Wellness Council - December 2018 Newsletter

WELLNESS AROUND THE DISTRICT

All MECP staff were invited to the Pacific Center where MECP’s new Wellness Reps Kelly Ableman and Theresa Mare introduced themselves with a welcoming Wellness Course as they entered the building and a healthy snack for a break.

Alice Ott enjoyed their healthy meal catered by the Kilt!!
THE NEXT BIG THING IN ANTI-INFLAMMATORIES!

Move over turmeric because moringa is the next big, even more powerful inflammation fighter! This powerful super-green has been used in for years in India, Chile, and Africa but is just making an appearance on the North American food scene. Moringa has twice the protein of spinach and 3X as much iron. According to the journal Ecology of Food and Nutrition, it has impressive amounts of calcium, potassium, and vitamin A.

Even better this buzz-worthy veggie has a likeable taste; its seeds are slightly sweet and its ground leaves are nutty and grassy like tea. So, food companies are not wasting time adding moringa into everything from nutrition bars and protein powders to juices and kombucha. Moringa is even entering the chip aisle; check out Moringa puffs for your next movie night!

In 2018 moringa oil may even make start to make an appearance in skin care...keep an eye out!!

https://www.wellandgood.com/fitness-wellness-trends/
Beat Holiday Stress

The holidays can be a time of laughter and love but they also can be a big source of stress. Here are a few things you can do to help you make your holidays more wonderment then worry.

1. Get some sunlight; either natural or from a light box. It will help your mood and stimulate serotonin production.
2. Get a whiff of citrus. Researchers have found that citrus fragrances boost feelings of well being and can alleviate stress by upping levels of norepinephrine, a hormone that affects mood.
3. Walk away. The rhythm and repetition of walking has a tranquilizing effect on your brain, and it decreases anxiety and improves sleep.
4. Give yourself a squeeze. The fleshy place between your index finger and thumb is called the hoku spot in traditional Chinese medicine. Applying firm pressure there for just 30 seconds can reduce stress and tension in your upper body.
5. Laugh it up. Don’t neglect what makes you laugh. Laughing like crazy reduces stress hormones. That, in turn, helps immune cells function better, says psychologist Steve Wilson, founder of the World Laughter Tour, an organization that offers therapeutic-laughter training.
6. Forget Perfection. Stop obsessing over doing it all. The world is not going to end if the house is a little cluttered or dinner is on the table a few minutes late. "Focus your energy on enjoying the people in your life.
7. Go tech free. Constant cell phone buzzes and email alerts keep us in a perpetual fight-or-flight mode due to bursts of adrenaline. Not only is this exhausting, but it contributes to mounting stress levels. What better time to turn your gadgets off than during a holiday get-together? Enjoy spending time with your family and friends without worry.
8. Fit in exercise. It may be the last thing you feel like doing when you’re stressed out, but going for a run or hitting the gym can actually make you feel better. Research has found that workouts can boost your mood for up to 12 hours.
9. Think positive. The holidays may drive you to your breaking point, but don’t focus on the bad. Negative thinking can trigger the your body's stress response, just as a real threat does. Remember, it’s time to celebrate with your family and friends (even if they do stress you out!). An optimistic outlook will help you cope with challenges that come your way.
10. Don’t over schedule. Give yourself permission to say no.

For more information about Holiday ‘Stress-Busting’ head to: https://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20306655,00.html
APPLE APP OF THE MONTH

The holiday season is upon us and what typically accompanies that is a million things to do and not enough time to do them. Enter Clear Todos!! Every other todo app piles on features, fields to fill out, and extra decisions to make in an attempt to make you feel more productive... and ends up creating even more noise and distractions in your life. What if there’s a better, simpler way? Tame the chaos of your life and focus it to something simpler with Clear, an app that somehow improves on the simple satisfaction of crossing off items on a piece of paper.

With its clean, colorful interface and intuitive swipe controls, Clear makes managing to-do lists across multiple devices lightning-fast and almost effortless. Its rainbow-hued checklists are like miniature works of art, making it simple to tell at a glance what you need to do and how urgently you need to do it. Bells? Whistles? Nah, but that’s by design. The developer knows that creating a to-do list is about managing chores, not creating new ones.

See for yourself why it works so well for over a million people by trying it out today. For iTunes: Click HERE
Skillet Honey Pomegranate Chicken Thighs

Prep Time 15 mins  
Cook Time 25 mins  
Total Time 40 mins

Tender, golden brown chicken thighs smothered in a smooth, sweet and tart honey-pomegranate sauce. These Skillet Honey & Pomegranate Chicken Thighs require minimal ingredients and effort, making this dish perfect for entertaining or easy, weeknight meals!

Servings: 6

Ingredients

- 1 ½ - 2 Pounds Boneless, Skinless Chicken Thighs *(about 6-8 thighs)*
- 2 TBS Olive Oil
- ½ tsp each: Salt and Cumin
- ¼ tsp each: Pepper, Ginger and Chili Powder
- ½ Cup Pomegranate Molasses
- 1/3 Cup Pomegranate Juice
- ¼ Cup Honey
- 1 TBS Balsamic Vinegar
- 1 Lemon – juiced
- 1 Shallot – finely chopped
- 3 cloves Garlic – minced
- 1 tsp Cornstarch

Optional Garnish: Fresh Parsley, Pomegranate Arils, Slices of Lemon

Serving Suggestion: Jasmine or Sticky Rice

Instructions

1. **In a small bowl combine:** salt, cumin, pepper, ginger and chili powder. Rub seasoning onto chicken thighs. In a medium bowl or measuring glass mix together: molasses, pomegranate juice, honey, vinegar and lemon. Set aside.

2. **Heat oil** in a large (cast iron) skillet over medium heat. Add chicken to skillet (in 2 batches if needed to not over-crowd the pan) and cook until golden brown and cooked through*, about 4-6 minutes per side. Remove chicken to a plate and set aside.

3. Add shallot to the skillet and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the cornstarch with 1 tablespoon of water and whisk to combine. Set aside.

4. Add garlic to the skillet and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the molasses mixture and bring to a rapid simmer. Add in the cornstarch/water mixture and whisk to fully incorporate.

5. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer the sauce, stirring occasionally, for 3-4 minutes or until thickened.

6. Add the chicken (and any juices that have collected on the plate) back to the skillet and turn to coat in the sauce.*

7. To serve: Garnish with parsley, pomegranate arils and slices of lemon. Serve and enjoy!

Recipe Notes

*You can substitute boneless, skinless chicken breasts or bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs. If using bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, you will need to finish cooking the chicken in the oven. Follow the instructions in the note below.

*If your chicken thighs are large, and they are golden brown from the pan-sear, but not cooked through, DON’T worry. Simply follow the instructions and remove them to a plate after browning. Then preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Continue with the recipe as instructed, adding the shallots and making the sauce. When you add the chicken back to the pan, turn it to coat and transfer the entire skillet to the preheated oven. Let it finish cooking in the oven until the chicken has reached an internal temperature of 165 degrees.

[Link for the recipe is here!](#)
SELF CARE FOR ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN OF TRAUMA

Working with children is emotional. Working with children who have been affected by trauma can be incredibly important and rewarding but also extremely taxing. Here are some ways for trauma-informed adults to cope, care for themselves and prevent burnout.

When we work with students impacted by trauma we run the risk of experiencing secondary traumatic stress, which is also referred to as compassion fatigue or vicarious trauma. According to The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, compassion fatigue is “the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another.” This compassion fatigue is often very common among healthcare professionals, social workers, and educators.

So how do you know if you are experiencing this vicarious trauma? Some symptoms may be:

- Isolation
- Depression
- Difficulty focusing
- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Excessive drinking
- Appetite changes
- Anger and/or sadness

In addition, some people may experience denial, which can be one of the most dangerous symptoms. The compassion fatigue project says this about denial, “Denial is one of the most detrimental symptoms of Compassion Fatigue and Life Stress. It can easily hinder your ability to assess the level of fatigue and stress in your life, as well as thwart your efforts to begin the healing process.” In our schools the symptoms may reveal themselves in a different way, such as:

- Chronic absenteeism
- Struggles amongst teacher teams
- Aggressive staff behaviors
- Colleagues feeling overwhelmed or unable to finish their work
- Negativity toward school leadership
- Resistance to change
- A general apathy toward the school mission and its success
**HOW CAN WE TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER?**

School leaders can help soothe compassion fatigue by offering professional development around self-care and mindfulness. Have the counselors lead a staff PD on trauma and self-care. We can provide mindfulness strategies, outings for staff to have fun and bond as a community. Offer a safe space to talk about traumas we have taken on and then providing training on healthy coping skills. Remember you don’t have to be a school leader to lead, touch base with your supervisor, your building wellness rep or the HAPPY wellness team.

In addition, don’t go it alone. Work to cultivate a school culture where supporting each other is the norm. Building and relying upon small support groups, staff teams or work/home friendships can help make the work more manageable. When we realize we’re not alone, the burden gets lighter. It’s important that these support networks remain a positive resource, rather than a breeding ground for negativity. Take a walk with a colleague during your prep. Begin meetings with some breathing exercises. Take time to complement the efforts of others. Positivity is contagious and peer support makes a strong foundation for your hard work.

**HOW CAN WE TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES?**

People go into education because they want to help others and often times they do that even though it may be a detriment to their own health. However, what we need to remember is sacrificing our health to make room for others makes us less effective at what we are trying to do. One way to help build some healthy emotional boundaries is to identify what you wish you could do versus what you can actually do. You cannot eradicate or prevent all suffering for your students. But you can show up each day, support your students, advocate for them, and love them. Stay on top of your needs by taking a mindful minute a few times a day and ask yourself: What does my body need right now? What does my mind need right now? Have a plan for yourself when you feel stressed so that you can access some techniques when you are having trouble making decisions. Remember you do great work every day and to continue that work you need to take care of yourself first!

To read more about this article, please go here.
## December Happenings! Get out there and have fun!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>What 2 Do</th>
<th>LINK</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/1/18-12/2/18</td>
<td>Festival of Trees</td>
<td>Wander the beautifully decorated trees, visit Santa and make crafts.</td>
<td><a href="https://providencefoundations.org/events/safeway-providence-festival-of-trees-portland/">https://providencefoundations.org/events/safeway-providence-festival-of-trees-portland/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1/18-12/2/18</td>
<td>Holiday Ale Festival</td>
<td>50 bold winter ales in a heated tent with food vendors at Pioneer Courthouse Square</td>
<td><a href="http://holidayale.com/">http://holidayale.com/</a></td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/2/18</td>
<td>Portland's Singing Christmas Tree</td>
<td>A 300 voice choir singing holiday songs. They are joined by dancers and Santa.</td>
<td><a href="https://singingchristmastree.org/">https://singingchristmastree.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/1/18-12/9/18</td>
<td>Scrooge: The Musical</td>
<td>A community theater show with lots of dancing and singing at Sellwood Playhouse.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.facebook.com/events/297296207667337/">https://www.facebook.com/events/297296207667337/</a></td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/16/18</td>
<td>Holiday Express</td>
<td>Take a one-hour ride along the Willamette River and meet santa on the decorated Holiday Express.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.orhf.org/the-holiday-express/">http://www.orhf.org/the-holiday-express/</a></td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/20/18</td>
<td>Christmas Ships</td>
<td>50 boats with Christmas lights cruise the Columbia and the Willamette River during the Christmas ship parade</td>
<td><a href="http://www.christmasships.org/schedule/willamette-river">http://www.christmasships.org/schedule/willamette-river</a></td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/26/18</td>
<td>Winter Wonderland</td>
<td>Drive through light show with 250 colorful displays at the Portland International Raceway. They also have a &quot;Bike the Lights&quot; Night as well as a &quot;Lights and Leashes&quot; dog walk night.</td>
<td><a href="http://winterwonderlandpportland.com/">http://winterwonderlandpportland.com/</a></td>
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<td>Date Range</td>
<td>Event Name</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/30/18</td>
<td>Christmas Festival of Lights</td>
<td>Lights at the Grotto features a walk among lights, choirs, carolers, a petting zoo, puppet shows and hot chocolate.</td>
<td><a href="https://thegrotto.org/christmas-festival-of-lights/">https://thegrotto.org/christmas-festival-of-lights/</a></td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/30/18</td>
<td>Lighting of Maddox Woods</td>
<td>Follow colorful lights through the woods to a viewing platform on the Willamette River.</td>
<td><a href="https://westlinnoregon.gov/parksrec/lighting-maddox-woods">https://westlinnoregon.gov/parksrec/lighting-maddox-woods</a></td>
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<td>11/21/18-1/5/19</td>
<td>Zoolights</td>
<td>As you walk around the zoo, you’ll see a dazzling display of more than million and a half lights, and experience your zoo in a whole new light.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.oregonzoo.org/visit/zoolights">https://www.oregonzoo.org/visit/zoolights</a></td>
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<td>12/1/18-12/31/18</td>
<td>Christmas in the Garden</td>
<td>1 million lights, festive music, warm fires, a Christmas market, and Santa. A &quot;fun pass&quot; adds ice skating and snowless tubing.</td>
<td><a href="http://christmasinthegarden.com/">http://christmasinthegarden.com/</a></td>
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<td>12/8/2018</td>
<td>Gingerbread Jamboree</td>
<td>Build a gingerbread house to take home, visit the hot chocolate bar and get a photo with Santa.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.jlpdx.org/gingerbread-jamboree/">https://www.jlpdx.org/gingerbread-jamboree/</a></td>
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<td>12/31/2018</td>
<td>New Year’s Eve Extravaganza</td>
<td>An amazing 4 hour show filled with improv, sketch, aerial acts and stand up. Appetizers and dessert all night long with a champagne toast at midnight.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.curiouscomedy.org/events/2017/12/31/1111-new-year">https://www.curiouscomedy.org/events/2017/12/31/1111-new-year</a></td>
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