

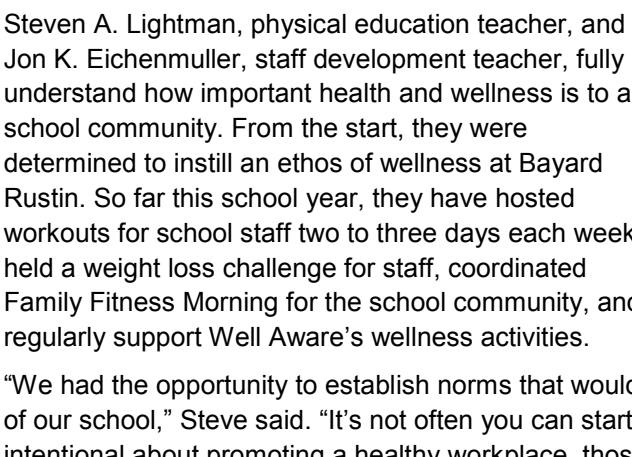
## May Well Aware eNews

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

- this month's wellness champions, two coworkers who launched a successful wellness program at a new elementary school;
- a seminar/webinar to help you manage your blood pressure;
- ways to stay active this summer;
- this year's Bike to Work Day;
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month; and
- more!

## Wellness Champions Set Wellness in Motion at New School

**Steven A. Lightman and Jon K. Eichenmuller, Bayard Rustin Elementary School**



When Bayard Rustin Elementary School opened its doors for the first time last fall, two of its staff members had already set in motion ideas for establishing a culture of wellness at the new school.

Steven A. Lightman, physical education teacher, and Jon K. Eichenmuller, staff development teacher, fully understand how important health and wellness is to a school community. From the start, they were determined to instill an ethos of wellness at Bayard Rustin. So far this school year, they have hosted workouts for school staff two to three days each week, held a weight loss challenge for staff, coordinated Family Fitness Morning for the school community, and regularly support Well Aware's wellness activities.

"We had the opportunity to establish norms that would become part of the long-term culture of our school," Steve said. "It's not often you can start something from scratch. By being intentional about promoting a healthy workplace, those values are more likely to adhere to the core of who we are as a staff."

Steve and Jon also attracted the attention and involvement of the school community in their wellness efforts. At the start of the school year, they held Family Fitness Morning. About 200 students and their families participated.

After the success of Family Fitness Morning, other Bayard Rustin staff thought it would be fun to hold wellness events for employees on a regular basis.

"We started off with a simple weight loss challenge," Jon said. "Interested staff paid into a pot that would be split for the top three weight loss winners at the end of an eight-week period. More than a third of our staff participated."

During the challenge, Steve began hosting online BeachBody workouts in the gym after school. These workouts were open to all staff. After the weight loss challenge, Bayard Rustin staff formed teams to participate in Well Aware's spring physical activity challenge, *Le Tour de Fitness*.

"The staff was enjoying the challenges so much, we decided to continue our workouts two to three days a week after school," Steve said.

To further promote wellness, a couple of staff members organized a healthy foods potluck at the school.

"Staff brought in a variety of healthy and low calorie/low fat dishes," Steve said. "It was a real hit!"

Jon and Steve have some suggestions for schools that are interested in growing their culture of wellness. First, they suggest gathering ideas and gauging interest in various activities.

"Some of the best events can be really easy to set up and manage," Steve said. Something like a healthy potluck requires very little organization, just a flyer and signup sheet."

They also recommend holding competitions, which can be a fun way to motivate staff.

"Many smart watch and fitness tracker apps have easy-to-set-up group competitions," Jon said. "You can also join Well Aware's physical activity challenges and, in the process, earn money for your school to further support its wellness initiatives."

They also recognize the importance of building group camaraderie when trying to meet the health and wellness needs of school staff.

"School health and wellness can't be the job of just a few people on a committee," Jon said. "It's a shared responsibility for the entire staff. When you have buy in throughout the school, staff are able to coach and support each other."

## Stay Active This Summer

Seated yoga, meditation, and tai chi are wonderful practices that help you lower your stress level and learn techniques for managing pressure and anxiety. Join Well Aware as we continue these practices this summer.

### Seated Yoga

Learn basic yoga techniques in a comfortable environment.

### Sit and Be Fit

This total body resistance training workout is for beginners who may have limited mobility or for those who are working up to a traditional resistance training class.

### Tai Chi

Are you new to tai chi? No problem! You can join any class at any time to enjoy and benefit from this stress relieving practice.

For dates, times, and locations of the above classes, and to register for any of them, [e-mail Well Aware](#).

## Bike to Work Day Will Be Here Soon!

Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association invites you to join more than 10,000 area commuters on **Friday, May 17, 2019**, for a celebration of bicycling as a clean, fun, and healthy way to get to work.

Attend one of 115 pit stops throughout Washington, DC; Maryland; and Virginia where you can receive refreshments and enter a raffle for free bicycles. Free T-shirts also are available at the pit stops to the first 20,000 who register and attend.

[Learn more and/or register for the event.](#)

## Wellness Initiatives: Complete Your Health Risk Assessment and Biometric Health Screening and Save

Completing your health risk assessment each year gives you the information you need to take better control of your health and well-being. And that's important, because when you are running at 100 percent, being fit and in good spirits will go a long way to help you perform at your best.

Take your medical insurance plan's confidential, online questionnaire and in less than 20 minutes, you will—

- learn your risk levels for common health problems, including heart disease, colon cancer, and diabetes;
- get a clear picture of your current health status and learn how to improve your health in the future through preventive tests, chronic condition support, and online health coaching; and
- discover interactive tools and educational information that can give you more details on your health status.

Managing and improving your health has never been easier. And, when you complete your Health Risk Assessment by October 4, 2019, MCPS will pay 1 percent more of the total cost of your 2020 health insurance premiums—reducing your contribution by 1 percent. To get started, visit the [Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page](#). You will find links for accessing the CareFirst and Kaiser Permanente Health Risk Assessments. You will also find helpful instructions to guide you through the log-in process.

In addition to the health risk assessment, you can save another 1 percent of the cost of your health insurance by completing a biometric health screening. This means that you either have an annual preventive physical exam with your primary care physician or attend a Well Aware health screening by October 4, 2019. If you are covered by CareFirst, make sure to have your primary care physician complete and sign a Wellness Evaluation form. Instructions are available [here](#). If you are a member of Kaiser Permanente, you will need to log in to the [Kaiser Permanente incentive portal](#) to complete its requirements.

[Learn more about Wellness Initiatives.](#)

## There's Still Time to Ride *Le Tour de Fitness*

Across Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), employees are experiencing better health and morale because of their involvement in Well Aware's *Le Tour de Fitness* physical activity challenge. Some are participating as individuals; others as members of a team. They are enjoying better health and fitness as a result.

There is still time to join the challenge. Let the *Le Tour de Fitness* inspire you to become your most active self. Participate to regain your health and win prizes! Your activity and weight loss updates need to be entered in the online Well Aware Fitness Log by 12:00 noon on Monday, May 13, 2019.

### Stay tuned

Grand prize winners will be announced in *The Bulletin* on May 22, 2019.

### Spirit Award

Do you have a coworker who has gone above and beyond to help build a culture of wellness in your school or office? We are recognizing the MCPS employees who most encouraged others to live their healthiest lives. Ten Spirit Award winners will each receive a fall Zumba or yoga class at their school or office. To request a Spirit Award nomination form, [e-mail Well Aware](#). Nominations are due by Monday May 13, 2019.

### Don't stop now!

Well Aware your active lifestyle and look for information on the fall wellness programs on the [Well Aware web page](#), in the *Well Aware eNews*, and in *The Bulletin*.

[Learn more](#) about the *Le Tour de Fitness*.

## It Is National High Blood Pressure Education Month

During National High Blood Pressure Education Month in May, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is challenging Americans to participate in a national pledge to #MoveWithHeart to help reduce their risk of high blood pressure (hypertension). [Watch a #MoveWithHeart video.](#)

## Quit for GOOD!

### It's Your Turn to Quit for Good

MCPS and Kaiser Permanente are teaming up again to bring you the Quit for Good tobacco cessation program. The free program is available to employees and their spouses, regardless of whether or not you participate in MCPS employee benefits or if you participate with Kaiser.

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. Participants will learn the skills necessary to successfully live tobacco-free. Discussion topics will include risk assessment, stress management techniques, healthy weight management strategies, and more. In addition to the class meetings, participants will receive support through a help line, peer sponsors who understand what it takes to quit, and other resources.

Fall classes are forming! To add your name to the list for the next class, [e-mail Well Aware](#). Learn more about the program by visiting the [Well Aware website](#).

## American Diabetes Association: National Get Fit Don't Sit Day™

Did you miss Get Fit Don't Sit Day™? No worries! You can make every day Get Fit Don't Sit Day™.

Held each year the first Wednesday in May, Get Fit Don't Sit Day™ is an opportunity for the American Diabetes Association (ADA) 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 resources with ideas to get you moving:

- [8 Ways to Be More Active During the Workday](#)
- [Desk Moves](#)

Portions of this article are excerpted from the [American Diabetes Association website](#).



## Don't Miss It

### This month's free seminar/webinar—**Managing Your Blood Pressure**

Join Well Aware and CareFirst for this seminar/webinar to learn the importance of healthy blood pressure, the risk factors for high blood pressure, and how to take control of your risks.

**Thursday, May 9, 2019**

10:00–11:00 a.m.

Shady Grove Bus Depot  
16651 Crabbs Branch Way  
Rockville, Maryland 20855

**Thursday, May 16, 2019**

4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

**Wednesday, May 22, 2019**

10:00–11:00 a.m.

West Farm Bus Depot  
11920 Bournefield Way  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

**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: CareFirst*