

## November Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champion—a special education teacher, coach, and assistant athletic director at Seneca Valley High School who found motivation to change his life for the better;
- this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna on how you can make the change to nutrient-dense carbohydrates (vegetables, fruits, and whole grains) while still eating the foods you love;
- this fall's physical activity challenge: *Go for the Gold*;
- American Diabetes Month;
- how your school or office can take the sweet-free challenge; and
- more!



### Don't Miss It

**This month's free seminar/webinar—  
 Carb-Conscious Eating**

Carbohydrates are the most efficient energy source for your brain and body. Using a common-sense approach, we will show you how to make the change to nutrient-dense carbohydrates (vegetables, fruits, and whole grains), while still eating the foods you love.

**Thursday, November 17, 2016**  
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Shady Grove Depot  
 16651 Crabbs Branch Way  
 Rockville, Maryland 20855

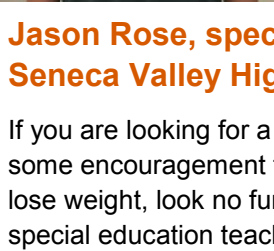
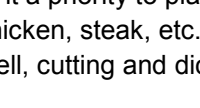
**Thursday, November 17, 2016**  
 4:00–5:00 p.m.

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**. See the **Wellness Webinar Library**.

Presented by:



## Wellness Champion Finds the Motivation to Change His Life for the Better

**Jason Rose, special education teacher, Seneca Valley High School**

If you are looking for a motivational figure to give you some encouragement to make lifestyle changes and lose weight, look no further than Jason Rose. Jason, special education teacher, coach, and assistant athletic director at Seneca Valley High School summoned up the motivation to change his life in May and hasn't looked back.

"Knowing that heart disease and diabetes run in my family, I want to be certain that I will be there for my family," Jason said. "With my poor eating habits and health choices, I was headed down the wrong path. The hardest part was finding the motivation, but once I found it, the only one who could get in my way was me!"

Since May 2016, Jason has lost 101 pounds. His realistic attitudes about food have helped him succeed.

"I am 100 percent against diets," Jason said. "Diets prevent you from eating certain things. I'm not on a diet. I am living a healthy lifestyle."

For Jason, it is about self-control and self-discipline. He makes it a priority to plan his meals ahead of time. Every Sunday, he cooks enough of a protein (chicken, steak, etc.) to last for the whole week. He prepares his vegetables for the week as well, cutting and dicing them so they are ready to toss into whatever meal he puts together.

"The food preparation takes a long time, but it is so worth it," Jason said.

With all that focus on healthy eating, Jason still manages to cheat—but just a little.

"Do I have a cheat day? No! I have a cheat meal!" Jason said. "And trust me, when I have a cheat meal, I go all out!"

Jason says that's okay though because he eats healthy the rest of the time and works out five days a week. Besides, he might not feel that great the next morning, which only serves to motivate him further.

Jason understands the importance of living a healthy life and learning to manage stress at home and at work.

"By working out and eating healthy foods, some of the stress I experience doesn't affect me," Jason said. "Maintaining a healthy lifestyle benefits your self-confidence and self-esteem as well."

As for the snacks shared by other staff and parents in the staff lounge, Jason has some words of advice for his coworkers.

"It's hard to say no to food, especially when it shows up unexpectedly," Jason said. "I always think of it this way, 'If I didn't know about this food ahead of time, I wasn't planning on eating it. So I don't eat it!'"

Jason's efforts have not gone unnoticed. Friend and MCPS coworker Donald J. "DJ" Connelly has a lot to say about Jason's success.

"Jason started out making small gains, but in the last two months he has taken it to another level and has done an amazing job," DJ said.

Jason has more advice for those looking to start a healthy lifestyle and perhaps lose weight.

"Create some type of routine," Jason said. "It is going to be difficult for the first couple of weeks because your mind is going to have to think of things you aren't accustomed to thinking. Learn the routine and stick to it. When it gets hard, as it will, just think, 'This is when all of the other people give up.' Don't be one of those. It will all be worth it!"

## November is American Diabetes Month

Observed every November, American Diabetes Month is an important part of the American Diabetes Association's efforts to focus attention on the disease and the tens of millions of people affected by it.

There are many factors that increase your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. They include—

- Overweight
- High blood glucose (sugar)
- History of diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
- High blood pressure
- Unhealthy cholesterol
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Unhealthy eating
- Age, race, gender, and family history

Some of these risk factors you have control over, like whether or not you smoke. Others you cannot control, such as your age. Understanding and managing your risk can help you prevent diabetes and heart disease and live a longer, healthier life.

To learn your risk, take this **Diabetes Risk Test**. You also can use the American Diabetes Association's **My Health Advisor** or visit your health care provider and ask about your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

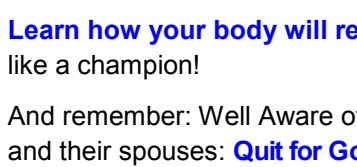
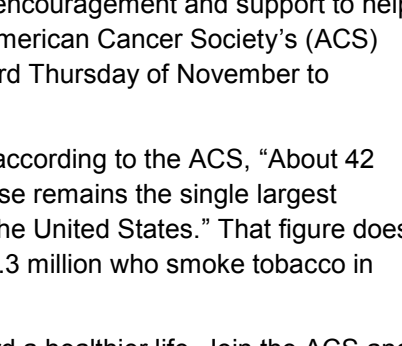
**Click here** to watch a video on reading labels from the American Diabetes Association.

## Get InStep with Diabetes

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente have teamed together to offer a four-week diabetes education program called InStep with Diabetes. It is geared toward both those diagnosed with diabetes to help control the disease as well as those with prediabetes to help prevent a further diagnosis. Are you interested in participating in the next session? For dates and locations of upcoming classes, **e-mail Well Aware**.

## Go for the Gold: Well Aware's Fall Physical Activity Challenge

Well Aware's fall physical activity challenge, *Go for the Gold*, is well under way! With 150+ teams registered, there is a lot of school and team competition for the grand prize grants. There is still time to join us! *Go for the Gold* is challenging you to train like a champion! **Learn more about Go for the Gold**.



## Sweet Free Zone

During the holiday season, you can be easily tempted to eat and drink food items that are high in fat, sugar, and calories. Social events, parties, and gifts throughout the holiday season can influence you to stray away from your healthy diet.

However, there are healthy habits and practices you can follow during the holidays to stay on track with your diet and avoid overindulging in an excessive amount of sweets.

- Stay active on a daily basis.
- Drink water to stay hydrated and decrease hunger.
- Get an adequate amount of sleep to help decrease cravings.
- Eat foods rich in natural sugars as opposed to those rich in processed sugars.
- Enjoy your favorite holiday treats, just limit the portion size.

Is your school or office interested in taking the sweet-free challenge? Post **this flyer** on the staff lounge or break room door to designate the area as a sweet-free zone. Feel free to share these ideas with the PTA to promote a culture of wellness during the holiday season.

**E-mail Well Aware** to let us know how your staff is celebrating the holiday season in a healthy way.

## This Year's Great American Smoke Out is Thursday, November 17

Are you thinking about quitting tobacco? Do you need encouragement and support to help you beat your addiction? One supportive effort is the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Great American Smoke Out, a yearly event held the third Thursday of November to encourage smokers to give up their habit.

The dangers of tobacco use are well known. Even so, according to the ACS, "About 42 million Americans still smoke cigarettes, and tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States." That figure doesn't include the 12.4 million cigar smokers and more than 2.3 million who smoke tobacco in pipes.

Quitting—even for one day—is an important step toward a healthier life. Join the ACS and Well Aware on November 17—you *can* do it and it will be so worth it!

**Learn how your body will reverse the effect of smoking** once you quit. You will feel like a champion!

And remember: Well Aware offers a free tobacco cessation program for MCPS employees and their spouses: **Quit for Good**. If you are interested in getting on the list for the spring class, **e-mail Well Aware**.

## Wellness Initiatives

Did you miss the opportunity to save money on your 2017 health insurance premiums? Did you know that every year you have an opportunity to contribute 2 percent less to the total cost of your MCPS-provided health insurance? All you need to do is have an annual physical exam (biometric health screening) and fill out your medical insurance plan's online health risk assessment by October 6, 2017. For more information, visit the **Wellness Initiatives website**. Plan now to receive your 2018 rate reductions!

## Stress Less This Fall

Unlike a traditional workout, yoga and tai chi focus on precise movements that allow the body to slowly transition from one position to the next. Both practices attempt to coordinate the muscles, bones, heart, and mind with the positive and seated yoga class this fall. Join Well Aware and treat your body to a relaxing tai chi or seated yoga class this fall.

### Guided Meditation

Mondays, November 7–December 19, 2016  
 5:00 p.m.

Maple Conference Room  
 45 West Gude Drive  
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Seated Yoga

Wednesdays through December 7, 2016  
 4:30 p.m.

Café 45 (Lower Level)  
 45 West Gude Drive  
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

### Tai Chi

Thursdays through December 8, 2016  
 4:30 p.m.

Café 45 (Lower Level)  
 45 West Gude Drive  
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

To register, **e-mail Well Aware**.

## #Commit2Ten

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is launching #Commit2Ten, a campaign challenging the nation to add 10 more minutes of physical activity a day. Individuals, families, schools, after-school programs, companies, and communities are invited to prove that a little more physical activity every day makes a big difference. Here are some ways to #Commit2Ten right now:

1. Hold a walking meeting. See the Center for Science in the Public Interest's **Healthy Meeting Toolkit**.
2. Take breaks during meetings to allow time for walks.
3. Meet coworkers before or after your workday for a 10-minute walk.
4. Download **staff fitness cards** to find new ways to move in the workplace.
5. **Desk stretches** are a great way to add activity and stress relief to your day.

Spread the word! How do you intend to #Commit2Ten? Join other Maryland public schools and share your stories on social media with the #Commit2Ten hashtag.

## Sleep Solutions

### Sleep and Your Immune System

During the cold and flu season, there are a number of things you can do to keep from getting sick. Along with eating right, taking vitamin C, and washing your hands frequently, you can make sure you are getting enough quality sleep.

On the Mayo Clinic website, Eric J. Olson, M.D. tells us that sleep deprivation can take a toll on the immune system. He writes—

"... Studies show that people who don't get quality sleep or enough sleep are more likely to get sick after being exposed to a virus, such as a common cold virus. Lack of sleep can also affect how fast you recover if you do get sick. ..."

Be sure to read the rest of **Dr. Olson's comments about the importance of sleep** and **watch this video** from CBS News on sleep and immunity.