

Wellness Program Newsletter

Wellness Matters

All benefitted and benefit-eligible municipal employees, retirees, and benefit-eligible family members in East Longmeadow, Hampden, HWRSD, Longmeadow, LPVEC and Wilbraham may participate in any of the programs and classes listed. Other employees, family members and friends are also invited to participate, however will not be eligible for incentives.

Coordinator's Corner

This may be the first time that I am at a loss for words. My inbox is filled with messages about the fatigue that many of us are feeling right about now. We are tired. Tired of talk about the virus, of the pain and loss it has inflicted, tired of not seeing friends and family like we usually do. Then there is the economic toll, job loss and small business loss. Have we really been living like this since March? Yes. Does it seem like longer? Probably. It may seem hard to recall what life was like before we heard of coronavirus. And it is hard to believe and accept that it's not over yet.

What else is there? Gratitude. For any and every little thing that makes us smile. Watching a comedian on YouTube. Talking to a friend. Listening to some great music. Being mindful of everything outside when we take a walk. **Taking a breath.** Two of our last 3 webinars had us taking cleansing, mindful breaths. A simple way to reclaim some calm in a hectic, overwhelming day.

Be on the lookout for positive messages. Approach people and situations with tenderness. Still feeling overwhelmed? Need help getting unstuck? Call MassSupport at 888-215-4920 to get connected to a counselor. It's free and confidential, open to all MA residents and organizations.

Be well~

~Lyn

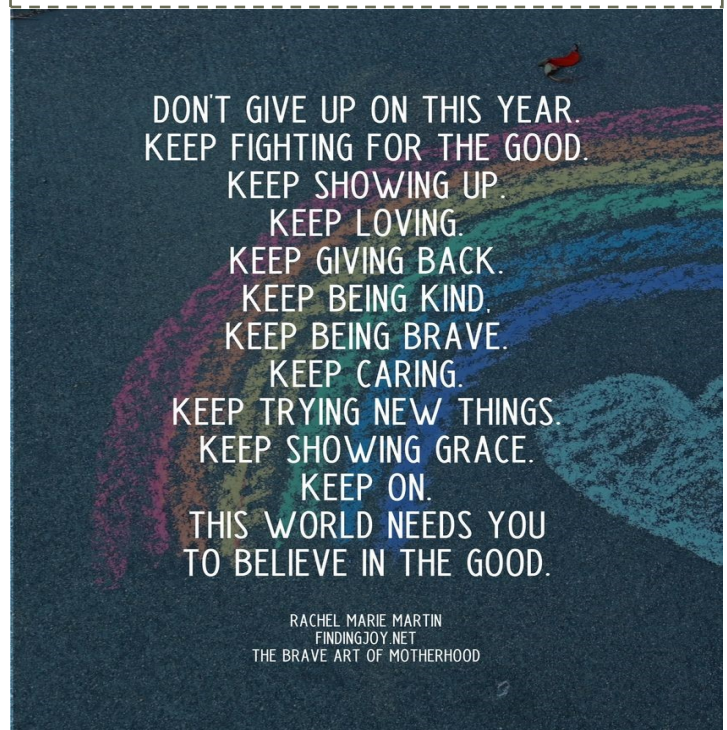
For more information on anything in this newsletter, please contact me at lyn@scantichealth.org. You are invited to "like" us on FB for info on various health topics:

<https://www.facebook.com/scanticvalleywellness/>

Visit us on the web! www.scantichealth.org

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wellness program

UPCOMING LIVE WEBINARS!!!

Managing Cash Flow and Debt Thursday, November 5 4:30 PM

In this session we will review some of the steps to take to get a better handle on your cash flow and how to avoid some of the common pitfalls people make in managing their credit.

Maintaining Your Weight While Working from Home Monday, November 16 6:30 PM

Maintain Your Weight, Don't Gain while working from home! Participants learn strategies to "set the table" from menu planning to meal planning and quick cooking strategies. The program includes information on best snack choices, quick easy meals, meal timing and more!

Mindfulness for Sleep and Stress Management Wednesday, December 2 4:30 PM

Wouldn't it feel great to wake up from a restful sleep relaxed and ready to tackle the day? Effectively managing stress leads to better sleep while boosting health and productivity. Participants will learn how to incorporate more mindfulness practices into their day that will help reduce stress and promote good sleep habits.

Destress at Your Desk Tuesday, December 8 5:00 PM

From lower back pain to swollen feet, there are many possible physical and mental effects of sitting at a desk for prolonged periods of time. This interactive class teaches participants easy stretches and movements in conjunction with breath work to relieve areas of contraction and reduce overall stress; leaving participants relaxed and ready for their next challenge at their desk! *Note this webinar does not include a PowerPoint presentation. There will be a live video of the presenter.

ALL EMPLOYEES are invited to participate in any or all of these free Wellness Concepts live webinars! SVRHT members (HNE, BCBSMA, Tufts) will receive 10 points for each one viewed. Non-members will receive one raffle ticket for each one viewed. If you cannot join us live, you can earn points/raffle tickets by watching the recording (available for 30 days following the live webinar) and completing a short quiz. The recording link and quiz will be posted on our website www.scantichealth.org two-three days after the live webinar.

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**The Diabetes Rewards Program** from Abacus is running a registration incentive in January for all eligible SVRHT members. If you have diabetes or pre-diabetes and are not yet enrolled, you will receive **an A1c kit** when you register for the Diabetes Reward Program. New members have until April to complete the A1c test. AND...if you become adherent between January and April, you will also earn an additional **\$100 gift card!** Wow...seems like a win-win!!!  
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Cooking for Weight Loss - 4 Week On-line Zoom Series

As a winner of the HNE *Well Worth It Award*, we were gifted with two 30-minute healthy cooking demos from Mediterranean Living with Bill Bradley. The whole series is 4 demos, so I am happy to offer all four live sessions! Everyone is invited to watch and learn. Raffle every week for an insulated lunch bag!

Week 1 – Wednesday, November 11th, 11:30 AM – Noon *Recipe: **Spinach and Ricotta Frittata***

How eating fat will help you lose weight For years, the common wisdom was to eat less fat to lose weight. What happened during those years? Everyone gained weight. Discover the truth about fat and weight loss.

Week 2 – Wednesday, November 18th, 11:30 AM - Noon *Recipe: **Loaded Tzatziki***

Your microbiome and weight loss An incredible amount of new research is being done on the gut microbiome and some of the most fascinating is how an out of balance microbiome can lead to obesity. Learn how to heal your microbiome while eating delicious food.

Week 3 – Thursday, December 3rd, 11:30 AM - Noon *Recipe: **Salmon with Yogurt, Spinach, Lemon & Capers***

Inflammation and weight loss Obesity is a form of inflammation. Learn how reducing inflammation can also reduce your waistline.

Week 4 – Thursday, December 10th, 11:30 AM - Noon *Recipe: **Italian Red Pesto with Pasta***

Can you eat carbohydrates and still lose weight? The answer is yes and no. Italians eat pasta and the Japanese eat rice without weight issues. Discover how to eat carbs and still lose weight.

An email with the invitation and link to join will be sent out each week.

An 'Awe Walk' Might Do Wonders for Your Well-Being

Consciously watching for small wonders in the world around you during an otherwise ordinary walk could amplify the mental health benefits of the stroll, according to an interesting new psychological study of what the study's authors call "awe walks."

In the study, people who took a fresh look at the objects, moments and vistas that surrounded them during brief, weekly walks felt more upbeat and hopeful in general than walkers who did not. The findings are subjective but indicate that awe walks could be a simple way to combat malaise and worry. They also underscore that how we think and feel during exercise can alter how the exercise alters us.

There already is considerable evidence, of course, that exercise, including walking, can buoy our moods. Past studies have linked increased physical activity to greater happiness and reduced risks for anxiety, depression and other mental ills.

Feeling a sense of awe also seems to up our overall feelings of gladness and improve health. A somewhat nebulous emotion, awe generally is defined as the sense that you are in the presence of something larger and more consequential than yourself and that this something is mysterious and ineffable. In past studies, people who reported feeling awe also tended to have less emotional stress and lower levels of substances related to body-wide inflammation.

But no studies had looked into whether mixing awe and activity might somehow augment the benefits of each — or, on the other hand, reduce them. So, for the new study, which was published in September in *Emotion*, scientists affiliated with the Memory and Aging Center at the University of California, San Francisco, and other institutions decided to start teaching older walkers how to cultivate awe.

They concentrated on people in their 60s, 70s and 80s, an age when some people can face heightened risks for declining mental health. The researchers also had a ready-made volunteer pool, consisting of men and women already participating in an ongoing U.C.S.F. study of how to age well.

The scientists asked 52 of the study volunteers if they would mind adding a weekly 15-minute walk to their normal schedules. All of these selected recruits were physically and cognitively healthy. Fresh, baseline studies of their mental health showed they were psychologically well-adjusted as well, with little anxiety or depression.

The scientists randomly divided these volunteers into two groups. One, as a control group, was asked to start walking, at least once a week, for 15 minutes, preferably outside, but given few other mandates.

The members of the other group likewise were asked to walk once a week, but also were instructed in how to cultivate awe as they walked.

"Basically, we told them to try to go and walk somewhere new, to the extent possible, since novelty helps to cultivate awe," says Virginia Sturm, an associate professor of neurology at U.C.S.F., who led the new study. The researchers also suggested that the walkers pay attention to details along their walks, Dr. Sturm says, "looking at everything with fresh, childlike eyes."

They emphasized that the awesome can be anywhere and everywhere, she says, from a sweeping panorama of cliffs and sea to sunlight dappling a leaf. "Awe is partly about focusing on the world outside of your head," she says, and rediscovering that it is filled with marvelous things that are not you.

The awe walkers, like the control group, were asked to walk outdoors. Neither group was told to confine their walks to parks or to avoid urban settings, Dr. Sturm says. Both groups were asked to take a few selfies during their walks, in order to document locales, but otherwise to avoid using their phones while walking.

The walkers in both groups uploaded their selfies to a lab website and also completed a daily online assessment of their current mood and, if they had walked that day, how they had felt during their strolls.

After eight weeks, the scientists compared the groups' responses and photos. Not surprisingly, they found that the

awe walkers seemed to have become adept at discovering and amplifying awe. One volunteer reported focusing now on “the beautiful fall colors and the absence of them among the evergreen forest.” A control walker, in contrast, said she spent much of a recent walk fretting about an upcoming vacation and “all the things I had to do before we leave.” The researchers also found small but significant differences in the groups’ sense of well-being. Over all, the awe walkers felt happier, less upset and more socially connected than the men and women in the control group. The volunteers in the control group reported some improvements in mood, but their gains were slighter.

More startling, the researchers noted a variance in the groups’ selfies. Over the course of the eight weeks, the size of awe walkers’ countenances shrank in relation to the scenery around them. Their faces grew smaller, the world larger. Nothing similar occurred in the photos from the control group. “We had not expected that,” Dr. Sturm says.

The findings are subjective, though, since awe, like other emotions, is difficult to quantify, and there is, as yet, no other science indicating that becoming a punier part of your own selfies says something about you. The study participants also uniformly were older people in good health who walked. It is not clear whether young people or those with illnesses likewise would benefit, or if you can and should try awe runs, swims, hikes or rides.

But Dr. Sturm thinks the possibility is enticing, especially now, when pandemic and other concerns are rampant. “It is such a simple thing” to look around for small wonders while you exercise, she says, “and there’s no downside.”

By Gretchen Reynolds Published Sept. 30, 2020, Updated Oct. 1, 2020

Taken from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/30/well/move/an-awe-walk-might-do-wonders-for-your-well-being.html>

Maintain Campaign, or this year, maybe we call it...Where in our Muni is the scale???

The Maintain Campaign is a true staple in our Wellness programming. It will look different this year to be respectful of the social distancing guidelines of our municipalities. **I will not be recording your weight, but you can!** If you have a scale at home, you can do this on your own scale. If not, there will be a scale available in your area for you to **weigh in on your own and email me your weight.** We will do the same for the weigh-out in January. Maybe this year we will have the most participation yet!

Once you email me with your weigh-in weight, you will receive weekly tips for limiting weight gain during the holidays starting the week of Thanksgiving. Everyone who sends me **both weights** will receive a **2021 wellness wall calendar!** All who stay **within 2 pounds (or lose weight)** during the holidays (pre-Thanksgiving through post-New Year) **will be entered into a raffle for \$15 and \$25 Amazon gift cards, magazine subscriptions, fit bit zips and fit bit flexes!** Where will the scale be???. Take a look and mark your calendar! The scale will arrive the day prior, so it will be there first thing in the morning on the date noted when you arrive to work! It will remain there through mid-afternoon, so whenever you choose to weigh in during that day is fine. School staff may weigh-in with your school nurse or may use the nurse’s scale to weigh-in on your own during these 2 weeks.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
November 10	November 11	November 12	November 13
Hampden Town Hall LPVEC Boston Road Wilbraham Town Hall	Hampden Police Dept. Wilbraham Fire Dept. Wilbraham Police Dept.	Hampden Police Dept. Wilbraham Fire Dept. Wilbraham Police Dept.	Career TEC LPVEC Agawam LPVEC Southwick
November 17	November 18	November 19	November 20
East Longmeadow DPW LPVEC East Longmeadow East Long. Town Hall/Lib	Longmeadow DPW ELFD Longmeadow Library Longmeadow Town Hall	Longmeadow Fire Dept. Wilbraham Library	