



April 2012 Well Aware eNews

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

- How this month's wellness champion lowered her cholesterol and increased her coworkers' activity,
- Some great spring trails to blaze as you *Walk This Way*,
- Resources for understanding and treating your seasonal allergies, and more!

Wellness Champion Lowers Cholesterol and



Raises Motivation

Meet Esta Franklin:
Beall Elementary School Teacher

When Esta Franklin was told that her LDL, or "bad" cholesterol,

was nearing dangerously high levels, she committed to some lifestyle changes. The second grade teacher at Beall Elementary School focused on her nutrition over the summer and joined Well Aware's *Work It Circuit* challenge in the fall. She shared her commitment with those around her, providing her coworkers with healthy snacking ideas and recipes, encouragement to log their exercise, and a constant positive attitude. Esta is not only a role model for her colleagues, but for the students of Beall as well. She is the Beall sponsor for *Girls on the Run*, a national program that aims to increase girls' self-esteem through running. In addition, Esta helped coordinate the Beall Dragon Disco to get students and staff up and dancing.

Esta's attention to her health and her motivation to keep moving has not only benefitted those around her, but has had a major and measureable impact on her own life. Esta has lost 50 pounds and has lowered her LDL so much—100 points, in fact—that she no longer requires cholesterol medication. Esta is certain for the first time in her life that her weight loss will be permanent. She is a true believer in a balanced, healthy lifestyle, and is helping to keep her coworkers and friends on track, too!

Don't miss it!

Seminar: Resistance Training at Home

Monday, April 16, 2012
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Randolph Transportation Depot Staff Lounge
1800 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Monday, April 16, 2012
4:00–5:00 p.m.
Clarksburg High School Cafeteria
22500 Wims Road
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Tuesday, April 17, 2012
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Bethesda Maintenance Depot Lunch Room
10901 Westlake Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Tuesday, April 24, 2012
4:00–5:00 p.m.
John F. Kennedy High School Cafeteria
1901 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, MD 20902

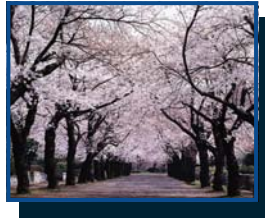
Wednesday, April 25, 2012
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Carver Educational Services Center Auditorium
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Presented by:



**Screenings:
Blood Pressure**

Walk *This Way*: Spring Walking Paths Aound



Walk This Way, the latest activity challenge from Well Aware, officially kicked off Monday, March 12. Already, 120 fresh fruit deliveries have been made, and four six-week exercise classes have been awarded to staff members across MCPS.

As the warm temperatures continue, it is a perfect time to make sure you are outside walking—and then log those steps in the Well Aware Fitness Log! Living in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area provides lots of opportunity for scenic walks—from viewing brilliant blooms to traveling HeartSmart Trails, walking trails that are generally 1-mile in length or less and follow a hard surface, level path.

Here are a few springtime walk suggestions:

- [Cherry Blossoms at the Tidal Basin](#) in Washington, DC—Take a loop or two around the Tidal Basin and get a grand view of the cherry blossoms in bloom. Plan to walk very early in the morning to beat some of the seasonal crowds.
- [Glen Echo Park](#)—Walk around this historic park, check out the yurts, and learn about history at the Clara Barton House. Take a break to ride the 1921 Dentzen carousel or watch a puppet show.
- [Brookside Gardens HeartSmart Trail at Wheaton Regional Park](#)—This trail takes walkers through a popular public garden, full of brilliant displays.
- [South Germantown Recreational Park HeartSmart Trail](#)—This trail begins near the King Dairy Mooseum and takes walkers on a path past a miniature golf course, tot lot, splash playground and pond.

A spring walk doesn't have to be an outing—there are plenty of chances to get outside and walk in your own neighborhood or near your workplace. If you are looking for walking path ideas, try the American Heart Association's [Walking Path Finder](#). Enter the location in which you are interested and it maps a potential walking path for you.

Don't forget to log your steps! Each step you take can help you earn fun prizes from the *Walk This Way* competition and can help your school or team win a grand prize. Log in to the [Well Aware Fitness Log](#) to get credit for your activity. If you have not yet registered, learn more about the program on the [Walk This Way webpage](#) and then visit the Fitness Log to register!

Thursday, April 5, 2012

10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
Carver Educational Services
Center Auditorium
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
Maple Room
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Presented by:



*Spread the word with a
[printable flyer!](#)*



Looking for ideas to get you started with *Walk This Way*? This article from Kaiser Permanente will help you understand the aerobic benefits of walking.

Walking is a popular aerobic activity. It is easy to do, you don't need special equipment, and it can be done almost anywhere. To get aerobic benefit, you must walk briskly—fast enough to make your pulse and breathing increase, but not so fast that you can't talk comfortably.



Some people start by walking daily during lunch or after work. Others start more gradually, with a 10- to 30-minute walk every other day. You can add up exercise time over the course of a day or week. Walking 10 minutes, 3 times a day is roughly equivalent to walking 30 minutes, once a day. Build up your walking routine bit by bit, and aim for at least 2½ hours a week of brisk walking.

Increasing your walking

You can increase your walking in simple ways. These suggestions can get you started, and you can probably think of additional ways.

Add a few extra steps to your everyday activities.

- Park farther than usual from your workplace (or get off the bus or subway before your stop).
- Take the stairs rather than the elevator for one or two floors.
- Take a lap around the outside of the grocery store before going in.

Find a new area to walk in. Allow yourself some extra time in case this walk takes longer than your usual route. Because new areas may pose some safety concerns, try a new area only during daylight, and choose well-populated areas, such as:

- Around your neighborhood. See some places you rarely see from your car. Meet some neighbors.
- Around a whole park. Try pathless areas.
- A mall.

Walk at various times of day. Use "transition times" (times between activities when you don't have to be anywhere) to get out and walk, such as:

- After work, when you usually might sit in front of the television.
- First thing in the morning. See a part of the day you usually might miss.
- During your lunch break. Ask a coworker to join you for a walk.

This article provided with permission from Kaiser Permanente. Read the full article [here](#).

Seasonal Allergies Should Not Hold You Back

This time of year, many people who would like to get outside and enjoy the spring weather are thwarted by their seasonal allergies. But it doesn't have to be that way. The following resources will help you better understand your allergies and learn to combat them.

[The Basics of Allergy](#) (6m)

In this video from UnitedHealthcare, allergy experts explain what causes some people to suffer from allergies and why they seem to flare up at certain times of the year.


[Allergies: Nothing to Sneeze At](#)

This article from CareFirst BlueChoice offers information about why your body reacts to an allergen, and tips for limiting your exposure to allergic triggers.

24-Hour Nurse Line

If you are still unsure about whether you have a cold or allergies, or if you need some additional information about ways to treat your allergy symptoms without a trip to the physician's office, you can consult a nurse for free. Each of the MCPS health plans offers call-in access to a nurse 24 hours a day.

 **CareFirst Blue Choice:** 1-800-535-9700

 **Kaiser Permanente:** 703-359-7878 or 1-800-777-7904

 **UnitedHealthcare:** 1-800-846-4678

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 email as a .pdf document, click [here](#).

Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or wellness@mcpsmd.org.