

September Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champions, an elementary school ESOL teacher who reduced her stress and increased her energy levels through running;
- a webinar on ways to unplug from the digital world to restore your body and mind;
- free access to Montgomery County recreation facilities for MCPS employees;
- a new physical activity challenge for the fall;
- this year's RUN@WORK Day; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free webinar—**Digital Detox**

As an integral part of our lives, technology is hard to avoid these days. This first webinar of the school year will cover the impact digital devices have on our health and provide tips on how to unplug to help the body and mind rejuvenate.

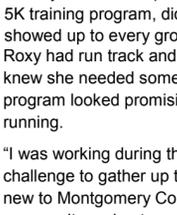
Thursday, September 26, 2019
 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Please register for the webinar by **e-mailing Well Aware**. 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

Wellness Champion Runs to De-stress and Re-energize



Roxanna "Roxy" Najera, ESOL teacher, Brown Station Elementary School

Roxy Najera running for her alma mater, The University of Texas at San Antonio

Roxanna "Roxy" Najera, ESOL teacher at Brown Station Elementary School, read about an opportunity in the *Well Aware eNews* and used it to get back into a healthy habit. Last spring, Roxy joined the Well Aware 5K training program, did her running homework, and showed up to every group run.

Roxy had run track and cross country in high school but had not run regularly since. She knew she needed something to gain back her motivation and energy. The 5K training program looked promising, so she took the opportunity to get back into the rhythm of running.

"I was working during the day, working evenings, and taking online classes, so it was a challenge to gather up the motivation and energy to work out," Roxy said. "Since I'm rather new to Montgomery County, I was in search of something that would get me out into the community and get me physically active. The opportunity to join Well Aware's program seemed like the perfect fit."

Roxy found that running again provided a number of positive outcomes. It was a big stress reliever for her, increased her energy, and more.

"The 5K training program gave me time to recharge, especially on days when I ran alone," Roxy said. "I got slimmer, since I was running three to four times a week. In addition, I got to meet some great people who were a great support system."

Roxy has found that running has been a huge help to her in the classroom.

"I've learned that if I can squeeze in a workout in the mornings before school, my energy levels are high throughout the day," Roxy said. "As teachers, we need all the energy we can get so we can be 100 percent for our students."

Roxy has advice for MCPS staff looking to get started in a physical activity program.

"Do a little more each day," Roxy said. "This is a reminder that each day I need to push myself, even if it's just doing two more extra push-ups or running for two extra minutes. This is what progress is all about, and it is what keeps me motivated. Do what you can each day, refrain from negative self-talk, and celebrate your progress big or small."

What is next for Roxy?

"I love dance," Roxy said. "In the past, I have tried Tahitian and belly dance, so I'm considering a new style of dance. Perhaps I'll try hip hop or ballet."

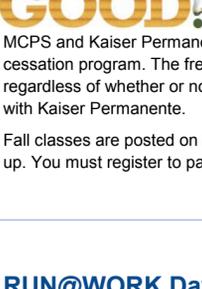
Montgomery County Offers MCPS Employees Free Access to Its Recreation Facilities

As an MCPS employee, you now have free access to all Montgomery County (MC) recreation facilities, including swimming pools and gymnasiums. You also are eligible for a 20 percent discount on an annual pool pass for your family members.

Montgomery County Government is offering this access to its facilities to MCPS employees as part of an overall effort to promote the health and well-being of county employees. By encouraging participation in physical activity to reduce stress and enhance fitness, the county's promotion aligns well with Well Aware's wellness programs.

Interested? **Learn more** and visit the **MC Recreation website** for general information. You may **apply online** for the individual Total Rec Pass. The **Employee Family Pool Pass Application** also is available online. Both passes are valid for one year; you may reapply each year to continue your access to the facilities.

For more information, contact MC Government at 240-777-6840 or **e-mail MC Recreation**.



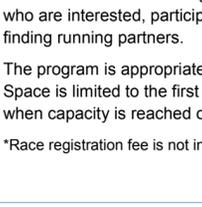
A New Physical Activity Challenge For Fall: *Minutes in Motion*

This fall, MCPS Well Aware is encouraging its staff to find *minutes* in the day for movement during the *Minutes in Motion* physical activity challenge. Starting September 23, find small pockets of time for activity and log them into the Well Aware Fitness Log. Then, build on these *minutes* and reach a goal of 30 minutes of accumulated activity per day.

Research shows that moving and stretching more often, and in short bouts of time, can stop the negative effects of uninterrupted sitting. Even a two-minute walk, or stretch at your desk can help ward off dementia, diabetes, anxiety, deep vein thrombosis, weight gain, back pain, and more.

Encourage your coworkers to join you in several short bursts of activity each day of this 10-week challenge. You may want to form a team to work together to compete in the challenge. Or, participate as an individual. Either way, you could win exciting prizes, including fruit platters and grants to promote wellness at your school or office.

Learn more about the *Minutes in Motion* challenge, including incentives, rules, and more by visiting the **Well Aware website**. Or, simply search for *Minutes in Motion* from any MCPS web page.



It's Time You 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 Permanente.

Fall classes are posted on the **Employee and Retiree Service Center website** and are filling up. You must register to participate by **e-mailing Well Aware**.

RUN@WORK Day is Back!

The Road Runners Club of America will present the 14th Annual RUN@WORK Day nationwide on September 20, 2019. Well Aware encourages you to plan fun runs and walks around MCPS with your coworkers. The goal is to encourage adults to get 30 minutes of exercise each day, in accordance with the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, either before work, during lunch, or right after work.

So how do you participate in the RUN@WORK Day? Simply make time to run or walk for 30 minutes on September 20, 2019, and bring a coworker or family member with you. **Check Out the RUN@WORK Day Planning Kit**. Is your school or office participating? **E-mail Well Aware** with your story and photos.

Ready to Run? Check Out this Fall 5K Training Program

Running is an accessible, inexpensive, and effective way to improve your health and fitness, relieve stress, and boost your confidence. Whether you have never run or it has been a while since you last ran, the cooler fall weather is the perfect time to start training!

Following a successful spring session, the Run Farther & Faster MCPS Fall Virtual Group 5K Training Program will be held from September 15, 2019, to November 3, 2019. The program will culminate with the Rockville 5K, an optional race to celebrate your training.* Participants will receive a comprehensive seven-week training calendar, weekly e-mails with training support and running information, as well as e-mail access to certified running coaches.

The training calendar begins with run/walk intervals and progresses safely and gradually towards continuous running. It also includes strength workouts and form drills. For those who are interested, participants also have access to a private Facebook group to facilitate finding running partners.

The program is appropriate for new runners or runners who are returning after a hiatus. Space is limited to the first 50 registrants. **Learn more** and **register here**. Registration closes when capacity is reached or on Friday, September 13, 2019.

*Race registration fee is not included; discount will be provided to participants.

Have You Taken the [Wellness] Initiative for 2020?

The deadline is fast approaching! The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program provides you with incentives to reduce your health insurance costs for 2020 and beyond. If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan, complete a biometric health screening and your insurance provider's online health risk assessment by October 4, 2019, to take advantage of the rate reductions.

Reduce the Contributions You Make to Your Health Insurance

You can reduce your contributions to your health insurance in 2020 by a full 2 percent. How? There are two steps for you to complete by **October 4, 2019**:

- 1) See your doctor for an annual physical, attend a Well Aware biometric health screening, or a CVS Minute Clinic if you are a CareFirst member; AND
- 2) Complete the health risk assessment on your medical plan's website.

Kaiser Permanente members: Be sure to log in to the Kaiser Permanente web page to consent to your participation in the program. Without your consent, your information will not be reported.

Remember to Attest to Your and Your Spouse's Tobacco-use Status During Open Enrollment

Be sure to attest to your and your spouse's tobacco-use status during this fall's Open Enrollment to be held October 7–November 1. Non-tobacco-users: Do not end up paying the 25 percent tobacco-user surcharge to the total cost of your health insurance in 2020 because you forgot to attest *during Open Enrollment!* You MUST attest to avoid the 25 percent surcharge, effective January 1, 2020.

If you or your spouse are tobacco users, you must attest that you have NOT been tobacco free. Consider registering for and completing Well Aware's *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program to have the surcharge waived. **See details**.

Instructions for making your attestation will be provided prior to Open Enrollment in the annual Open Enrollment announcements e-mail, to the Employee and Retiree Service Center website, and in the *For Your Benefit* online newsletter.

Take the [Wellness] Initiative! **Find details here**.

Stress Less This Fall

If you are living with high levels of stress, you are putting your overall 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, September 9–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

- September 11, 18*, 25
- October 2, 16**, 23, 30
- November 6, 13, 20**
- December 4, 11

4:45 p.m.

Café 45 (unless indicated otherwise below)

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Register **here**

*Maple Room

**Robinson Room

Tai Chi

Thursdays, September 12, 19, 26

4:30 p.m.

Robinson Room

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Register **here**

Yoga

Wednesdays, October 16–November 20

3:45–4:45 p.m.

Parkland Middle School

4610 West Frankfort Dr.

Rockville Maryland 20853

Register **here**

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 starting September 24

4:45–5:45 p.m.

Café 45

45 West Gude Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Register **here**

Zumba

Fridays starting September 13

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Washington Grove Elementary School

8712 Oakmont Street

Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

Register **here**

Zumba

Mondays starting September 16

4:00 p.m.

Cafeteria

Carver Educational Services Center

850 Hungerford Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20850

Register **here**

Zumba

Tuesdays and Thursdays starting September 17

3:00–4:00 p.m.

Dance Studio

John F. Kennedy High School

1901 Randolph Road

Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Register **here**

Zumba

Tuesdays starting September 17

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Gymnasium

Wheaton Woods Elementary School

4510 Faroe Place

Rockville, Maryland 20853

Register **here**

Zumba

Mondays starting September 16

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Gymnasium

Flora Singer Elementary School

2600 Hayden Drive

Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Register **here**

Zumba

Thursdays, September 26–November 7

3:30–4:30 p.m.

A Mario Loiederman Middle School

12701 Goodhill Road

Silver Spring, Maryland 20906

Register **here**