



Staff Wellness News

by Dana Schuster, WAC Community Member

We are very appreciative of all the ideas and comments you provided on the Staff Wellness survey, and are excited to begin providing some of the things you've asked for via this newsletter.

First, we are introducing a new "benefits@seq" column to provide details about employee benefits. Through a Q & A format with benefits coordinator Sonia Ramirez de Figueroa, we will address different aspects of health benefits in each future staff newsletter, and welcome your submission of specific questions/areas you would like us to consider in this feature.

Another of your requests was to have access to additional nutritious and quick recipes, so in this newsletter we have a full page of delicious health-supporting options that have been successfully tested-out and enjoyed by members of WAC. If you have a recipe to share in an upcoming newsletter, please send it in!



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Staff Wellness News, cont.'d.

WAC also reached out to several health clubs near district schools to see if we could encourage them to offer discounted options for Sequoia Union High School District employees. As a result, we are thrilled to share the following offers with you:

- **Every Woman Health Club RWC:** \$10 off each month on their contract and Basic and Premier memberships, with a reduced enrollment fee of \$29. If you would like more information about this offer, please speak with Stephanie or Anne at 364-9194.
- **24 Hour Fitness San Carlos:** Offering rate of \$29.99/month and \$24.99 initiation fee from 6/2-6/15. Go in with district ID to sign up and receive more details.
- **Peacebank Yoga:** \$99 per 10 yoga classes (usual rate is \$130); located on Broadway, RWC. They also offer a free Friday meditation from 6:30-7:30 pm.
- **San Mateo Athletic Club** (located at the College of San Mateo): SUHSD employees get GREAT rates for individual, couple, and family memberships that range from \$55.00 to \$109.00 per month* with one-time registration rates that range from \$130 to \$225.00 (reduced from \$190 to \$330). *Registration rates adjust monthly

(NOTE: Each club also provides a "Free Pass" offer, available at their website.)

Our staff wellness goals for the 2014-15 school year include sponsoring "mini" staff health fairs at each school site in the fall to provide an opportunity to ask questions about district health benefits, have your blood pressure checked, get information about on-and off-campus movement classes and/or discounted options at local health clubs, enjoy nutritious snacks (with recipes provided), receive stress reduction information, and more. WAC will also be exploring:

- Facility use issues raised on the staff wellness survey
- Creation of a staff cookbook of "Eating for Wellness" recipes
- Establishing communication channels for staff to connect to form walking clubs or other activity groups for fun exercise

benefits@seq

by Sonia Ramirez de Figueroa

Q: What benefits does the SUHSD provide to employees?

A: The Sequoia district offers a highly competitive salary and benefits package, including fully paid medical, dental and vision coverage for employees and their families. Benefits are pro-rated for part-time employees. The district currently offers HMO and PPO options as well as a cash-back option for those opting out of district-paid benefits. The only responsibility for employees is to utilize these benefits for themselves and their families.

Q: Where can I find out more information about our staff benefits?

A: As benefits coordinator, I want to refer you to our website where all benefits are explained. The information is located at www.seq.org. Under departments, pull down the menu and choose Human Resources and Student Services. Pull down the menu again and under Employee Benefits, you will find detailed benefit information.



Q: What benefits could staff be more aware of?

A: One of the main benefits often overlooked is the EAP (Employee Assistance Program) provided by AETNA. Details of this plan can be found on our website or at <https://new.mylifevalues.com>. The plan is available to every employee, no matter what health care provider is chosen. For assistance with behavioral health and mental health issues, grief, family turmoil, divorce, drug and/or alcohol dependence, parenting and adolescence, there is a resource for you. You can call "24/7" and receive referral information tailored to your specific need. Call 1-800-342-8111 or log into the website with the Username: **Sequoia UHSD** and Password: **eap**. Other referral services include financial planning, debt management, legal consultation, will preparation, child and elder care resources and adoption resources.

Future benefits articles will be based on the other little-known benefits and on questions you send to me at: sfiguero@seq.org

"If you would like more information about WAC or are interested in attending a meeting, please contact Dr. Karen Li: kli@seq.org".

Updates from Food Service Director, Nora DeCaro

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 updated nutritional requirements for school meals for 2013-14 and beyond. All breads, buns and baked goods served as a part of school meals must now include whole grains. Greater varieties of fruit and vegetable servings are offered, and students are encouraged to take these items as part of each meal. Food Services has "upped the green factor" with offerings such as romaine lettuce, spinach and broccoli in salads. Seasonal stone fruits from local valley growers were served at the beginning of the school year and even while we are in the apples/oranges/bananas part of the year, there are a greater variety to be enjoyed including Pink Lady and Honey Crisp apples and Cara-Cara oranges when in season. Easy access to free drinking water is being provided by the recently installed Global Tap Water Bottle Filling Stations at each school site.

To improve the quality and freshness of school meals, emphasis is being placed on moving away as much as possible from prepackaged foods and foods prepared and packaged by Food Services staff at the District Central Kitchen and instead preparing more items on site at each campus. It is important to note however, that items from the Central Kitchen such as sandwiches and salads are prepared daily by staff and are not purchased and shipped from outside vendors. Sandwich meats are sliced fresh each day with fresh bread and produce delivered daily as well. To help with line speed and management, certain food items are now served at specific windows, rather than all items being served at all windows as was in the past. Our new Point of Sale (POS) program, which is a module of the district student information system, is now up and running, giving staff access to student picture IDs to help move the lines faster.



Food Services has a goal to move even more of the food prep to the school campuses next year, as well as implement online pre-payment options and other line-speed improvement ideas. As a staff member, you can help support Food Services by making us aware of students who may need meal benefits but may not currently have them, and by getting to know your school cafeteria. All campuses serve breakfast before school and lunch each day, so be sure to encourage students to feed their brains and bodies so they can excel while they are in the classroom!

SUHSD Health & Wellness Highlights of the Year

by Karen Li, M.D., Wellness Coordinator

It's been a productive and exciting year for our district in the realm of health and wellness. The Wellness Advisory Committee (WAC) continues to support the motto "Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn", basing our work on the CDC's Coordinated School Health model. In addition to the work already outlined in this newsletter regarding staff wellness and food services, here's a recap of some of the year's other highlights:

- Collaborated with the Teen Wellness Center, Teen Talk, and Kaiser Permanente on enhancing reproductive health education and services to all of our sites. <http://bit.ly/suhsd-secrets>
- Followed up on the 2012-13 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) results. Analyzed the objective data, with plans to obtain subjective data via "Student Listening Circles" (aka "Fishbowls") next school year.
- Provided CPR training to all 9th graders through PE classes, Redwood's TAPP and REAL students, and the Independent Living Skills students.
- Initiated an "Impact Test" concussion education and baseline-testing pilot with the boys' lacrosse team at Woodside High. <http://bit.ly/whs-concussion-testing>
- Conducted distracted driver observations at Carlmont and Woodside.
- Sponsored booths at the sites' health fairs on Asthma Education, Concussion Education, and Distracted Driving.
- Distributed hundreds of water bottles (with water facts and bottle cleaning instructions) at each site to students who completed a food services survey to get their input for consideration in district capacity planning.
- Facilitated SUHSD teens to volunteer as leaders for Sequoia Hospital's "Make Time For Fitness" event for all of Redwood City School District's 4th graders. <http://bit.ly/rwc-healthy>
- Assisted with the annual Great California Shakeout Drill at the District Office. All sites conducted emergency drills throughout the year.
- Continued to support the high-quality parent education events offered throughout the year.
- Addressed mental health services and social-emotional support in the district with the Board of Trustees.
- Addressed topics such as Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), smoking/vaping, suicide prevention, and stress reduction.
- Promoted the San Mateo County Office of Education's "Youth Mental Health First Aid" training for staff, funded by Measure A.
- Initiated a Quiet Time meditation-based program at Community Day School last fall. For an overview of the pilot, watch the following YouTube video clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRffkcLsIM> and check out the following article: <http://bit.ly/suhsd-meditation> Also, please read a student's perspective regarding Quiet Time:

"My experience with Quiet Time is a life-changing experience. In the training stage, students thought it was boring. Further into the meditation program, students liked it more. My first few sessions, I used to use every excuse to get out. The people around me thought I was weird, but as time went on, they noticed me changing for the better. My grades were better, test scores were higher, and sleep was good at night. With attendance getting better, I changed my ways about the streets and prospects changed. I highly recommend this program to all schools and staff."

By Daniel Fifita Jr., former Community Day School student, currently at Redwood High

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Thank you to all the Wellness Advisory Committee participants this year:

Becky Beacom, *Palo Alto Medical Foundation*
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 Donna DeKom, *District Office*
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 Gregorio Gutierrez, *Americorps*
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 Pamela Kurtzman, *Sequoia Healthcare District*
 Karen Li, *District Wellness Coordinator*
 Daina Lujan, *San Mateo COE*
 Emma Mackey, *Americorps*



Charlene Margot, *Parent Ed. Series, Director*
 Donald Milhaupt, *Director, Student Services*
 Debbie Moritz, *Epidemiologist*
 John Ramos, *Fitness Instructor*
 Judy Romero, *Director, Sequoia TRC*
 Dana Schuster, *Fitness Instructor*
 Marlene Schweighofer, *Psychology Intern*
 Judy Sencenbaugh, *District Nurse*
 Kalani Vasquez, *WHS, Mental Health*
 Marie Violet, *Dignity Health Sequoia Hospital*
 Justin Watkins, *SMC Health Planner*

Asparagus, Goat Cheese and Lemon Pasta

(serves 6)

1 lb spiral-shaped pasta
 1 lb slender asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1 TBSP finely grated lemon peel
 2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon, plus more for garnish
 1 log (5 to 5-1/2 ounces) soft goat cheese (NOT Pre-crumbled goat cheese, as it does not melt as well)
 Fresh lemon juice to taste



Cook your pasta in a large pot of well-salted water until it is almost tender, or about three minutes less than what the package suggests. Add the asparagus and cook until it is firm tender, another two to three minutes. Drain both the pasta and asparagus together, reserving one cup of pasta water. Meanwhile, combine olive oil, lemon peel, tarragon, and goat cheese in a large bowl, breaking up the goat cheese as you add it in. Add the pasta and asparagus to the bowl, along with a couple of splashes of the pasta water. Toss until smoothly combined, adding more pasta water if needed. Season with salt and pepper, and lemon juice for an extra 'kick'.

Chicken and Veggie Orzo (serves 4)

1 TBSP olive oil
 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts
 1 can (14.5 ounces) no-salt added diced tomatoes
 1 bag (12 ounces) frozen mixed vegetables
 1 cup water
 3/4 cup orzo
 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning



Cut the chicken into 1-inch pieces. Warm oil in a nonstick skillet over low heat and add the chicken. Cook 6 minutes, or until done. Stir in tomatoes, vegetables, water, orzo, and seasoning. Bring to a boil, and then reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer 20 minutes or until orzo is tender.

Pan-Roasted Green Beans With Golden Almonds (serves 4)

8 ounces fresh green and/or wax beans, trimmed
 1/4 cup blanched whole almonds, coarsely chopped
 3 TBSP extra virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
 1 large shallot, minced
 1 TBSP fresh flat leaf parsley leaves, thinly sliced
 1 lemon
 Freshly ground black pepper



Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil and add a teaspoon or so of salt. Fill a large bowl with ice and water. Add the green beans to the boiling water and cook until bright green but still firm, about 2 minutes. Drain and transfer to the ice water. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the almonds and oil, using enough oil to just cover the almonds. Cook over medium heat just until the almonds are golden, about 6 minutes. Remove from heat and add the shallot, which will cook in the residual heat. Coat a large skillet lightly with oil and heat over medium-high until very hot but not smoking. Add beans and stir-fry until charred dark brown in spots and tender-crisp, about 7 minutes. Top with the almond mixture and parsley, and grate zest from a quarter of the lemon on top. Season as desired with salt and pepper, and serve with lemon wedges.

White Bean Hummus

3 (15 ounce) cans white beans
 7 ounces pesto sauce, prepared
 3-1/2 teaspoons lemon juice, fresh



Drain and rinse beans and process in a food processor until smooth. Add pesto and lemon juice and process to combine. Check seasoning and add salt or pepper if needed. Serve with pita chips or raw vegetables.