

December Well Aware eNews

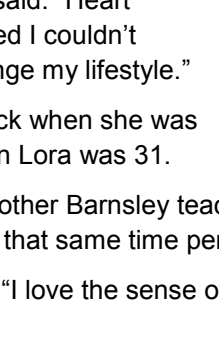
Welcome to the December issue of the *Well Aware eNews!* Read on to learn about—

- a seminar/webinar on the pitfalls of holiday eating, including tips for making healthy choices without missing out on the festivities;
- an update on our trip *To the Moon*;
- how to enter the Sweet-free Zone;
- ways to mind your wellness and reduce your stress during the holidays; and
- more!

Wellness Champion Runs Race Every Month in 2018

**Lora J. Allison, Auditory Teacher,
 Lucy V. Barnsley Elementary School**

This month's wellness champion, Lora J. Allison, an auditory teacher at Lucy V. Barnsley Elementary School, recently completed the Hershey Half Marathon after receiving online coaching through the Well Aware running program.



Allison at the finish

She has been running off and on for a number of years, but decided that 2018 would be the year when she would fully commit to the practice.

"I originally started running to make lifestyle changes and become heart healthy," Lora said. "Heart disease runs in my family. I realized I couldn't change my genes but I could change my lifestyle."

Lora lost her father to a heart attack when she was 18. Her mother passed away when Lora was 31.

About nine years ago, she and another Barnsley teacher began coaching an after-school running club at the school. During that same time period, she ran her first 5K.

"I got the running bug," Lora said. "I love the sense of accomplishment I get after training for and finishing a race."

Lora has been running off and on ever since. To keep herself running more consistently she made a New Year's Resolution to run a race every month in 2018. So far, she's run eight 5Ks, two half marathons, and a 10K.

She struggled a bit with her July and August races because she hadn't been running as much during the hot summer months. She knew she would need to step it up to meet her 2018 goal.

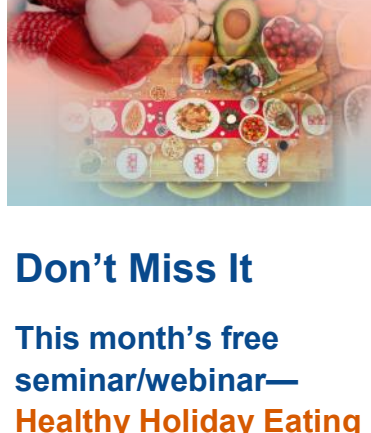
"When Well Aware offered the online running program early this fall, I was able to get back into a better running routine," Lora said. It helped me to train for and finish the half marathon, which was my race goal for October."

Lora has some advice for those beginning a running routine.

"Make small changes that will payoff in the long run," Lora said. "A few years ago I was about 20 pounds heavier. I did what I could do at the time. I started with 10-15 minutes of physical activity and eventually that led to 20-30 minutes. Find something that you enjoy doing and make a commitment to do it by putting it on your calendar. Don't cancel an appointment to make yourself better!"

What is next for Lora? To fulfil her 2018 running resolution, she will run one 5K in December. Although her resolution for 2019 isn't set yet, she has a few ideas in store.

"There are a bunch of half marathons I still want to run," Lora said. "I would love to do the Maryland King Crab Challenge, and eventually, I want to cross the marathon distance off of my running bucket list!"



Don't Miss It

This month's free seminar/webinar— Healthy Holiday Eating

Join Well Aware and CareFirst for a seminar/webinar that examines the pitfalls of holiday eating and reviews tips for making healthy choices without missing out on the festivities.

Thursday, December 13, 2018
 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Webinar

Wednesday, December 19, 2018
 10:00–11:00 a.m.

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

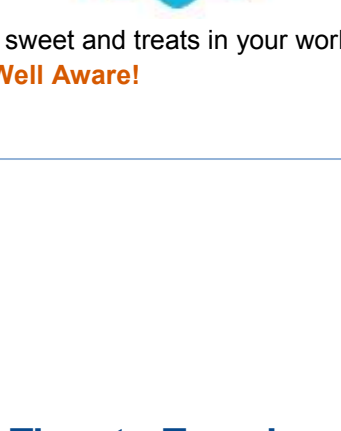
Please register for the seminar or webinar by e-mailing Well Aware with the date and time you plan to attend. If you register for the webinar, you will receive a link in your Outlook e-mail as well as an Outlook calendar reminder.

Spread the word with our **printable flyer**. See the **Wellness Webinar Library**.

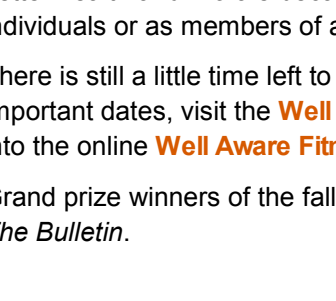
Presented by: CareFirst

Enter the Sweet-free Zone!

Again this year, Well Aware is challenging you to designate your school or office as a Sweet-free Zone. What does this mean? It means that you pledge to do your best to celebrate the holidays in a healthy way. Post **this flyer** to designate your school as a Sweet-free Zone and share suggestions on how to change the culture in your school or office.



Are you doing something special to stop the influx of sweet and treats in your work location? Be sure to let us know, and **e-mail your photos to Well Aware!**



There's Still Time to Travel To the Moon

Since October 1, MCPS employees have been working to achieve the goals they set during the *To the Moon* physical activity challenge. Across MCPS, employees are experiencing better health and morale because of their involvement, whether they are participating as individuals or as members of a team.

There is still a little time left to join us! For details, including incentives, rules, and important dates, visit the **Well Aware web page**. Your activity updates need to be entered into the online **Well Aware Fitness Log** by 12 noon on Monday, December 10, 2018.

Grand prize winners of the fall challenge will be announced in the December 12th issue of *The Bulletin*.

Quit for Good!

It Is Always a Good Time to Quit!

Are you ready to quit? *Quit for Good*, Well Aware's free tobacco cessation program for MCPS employees and their spouses, can help. *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.**

The next class will begin in January. 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 class.

Wellness Initiatives

If you are covered by an MCPS-provided medical insurance plan, 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 easy to complete. To earn the maximum two percent incentive toward your health insurance premiums, you need to complete a yearly—

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

To find out how and when to complete your assessment and screening, more about the benefits of participating, and if any Wellness Initiatives information is reported to MCPS, please visit the **Wellness Initiatives for Employees web page**.

Holiday Wellness

Make the most wonderful time of year a safe and healthy time of year. With just a little preparation and caution, your holidays can be remembered for all the good reasons. Here are some tips on staying healthy, safe and stress free.

Don't skimp on sleep while getting ready for the holidays. Lack of sleep leads to—

- overeating and weight gain;
- safety hazards at home, work, and on the road; and
- a negative mood.

Holidays mean lots of time spent with others, mostly indoors. Whether it's shopping or social events, indoor activity is prime time to spread common colds and the flu. Some ways to avoid getting or giving viruses include—

- washing your hands with soap and water for at least for 20 seconds;
- covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; (If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.)
- getting the flu vaccine; and
- keeping your immune system strong by staying physically active, eating healthy, and limiting alcohol. (You don't have to say no to all of the holiday treats, just don't overindulge.)

Often, on our own or with the media's help, we create unrealistic expectations. If not kept in check, holiday commitments and spending can lead to stress. Ways to manage holiday stress include—

- balancing work, home, and social activities; (Remember: It is okay to say no.)
- asking for support from family—including your children—and friends;
- finding time to relax—even for just a few minutes—to recharge;
- getting plenty of sleep; and
- creating a budget for purchasing gifts, food, and decorations.

Flights to Fitness To Return in January

Flights to Fitness (F2F) is a program designed to encourage physical activity MCPS employees through stair climbing. Stay tuned for more information on the latest *Flights to Fitness* challenge starting in January!

Mind Your Wellness

Are the holidays stressing you out? Join Well Aware to learn how to manage your stress.

Stress Reduction and Mindfulness for a Healthy Holiday Season

Learn strategies, tips, and exercises to help you minimize stress and increase peace of mind and well-being as you prepare for the upcoming holiday season. You will learn exercises to help you embrace mindfulness, moderation, and wellness in your approaches to work, family, and food.

Monday, December 18, 2018
 4:30–6:30 p.m.

Maple Room
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Mindfulness and Meditation

Mondays through December 17 (except holidays)
 5:00–5:45 p.m.

Conference Room 223
 Carver Educational Services Center
 850 Hungerford Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

Seated Yoga

Wednesdays, December 12, 19
 4:45 p.m.

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

Sit and Be Fit

Tuesdays through December 18
 4:45 p.m.

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

Tai Chi

Thursdays
 4:45 p.m.

Lower Level Gym
 45 West Gude Drive
 Rockville, Maryland 20850

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

Friday
 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**.