

April Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion—members of an Infants and Toddlers team who go the extra mile to support each other;
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna on creative ways to fit exercise in to your busy schedule;
- an update on *Built to Move*, Well Aware's spring physical activity challenge;
- National Cancer Control Month;
- a spring training program for a 5k road race; and
- more!



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar— Exercise for Busy Bodies

Are you too busy for the gym? Join Well Aware and Cigna to find out how you can still exercise—at your desk, in your car, and at odd moments during the day.

Wednesday, April 13, 2016
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Bethesda Bus Depot
10901 Westlake Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20852

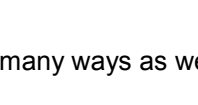
Tuesday, April 19, 2016
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Randolph Bus Depot
1800 Randolph Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20902

Thursday, April 21, 2016
4:00–5:00 p.m.
Webinar

Please register for the seminar/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 Support Each Other Through Illness and Wellness

Infants and Toddlers Program Mid-county Site Staff

"Women Rock!" is the motto behind a very strong group of women in the Infants and Toddlers Program's mid-county site. When a number of them came down with a series of illnesses, they quickly banded together to support one another.

"When our coworker was diagnosed with leukemia, we wanted to support her and show compassion by raising money and donating blood," Arabella Estrada, paraeducator, said.

The women held a potluck lunch and raised approximately \$1,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and participated in the Light the Night Walk in Rockville, raising another \$6,000. In addition, they held an American Red Cross blood drive, which included participation from other Infants and Toddlers Program sites.

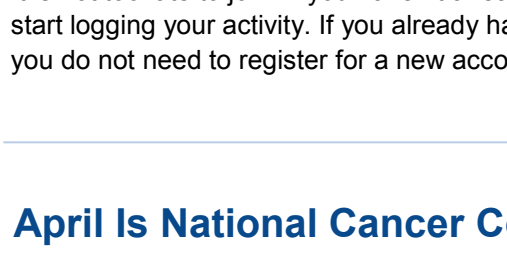
The women supported another coworker who was diagnosed with a genetic heart condition by wearing red on National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about heart disease being the number one killer of women.

"We care about our work family and want to support them in as many ways as we can. Women supporting one another also builds morale," Arabella said.

Along with supporting each other when illness happens, mid-county Infants and Toddlers staff work together to get and stay healthy. During their breaks, they often participate in daily stretches and take walks in their worksite neighborhood. A staff member's husband held a biweekly, after-work "Boot Camp" at the Infants and Toddlers site to promote health and wellness. Members of the team acknowledge birthdays, births, and each other's successes to promote social wellness. And, they have formed teams to participate in Well Aware's physical activity challenges.

By serving families with children from birth to the start of the school year following their fourth birthdays, the Infants and Toddlers Program has a unique role in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Their health and wellness is vital to the program's success.

"We are an office of women ranging in ages from the mid-20s to mid-60s, with a variety of health concerns," Arabella said. To better support the families and children we serve, we need to be physically, socially, mentally, and emotionally strong."



You are Built to Move, so Move!

We are four weeks into the Built to Move spring physical activity challenge and your Montgomery County Public Schools coworkers are working hard! So far, 20 individual prizes have been awarded for logging physical activity. We seem to have the spring back in our steps!

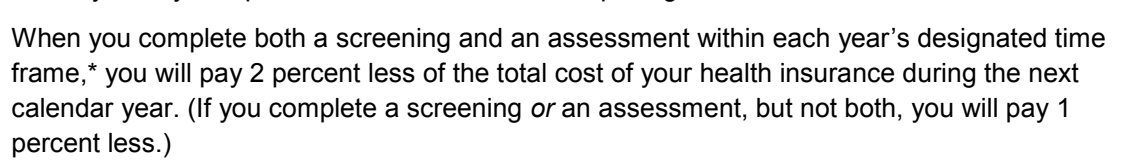
It is not too late to join! If you haven't already, register for a [Well Aware Fitness Log](#) account and start logging your activity. If you already have a fitness log account from an earlier challenge, you do not need to register for a new account. Having trouble logging in? [E-mail Well Aware](#).

April Is National Cancer Control Month

A study from the American Cancer Society predicts that by 2030, cancer will surpass heart disease as the leading cause of death in America. Although recent studies suggest that many cancers can be attributed to bad luck, there is no doubt that poor lifestyle choices, such as smoking, not exercising, and/or eating unhealthy foods, contribute directly to rising cancer rates.

President Barak Obama proclaimed April as National Cancer Control Month. National Cancer Control Month is a time to recommit to improving cancer prevention, detection, and treatment; honor the memory of the courageous men and women lost to the disease; and stand with all those facing it today.

You can help regular cancer screening by living a healthy lifestyle. To improve detection, be sure to have regular screening tests for the disease before you have symptoms. Regular screenings may find breast, cervical, and colorectal (colon) cancers early, when treatment is likely to work best. Lung cancer screening is recommended for some people who are at high risk. [Learn more](#) about screening for different types of cancer.



Wellness Initiatives: Know Your Numbers

If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan through CareFirst, Cigna, or Kaiser Permanente, you can learn more about your health and reduce your contributions to your health insurance with the Wellness Initiatives program. To take full advantage of the rate reductions, complete both a biometric health screening and a health risk assessment yearly, and, if you or your spouse use tobacco, consider quitting.

When you complete both a screening and an assessment within each year's designated time frame,* you will pay 2 percent less of the total cost of your health insurance during the next calendar year. (If you complete a screening *or* an assessment, but not both, you will pay 1 percent less.)

As part of the Wellness Initiatives program, MCPS imposes a 3 percent surcharge to the total health insurance costs of employees who are covered by a medical plan if they or their spouses smoke or use other forms of tobacco. To avoid this surcharge, you and your spouse need to be tobacco free for the 12 months prior to each January 1 effective date.

For details about the Wellness Initiatives program, be sure to visit the [Wellness Initiatives web page](#). Well Aware offers biometric health screenings at MCPS central offices to help you fulfill the 1 percent incentive. For dates, times, and exact locations, visit Well Aware's [Biometric Health Screenings web page](#).

To receive both rate reductions, you must complete a biometric health screening **and a health risk assessment between the first day of fall Open Enrollment and the Friday before the next Open Enrollment begins a year later.*

Train for 5k Road Race This Spring

Have you ever wanted to complete a 5k road race? Whether you are a beginner or you are a runner that wants to improve your time, now is a great opportunity to train!

Run Farther and Faster is offering a Spring Virtual Group Program for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) employees, which will begin on Monday, May 2, 2016, and run through Monday, July 4, 2016. The schedules are appropriate for beginner to experienced runners who are targeting the 5k distance. Each participant will receive a comprehensive training calendar with his/her experience and goals, along with the ability to contact certified running coaches with questions or concerns via e-mail. Whether you are looking to sustain your fitness gains or improve them through endurance and speed, this virtual coaching option will help you stay on track and achieve your goals.

Visit the [MCPS Spring Virtual Group program web page](#) for further details. Interested? Register [here](#). Space is limited to the first 50 participants.

Time for Another Brain Break!

Yoga is such a great tool for managing stress, honing your mental focus, and ridding your body of toxins. Yoga doesn't have to be performed in an hour-long class. Do you have five minutes to spare?

[Learn why yoga is such a great tool for health and wellness](#). Now, take a brain break.* Enjoy this [quick video](#) showcasing some yoga poses that you can do at your desk.

**Brain breaks are a quick and effective way of changing or focusing your physical and mental state. Research indicates that brain breaks also improve concentration and relieve stress.*

Stress Less This Spring

Seated yoga and tai chi are wonderful practices that help you to lower your stress level and learn techniques for managing pressure and anxiety. Join Well Aware as we continue to practice seated yoga and tai chi into the spring.

For information on dates, times, and class locations, e-mail [Well Aware](#).

InSTEP with Diabetes

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente are partnering again to hold a diabetes educational program to help pre-diabetics, diagnosed diabetics, and caretakers of diabetics. Through the program, MCPS staff members have lowered their A1C levels, controlled their sugar intake, and lost excess body fat.

As a result of participant feedback, now we are able to offer the program in four weeks rather than eight, with a focus on nutrition and diabetes.

InSTEP with Diabetes will be held—

Wednesdays, June 1–22, 2016
4:30–5:30 p.m.
Aspen Room
45 West Gude Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register, e-mail [Well Aware](#).

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 e-mail newsletter as a .pdf document, click [here](#). Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or [e-mail Well Aware](#).