

The education you need for the health you want

October Well Aware eNews

- Welcome to the October issue of the Well Aware eNews! Read on to learn about—
- this month's wellness champions, a middle school that won both a \$500 grant and a healthy cooking demonstration for its success in last spring's *Le Tour de Fitness* physical activity challenge;
- a seminar/webinar on women's health;
- how you can put your Minutes in Motion;
- the Centers for Disease Control's *Bring Your Brave* campaign;
- Depression Screening Day; and
- more!

Wellness Champions Cook Up Fun Wellness Activities for Staff



Catherine A. Stanton, media assistant, and Sara E. Edelberg, speech pathologist, William H. Farquhar Middle School

Wellness coaches Catherine (Cathy) A. Stanton, media assistant, and Sara E. Edelberg, speech pathologist, at William H. Farquhar Middle School have come up with some exciting ideas for their school's staff wellness program in the 2019–2020 school year.

"Thanks to winning a healthy cooking demo as a result of last spring's physical activity challenge, we are cooking up (pun intended) some fun things for this year," Cathy said.

Farquhar Middle School started its staff wellness journey during one of the Well Aware physical activity challenges. Cathy believes the challenges provide a good framework for schools to begin focusing on physical activity and healthy eating.

"The challenges make it easy for staff to share the journey together," Cathy said. "It is a great way to find coworkers who are interested in wellness and, if you're really lucky, you'll also find an enthusiastic partner with whom you can grow a terrific program and lasting friendship."



Don't Miss It

This month's free webinar— Women's Health: Taking Care of You

This seminar delivers tips for women to ensure a healthy lifestyle with a focus on heart, breast, and bone health, as well as ways to manage menopause symptoms.

Thursday, October 17, 2019 10:00–11:00 a.m. Shady Grove Bus Depot 16651 Crabbs Branch Way Rockville, Maryland 20855

Wednesday, October 23, 2019 10:00–11:00 a.m. West Farm Bus Depot 11920 Bournefield Way

Silver Spring, Maryland 20904 Thursday, October 24, 2019 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. Visit the Wellness Webinar Library.

Presented by: Kaiser Permanente

The wellness program at Farquhar is supported from the top. Principal Joel Beidleman acknowledges the hard work that Cathy and Sara are continuing to put in and is looking forward to upcoming activities.

"We understand that all of the events can't be based on healthy eating alone," Joel said. "We are exploring ways to increase opportunities for healthy *activities*. We recognize, too, the need to address social emotional well-being."

During the January professional day, Farquhar staff will be able to meet representatives from local gyms and wellness programs. In addition, school leaders will continue to look for opportunities to decrease levels of stress and anxiety for staff.

"In addition to staff wellness, Farquhar prides itself in addressing the whole person, as well as the whole community," Joel said. "Farquhar emphasizes the importance of its staff maintaining a balanced life, a balance that includes supporting happy families, maximizing potential at work, and encouraging each person to practice self-care."

The school supports self-care by planning many intentional events for staff. These events include: cooking classes; pop-up healthy snack, breakfast, and restaurant sampling bars with a focus on clean eating; seated chair message therapy sessions by outside businesses; and exercise classes, including core strengthening, Zumba, and meditation yoga. The school also provides staff with access to its gymnasium equipment one hour before the start of the school day and two hours following the end of each day.

Mr. Beidleman has a long-term vision for the program.

"Our vision is to ensure that wellness becomes a way of life for our staff, not an occasional endeavor," he said.

Sara has some advice for schools looking to start a staff wellness program.

"Start small and support each other," she said. "Having supportive team leaders has made a huge difference in our activity challenges."





Modern society is geared for sitting. We sit at our desks while working, at tables while eating or meeting, and in our cars during long commutes. Since sitting uses far less energy that standing or moving, we burn 1,000 fewer calories a day than generations before us. Even a two minute walk, or stretching at your desk can help ward off dementia, diabetes, anxiety, deep vein thrombosis, weight gain, back pain, and many other physical and mental health problems.

This fall, MCPS Well Aware is encouraging staff to find *minutes* in the day for movement during the *Minutes in Motion* physical activity challenge. And, throughout the 10-week challenge, to build on these minutes with the goal of 30 minutes of accumulated activity per day.

Participants will log their activity throughout the challenge and track their progress using the online **Well Aware Fitness Log**. Based on participation, you will be eligible to win prizes for yourself, your team, and your school or office.

Gather your team! *Minutes in Motion* started on Monday, September 23, but there is plenty of time to join us! Form a team or train as an individual.

For more information on the challenge, including important dates, visit the Well Aware website.

Attest and, If You Use Tobacco, *Quit for Good* to Avoid the Tobacco-user Surcharge

Employee Benefits Open Enrollment begins next week and is your chance to attest to your and your spouse's tobacco-use status.* If you are a non-tobacco-user and fail to attest, you will pay a 25 percent surcharge on the total cost of your health insurance in 2020.

Tobacco-users also must make their attestation during Open Enrollment every year. Those who register for and complete the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program can have the surcharge waived and, depending on when the program is completed, refunded.

MCPS and Kaiser Permanente have been teaming up since 2011 to bring you *Quit for Good*. 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 Permanente.

The program is course-based and led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Classes cover the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources. Learn more by visiting the *Quit for Good* web page.

Classes are filling up! You must register to participate by e-mailing Well Aware. *Open Enrollment will be held October 7–November 1, 2019. Tobacco attestation instructions will be included in the annual Open Enrollment announcement e-mail that you will receive in your Outlook inbox on Friday, October 4.

Wear Pink to Raise Breast Cancer Awareness

Wear Pink Day will be held this year on Friday, October 18, 2019. Join your MCPS coworkers and wear pink that day to raise breast cancer awareness.

Among American women, breast cancer, along with skin cancer, is the most common cancer. Getting mammograms regularly can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women who are 50 to 74 years of age have a screening mammogram every two years. Those 40 to 49 years old should talk with their doctors about when to start and how often to have a screening mammogram.

The Centers for Disease Control launched the *Bring Your Brave* program to provide information about breast cancer to women younger than age 45. The campaign tells real stories about young women whose lives have been affected by breast cancer. These stories about prevention, risk, family history, and survivorship bring to life the idea that young women can be personally affected by breast cancer. Through these testimonials, *Bring Your Brave* aims to inspire young women to learn their risk for breast cancer, talk with their health care provider about their risk, and live a breast-healthy lifestyle.

• Learn more about the importance of family history, genetic counseling, and lifestyle choices.

• View testimonials from the *Bring Your Brave* campaign.

Wear Pink Day is a great opportunity to speak with coworkers, family, and friends about breast cancer warning signs and to encourage self-checks and mammograms. Also, be sure to take photos of you and your coworkers wearing pink and share them with Well Aware!

Stress Less This Fall

If you are living with high levels of stress, you are putting your entire well-being at risk. Stress wreaks havoc on your emotional wellness, as well as on your physical health. It makes it harder to think clearly, function effectively, and enjoy life.

Effective stress management, on the other hand, helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the flexibility to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. But stress management is not one-size-fits-all. That's why it's important to experiment and find out what works best for you.

Well Aware will offer the following classes this fall to help you stress less:

Mindfulness and Meditation

Mondays through December 16 (except holidays) 5:00–5:45 p.m. Conference Room 223 Carver Educational Services Center 850 Hungerford Drive Rockville, Maryland 20850 Register here

Seated Yoga

Wednesdays October 16*, 23, 30

November 6, 13, 20* December 4, 11 4:45 p.m. Café 45 (unless indicated otherwise) 45 West Gude Drive Rockville, Maryland 20850 Register here

Tai Chi

Thursdays*** 4:30 p.m. Robinson Room 45 West Gude Drive Rockville, Maryland 20850

Yoga

Wednesdays, October 16–November 20 3:45–4:45 p.m. Parkland Middle School 4610 West Frankfort Drive Rockville Maryland 20853 Register here

*Maple Room

Robinson Room *For tai chi schedule and registration information, e-mail Well Aware.

Fall Physical Activity Classes

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your heart, your mind, and your overall wellness. Consider trying one of the classes below to see what kind of physical activity is best for you!

Sit and Be Fit

Tuesdays 4:45–5:45 p.m. Café 45 45 West Gude Drive Rockville, Maryland 20850 Register here

Zumba

Fridays 4:30–5:30 p.m. Washington Grove Elementary School 8712 Oakmont Street Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877 Register **here**

Zumba

Mondays 4:00 p.m. Cafeteria Carver Educational Services Center 850 Hungerford Drive Rockville, Maryland 20850 Register here

Zumba

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00-4:00 p.m. Dance Studio John F. Kennedy High School 1901 Randolph Road Silver Spring, Maryland 20902 Register here

Zumba

Tuesdays 4:30–5:30 p.m. Gymnasium Wheaton Woods Elementary School 4510 Faroe Place Rockville, Maryland 20853 Register here

Zumba

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

Zumba

Thursdays, through November 7 3:30–4:30 p.m. A Mario Loiederman Middle School 12701 Goodhill Road Silver Spring, Maryland 20906 Register **here**

Depression: Shining Light on a Difficult Subject

We all feel sad from time to time. It's a normal, temporary reaction to upsetting experiences in life. Depression is different. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life—eating, sleeping, working and more. It affects not just the person with depression, but also those who care about them. Most people who experience depression need treatment to get better.

Roughly 40 million adults in the U.S. struggle with depression or anxiety. National Depression Screening Day is held annually on October 10 and is important for many reasons. First, it can help people make and receive an informed diagnosis. It also brings the conditions out of the darkness and into the light of day. And, perhaps most importantly, it can bring help to those that need it.

Know the signs and symptoms of depression

If you experience any of the following symptoms for two weeks or longer, you may have depression:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Difficulty sleeping, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering

Understanding depression

There are different types of depression and they can impact people in different ways. It is best to start treatment early, but it's important to know all forms of depression can be treated. They include—

- Major depression—severe symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, sleep, study, eat and enjoy life.
- Persistent depressive disorder—a depressed mood that lasts for at least two years.
- Postpartum depression—more serious than the normal "baby blues" many women experience after giving birth.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)—depression sets in during the winter months, when there is less natural sunlight. The depression typically fades during spring and summer.

Treatment for depression

Depression is usually treated with medicines and/or talk therapy (psychotherapy). Typically, there is some trial and error to find the right medication because no two people are affected the same way by depression. It can take several weeks of treatment before you begin to feel better. It is essential to follow your doctor's treatment plan to keep depression from returning.

Every situation is different; there are resources available to help:

- If you are having thoughts of death or suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 or call 911 immediately.
- Talk with your doctor to find the right treatment options.

Depression Screenings

The MCPS Employee Assistance Program (EAP) conducts screenings for depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The screenings take less than 30 minutes and are available for all MCPS employees and their family members. Screenings are free and confidential and provide an opportunity to learn more about depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders; complete a brief screening questionnaire; and speak one-on-one with a mental health professional. If appropriate, referrals will be made for a complete evaluation.

Call the EAP at 240-314-1040 if you have questions and/or to schedule an appointment. Appointments are available from 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the EAP offices, 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 1300, Rockville.

Flu Awareness

Did you know a cough can travel up to 100 mph and reach as far as 20 feet? Flu season is fast approaching! Ranging from October through April, an estimated 5-20 percent of Americans get the flu each year with symptoms lasting for up to two weeks.

Here are some easy ways to protect yourself from colds and the flu.

Pathways Program

MCPS and Kaiser Permanente are partnering together to offer a program to help you gain control and lose weight in the New Year. This 12-week program, *Pathways*, begins in January 2020, and will offer a variety of topics as well as a weekly weigh-in to keep you accountable in your weight loss journey. For more information **e-mail Well Aware**.

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