

Upcoming Wellness Events

- **Upcoming Potlucks**—Ainsworth, February 23, noon to 1pm. Theme: Favorite Foods From Childhood; Wheatley Potluck - March 3
- **Yoga at Ainsworth**—Wednesdays 11:35am-12:20pm (drop-in \$7)
- **Yoga at Wheatley**—Tuesdays at 4:15pm (drop-in \$5)

Inside this issue:

Crockpot Recipe: Zuppa Toscana	2
MESD Employee Sports Teams	2
Plank Challenge Review	3
February is Heart Health Month!	3
Transportation improvements in NE Portland	3
Dealing with Grief and Loss	4
Employee Wellness Overview	4

Journey to the WELL



Volume III, Issue IV

February 15, 2017

It Works for Me! Jacob Lang, Arata Creek

By Elana Emlen

We can all thank Michael Jordan for the new MESD basketball teams. Why? Because while he's a huge Blazers fan, Jacob Lang, one of the people who led the push for sports teams, was inspired by Michael Jordan when he was a kid. From the moment he saw Jordan play, Jacob was hooked on basketball.

Jacob is an Education Assistant at Arata, and also helps with campus maintenance. He is active throughout his workday at the school. He floats into classrooms and provides assistance as needed. With a hallway that is 75 yards long (the length of a football field), Jacob gets physical activity all day long.

Jacob and his co-worker Jared started to talk about having a basketball team last year. They began to play in the Portland

Basketball League. (See sports article on page 2). This year, they have a full team in the league, called the MESD Allstars. They practice once/week and they play a game once/week.

Basketball fits nicely into Jacob's overall fitness plan. He treats it as a cardio workout, and includes the stair stepper or elliptical on other days of the week. He works out at LA Fitness regularly and does strengthening drills to keep his body and bones strong. Sometimes, in addition to MESD basketball, he plays at Mt. Scott Community Center as well.



Jacob Lang

Along with the fitness benefits of playing basketball, Jacob appreciates the social aspect. "You make a bond with whoever you play with. You get to know them better." He also says it is a great stress releaser. "You can always pick up the ball and shoot on your own. I like that about it."

Jacob tends to eat lean meats, salmon, whole grains, and Greek yogurt. Once he ate an apple before a game - and it was a great game - so he has started to make a habit of eating an apple before each basketball game.

"Sports, in general, build character and camaraderie. Camaraderie was the main reason we started playing basketball at Arata."

Get out this month around Portland

Polar Plunge Portland

What: Raise money for [Special Olympics Oregon](#) by pledging to plunge into the icy waters of Broughton Beach. The annual fundraiser includes an optional 5k walk/run, a costume contest, and a hot bowl of soup for all participants.

Where: Broughton Beach, 4356 NE Marine Drive

When: 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb 25

How much: Must raise at least \$50 for Special Olympics Oregon. Learn more [here](#).

Free class at REI - Prepare for the Unexpected: Urban Emergency Preparedness

What: What happens when flood, fire, pandemic, tornadoes, terrorist attacks, or other disasters affect your community? Where will you go? What will you

do? Learn valuable planning and survival techniques that may one day help save your life or the lives of those you love.

Where: REI Portland

When: March 1, 2017 6:30-8:00pm

How much: Free, go to [rei.com](#) to register

What to Do in the March Vegetable Garden

Get the dirt on year-round vegetable growing in this monthly talk about vegetable gardening in the Pacific Northwest. Robyn will cover soils & early season plantings in this class plus talk about what you can plant this month. **Note:** register ASAP if you want to take this free class at Portland Nursery. They fill up!

Portland Nursery 9000 SE DIVISION • Saturday • March 4 • 11:00-12:30pm

[Click here to register for this class.](#)

Zuppa Toscana Recipe!

Submitted by Laura Holguin, MESD Human Resources

The "Crockpotluck" at Ainsworth in January featured 6 crockpots filled with savory goodness, including soups, stews, and pastas. And one that was filled with homemade caramel popcorn! One of the soups that was a big hit was this Zuppa Toscana, made by Laura Holguin in Human Resources. This soup is inspired by a popular menu item at the Olive Garden.

1 lb hot or mild Italian sausage
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 yellow onion, chopped
4 red potatoes, diced
4 cups chicken broth (may need more)
1 bunch of kale, chopped
3/4 c half & half or heavy cream
salt & pepper to taste



grated parmesan for topping
red chili flakes for topping, if you like it hot!

If cooking in a crock pot:

In a large skillet over medium-high heat, crumble and brown sausage for 5

minutes. Add garlic and onion and cook together until onions are opaque. Drain grease.

Add cooked sausage, potatoes, salt, pepper and chicken broth. If necessary, add extra chicken broth to ensure potatoes are covered.

Stir ingredients, cover and cook on

low or 5-6 hours, or high for 3-4 hours.

Add kale and half & half, stir and cook on high for another 30 minutes.

Serve immediately with parmesan and chili flakes.

Enjoy!

If cooking on a stove top:

In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, crumble and brown sausage for 5 minutes. Add garlic and onion and cook together until onions are opaque. Drain grease.

Add chicken broth, potatoes, salt and pepper to soup pot. If necessary, add extra chicken broth to ensure potatoes are covered. Turn to high heat until boiling, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until potatoes are almost cooked through.

Add kale and half & half, stir and cook on medium-low for another 30 minutes.

Serve immediately with parmesan and chili flakes.

Enjoy!

MESD Employee Sports Teams!

In January we launched MESD Sports Teams. We started by asking employees what team sports they love to play. Over twenty employees responded, with their top choices being basketball, softball, bowling, volleyball, running, and soccer. Our plan is to **subsidize** MESD teams to get them going. Ultimately, we hope to have a variety of team opportunities open to all employees at MESD.

Basketball is clearly the favorite with twelve interested employees. Currently we have

one team - the MESD All Stars from Arata Creek and Burlingame. They registered in January and already won their first game - 75 to 32. Go All Stars!! Another men's basketball team is forming at Donald E Long, but they need a few more players. They plan to play their games on Monday nights. Anyone else ready to play on the new team? It's great when employees from different parts of MESD can play together.

Running is not a team sport, but there are many MESD

runners who are interested in getting together to plan for a future Hood to Coast team, group runs, and/or running workshops. The first meeting will be in late February. Contact eam-len@mesd.k12.or.us if you're interested.

Looking for a slower pace sport with possible strikes of joy? Then meet up with our budding MESD bowling team. Three employees are eager for you to join them.

Volleyball, soccer, and softball are still lagging in num-

bers to create a full team, but it is still early in our MESD Sports Team recruitment. Help us build these teams or offer other sport options to our roster. For more information, check out our MESD Employee Wellness Exercise webpage <http://www.mesd.k12.or.us/Page/494> or email us at ness@mesd.k12.or.us

A look back at the Plank Challenge

By Elana Emlen

The MESD Plank Challenge enticed 68 people to sign up to try to do a plank for increasing amounts of time over 28 days. I couldn't do more than 120 seconds, but plenty of people did. Two successful participants shared their experience:

Peggy Sedlak

"I made it to 140 seconds and then started from the beginning for the rest of the month. The form I did was on my elbows and toes. Kitty Boryer and I used to plank at work together a few years back. We kept it up for a few months. We worked up to 2 minutes and then stayed

at 2 minutes. Kitty is the one who told me I had to do the plank challenge. It helped me to have music or the TV on. I would close my eyes, hum to the music, I tried not to count or look at the stop-watch, but I ended up doing both those things at times. I noticed some additional strength in my core. Since I hula-hoop for 30 minutes, 5 days a week, my core is pretty strong."

James Barnett

"I did the plank with my forearms on the floor. A friend of mine sent me a video of a 4 minute plank workout a couple of months ago and I have been hooked ever since. Here

is a link to the video:

<https://yhoo.it/2jYWS5B>

When I was doing the timed plank I would close my eyes and concentrate on my breathing. Concentrating on keeping my core tight and relaxing the rest of my body.

The longest plank I have done was at the end of the plank challenge. It was 375 seconds.

I have definitely noticed a difference in my posture and strength from doing planks. I highly recommend doing planks. It is important to have a strong core. It is

good for your back too."

I am going to try to do the Plank Challenge again, but an easier version. I'd like to start at 20 seconds and get up to 150 seconds in one month. There are many plank challenges online – pick one you'd like, or email mesdwellness@mesd.k12.or.us if you want to get in on mine starting March 1.

Stay tuned for our next MESD Challenge. It involves water.

February is Heart Health Month!

Did you know that your heart beats an average of 100,000 beats a day? And that the aorta, the body's largest artery, is almost the diameter of a garden hose?!

Portland has terrific prevention, treatment, and research institutions for heart health. Here are some links that you might find useful:

OHSU's link will lead you to all kinds of information about cholesterol, blood pressure, new ways to prevent heart attacks... even "How to Make Your Spouse Healthier." There are also tons of recipes <http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/health/services/heart-vascular/getting-treatment/heart-disease-prevention-program/health-information/index.cfm>

And the Providence Heart-Healthy Living Guide is here <http://oregon.providence.org/our-services/p/providence-heart-healthy-living-guide/>

Kaiser Permanente provides information on heart-healthy choices here https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health/care/lut/p/a0/FYpBCsMgEADfkgcsi0ZK7UIt_EKrt0UkCmqCSPP92MvADIMev-gb_fjOlx-NynQXYhuxvIKkPmCyjIOf9OjPTnslD02AOCHff5tPDiWis5JbrOOHpswKjG0MpDYM9JtrYeX64EbgWevzUstyA8xXNgY!!

Transportation improvements in NE Portland—including Sidewalk, Trail, Bikeway, Safety and Greenway projects—are up for comment through February 28.

Since Fall 2015, the community has been helping to identify and prioritize the most beneficial improvements that would make it safer and more convenient to get to the bus or walk and bike to places nearby sections of bus lines 87 (Airport Way) 77 (Halsey) and 20 (Outer Stark-Burnside).

Click here to discover which projects rose to the top, and weigh in before the plan is complete!:

https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/68195?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

**MULTNOMAH
EDUCATION
SERVICE DISTRICT**

11611 NE Ainsworth Circle
Portland, OR 97220

Phone: 503-255-1841

More info on the MESD Wellness web
pages: www.mesd.k12.or.us/wellness

MESD
Employee Wellness Initiative

Suzanne Briggs—
Co-Coordinator
sbriggs@mesd.k12.or.us

Elana Emlen—Co-Coordinator
eemlen@mesd.k12.or.us

Dealing with Grief and Loss

by *Steffannie Roache*

Why talk about grief, loss, or helplessness on the job? Just the mention of these topics can trigger negative feelings. The reason is our healthcare staff and educators working directly with people in frequent crisis or chronic health problems are virtually guaranteed to experience negative emotions on occasion. Discussing this reality, facing it head-on is a step towards the prevention of compassion fatigue and increases chances to promote wellbeing. It also serves as an opportunity to celebrate the value of our professions.

Understand Strengths and Limitations

The work we do is honorable and provides opportunities to 'be the change'. We are also limited by scarcity of resources, a student's chronic health issues, or opposition from the people who need help the most and create real barriers against success.

Respect Their Choices

Students or family members can make choices that sabotage their own emotional or physical wellbeing. I've learned a very uncomfortable lesson. My responsibility is to encourage, teach, inspire, provide care, but never to force change. We respect their decisions and right to work through any natural consequences.

Dare to Care

We will never heal every disease or solve every problem. Direct care for vulnerable people can be challenging, disappointing, even occasionally a source of grief. I've learned it is better to risk caring despite the harsh realities. I encourage you to celebrate the 'good' work you do. You are everyday heroes.

I hope this encourages conversations within workgroups to determine how we corporately support one-another when grief and serious disappointments occur when working with at-risk populations.

Employee Wellness Overview

MESD's Employee Wellness Program aims to support the health and wellbeing of all MESD Employees, no matter where they work. Started in 2015 with a grant from OEA Choice Trust, MESD's continued investment in Employee Wellness focuses on three goals: Physical Activity & Active Living, Nutrition and Social-Emotional Wellbeing.

MESD is committed to provide resources for mindfulness and stress reduction, sports teams, fitness classes, and Walker Tracker, information sharing (including an upcoming wellness orientation video) and the popular [employee wellness newsletter](#), as well as potlucks, gardening and other "camaraderie" activities.

Visit this webpage often for more information of MESD's past, current and upcoming wellness events, and activities. Get involved by emailing mesdwellness@mesd.k12.or.us.

Visit the Employee Wellness webpage often, for more information:

<http://www.mesd.k12.or.us/wellness>