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On the Road to Wellness

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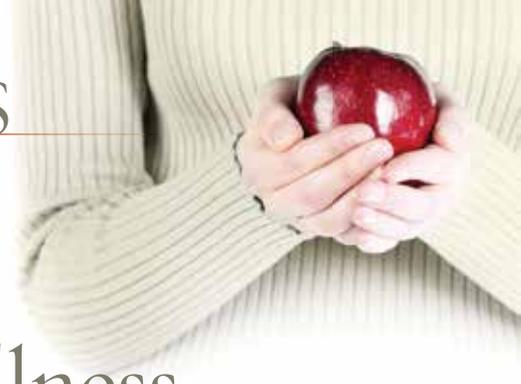
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On the Road to Wellness

BY JUSTIN NEU

Part of the Andrews University campus initiative for the 2016-2017 school year is to make Andrews the healthiest university in the world. In order to accomplish this goal, staff and faculty members from across campus have signed up to be Wellness Ambassadors (WAs) with the aim of making the desire for and work toward health and wellness go ... well, viral. From daily plank challenges, to weekly lunch hour and evening 5K walks, the WAs are burning calories and eliminating stress in the work place.

The importance of health and overall wellness is at an all-time high. From the ease of fast food to the prevalence of desk jobs, we are at a daily increased risk for health complications and stressors. Aware of these risks, the WAs encourage their colleagues to make small lifestyle changes, striving to motivate, educate and change habits in their respective departments.



difficult to share with individuals who aren't used to living the lifestyle many of us grew up living, such as vegetarianism and abstaining from alcohol. By beginning a WA initiative in your own community, it opens doors that allow you to share what we believe and how important living a holistic lifestyle is.

One very helpful item that WAs use and promote are fitness trackers. The ever-popular FitBit is a great way to track your daily activities, caloric consumption, water intake and, in some models, your heart rate. By being aware of these daily activities, individuals can begin the road to a healthier lifestyle.

Being a WA is not Andrews specific. The concept of a WA is to work toward living and encouraging an overall healthy lifestyle. Although a major focus of a WA is to promote health as well as fitness, it's much more than that. It's about living a holistic life, in every aspect. This initiative can be incorporated into any community: home, school, corporate offices, churches, men's and women's prayer groups, etc. It's a great way to build communities and spread holistic living to friends, families and co-workers.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are blessed with an amazing health message — a message that sometimes is

In April 2015, the Mayo Clinic published an article¹ on stress management which stated that exercise and being active on a daily basis can boost endorphins and help distract an individual from their daily worries. This is one of many articles that have been published that correlates being active and healthy with decreased stress levels and a boost in "feel-good" endorphins. This is the main reason why being healthy and active is such a crucial part of living a holistic lifestyle.

I encourage you to put together your own wellness initiative in your community. By educating others and encouraging them to make daily activity changes — even small ones, it will open other doors that lead to teaching about the One who gives true peace and happiness.

Justin Neu is assistant manager, Andrews University Bookstore, and Chief University Wellness Ambassador.

1. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/exercise-and-stress/art-20044469>