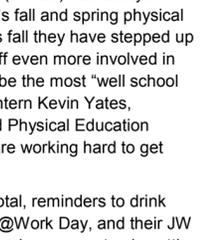


November Well Aware eNews

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

- a seminar/webinar on the causes and successful management of diabetes,
- an update on our trip *To the Moon*,
- another chance to get InStep with Diabetes,
- healthy habits and practices to follow during the holidays, and
- more!

Wellness Champions Aim to Be the “Most Well School Staff”



JWMS Principal Craig Staton and colleague out for a run

Julius West Middle School (JWMS) has always participated in Well Aware’s fall and spring physical activity challenges, but this fall they have stepped up their efforts to get their staff even more involved in wellness. In an attempt to be the most “well school staff in MCPS,” Principal Intern Kevin Yates, Principal Craig Staton, and Physical Education Teacher Shauna Carado are working hard to get their coworkers engaged.

Between their school lap total, reminders to drink water, participation in Run@Work Day, and their JW Commit2BFit club, staff members are not only getting healthy, but they are socializing, and modeling healthy behaviors for the students.

Kevin was sold on the idea of staff wellness after attending a presentation at a MCAAP conference.

“We believe that a healthy staff translates to a healthy school,” Kevin said. “Studies show that teachers who feel good are happy, invested, and ready to do the heavy lifting that is required when working with adolescent learners.” JWMS is very proud of its wellness programs.

“We challenged our staff to walk laps on the outdoor track or inside the school, and to enter these steps on our own Google survey,” Kevin said. “We pick a winner from the entries each month and raffle off prizes, including free visits to local gyms.”

The school’s teachers have been seeing bringing their classes outside to walk and/or jog laps with them. Not only are staff getting active, but the students are receiving much needed brain breaks too. This supports JWMS’s Active Classrooms initiative as part of its School Improvement Plan.

“We want our students to see us being active so that they will be willing to jump on board with daily physical activity too,” Kevin said.

JWMS has developed a very well-rounded wellness strategy. Before school on Tuesday mornings, Jeff Brink, physical education teacher, leads a staff-only fitness class. The school staff have plans to create a staff wellness room, coordinate staff vs. student basketball games, establish staff softball teams, and hold a 5K Color Run, among other activities.

“Our wellness goals are to use physical activity as a way to maintain lifelong health, relieve stress, improve our mental health, and be role models to our students,” Kevin said.

“Wellness is a continuum that you must work at by including physical, mental, and social health. We strive to improve our balance of these wellness areas each and every day.”

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November Is American Diabetes Month

Observed every November, American Diabetes Month is an important element in the American Diabetes Association’s efforts to focus our nation’s attention on the disease and the tens of millions of people affected by it.

Because there is no cure for diabetes, the focus is on prevention. If you have risk factors or **symptoms**, or are pre-diabetic, the following are ways to prevent or delay onset of diabetes:

- **Get physically active.** Just 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, five times a week, reduces your risk of diabetes. If you haven’t been active, start with 5–10 minutes a day and gradually work your way up to 30 minutes.
- **Eat healthy.** It may seem hard to eat healthy if you are on a budget or always crunched for time. You are more likely to adopt healthy eating habits if you start with small changes. Look for ways to make your meals healthy by choosing—
 - ◊ Non-starchy vegetables—carrots, broccoli, green beans, kale, and cauliflower
 - ◊ Lean meats—skinless chicken and turkey and lean cuts of pork and beef
 - ◊ Low-fat dairy products—skim milk and fat-free yogurts
 - ◊ Whole grains—brown rice, barley, farro, and quinoa
 - ◊ Healthy fats in small amounts—olive, canola, sunflower, and peanut oil
- **If you smoke or use tobacco—quit.**

Here is additional educational information on diabetes:

- [Gestational Diabetes](#)
- [Preventing Type 2 Diabetes](#)

InStep with Diabetes

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente have teamed together to offer a four-week educational diabetes program called InStep with Diabetes. It is geared towards those diagnosed with diabetes to help control the disease as well as those with pre-diabetes to help prevent a further diagnosis. Are you interested in participating in the next session? **E-mail Well Aware** and we will update you on the dates and locations of upcoming classes.

To the Moon Challenge

To the Moon: Well Aware’s Fall Physical Activity Challenge

To the Moon, Well Aware’s fall physical activity challenge, is well under way! With 170+ teams registered, there is a lot of school and team competition for the grand prize grants! There still is time to join us as we get moving and travel the 250,000 miles to the moon! For details, visit the [Well Aware web page](#).

It Will Soon Be Time to Enter the Sweet-free Zone



During the holiday season, you can be easily tempted to eat and drink foods that are high in fat, sugar, and calories. Social events, parties, and gifts throughout the holiday season can influence you to stray from your healthy diet. However, there are healthy habits and practices you can follow during the holidays to stay on track with your diet and avoid overindulging in an excessive amount of sweets.

- Stay active on a daily basis.
- Drink water to stay hydrated and decrease hunger.
- Get an adequate amount of sleep to help decrease cravings.
- Eat foods rich in natural sugars as opposed to those rich in processed sugars.
- Enjoy your favorite holiday treats, just limit the portion size.

Is your school or office interested in taking the sweet-free challenge? Post [this flyer](#) on the staff lounge or break room door to designate the area as a sweet-free zone. Feel free to share the ideas on the flyer with your school’s PTA to promote a culture of wellness during the holiday season. **E-mail Well Aware** to let us know how your staff is celebrating the holiday season in a healthy way.

Quit for Good!

Ready to Quit? Here’s a Way and a Day!

Quitting smoking is not easy. It takes time and a plan. You don’t have to stop smoking in one day, you just have to start with one day. Let this year’s **Great American Smokeout** on November 15 be the day you start your journey toward a smoke-free life. You will be joining thousands of smokers across the country in taking an important step toward a healthier life and reducing your cancer risk. Plus, the American Cancer Society has [the resources and support](#) you need to quit.

Quitting smoking has immediate and long-term benefits at any age. Quitting is hard, but you can increase your chances of success with help. Getting help through counseling or medications can double or triple your chance of quitting successfully.

Are you ready to quit? *Quit for Good*, Well Aware’s free tobacco cessation program for MCPS employees and their spouses, can help. Tobacco-users who complete the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program can have the 25 percent tobacco-user surcharge waived and, depending on when the program is completed, refunded. [Learn more](#). If you are interested in getting on the list for the next *Quit for Good* class, **e-mail Well Aware**.

Do you know a smoker and would like to help them quit? Review these [do’s and don’ts](#).

Wellness Initiatives

Did you miss the opportunity to save money on your 2019 health insurance? Did you know that each year you have an opportunity to earn up to 2 percent back on your health insurance premiums by simply completing a biometric health screening and filling out an online health risk assessment? For more information, please visit the [Wellness Initiatives for Employees website](#). Begin taking the [wellness] initiative for 2020 now!

Stress Less This Fall

With the sun setting earlier and busier fall schedules setting in, stress can slowly creep up on you. Stress causes a chemical reaction in your body that can increase your heart rate, breathing rhythm, and muscle tension. Although a little bit of stress is okay, being in a state of high-stress for long periods of time can lead to many detrimental health effects such as insomnia, headaches, high blood pressure, obesity, and a weakened immune system. Luckily there are many proven ways to manage stress and welcome the holiday season with reasonable expectations and the energy to realize them.

Follow these few tips and join Well Aware for one of the classes below to stay ahead of the game and beat the fall funk.

Mindfulness and Meditation

Mondays through December 17 (except holidays)
 5:00–5:45 p.m.
 Conference Room 223
 Carver Educational Services Center
 850 Hungerford Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga

Wednesdays
 November 7, 14, 28
 December 5, 12, 19
 4:45 p.m.
 Café 45 (Lower Level)
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Sit and Be Fit

Tuesdays through December 18
 4:45 p.m.
 Café 45 (Lower Level)
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tai Chi

Thursdays
 4:45 p.m.
 Lower Level Gym
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Zumba

Mondays
 4:30–5:30 p.m.
 Gymnasium
 Flora M. Singer Elementary School
 2600 Hayden Drive
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Tuesdays and Thursdays
 3:00 p.m.

John F. Kennedy High School
 1901 Randolph Road
 Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Register here

Fridays
 4:30 p.m.
 Washington Grove Elementary School
 8712 Oakmont Street
 Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

To register for any of these classes (except for the Zumba class at John F. Kennedy High School), **e-mail Well Aware**.

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**.