



eNews

The education you need for the health you want

May 2012 Well Aware eNews

Welcome to the May issue of the Well Aware eNews!

Read on to learn about—

- How this month's wellness champion has turned a competitive spirit into a collaborative one,
- *Walk This Way* challenge winners and upcoming award ceremony,
- Bike to Work Day,
- Resources for understanding and treating high blood pressure, and more!

Wellness Champion Turns Competitive Spirit to



Collaborative Leadership

Meet Jon Freda, Athletic Director, Richard Montgomery High School

For Jon Freda, athletic director at Richard Montgomery High School (RMHS), exercise equals fun.

Although Jon works long hours and has many job responsibilities, he used his fun approach to motivate his team during *MCPS on the Move*. As the team coach for "Admin it to Win it," John encouraged his team and other RMHS staff members to walk, do housework, or do anything to keep moving. Jon offered advice on how to fit activity into a busy workday, sent motivational videos, and printed team shirts as an incentive to get his team moving.

Jon believes good health is all about good habits, which take time and commitment to create and sustain. Jon does his best to model those good habits, opening the RMHS gym early every day for a staff workout with the *Insanity* DVD.

Growing up, physical activity was always a competition for Jon. Now, he recognizes that the only way to "win" is to encourage others to follow his healthy lead. "I no longer need to bench press more than everyone else in the county like I would try to do in high school and college. My goals are to maintain a high level of exercise, eat right, and take good care of my health." His coworkers are



Don't miss it!

Seminar: Fad Diets—
Why They Don't Work

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

10:00–11:00 a.m.

West Farm Transportation
Depot Training Room
11920 Bournefield Way
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Tuesday, May 15, 2012

4:30–5:30 p.m.

Carver Educational Services
Center Auditorium
850 Hungerford Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Thursday, May 17, 2012

4:00–5:00 p.m.

Quince Orchard High School
Cafeteria
15800 Quince Orchard Road
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Monday, May 21, 2012

10:00–11:00 a.m.

Clarksburg Transportation
Depot Staff Lounge
13100 Shawnee Lane
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Thursday, May 24, 2012

4:00–5:00 p.m.

Paint Branch High School
Cafeteria
14121 Old Columbia Pike
Burtonsville, MD 20866

Presented by: UnitedHealthcare

and take good care of my health. His coworkers are appreciative that he has embraced this new mindset; Jon was one of seven Spirit Award winners for his motivational leadership throughout *MCPS on the Move*.

Spread the word with a [printable flyer!](#)

And the Winners Are...

The *Walk This Way* challenge is complete, the winners are in, and the awards ceremony is scheduled!



We asked you to *Walk This Way*, and did you ever! *Walk This Way* was the biggest wellness competition yet—over 4,800 employees participated. The challenge was great—to reach the goal of walking an average of 10,000 steps a day within eight weeks—but you rose to the occasion. How? Top activities that counted toward steps for the challenge included walking, gardening, cycling, and circuit training. Now it's time to celebrate our successes and motivate one another to stay active throughout the summer.

Prizes, Prizes, and More Prizes to Come! Congratulations to all of our grand prize winners!

School Grand Prize: \$5,000 grant for physical education equipment or to support staff wellness

- Potomac Elementary School
- Poolesville Elementary School
- John Poole Middle School
- Thomas Edison High School of Technology

Team Grand Prize: A healthy lunch and a six-week exercise class for their teams

- **Blocks of Granite:** Katherine Siguenza, Amy Hannum, Manju Upadhyaya, Rovena Katsafanas, Janet Gawler, Michael Herlihy
- **Sole Sisters:** Ashley VanCleaf, Krista Vega
- **Steppin' with the Control Freaks:** Jade Pridgeon, Carolyn Gibson, Ana Pérez, Michelle Williams, Kim Whitfield, Laura Salteris, Margarita Gomez, Maria E. Douglas, Kristen Millios, Nina Barbosa
- **Fit Chicks:** Evelyn Wilson-Carr, Ivy Reed, Karen Murphy, Jennifer Milstein
- **Sole Striders:** Barb Baliles, Howard Kpakima, Julie Broyles, Carlos Nalda, Evelyn Zuniga-Sanchez, Karen Wilson
- **Get it Done:** Yanira Lopez, Heather Welter, Mary Newman, Tina Moore, Leslie Gordon, Maria Anthony, Antoinette Lewan, Susan Dowling, Gabriel Bellagamba, Joy Burkley

Overall Lifestyle Change Prize: A healthy lunch for the winners and their teams

- Carolina Kindel
- Ann Plummer
- Saulan Cheung

Individual Grand Prize: A healthy lunch for the winners and their teams

- Doreen Brandes
- Judie Dan-Weisletten
- Lisa Orifici

In addition, five employees will be recognized for going above and beyond in motivating

... .., the employees are encouraged to go above and beyond in honoring their coworkers during the competition with a Spirit Award—the prize for which is a six-week exercise class held at their work locations. Spirit Award nominations are submitted by the coaches at each location and are due this Friday, May 11. If you know someone who deserves a Spirit Award, talk to your coach today!

Let's Celebrate!

All staff members are invited to attend the *Walk This Way* award ceremony on Wednesday, May 23, 2012, at Rockville High School from 4:30–5:30 p.m. In addition to awarding grand prizes, all Spirit Award nominees will be honored and the Spirit Award winners will be announced. Everyone is encouraged to attend the event to cheer on colleagues who have won and, most important, to celebrate your own victories through the program.

What's Next?

Of course, Well Aware hopes you will build on the *Walk This Way* momentum and keep moving over the summer months. Learn about summertime program offerings and get tips for staying active on the [Staff Wellness webpage](#). A new fitness competition will be unveiled this fall—watch the Staff Wellness page and the Bulletin to learn more!

Bike to Work on May 18

Friday, May 18, 2012, is Bike to Work Day, when commuters across metropolitan DC are encouraged to abandon their cars in favor of bikes. Why bike to work? Commuting by bicycle is a great way to get the physical activity your body needs while decreasing your impact on the environment. Bicycling to work also can help save you money by eliminating your need for a monthly gym membership, cutting your fuel costs, and reducing your need for car maintenance.

Commuter Connections and the Washington Area Bicyclists Association want to make it easy for you on Bike to Work Day with designated pit stops, maps, and resources for first-time bike commuters.



Need a good example? Check out Kevin Yates's story in the [January Well Aware eNews!](#)

Pit Stops

On Bike to Work Day, there will be pit stops across Maryland, Virginia, and DC that offer refreshments, fun raffles, and T-shirts for registered participants. Register for the pit stop most convenient to you and you can pick up your free Bike to Work T-shirt when you arrive.

- [Learn more](#) about pit stops and see which one is most convenient for you.
- [Register now](#) on the Bike to Work website.

Find Your Route

If you have not biked to work before, you can find the best route with the Montgomery County Bikeway Map. The interactive map helps you identify major bike paths, minor bike paths, and shared roadways. Be sure to open the map legend on the left side of the screen to help you understand what you are seeing.

- [Visit the Bikeways Interactive Map](#).

First Time Rider Resources

For those potential riders who might be hesitant about taking the first spin, the Bike to Work website offers resources for first-time riders. Depending on where you live, you may be able to borrow a bike for Bike to Work day at no charge, hook up with a biking buddy, or even join a commuter convoy.

- Visit the [First Time Riders](#) page for more information.

May is National High Blood Pressure Awareness Month

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 68 million Americans have high blood pressure, putting them at risk for heart disease and stroke.



This month, make sure you know your numbers and strategies to keep your blood pressure at a healthy level.

Visit your health provider for a blood pressure screening. If you already have been diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure) or prehypertension, the CDC suggests combining prescribed medications with some essential lifestyle changes, including maintaining a normal body weight, eating a nutritious diet, limiting alcohol intake, and quitting smoking. For more details about the CDC recommendations, [visit their website](#).

In addition, these resources will give you some ideas about reducing stress, improving your diet, and keeping your blood pressure under control.

- [Decreasing Stress Can Help Lower Blood Pressure](#) (1m)
In this video from UnitedHealthcare, Dr. Bruce Dan discusses the ways in which lowering your stress level also can lower your blood pressure.
- [Tai Chi: Exercise for Mind and Body](#)
This article from CareFirst BlueChoice discusses the benefits of practicing Tai Chi, including decreasing your blood pressure.
- [Eat Less Salt](#)
In this Kaiser Permanente article, you will learn why too much sodium can be dangerous to people with high blood pressure and how to make changes to your diet to decrease your salt intake.

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Questions or comments about your employee wellness program? Contact ERSC at 301-517-8100 or wellness@mcpsmd.org.

