer to the last Wednesday of every month as "Wellness Wednesday." School staff invites people from the community to join them at the school to participate in different wellness activities.

Participants have had the chance to try Zumba and learn easy exercises they can do at home. Also, Mollie and Rachel taught staff and community members how to make healthy snacks including fruit kebabs, trail mix, and pumpkin oatmeal cookies.

"It has been so much fun, and we are so excited about continuing Wellness Wednesdays for the school community," Mollie said. "We love being able to use our passion for wellness to inspire our school community to do the same."

Opportunities for Physical Activity This Summer

Tai Chi

Join Well Aware as we continue our tai chi practice throughout the summer. Are you new to tai chi? No problem! You can join any class to enjoy this stress-relieving practice.

Thursdays, June 29–August 3, 2017

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Café 45

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Sit and Be Fit

Join Well Aware this summer and try a new and exciting physical activity class! Sit and Be Fit is a total body resistance training workout for beginners who may have limited mobility or for those who are working up to a traditional resistance training class.

Mondays, June 19–August 21, 2017

4:45–5:45 p.m.

Café 45

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga

Join Well Aware this summer and learn basic yoga techniques in a comfortable environment.

Wednesdays, July 5–August 23, 2017

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Café 45

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register for any of these classes, **e-mail Well Aware**.

Bike to Work Day is Coming!

Last year, a record breaking 17,583 people registered for the Washington Area Bicyclist Association's (WABA's) Bike to Work Day. This year, WABA and Commuter Connections invite you to join area commuters on Friday, May 19, 2017, for a celebration of bicycling as a clean, fun, and healthy way to get to work. Help us break the record again!

Attend one of 86 pit stops throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia to receive refreshments and enter a raffle for free bicycles. Free T-shirts also are available at the pit stops to the first 15,000 who register and attend.

Learn more and/or register for the event.

Wellness Initiatives: Complete Your Health Risk Assessment and Biometric Health Screening and Save

Completing your health risk assessment each year gives you the information you need to take better control of your health and well-being. And that's important, because when you are running at 100 percent, being fit and in good spirits will go a long way to help you perform at your best.

Take your medical insurance plan's 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; and
- discover interactive tools and educational information that can give you more details on your health status.

Managing and improving your health has never been easier. And, when you complete your Health Risk Assessment by October 6, 2017, MCPS will pay 1 percent more of the total cost of your 2018 health insurance premiums—reducing your contribution by 1 percent. To get started, visit the **Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page**. You will find links for accessing the CareFirst, Cigna, and Kaiser Permanente Health Risk Assessments. You will also find helpful tutorials to guide you through the log-in process. **Learn more.**

In addition to the health risk assessment, you can save another 1 percent of the cost of your health insurance by completing a biometric health screening. This means that you either have an annual preventive physical exam with your primary care physician or attend a Well Aware health screening before October 6, 2017. If you are covered by CareFirst, make sure to submit its **Health and Wellness Evaluation form**. If you are a member of Kaiser Permanente, you will need to log in to the **Kaiser Permanente incentive portal** to complete its requirements.

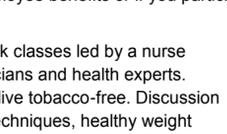
Learn more about Wellness Initiatives.

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month

High blood pressure (also known as hypertension) is the leading risk factor for death in both men and women. For this reason, May has been designated as National High Blood Pressure Education Month. The campaign's mission is to encourage men and women to check, change, and control their blood pressure.

You may know that eating too much sodium increases your risk for high blood pressure. How much sodium is too much? Find out **here**.

It's Your Turn to 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 led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Participants will learn 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 **Well Aware website**.

For more information on the Quit for Good class and to register for the next class, **e-mail Well Aware**.

Sleep Solutions

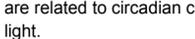
Is Artificial Light Disrupting Your Sleep?

More and more studies are showing that artificial light exposure is disturbing normal, healthy sleep. It does this by disrupting the body's natural sleep regulation (circadian rhythm). Exposure to artificial light changes the hormone melatonin, thereby negatively altering the body's natural sleep cycles.

Circadian rhythms operate on a 24-hour cycle, in step with night and day. Sleep and many other biological processes, such as digestion, hormone regulation, and immune function, are related to circadian cycles, and are influenced by both the presence and absence of light.

When people watch television or look at their phones or tablets on a blue light emitting device, it takes them longer to fall asleep, they have less REM sleep, and wake up feeling tired. It is important to avoid using technology for at least 30 minutes before bedtime, and avoid using energy efficient blue bulbs in nightlights.

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**.



Spring Training Update

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

Let the *Spring Training Challenge* inspire you to become your most active self. There is still time to participate to regain your health and win prizes! Your activity and weight loss updates need to be entered in the online **Well Aware Fitness Log** by noon on Monday, May 22, 2017.

Spirit Award

Do you have a coworker who has gone above and beyond to 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, **e-mail Well Aware**. Nominations are due by Monday May 22, 2017.

Stay tuned!

Grand prize winners will be announced in the May 23rd issue of *The Bulletin*!

Don't stop now!

Maintain your active lifestyle and look for information about this fall's wellness programs on the **Well Aware web page**, in the **Well Aware eNews**, and in **The Bulletin**.