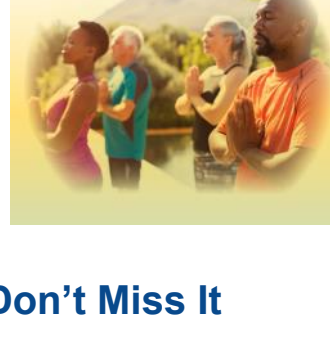


## April Well Aware eNews

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

- wellness tips to stay healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak;
- this month's wellness champions, staff from an MCPS elementary school who keep it moving;
- a webinar to learn about the mind-body connection;
- National Cancer Control Month;
- The American Heart Association's Move More initiative;
- this year's Get Fit, Don't Sit Day; and
- more!



## Don't Miss It

### This month's free webinar— Mind-Body Connection

Join us for this webinar, which will investigate the mind-body connection and teach you ways to improve individual wellness.

**Thursday, April 23, 2020**

4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

*Please note: There is no seminar this month, due to spring break.*

**Please register** for the webinar. When you register for the webinar, you will receive a link in your Outlook email as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our [printable flyer](#). Visit the [Wellness Webinar Library](#).

*Presented by: Kaiser Permanente*

## Staying Healthy During the COVID-19 Outbreak

The outbreak of COVID-19 is certainly stressful. While times are uncertain, it is important to control what you can. Leading a healthy and well life can help boost your immunity and help with your mental well-being. It is important to get enough sleep and physical activity, to eat well, stay connected to others, and find healthy ways to manage your stress. Well Aware has many resources to help you stay healthy during this time, or start your journey to optimal health and wellness! From our video library of webinars, to our online physical activity challenge and

classes, it is never too late to start. For updates on COVID-19, visit the [MCPS Coronavirus website](#). For additional support visit the [Employee Assistant Program website](#). Find our resources on the [MCPS Staff Wellness webpage](#), and follow us on Twitter [@MCPSWellAware](#) for tips and additional resources.

## Wellness Champions Keep it Moving!

### Adrian Gibbs, P.E. teacher, and Greencastle Elementary School staff



Adrian Gibbs, P.E. teacher and staff wellness coach, has gotten the staff at Greencastle Elementary School moving. On Wednesday afternoons, Greencastle staff meet for a health and wellness boot camp, in which Adrian leads the staff through a series of wellness activities.

Adrian stated, "Staff wellness is important at Greencastle for many reasons. First, staff morale should be high. Exercise is a positive outlet for stress and our jobs as teachers can be stressful. If our staff is feeling good, they can project that positive energy onto our students more genuinely and effectively. This can lead to improved

moods for everyone as well as improved academic performance. Second, exercise is a necessary part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Some teachers may not have the time to travel to a gym after work, so having a free group class offered at school offers an affordable and convenient option for physical activity."

In addition to health benefits, the exercise group has had other positive effects for the staff at Greencastle Elementary School. "I believe the boot camp has created a sense of community and belonging," Adrian states.

Wellness tends to be more successful when administration is on board and supportive. Principal Rob Obstgarten not only appreciates the efforts of Mr. Gibbs, but he encourages his staff to participate in the voluntary group. Mr. Obstgarten says, "This has been VERY well received!"

Interested in starting a group like the one at Greencastle? Here is some advice from Adrian Gibbs, "To those who may be thinking about what kind of wellness program to start at their school, think about what you enjoy and feel comfortable putting energy into. I love exercising and trying new and unique exercises. This boot camp consists of many different stations that work the entire body. I get excited about seeing and helping others go outside their comfort zone and try new movements related to exercise. If running a boot camp seems to be too much, try other modes of exercise, such as yoga, or a walking group. The sky is the limit!"

Mr. Gibbs also mentioned that a colleague of his has started a softball league for school staff. If you are interested in learning more about the softball league, email [wellness@mcpsmd.org](mailto:wellness@mcpsmd.org).

## The Super Hero Challenge is Underway!

We are five weeks into the MCPS Superhero Challenge and our MCPS staff members are working hard! Twenty-five individual prize winners have received a yoga mat and a grant for their work location for logging activity. We seem to have the spring back in our step!



Although the challenge started on Monday, March 2, 2020, it is not too late to join! Register for a Well Aware Fitness Log account and start logging your activity. [Click here](#) to see all of the details on the MCPS Superhero Challenge. Or, simply search for "Superhero challenge" from any MCPS web page.

## American Heart Association: April is Move More Month!

Every April, the American Heart Association celebrates physical activity and encourages all Americans to commit to being more active on a regular basis.

Are you fitting in at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of heart-pumping physical activity per week? If not, you're not alone. Only about one in five adults and teens get enough exercise to maintain good health. Being more active can help all people think, feel, and sleep better; and perform daily tasks more easily, and if you're sedentary, sitting less is a great place to start.

These recommendations are based on the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd edition](#), published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and suggest how much physical activity we need to be healthy. The guidelines are based on current scientific evidence supporting the connections between physical activity, overall health and well-being, disease prevention and quality of life.

Adults should be getting at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity, or a combination of both, preferably spread throughout the week.

Children 3-5 years old should be physically active and have plenty of opportunities to move throughout the day. Kids 6-17 years old should get at least 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous-intensity physical activity, mostly aerobic.

If you are just getting started remember that any amount of movement is better than none. Start by taking a two-minute walk and add to it!

How will your school or office celebrate Move More Month? Get creative and [send us](#) a picture of how you chose to have a healthy celebration.

## National Get Fit Don't Sit Day: Wednesday, May 6, 2020

The first Wednesday in May is Get Fit, Don't Sit Day. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) sponsors this day to increase awareness of the dangers of excessive sitting, and the importance of getting up and moving throughout the day – especially at work.

Research shows that sitting for long periods of time increases the risk of health complications. The ADA recommends breaking up sitting time with three or more minutes of light physical activity - such as walking, leg extensions, or overhead arm stretches - every 30 minutes.

Here are some great resources with ideas to get you moving:

- [8 Ways to be More Active](#)
- [Desk Moves Handout](#)

How will your school or office celebrate the event? [Email your stories and photos to ERSC](#)

## Your Chance to Quit for Good Begins Soon!

The U.S. Surgeon General has said, "Smoking cessation [stopping smoking] represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives."



It's hard to quit smoking, but you can do it. To have the best chance of quitting and remaining a nonsmoker, you need to know what you're up against, what your options are, and where to go for help. We can help!

Well Aware and Kaiser Permanente have teamed up to produce an eight-week tobacco cessation class for our staff and significant others. To register for an upcoming session of the *Quit for Good* class, [email Well Aware](#).

Once you (and your spouse) have been tobacco free for 12 months, you can re-attest and stop paying the 25 percent tobacco-user surcharge on the cost of your health insurance. [Learn more](#). It's also true that tobacco-users who complete *Quit for Good* can have the 25 percent waived and, depending on when the program is completed, refunded. [Learn more](#).

## Wellness Initiatives: Lower Your Health Insurance Contributions

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 2021 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. In order to earn the maximum 2% incentive toward your medical premium, you will need to complete:

- An annual health assessment online
- An annual biometric health screening

Well Aware will be offering upcoming health screenings on-site which will help you fulfill 1% of the wellness incentive. For dates and times, and to register, please visit the [MCPS Wellness Initiatives for Employees Web Page](#).

## National Cancer Control Month

This year, an estimated half million Americans will lose their lives to cancer, and three times that many will be diagnosed with this devastating illness. Cancer patients are parents and grandparents, children and cherished friends; this disease touches almost all of us and casts a shadow over families and communities across our Nation.

During National Cancer Control Month this April, we remember those we have lost, support Americans fighting this disease, and recommit to progress toward effective cancer control.

Prevention and screening are our best defenses against cancer. All Americans can reduce their risk by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, limiting sun exposure, avoiding excessive alcohol consumption, and living tobacco-free. Individuals should also take advantage of appropriate, regularly scheduled cancer screenings. [Learn more](#) about screening for many types of cancers.

## Stress Less This Spring

Yoga, meditation, and mindfulness are wonderful practices that help you to lower your stress levels. In addition, they help you to learn techniques for managing pressure and anxiety. Join Well Aware as we continue to practice yoga and mindfulness into the spring.

*Reminder—If schools are closed, classes are canceled. If you are unsure if a class has been canceled, please check the [Wellness Calendar](#) on the [Staff Wellness](#) webpage.*

Mindfulness classes are now online! [Email Well Aware](#) for links to the classes.

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

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

To register for any of these classes, [email Well Aware](#).

## Physical Activity Classes

Physical activity or exercise can improve your health and reduce the risk of developing several diseases like type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your heart, your mind, and your overall wellness. Consider trying one of the classes below to see what kind of physical activity is best for you!

*Reminder—If schools are closed, classes are canceled. If you are unsure if a class has been canceled, please check the [Wellness Calendar](#) on the [Staff Wellness](#) webpage.*

Physical activity classes are now online! [Email Well Aware](#) for links to the classes.

To register for any of these classes, [email Well Aware](#).

## HIITCamp Now Offered Through Well Aware

HIITCAMP is a one-hour group fitness class that includes both high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and strength training during each session. Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned fitness enthusiast, this format is guaranteed to give you a great workout in every class.

*Reminder—If schools are closed, classes are canceled. If you are unsure if a class has been canceled, please check the [Wellness Calendar](#) on the [Staff Wellness](#) webpage.*

Physical activity classes are now online! [Email Well Aware](#) for links to the classes.

## Share Your Wellness Stories and Encourage Your Coworkers Through Twitter!

Well Aware is proud of MCPS employee for all of the hard work they are doing to lead healthy lives. It is time to share your stories and your spirit! Or, perhaps you need some extra motivation to begin a staff wellness program at your school, depot, or office, or to turn life-long unhealthy habits into healthy ones. Follow [@mcpswellaware](#) for incredible wellness stories, ideas, and encouragement from your MCPS coworkers. You also will read tips on living a healthy life and receive updates on MCPS staff wellness programs.