

Welcome to the March issue of the Well Aware eNews!

Read on to learn about—

Type 2 diabetes; and

March Well Aware eNews

this month's wellness champion—a Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) wellness role model who

- believes exercise is key to reducing stress, improving sleep, building immunity, and developing coping skills; this month's seminar/webinar from Cigna that will help you come up with healthy and tasty alternatives for
- dinner that your whole family will enjoy; Built to Move, Well Aware's spring physical activity challenge;
- your eating habits as part of National Nutrition Month;

an easy way to determine your risk for developing

- more!



energy, and is fun!"

the best they can be for the students.

Director, School Support and Improvement of Middle **Schools** When it comes to exercise, flexibility—of mind and body is key. Just ask Beth Thomas, director in the Office of

Wellness Champion

Benefits of Exercise

Appreciates the Many

Elizabeth (Beth) L. Thomas,

School Support and Improvement and this month's wellness champion. Since becoming more physically active, she has needed to modify her exercise program to better meet her body's changing needs. By doing so, she has been able to keep moving and has the energy and stamina she needs to perform better at her job.

being an athlete and later a physical education teacher she could rely on that level of activity to stay healthy. "Most of my life, I battled being overweight and never had enough energy to do everything I wanted to do," Beth said. "After I started teaching, I quickly realized I would need to take a different approach to exercise." As a single mom who was focusing on being the best she could be for herself and her son, she knew that if her health was compromised she wouldn't be able to take care of her family and attend to the other important things in life.

Although raised by two very active and healthy parents,

Beth didn't always follow their lead. She thought that by

Two years later, Beth decided to train the right way by stretching, strengthening, and working with a running coach. Since then, she has improved her mile time, ran her first half marathon, and last year ran 21 other races. Beth believes that exercise has helped her to be at her best when performing the duties of her Montgomery County Public Schools administrative job. By getting and staying healthy, she has

wasn't training the right way," Beth said. "I was told I shouldn't run because of the impact it was

said. "That directly impacts my focus, positive outlook, and response to stress." Beth believes too that health and wellness are key to being a great teacher and school staff member. "Exercise helps reduce stress, improves sleep, helps build immunity, and is foundational to

establishing coping skills," Beth said. "School employees are exposed to so many things each day and need to be proactive in building up their immunity. Exercise helps fight disease, boosts

Beth encourages school staff to lead healthy lives so they will have the energy they need to be

the energy and focus she needs to engage in the important work of improving children's lives. "Exercising helps me reduce my stress, sleep better, and makes me want to eat better," Beth

She suggests schools hold contests, challenges, and mini-competitions, and find ways to showcase how the adults are making health and wellness a priority. She also emphasizes the importance of building a culture of wellness in our schools. "To build a culture of wellness, you need to plant the seeds, create opportunities, and keep it a

"They look up to us, and we should be a role model in all that we do," Beth said.

Beth is up and exercising. She exercises six days a week, either early in the morning or right after work.

my time during those hours," Beth said. "It is my time and I am committed to me!"

"Most days I work out between 5:00-6:30 a.m. because I have found that nobody can schedule

You will build muscle strength and bone;

As a magnificent machine of intricate moving parts, your body was built to move. To stay healthy, it needs to move. What can you accomplish by adding more movement to your days?



What's for Dinner?

Do you need some inspiration for dinner tonight? We'll help you come up with healthy and tasty

alternatives that your whole family will love. Wednesday, March 9, 2016 10:00-11:00 a.m. West Farm Bus Depot

11920 Bournefield Way Silver Spring, Maryland 20904 Thursday, March 17, 2016 10:00-11:00 a.m. Shady Grove Bus Depot

Thursday, March 17, 2016 4:00-5:00 p.m. Webinar Please register for the seminar/ webinar by e-mailing Well Aware

16651 Crabbs Branch Way

Rockville, Maryland 20855

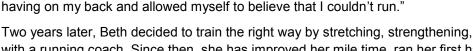
webinar, you will receive a link in your Outlook e-mail as well as an Outlook calendar reminder . Spread the word with our printable flyer. See the Wellness Webinar Library.

Presented by:

🎇 Cigna.

with the date and time you plan to attend. If you register for the

"When I started to really focus on my health and wellness, I went full force and quickly realized I

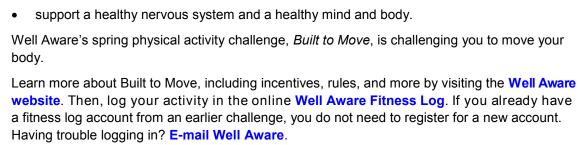


focus," Beth said. "People need to share their experiences with others and create a culture where everyone is supported on their health and wellness journey." Beth is training for some very exciting races, but most importantly, she wants to be healthy for life. She is currently training for the most important race of her life—her health.

"I am racing against Mother Nature," Beth said. "As I get older, I am finding that my metabolism

Now she is working harder than ever to meet and exceed her health goals. Beth has set a goal to run at least one race or compete in a challenge once a month. While most of us are sleeping,

is changing, so I have to train differently to have the same or better results," Beth said.



March Is National Nutrition Month

developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

chronic disease, and promote overall health.

habits with this quick quiz.

16 Health Tips for 2016

release stress and tension; and

increase stamina and aerobic capacity;

release endorphins that increase happiness;

release toxins through breath and sweat;

pump the body full of oxygen, which it needs to operate;

We are Built to Move,

so Let's Move!

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages everyone to adopt eating and physical activity plans that are focused on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices, and getting daily exercise in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of

Take this opportunity to learn more about nutrition. Are you eating right? Rate your eating

How will your school or office celebrate National Nutrition Month? Get creative and e-mail

Enjoy these tip sheets from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

Well Aware a picture of how you chose to have a healthy celebration.

Research has shown that walking at least 30 minutes a day can help you—

improve your blood pressure, blood sugar levels, and blood lipid profile;

reduce your risk of coronary heart disease and stroke;

maintain your body weight and lower the risk of obesity;

reduce your risk of non-insulin dependent (type 2) diabetes.

enhance your mental well-being;

reduce your risk of osteoporosis;

photos.

Quit for Good:

quality of their lives."

insurance. Learn more.

Are You at Risk for Diabetes?

health care provider. Take the Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test now.

disorders, and what you can do to get a good night's sleep. Read the Mayo Clinic's Sleep tips: 7 steps to better sleep.

for help.

We can help!

Healthy Eating on the Run: A Month of Tips

The theme for this year's National Nutrition Month is "Savor the Flavor of Eating Right." The

National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign held annually in March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, formerly the American Dietetic Association. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and

National Walking Day: April 6, 2016 There are countless ways you can get active, but walking has the lowest dropout rate of them all. It is the simplest positive change you can make to improve your heart health. Take the first step to a healthier life by taking part in the American Heart Association's National Walking Day on Wednesday, April 6, 2016. Each year on the first Wednesday of April, Americans are encouraged to lace up their sneakers and take 30 minutes out of their day to get up and walk.

How will your school or office celebrate the event? E-mail Well Aware with your stories and

Are you interested in walking but confused about choosing the right type of shoes? Read this

article about wearing the right shoes for walking. Are you looking for some stretches for your post-walk cool down? Review this list of important stretches for walkers.

reduce your risk of breast and colon cancer; and

There are so many benefits to such a simple activity.

- tobacco-free. register for the Quit for Good course, e-mail Well Aware.
- **Next Week Is National Sleep Awareness Week** Do you have difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep?

But do you know the heart health numbers that could literally save your life? Healthy numbers mean a healthy heart. If you follow a healthy lifestyle—eat a balanced diet, get regular exercise, and avoid smoking—you can even turn bad numbers around.

We live our lives by the numbers: phone numbers, PIN numbers, and our social security

our health and mental well-being a priority?

Live Longer, Live Better The Surgeon General of the United States has said, "Smoking cessation [quitting smoking] represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and

The course will begin on Tuesday, April 5, 2016, at 4:30 p.m. For more information and/or to Looking for another reason to quit? By quitting, you will avoid paying the additional 3 percent smoker's (tobacco user's) surcharge on the total cost of your MCPS-provided medical

American Diabetes Association Alert Day is a one-day wake-up call asking Americans to take the Diabetes Risk Test to find out if they are at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. The Diabetes Risk Test asks users to answer simple questions about their weight, age, family history, and other potential risk factors for prediabetes or Type 2 diabetes. Preventive tips are provided to those who take the test, and those at high risk are encouraged to talk with their

This spring, Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente will offer their eight-week tobacco cessation class for MCPS staff and their significant others. The program is course-based and consists of once-a-week classes led by a nurse practitioner with assistance from Kaiser Permanente clinicians and health experts. Discussions focus on the skills necessary to successfully live

It is hard to quit smoking, but you can do it. To have the best chance of quitting and remaining a non-smoker, you need to know what you are up against, what your options are, and where to go

At least 40 million Americans suffer from chronic, long-term sleep disorders, and an additional 20 million experience occasional sleeping problems. Those symptoms can lead to memory challenges, workplace accidents, and increased sickness.

To raise awareness regarding the health benefits of sleep and its importance to safety and productivity, the National Sleep Foundation will celebrate Sleep Awareness Week beginning March 6, 2016. Visit the foundation's website to learn about the importance of sleep, sleep

Watch the National Sleep Foundation's videos to help you get the sleep you need:

Take the Wellness Initiative and save on your health insurance!

Wellness Initiatives: Know Your Numbers

You can learn about these vital health numbers and reduce your financial contribution to your health insurance by participating in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Wellness Initiatives program. To take full advantage of the program, complete a biometric health screening and health risk assessment yearly. And, if you and/or your spouse smoke (if you

on-site biometric health screenings, visit the Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page.

are married), consider quitting. Doing so will go a long way toward improving your numbers. For more information on the Wellness Initiatives program and to see a schedule of upcoming

reduce your anxiety, increase your ability to focus, and more!

Time for a Brain Break!

Sleep and Depression

Build a Better Bedroom

numbers.

Brain breaks are a quick and effective way of changing or focusing your physical and mental

This video will show you how to meditate.

state. They are a useful tool for students to use to help activate, energize, and stimulate their stress.

Watch this video to learn more about meditation.

brains. Research indicates that brain breaks also improve students' concentration and relieve So why don't we use them as adults? Is it that we don't have enough time, or are we not making Do you have two minutes to spare? Take the time for a healthy brain break. One method to try is meditation. In only a few minutes a day, meditation can help you lower your blood pressure,

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