

# Wellness Works Coordinators' Bulletin

**April 2019**

Providing your wellness committee  
with updates and relevant health  
information!



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**It's not too late to sign up for  
the Wellness Conference!!**

**The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Wellness Conference**

is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the  
Harraseeket Inn, Freeport, Maine!

You must register for the conference by  
Friday, April 12.

(Please see following page for details and the  
registration link.)

# 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Wellness Conference



In the morning, Elizabeth Ross Holmstorm, Founder and President of BreakTogether, will introduce the science and simple practices of mindful pause to improve work and wellbeing. Mindfulness is the foundation of Emotional Intelligence, which improves decision-making, stress resistance, social skills and more. The ability to pause, think and respond—rather than just react—is beneficial in all types of jobs, from executive administration to public works.

In this highly interactive session attendees will learn:

- ⇒ The scientific evidence behind mindful and resiliency practices in the workplace.
- ⇒ The myth of multi-tasking.
- ⇒ The mental challenges of 24/7 connectivity and addictive technology.
- ⇒ Simple 2-minute activities to re-energize your mind.
- ⇒ How to improve one on one and team meetings through unplugged interactions.

After lunch the Wellness Works staff will provide a high-energy session that will allow for groups to network with one another. The theme for this session will be ***Triumphs and Trials***. Please be prepared to share your proud moments and struggles that we can work through as a group.

This conference is FREE of charge for the first two committee members from each worksite. Additional wellness committee members are welcome to attend for a fee of \$30 per person. A healthy continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Scholarships are available to cover the cost of travel to groups who need it. Contact Anne Charles at [acharles@memun.org](mailto:acharles@memun.org) to see if your group qualifies.

Please click on the link below for more information and to register. A few of our groups have reported issues and have not been able to register online (most have successfully been able to do so). If you run into an issue, please contact Anne Charles ([acharles@memun.org](mailto:acharles@memun.org)) and she can help you out.

<https://www.memun.org/Insurance-Services/Maine-Municipal-Employees-Health-Trust/Wellness-Works-Conference>

# Weekly Wellness Challenges

Here are the weekly wellness challenges for June 2019! These challenges are easy to roll out to employees and cover a variety of health and wellness topics. Best of all, they can be offered at any time throughout the year. Your wellness committee can also choose to offer wellness classes along with these challenges to round out the program.

If you would like to offer these challenges at your worksite, contact Amanda Nile [anile@memun.org](mailto:anile@memun.org). She is the go-to person to receive copies of the calendars that describe the weekly challenges and simple log cards. We encourage you to find ways to give employees incentive to participate by offering raffle items or simple completion certificates!

The challenges for June are below and classes that can be done in conjunction with the challenge are listed in red:

**Take a Hike** - Research, plan and then go for a hike this week. It doesn't have to be an epic adventure, just a way to get outside and enjoy all that Maine has to offer. **(Footworks, Get Off Your Seat and Move Your Feet, Walking 4 Wellness)**



**Facetime not Facebook** - How much time are you spending being "social" on social media? Have you been forgetting to talk to the real people in your life? Turn off your social media presence and be present with your family and friends this week. **(Tech Detox, Importance of Purpose, How Full is Your Bucket, Mindfulness)**

**Back to Basics** - Back health is vital to staying active and enjoying your hobbies. Be sure to work at least 5 minutes of back care into your daily activity. **(Deskercise, FitME, On the Ball, Snap Into Shape, Strengthen Your Core, Stretching Solutions)**



**Berries for Breakfast** - Berries are full of nutrition that can benefit your brain, digestion and help fight disease. Add 1/2 cup of berries to your breakfast daily.

**We hope these challenges will add some fun and excitement to your wellness programs. Please contact any of our staff with questions!**

## Plalks and Plogging

No those aren't new curse words—they are a "new" fitness craze that can save the world...literally! Recently, a had a South Portland Rec employee tell me about plogging and as I stared at her blankly, she informed me of this brilliant idea that began in Sweden and is now sweeping the world—so now I will share it with you and spread the word(s)!

### What the heck are plalks and plogging?

So glad you asked! Plalks and plogging are environmentally conscious workouts where the people pick up trash while on a jog (plogging) or on a walk (plalks). The concept is really pretty simple: we know that running/walking are good for our health. We know that picking up litter is good for the planet's health, so why not combine the two? Better yet, as you bend down to pick the trash up you do a squat and as your trash bag gets a little heavier you add resistance... bonus!

### What do you need to know?

- \* Plogging and plalks are probably not going to replace your heart pumping exercise bouts every day, but they can be a great way to reduce the litter you see on your daily jaunts by incorporating them in once a week or so.
- \* You might want gloves. Think mud season, goopy trash and you can easily see why wearing simple gardening gloves or rubber gloves might be a good idea.
- \* Pile and pick it up. Carrying a bag of trash with you for your entire run/walk might not sound like a great plan. You can always create piles along the way and gather the piles up when you double back around.



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*(Plalks and Plogging continued from page 3)*

- \* Track your progress. Bag up the litter you collect for a week or a month and see how quickly it adds up. Then take a picture and share it with others, not only to see how much you have done to save the planet, but also to inspire others to do the same!
- \* Cash in. Collecting cans and bottles along your routes can add up to some serious cash, plus it makes searching for litter a little more rewarding!

This spring, make a plan to go on a plog or plalk and see what lurks on your roadsides. Better yet, make it a wellness activity and get your fellow co-workers to join you for a community plogging event after work!

## Spring Is Coming...So Is Fresh, Local Food

Nothing beats fresh fruits and vegetables from a local farm stand! While opening day at the local farm may be a few weeks away, now is the time to think about CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture programs) and promoting them to employees. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer and get some great healthy foods for their tables!

### The Basics:

A farmer offers a certain number of "shares" to the public. Typically the share consists of a box of vegetables, but other farm products may be included. Interested consumers purchase a share (aka a "membership" or a "subscription") and in return receive a box (bag, basket) of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season. Each farm does it a little different, so it is important to ask your farmer what the details of their "shares" are. Regardless of how it is run, this arrangement creates several rewards for both the farmer and the consumer, including:

### Advantages for farmers:

- Get to spend time marketing the food early in the year, before their 16 hour days in the field begin
- Receive payment early in the season, which helps with the farm's cash flow
- Have an opportunity to get to know the people who eat the food they grow

### Advantages for consumers:

- Eat ultra-fresh food, with all the flavor and vitamin benefits
- Get exposed to new vegetables and new ways of cooking
- Usually get to visit the farm at least once a season
- Find that kids typically favor food from "their" farm—even veggies they've never been known to eat
- Develop a relationship with the farmer who grows their food and learn more about how food is grown



It's a simple enough idea, but its impact has been profound. Tens of thousands of families have joined CSAs, and in some areas of the country there is more demand than there are CSA farms to fill it. You are probably well-aware of some great local farmers in your area that offer CSAs—why not invite them in to talk about the program with employees or maybe offer a farmer's market right at your worksite?

If you are looking for a listing of CSAs, [www.LocalHarvest.org/csa](http://www.LocalHarvest.org/csa) can offer you a short list of potential farms based on zip code. This list is not all-inclusive, so be sure to ask around for other local options.



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