

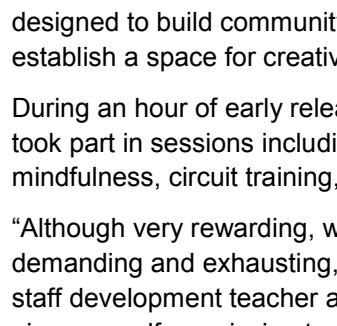
## January Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion—a high school that finds creative ways to encourage staff to participate in activities supporting both physical and mental health,
- A seminar/webinar on meditation and relaxation,
- another chance to climb the tallest buildings in the United States,
- ways to stress less this winter,
- how you can *Feel Like a Million*, and
- more!

## Wellness Champion Finds Creative Ways to Inspire Wellness

### Rockville High School



RHS staff roll out clay during their ceramics session

Rockville High School (RHS) has found a number of creative ways to encourage staff to participate in activities supporting both physical and mental health. This fall, partly inspired by Mental Health Awareness Month, teachers led their coworkers in activities designed to build community, reduce stress, and establish a space for creativity and trying new things.

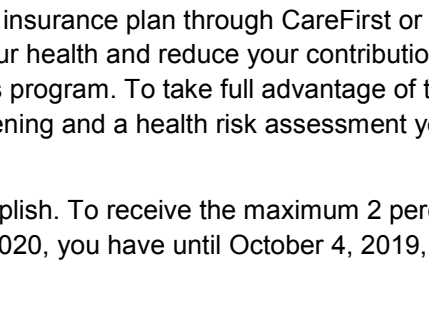
During an hour of early release time, the school's staff took part in sessions including Zumba, ceramics, mindfulness, circuit training, and cooking.

"Although very rewarding, working in education can be demanding and exhausting," said Lisa Gerhardt, a staff development teacher at RHS. "It is important to give yourself permission to spend an hour calming your mind, being creative, or sweating out the stress." As RHS staff have discovered, there are innumerable ways to help coworkers incorporate wellness into their lives.

"Our event was a big hit and was very easy to coordinate and promote," Lisa said. "I have already received requests for this to become a tradition, and I have offers from teachers to share even more of their creative skills with school staff."

## Flights to Fitness: Climb the Tallest Buildings in the U.S.!

Stair climbing can be a wonderful way to keep fit. Most of us work in or live near a building with stairs. Stair climbing can be done anytime throughout the day as a break in your routine. The activity benefits your heart, your mind, as well as your leg muscles.



Well Aware is challenging you to climb the tallest buildings in the United States! If traveling around the country is not possible, you can climb the equivalent of these buildings in flights of stairs. Form a team and complete the buildings together to share your sense of achievement! It is a great way to stay in shape during the cold winter months.

For details, visit the [Flights to Fitness web page](#) on the Wellness website.

## Wellness Initiatives: It Is Not Too Early to Reduce Your Share of Health Insurance Costs for 2020

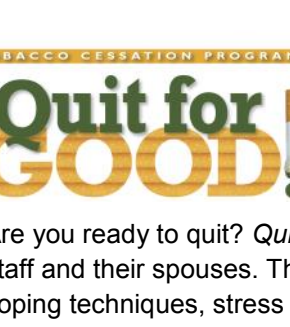
If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan through CareFirst or Kaiser Permanente, you can learn more about your health and reduce your contributions to your health insurance with the Wellness Initiatives program. To take full advantage of these rate reductions, complete a biometric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

The Wellness Initiatives are very simple to accomplish. To receive the maximum 2 percent reduction on your health insurance premiums in 2020, you have until October 4, 2019, to complete—

- an online health risk assessment, and
- a biometric health screening.

To find out how to complete your biometric health screening and health risk assessment and how your results will be reported to MCPS, please visit the [Wellness Initiatives web page](#).

Well Aware is continuing to offer onsite biometric health screenings to help MCPS employees fulfil this part of the incentive program. For dates, times, and locations, please visit the [Wellness Initiatives web page](#).

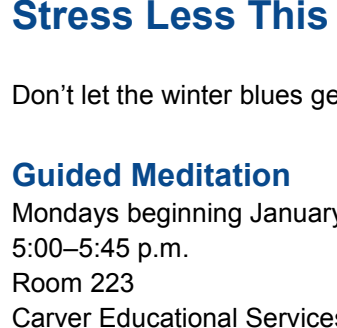


## To the Moon Challenge Final Results

More than 6,000 Montgomery County Public Schools employees spent 10 weeks traveling to the Moon this fall during the *To the Moon* physical activity challenge. They competed for prizes and, more importantly, adopted or maintained healthy lifestyles. Each of the top 15 schools averaged at least 79 minutes of physical activity per employee per day. This is an increase of one minute over last year!

Congratulations to all those who improved their health by participating! See [a list of the winners](#).

Although *To the Moon* has come to an end, the challenge continues! Well Aware's next physical activity challenge will begin in March. Look for details in future issues of the *Well Aware eNews* and *The Bulletin*, and on the [Well Aware website](#). In the meantime, the [Well Aware Fitness Log](#) continues to provide a resource for you to track your physical activity and diet.



## The Best Time to Quit ... Is Now!

Are you ready to quit? *Quit for Good* is a free, eight-week tobacco cessation class for MCPS staff and their spouses. The class covers everything from nicotine replacement therapy, coping techniques, stress management, nutrition, and more.

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](#).

For more information on the *Quit for Good* tobacco cessation program, visit the [Quit for Good web page](#). [E-mail Well Aware](#) to reserve your spot in the next class.

## Stress Less This Winter

Don't let the winter blues get you down. Try these alternative ways to beat them this winter.

### Guided Meditation

Mondays beginning January 7  
5:00–5:45 p.m.  
Room 223  
Carver Educational Services Center  
850 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Seated Yoga

Wednesdays  
January 9, 16, 23, 30  
February 6, 13, 20, 27  
March 6, 13  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Café 45 (Lower Level)  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Sit and Be Fit

Looking for an exercise class that increases your heart rate, helps build muscle, but is still low impact and done from a chair? Look no further!

Tuesdays beginning January 8 (no class on February 5)  
4:30–5:30 p.m.  
Café 45 (Lower Level)  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Tai Chi

Thursdays  
4:45–5:45 p.m.  
Robinson Room  
45 West Gude Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Yoga

Mondays and Thursdays  
5:00–6:00 p.m.  
All-purpose Room  
Rocking Horse Road Center  
4910 Macon Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

### 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](#)

Wednesdays  
3:30 p.m.  
Auxiliary Gym  
Redland Middle School  
6505 Muncaster Mill Road  
Rockville, Maryland 20855

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](#).

Can't make it to a class? Try some of these online resources to manage your stress this winter:

- [Yoga for Teachers](#)
- [Guided Meditation for Teachers](#)

## Feel Like a Million

Kaiser Permanente and Well Aware invite you to participate in a six-week challenge to motivate you to *Feel Like a Million*! This fun, interactive game show theme challenge inspires you to adopt habits to help you feel your best. By focusing on simple daily actions in the areas of fitness, nutrition, balance, and purpose, the goal of improved energy, focus, and resilience can become a reality.

The challenge will begin on February 1, 2019. For more information or to register, please [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](#).