

# BALANCE

WELLNESS MAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

DECEMBER 2015 | VOLUME 1 | NUMBER 3



Getting to Better™:  
**Setting  
Goals for  
Wellness**

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Ten Tips to Overcome  
the Pressures of Life

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Gluten Free Cupcakes  
Save the Day

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2015 Holiday  
Survival Guide

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6 Ways to be a  
Healthy Host

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# editor's MESSAGE



Balance wrapped up the fall with programming taking place throughout Manitoba. We were thrilled to have been able to provide wellness events covering topics such as Mental Health and Financial Literacy in Flin Flon, Mindfulness in Portage La Prairie, and Vocal Hygiene & Nutrition, some of the many topics covered at the 3rd annual Wellness Forum.

In this Issue of Balance we take a look at our lifestyles as we head into the holidays. The holidays bring with them incredible joy and often incredible pressure as we try to balance day to day responsibilities along with family events, a change in weather and spending patterns. It is a lot to take on. We hope this issue helps empower you on your guide to achieving Balance throughout this hectic time. Don't forget to sit back, relax and take a few moments to take care of yourselves.

To help you we would like to introduce you to Tally Young, yoga instructor and member of the Balance team. In this issue Tally informs us on Savasana, the most valuable posture which may help to improve your body's rest cycle, improve your breathing and clear your mind.

We are also excited to announce a new presentation now available through Balance - Balancing Healthy Eating with a Busy Life with presenter Carla D'Andreamatteo, MSc, RD. "Healthy eating, balanced with a hectic schedule can be a challenge. Choices made in the grocery store, at home, and when eating out all contribute to the health of your body. This session will provide you with practical tips to help you manage food intake with the demands of a busy life."

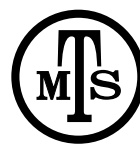
To book this event or other wellness events please visit us at [www.mbteach.org/balance](http://www.mbteach.org/balance) or e-mail: [balance@mbteach.org](mailto:balance@mbteach.org)

We want to wish you all the best during the holiday season and hope to see you at a Balance event in the New Year.

**Robyn Braha**  
Wellness Coordinator

*I just got back from connecting and facilitating a workshop on mindfulness with the staff groups at La Verendrye School and Ecole Arthur Meighen School in Portage La Prairie. I was so inspired by these two incredible groups of people and the mental and physical shifts towards balance that they were able to start making in such a short period of time. I watched both groups shift into higher levels of energy and alignment as they awakened to the framework of mindfulness and how to apply it in their daily lives. I am really looking forward to continuing to share this work with other staff groups across the province and beyond. Teachers are some of the most important people in our society and it is essential that they are equipped with both the tools and reminders that their health and well being are essential components in order to be most effective as leaders in our community.*

– Keith Macpherson



The  
Manitoba  
Teachers'  
Society



**BALANCE**  
mind body spirit  
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY

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# 10

## enjoy life more DAY 3

Make time to play today:  
Get outdoors. Play with your kids or your pet. Take a moment just to play and rejuvenate. This can be a healthful way of burning off steam!

– Courtesy of Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Mental Health Promotion Team WRHA

Vocal hygiene: **9**  
Louder the voice, greater the vocal dose

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# Getting to Better™: Setting effective goals for wellness



By Stephen de Groot, Myriad Consulting [www.stephendegroot.com](http://www.stephendegroot.com)

The last publication encouraged a search for the “meaning” in your experience of Better. It emphasized the search for and connection to important needs and values. This article focuses on leveraging salient needs and values to set effective goals for your wellness.

Goals are the mechanisms by which our values lead to action so that we can, to the extent possible, accommodate the fulfillment of important needs. Goals are instrumental and operate as a necessary means to help us all move closer to Better.

## Setting effective goals for getting to better

Once you identify what Better means and/or looks like for you and you have connected with important needs and values, consider 2 - 3 goals that will help you get closer to that Better Place. For goals to be the most effective, it is important that they satisfy important criteria. The following section will outline what I refer to as the “MUST” principles for effective goals. We will build on the example of Shelley, offered in the last article, to illustrate the identified goal criteria

in operation.

## The MUST Criteria for Effective Goals That are More Likely to Ensure Success:

These Goals MUST Be:

- **Important and meaningful to the person setting the goal**

This might seem straightforward, but many people get caught up in what others say is important or, place their energies and efforts into what they think they “should” do. Effective goals must have meaning to the person and maintain a direct connection to their own needs and values.

Shelley has realized that she feels the best and does the best when she is engaged in relationships that are positive and fun. This is connected to her needs for connection, friendship and close attachments. It is also connected to the values of community, team, shared values and positivity.

- **Defined as the presence not the absence of something**

All too often people will set goals in order to curtail or eliminate something (behaviour, action, interactions) that is not preferred. However, just because we set a goal to stop a certain action and/or behaviour (Quit smoking, stop hanging with certain people, etc.), does not mean that we haven't replaced it with something else, that may not be helpful. Defining a goal as the presence rather than the absence of something ensures movement towards Better.

Shelley made her first goal "to re-connect with colleagues and create more moments that are meaningful and fun."

- **Written down and recorded**

Often the difference between goals being accomplished or just remaining as thoughts in one's head has to do with whether or not they are written out and recorded. Writing down goals makes the thought more concrete and this simple act initiates the first action and momentum towards the first and subsequent steps of the plan.

Shelley went to the store and purchased a journal with a color and design that reflects the meaning of her plan. On page one she noted: "Shelley's Personal Wellness Plan – Goal #1: Re-connect with colleagues at work and create moments that are meaningful and fun."

- **Broken down into small, concrete steps that are measureable**

Because goals are important, it is not uncommon for them to be lofty and/or ambitious; however, goals that are too BIG may be a real barrier to accomplishing them successfully. Breaking goals down into small steps is helpful for many reasons including making the tasks more doable and easier to achieve. In addition to this, making them concrete and measureable is helpful so that progress can be attained and measured. Finally, small and specific tasks assist in the goal being more realistic and achievable, which will be discussed further.

Shelley considered some of the smaller and concrete tasks she could set that would help her approximate and achieve her overall goal for reconnecting with colleagues and creating moments that are meaningful and fun. She



**Goals are the mechanisms by which our values lead to action so that we can, to the extent possible, accommodate the fulfillment of important needs. Goals are instrumental and operate as a necessary means to help us all move closer to Better. Once you identify what Better means and/or looks like for you and you have connected with important needs and values, consider 2 - 3 goals that will help you get closer to that Better Place.**

wrote them in her journal. They included, but were not limited to the following:

- Make a list of the colleagues I want to connect with
- Consider what I want to tell them and write it down
- Craft a personalized e-mail that states my intentions to reconnect
- Send each e-mail
- Make an outline of what I want to talk about with each colleague
- Set some coffee or lunch dates to reconnect

- **Realistic**

Realistic goals are goals that you have the time, energy and resources for. If you don't have these important things, there is a really good chance that the goal is not realistic. As stated earlier, creating small and specific steps, helps make the goal much more realistic.

Shelley believes she has the time and energy to do this. She will ensure to space the above tasks out and set generous and realistic time frames for accomplishment.

- **Achievable**

Achievable is not the same as realistic. The only way achievable can be assessed is by considering whether the tasks, or like-tasks have been set and accomplished in the past. If they have not been, it is difficult to know for sure whether the goal is achievable or not.

Shelley realizes that she used to connect with colleagues and friends regularly, but priorities have gotten mixed up and she has just lost connection to this area that gives her meaning. She has done it before and she will work to do it again!

- **Be time-limited and or time-driven**

Just as writing down goals and tasks is critical for success, so too are placing time-limits or time-bands on identified tasks and relevant activities. Specific time lines enhance focus and a positive tension to each task and offer a concrete sign that something should be accomplished. All too often, goals fail because of an unidentified or clear and tangible time frame. "Sometime next week or next month" is not specific enough.

Shelley made sure to place a realistic and achievable time frame on each task related to her goal.

- Make a list of the colleagues I want to connect with (tomorrow evening by 9:00 pm)
- Consider what I want to tell them and write it down (this Saturday afternoon, before I go out to the movie at 7:00 pm)
- Craft a personalized e-mail that states my intentions to reconnect (Sunday evening before bed 11:00 pm)
- Send each e-mail (one per day, over the following week – all to be completed by next Sunday evening at 11:00 pm)

- **Shared with 1 or more supportive people**

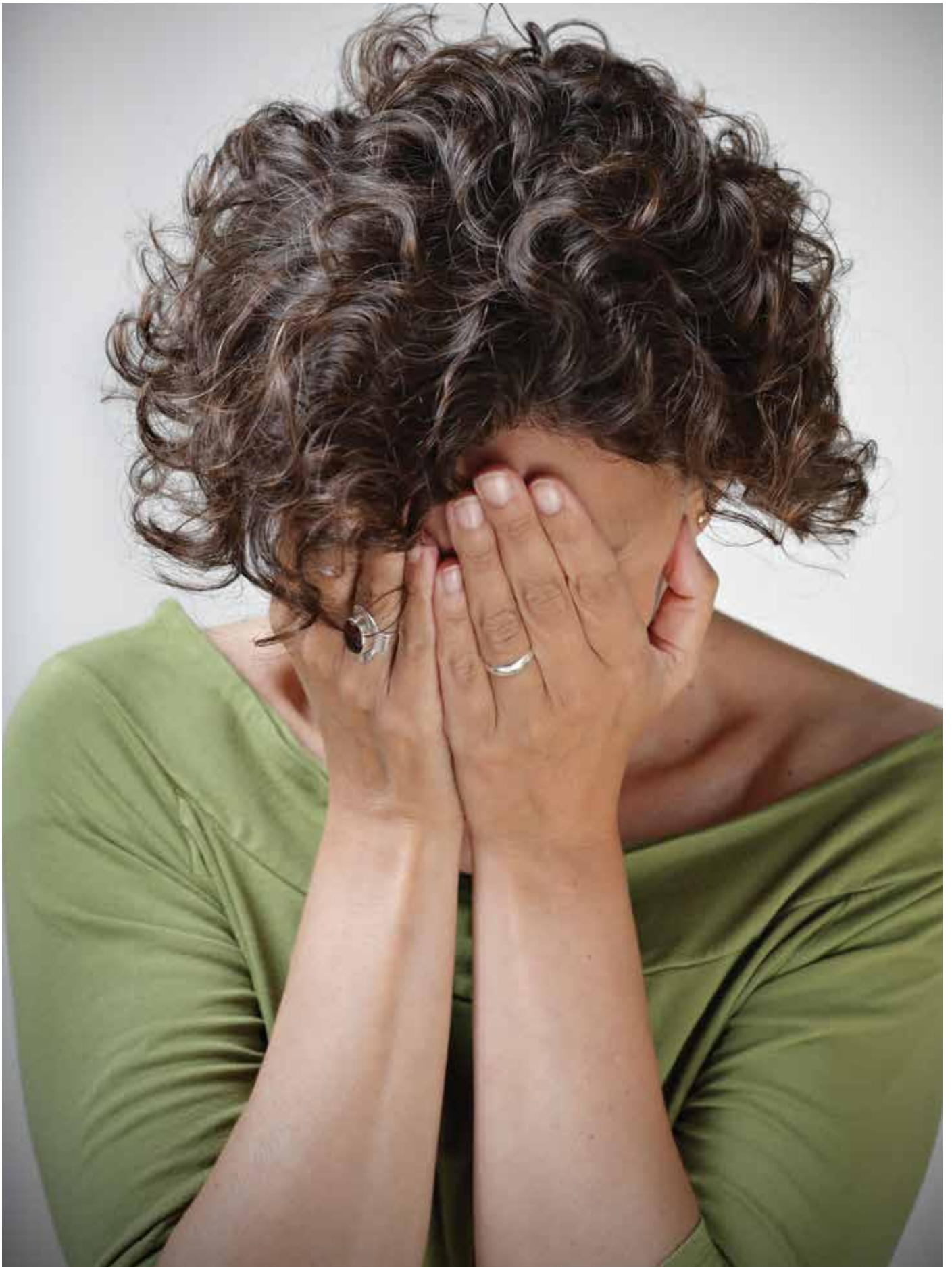
Research demonstrates that the more people we share our goals with, the more likely we will be at sticking to the plan and achieving important objectives. Sharing the plan with people increases the level of follow-through and accountability that we have to the plan and to the people we shared it with. An important note is that the people identified be supportive; not negative, pessimistic or overly critical.

Shelley developed her plan in as much detail as possible and then shared it with 3 of the most supportive people in her life, her husband; her best friend and her aunt. She asked them to check in with her regularly in order to support her focus and follow-through.

### Small steps towards big and meaningful differences

Getting to Better is not necessarily about making BIG changes and/or doing more. It is about creating an awareness and understanding that your efforts and what you are doing hold the most meaning and value for you. Be gentle with yourself and take small steps. When we start with one or two small changes they can begin to enhance other aspects of our lives. Small changes can indeed have profound and lasting effects that are positively unpredictable and far reaching. **B**





# Ten tips to overcome the pressures of life

By Karen L. Kyliuk, Winnipeg Health Region [www.wrha.mb.ca](http://www.wrha.mb.ca)

What if I get sick? What if I can't pay the rent? What if my son doesn't graduate?

What if . . .

We all worry from time to time, whether it's about the well-being of our children, finances, or even troubling global situations that we are exposed to, such as plane crashes or acts of violence.

Worrying is driven by the need to make sure everything will be okay amidst uncertainty. Worry is normal, it can serve a purpose. Worry helps us to reflect, problem-solve, and even plan ahead for potential threats or issues that may come up.

But when worrying is dialed up too high, it can become a habit of thinking that robs us of our peace of mind. When worry interferes with your daily activities or your ability to enjoy everyday moments, then you may want to consider some strategies to keep worrying in check.

Studies have indicated that one in 10 people experience uncontrollable worry to the point of feeling distressed. Excessive worry can negatively impact our overall health and is connected to adverse stress reactions such as sleep disruptions, digestive problems, and anxiety.

Managing worry and reducing worry habits are possible, and that can be reassuring when we feel overwhelmed. Here are ten tips on how to overcome worry:

## Take 5

Take five-minute breaks throughout your day, whether it is for a vigorous walk, taking the stairs at the office, or finding a quiet place to sit down and take a few deep breaths. This helps to reduce cortisol levels, a stress hormone that is associated with worry and anxiety. Mini-breaks allow you to reset your thoughts and regain a sense of calm.

## Talk it out

Talk with friends, family, and colleagues about your worries rather than brooding silently. You may find you are not alone and that you share common concerns. You may also find group solutions to dealing with real concerns. Connecting with people results in

positive feelings; your social supports can act as a sounding board to help you evaluate whether or not what you are worrying about is worth your attention.

## Go with the flow

Expect change and accept uncertainty. This is a healthy attitude to adopt. Embracing change also builds resiliency so you can recover more quickly when faced with life challenges or disappointments.

## Revive your drive

There are several ways to get grounded throughout your day: breathe deeply for five minutes while clearing your mind of all thoughts, journaling, listening to music, yoga or connecting with nature. This helps to restore your energy, improve your focus, and regain a sense of control.

## Let it go

Sometimes expectations feed into worry. Do you want and expect to be perfect in all you do? This is not realistic or obtainable so try to replace this perception with, "I did my best today with what I had to give," or "That is good enough." Keeping expectations in line with reality allows us to perform to our fullest potential each and every day.

## Make a worry list

Spend approximately 10 minutes every day writing down all your worries, every single one. Then put the list away to review at a scheduled time later in the day. This helps to change the habit of constant worrying or adding "what ifs" and re-trains your mind to manage the worry rather than being consumed by it.

## Review your worry list

At a scheduled time, review your worry list in a peaceful manner, maybe with a cup of tea while listening to music.

Ask yourself, "What worries need to be addressed immediately?" Prioritize them. "What worries are not important anymore?" Cross them off your list. "What worries or fears from the day are now unfounded?" Cross them off your list, too. This helps you to

see what to focus on, what you have control over, and what you can let go.

## Distract yourself

To prevent your mind from overplaying the worry list, try using simple distractions like saying "stop" to yourself, or a gesture such as clapping, snapping an elastic band, or standing and stretching. Catching worry thoughts as soon as they are noticed is the key. This helps to refocus your attention and may also break the pattern of constant worry habits.

## Make a plan

Challenge your worries, big or small, and make a realistic plan to address any problems that are of great concern to you. Sometimes talking to a counsellor to explore solutions and develop problem solving skills may be a positive step towards managing worry. The ultimate goal is to realize you have the power to decide what you focus your thoughts on and how you will overcome any challenges that you are faced with.

## Unwind

Make time at the end of your day to relax and engage in soothing and pleasurable activities. This will recharge and refuel your energy stores and support the shift from a busy day to a peaceful evening.

It may take some time to embrace new behaviours and replace old worry habits. Be patient with yourself and experiment to see what works for you. View worry as temporary and a blip in your day. The goal is to fit worry into the rest of your life. When we accept uncertainty in life and understand that we cannot control everything around us, then we give worry less space in our thoughts. One inspirational quote sums up nicely what we can strive towards: "Stop worrying today about things that may or may not happen, instead focus on the joy of today that is lived and real." **B**

*This column was originally published in Wave. For more health information, visit [www.wrha.mb.ca](http://www.wrha.mb.ca).*

*Karen L. Kyliuk is a mental health resource and education facilitator with the Winnipeg Health Region.*

# Keith's corner: Gluten free cupcakes save the day



By Keith Macpherson [www.keithmacpherson.ca](http://www.keithmacpherson.ca)

Have you ever had one of those days where nothing seems to be going right and everything you try to do to remedy the situation just seems to make things worse? There is a saying in Hawaiian that states, "Ika Pono Mea" which in English translates to, "everything is working out perfectly on time". It sure wasn't feeling that way when I got to the yoga studio where I teach a weekly yoga class.

It had been a day of one mistake after another. I had accidentally deleted all the work I had been doing on my computer, I was running low in the funds department and I couldn't turn the sabotaging voice off in my head that was insisting that I was a failure and was never going to get things right. Sound familiar? I walked into the yoga room to a class full of students ready to connect to their inner self and find some peace and quiet. My mind was the last thing from peace and quiet. Nevertheless, I proceeded to teach the class and came out on the other side feeling a lot more relaxed and present.

I always find it a miracle that a one-hour class in a hot and sweaty room, practicing yoga can have such an incredible effect on my state of mind. After about five minutes on the other side of the class and feeling like I was getting back into the balanced zone, a student came out of the class and tore a strip off me in front of everyone in the lobby. She told me it was the worst class she had ever taken and that my teaching style was just not in alignment with what she wanted and that I should really reconsider how I approach teaching yoga.

I stood there in complete shock and started taking deep breaths to make sure I did not lose my cool. I can imagine this might be the equivalent

situation to a parent-teacher interview gone sideways, where a parent has gone off the rails in an inappropriate way and made the teacher feel completely worthless. I thanked the student for her feedback and told her that I had tried my best and that I was sorry that the class did not satisfy her and then watched her walk away as I stood there holding back the tears from falling down my face. The sabotaging voice in my head once again came back and I spent the next 24 hours doubting my abilities to teach yoga.

The next day I returned to the studio feeling rather cautious and apprehensive about teaching my next class. Every thought you could imagine was running through my head. I was doubting my abilities to be a yoga teacher and in my mind I was ready to just keep on driving out of town and run away from it all. Instead, I walked into the studio and there to my surprise was a student who had posted a sign on the wall that read "Help yourself to a cupcake! They are gluten-free with no artificial coloring, no MSG, no salt, no fat, no sugar, no guilt".

I looked down below the sign to see a serving platter full of empty cupcake holders with no cupcakes in them and I started to laugh. She gave me a big hug and told me that my yoga classes were so authentic and "out of the box" in a great way. She assured me that it was my teaching from authenticity that really allowed everyone else in the class to step outside the box and be authentic. I can hear her voice saying, "Keep doing what you are doing! It works". It was in that moment that I remembered the Hawaiian saying "Ika Pono Mea"; everything is happening perfectly on time. There are no accidents.

There is a perfect balance in the universe and all we must do is sit back



and enjoy the ups and the downs of this roller coaster ride we call life. I remember one of my favorite authors, Wayne Dyer saying "you can't know joy unless you have experienced sadness. Our world really is in perfect balance and all under heaven is in divine timing".

I want to assure you that no matter what is happening in your life right now, whether you are on a major up or going through a darker time, embrace it all, live it to the fullest, cry the tears and laugh your guts out. This is life and it is happening perfectly on time so that we can learn and experience all the lessons we have come here to learn... and when in doubt, help yourself to a gluten-free cupcake, that will lift the corners of your lips back up! **B**

*Keith Macpherson is a motivational speaker, yoga instructor, life coach and recording artist. For more information and to sign up for Keith's daily intention emails visit <http://www.keithmacpherson.ca>*



# Vocal hygiene: Vocal dose

*The more you use your voice – and the louder you are – the greater the vocal dose*



By **Caitlin Buchel, RSLP, SLP (C), M.Cl.Sc. , Buchel Speech & Language Group**

You have just spent the last eight hours teaching your very spirited class of students and are headed home for the day. You jump into your car and, using your Bluetooth, you call your partner to fill them in on the day's events. Before getting home, you stop at the hockey arena to cheer on your daughter before running home to cook supper so that you can make it to your choir practice.

As a teacher, you spend much of your workday using your voice to teach your students and manage your classroom. However, your voice use doesn't end when the school bell rings. Your vocal folds are two tiny bands of membranous tissue which vibrate together to make your voice. They vibrate in different ways depending on the pitch and loudness of your voice. The more you use your voice – and the louder you are – the greater the vocal dose. Unfortunately, our vocal folds are only made to tolerate a certain dose and when we exceed that limit, voice problems can arise.

Think strategically about your voice use in the classroom. While you likely cannot spend a day teaching without talking, there are ways to spread out your voice use and give your vocal folds a break. Look at your lesson plans for the week and try to intersperse “high talking” teaching periods with “low talking” periods like silent reading. While managing classroom behaviour, you can use a number of non-verbal strategies – some of which you probably have in your teaching arsenal already! You can also try to build in strategic voice rests using “prep” periods, spares, or your lunch hour. You would be amazed how much a 15-20 minute voice rest in the middle of the day can help your voice.

You also need to consider your voice use outside of the classroom. Talking on



the phone for long periods after a long day of voice use at work can be enough to push your vocal folds beyond their limits. This can be especially true when using devices such as speaker phones that generally require a louder voice. Many recreational activities such as singing in a choir or band, coaching, and playing sports can increase our vocal dose considerably and have a negative impact on our voice. Even trying to manage your own children at home requires you to use your voice and can add to the stress on your vocal folds.

Obviously, you cannot put your life on hold simply to prevent potential voice problems. Instead, you want to be aware of the impact different behaviours

may have on your voice and then plan strategically.

## Vocal dose tips

1. Plan ahead in the classroom! Be strategic about lesson planning and vocal rests.
2. The power of non-verbal cues! Use non-verbal behaviour management techniques whenever possible.
3. The day is never over for your voice! Consider the impact that your activities outside of teaching may be having on your voice. **B**

*Caitlin Buchel is the owner and managing clinician of the Buchel Speech & Language Group, a private speech-language pathology (SLP) practice offering services in Winnipeg, and throughout Manitoba.*



## *Holiday survival guide:* **Keep your finances out of the red**

Courtesy of **Consolidated Credit**

It's the most wonderful time of the year – but without the proper planning the holiday season can bring a significant amount of stress and financial strain to your life. In order to avoid a holiday debt hangover, Consolidated Credit offers a clear plan to help you plan for your holiday spending each year.

Don't let concerns about money put a damper on your holiday celebrations.

### **Plan for success**

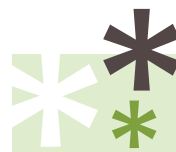
Smart shoppers get ahead of holiday costs and avoid debt by planning ahead. By planning your shopping early and effectively anticipating holiday costs, you can easily make your family's holiday special without burying yourself in a pile of year-end credit card debt.

The following strategies can help you

maximize your holiday savings and minimize your holiday stress:

1. Read our Holiday Survival Guide in full and use our Holiday Spending Checklist to create an accurate holiday spending plan.
2. Comparison shop online to find the best price for each gift or item on your holiday spending list.





**Planning ahead and making a holiday budget are great steps towards holiday success. But you need to track your spending in order to avoid the holiday debt hangover. Tracking the actual costs of your holiday purchases allows you to stay on the right path with your holiday spending. After every item you purchase on your list, make sure to write down the actual cost of the item so you can keep a running total of your real holiday costs.**

3. As you go about your holiday spending, be sure to check purchased items off your list to avoid doubling up on gifts and making any unnecessary purchases.
4. Compare advertised prices to any Black Friday or Cyber Monday sale prices you find. Many retailers start advertising these sales as early as October.
5. If there is no financial benefit to waiting until Black Friday or Cyber Monday, purchase these items now instead of leaving them until the last minute.

### Managing your holiday cash flow

Now that you have completed your Holiday Spending Plan and gained a clear picture of what the holiday season is going to cost, you can now begin to balance your spending expectations with your available cash flow. Balancing your holiday budget is an important step to help you avoid overspending on credit cards and minimize your holiday debt hangover.

Ideally, your holiday costs will be less than your available cash flow. But don't be surprised if you are "in the red" when you first compare the two numbers. Don't panic! If this is the case, you can easily find ways to either adjust your holiday spending or increase your available cash flow to balance your budget.

The following tips can help you strike a balance with your holiday spending:

#### General

- Start early to spread holiday costs. Spreading your holiday spending out over 3-5 months will increase your available holiday cash flow.
- Cut your budget. Reducing the discretionary expenses in your budget during the holidays can go a long way towards increasing your overall cash flow.
- Shop with a list. Statistically, the chances of making impulse purchases are reduced when you shop with a list. Keep your holiday planner with you at all times and don't deviate from the list.

#### Gifts

- Reduce your list. Gift giving can be really expensive. Revisit your list before you shop and consider limiting gift giving to immediate family. Give

everyone else homemade gifts, baked goods or holiday cards.

- Homemade and bulk gifts can reduce costs. For example, you could make holiday gift baskets filled with candy, homemade treats and small items you can buy in bulk.

#### Travel

- Plan early. Making travel arrangements and reservations early typically reduces the cost on travel and accommodations.
- Combine house and pet sitting. Get the same person to look after your house, water your plants and care for your pets.

#### Decorations

- Don't buy new. Reuse existing holiday decor from year to year. Replace a missing bulb instead of buying new lights, and move decorations around to give your home a fresh holiday look.
- Real or artificial? Decide if you really need a live tree or if there is more value in having the one-time cost of an artificial tree that can be used every year.

#### Meals

- Potluck or BYOB? Holiday parties and meals can be a real budget buster. Consider making your event a potluck or request that guests bring their own beverages to reduce your out-of-pocket expenses.
- Want not, waste not. Creating three different main dishes, six sides and several desserts can put a strain on your holiday budget. Cut down on the cooking and only make what is needed.

#### Guests

- Ask your guests to chip in. If your house resembles a hotel during the holidays, ask guests to contribute to the grocery or utility costs. You're saving them the expense of a hotel, so don't feel guilty about asking them to contribute a little.

#### Shipping

- Don't pay for shipping. Almost every retailer offers free shipping days. If you are purchasing gifts online, give yourself enough time to use the lowest shipping fee or wait for a "free shipping" promotion.

### Track your spending

Planning ahead and making a holiday budget are great steps towards holiday success. But you need to track your spending in order to avoid the holiday

debt hangover. Tracking the actual costs of your holiday purchases allows you to stay on the right path with your holiday spending.

After every item you purchase on your list, make sure to write down the actual cost of the item so you can keep a running total of your real holiday costs. You may also wish to write down how each item was paid for so you can determine what you put on credit.

### Managing holiday debt

Once the gifts are all opened, and the leftovers are packed away, you will need a plan to stay in control of your holiday debt.

By planning ahead and tracking your expenses, you can now get a clear picture of the impact of these expenses on your credit card bills.

To calculate the increase on your credit card bills, add the amount of money you spent to the current balance on each credit card. Then you can use a debt calculator to determine what your new monthly payment will be on your next bill. Compare this to your current minimum monthly payment to see how much these new charges increased each bill. You can also use the debt calculator to help determine the best way to pay off each debt.

Ideally, if you can pay off all your holiday charges in the first month they are incurred, you will minimize any added interest charges. **B**

# 6 ways to be a healthy host: Guests will thank you

By Federica Maraboli, Courtesy of the Heart and Stroke Foundation



The holidays offer plenty of opportunity to overindulge and let healthy eating habits slide. But celebration and moderation can go together.

Whether you're carrying the family baton for traditional meals or just love to host a party, here are tips from our dietitians to help you create a festive spread that won't leave any food hangovers. Your guests will be too busy enjoying themselves to notice they're keeping it healthy.

1. Learn to compromise. A few modifications can make a big difference. Puff pastries or fried and breaded items are usually high in fats. Maintain tradition by picking one or two favourite items but substitute more vegetables and try grilling or baking, rather than frying, where possible. Provide plenty of light snacks such as raw

veggies, sushi or pita crisps with a hummus dip. For appetizers on the healthier side try our Chipotle chickpea crostini.

2. Dress up your H<sub>2</sub>O. Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. Offer plenty of water options, which look much more appealing when presented in pretty glass beverage dispensers. Add raspberries, orange slices or cucumber and mint for a festive look. Or try sparkling water with a splash of cranberry juice or a slice of lime.
3. KYSS (Keep your samples small). The variety of offerings at holiday parties often encourages guests to try a little bit of everything. Resist the urge to over-deliver and make way more food than necessary. You'll save guests a bellyache

and yourself from a mountain of leftovers.

4. Downsize. Smaller portions look, well, smaller when served in large bowls or plates. Bigger isn't always better so choose medium sized platters and small plates – this trick will help guests consume fewer calories.
5. Limit treats. Research shows that seeing and being close to food increases the likelihood that you'll eat it. So limit the placement of festive cookie plates or other sweet treats. Better yet, bring them out after the meal when guests are more likely to be satiated.
6. Make it an active party. If the occasion permits, add sledding, skating or a winter walk to the festivities for a dose of heart-healthy active fun. **B**





## Greek yogurt ranch dip

**Prep time:** 5 min

**Cook time:** 0 min

**Makes:** 1 1/3 cups (325 ml)

This dilly lemon dip is great for veggies, salad dressings or served with your favourite fish dish.

- 1 cup (250 ml) 0% plain Greek yogurt
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) light mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) grated lemon rind
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) lemon juice
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh dill
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) each chopped fresh chives or parsley
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) skim milk

### Directions:

1. In a bowl, whisk together yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon rind and juice, dill, chives, parsley, garlic and milk until smooth.

2. Serve with mixed fresh cut vegetables such as carrots, cucumber, peppers, broccoli and cauliflower.

*Per serving (2 tbsp (25ml)) : Calories 29, Protein 2 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 2 mg, Carbohydrates 2 g, Fibre 0 g, Sugars 11 g, Added sugars 0 g, Sodium 39 mg, Potassium 102 mg*



## Chipotle chickpea crostini

**Prep time:** 5 min

**Cook time:** 0 min

**Makes:** 40 pieces

This combination works beautifully as a chickpea spread that is perfect atop crostini or alongside crisp vegetables.

- 1 whole-wheat baguette, sliced thinly
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried oregano leaves
- 1 tsp (5 ml) canola oil
- 1 shallot, minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (19 oz/540 ml) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 tsp (10 ml) minced chipotle pepper in adobo sauce or 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) ground cumin
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) light ricotta or goat cheese
- Half a red bell pepper, diced
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) chopped parsley

### Directions:

1. Place baguette slices on a large baking sheet and lightly spray with cooking spray. Sprinkle with oregano. Toast in 425° F (220° C) oven for about 5 minutes or until light golden. Let cool slightly.

2. In a nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat and cook shallot and garlic for 1 minute or until softened. Stir in chickpeas, chipotle and ground cumin and cook for 2 minutes.

3. Scrape half of the chickpea mixture into a food processor with ricotta cheese and puree until smooth. Scrape into a bowl and stir in remaining whole chickpeas, red pepper and parsley. Spread mixture onto crostini or serve the crostini alongside the chickpea mixture as a dip.

*Per piece: Calories 41, Protein 2 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Carbohydrates 7 g, Fibre 1 g, Sodium 65 mg, Potassium 33 mg*



## Sweet potato fries & cajun dipping sauce

**Prep time:** 10 min

**Cook time:** 35 min

**Makes:** 6 servings

These veggie favourites get a flavour boost from the dip, with its combo of cool sour cream and fiery pepper.

- 1 1/2 lb/750 g sweet potatoes, peeled, cut in half crosswise, then cut into 1/2-inch (1.25 cm) slices and finally into 1/2-inch (1.25 cm) strips (to resemble fries)
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) canola oil
- 1 tsp (5 ml) smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) coarsely ground black pepper

### Cajun dipping sauce:

- 3/4 cup (175 ml) fat-free sour cream
- 2 tsp (10 ml) Louisiana hot sauce
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F (230°C). Line large baking sheet with aluminum foil.

2. Place potatoes in large bowl. Drizzle canola oil over potatoes and toss gently, yet thoroughly to coat. Sprinkle with paprika and black pepper and toss gently.

3. Arrange potatoes in single layer on baking sheet. Bake 30-35 minutes, stirring after 20 minutes or until beginning to richly brown.

4. Remove from oven. Serve immediately for peak flavour and texture.

*Per serving: Calories 140, Protein 3 g, Total Fat 5 g, Saturated Fat 0.5 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Carbohydrates 20 g, Fibre 2 g, Sugars 10 g, Sodium 230 mg, Potassium 403 mg*

# Savasana, the most valuable posture for better health

By Tally Young

On many occasions I have students ask me, "What is the most valuable posture to do for better health", my answer is always the same. Savasana. It is quite common for people to be very confused about the answer, but just because it is simple in its layout does not negate its health benefits. In fact the health benefits from this posture alone may stop some diseases in their tracks. Some of which are:

1. Improving the body's rest cycle. We need rest in order to sleep. This is a scientific fact. When our bodies have enough rest, we drift into a deep, peaceful slumber which regenerates the cells of our body to get us through the next busy day.
2. Our pulse rate lowers to its natural beat cycle.
3. We improve our breath to slow deep breaths to better oxygenate our bodies.
4. Our mind clears so we can truly focus on what is important. When we rest what our true nature is to be will be revealed.
5. Happy. Well rested people are just simply happier.
6. When all of the above happen's a few of the ailments and diseases that can be avoided are: hypertension, depression, exhaustion, insomnia, headaches; and savasana helps to lower blood pressure.

Now, to make time for your 20 min of rest a day. This is all that is needed to begin to make a difference to our daily health. The key piece to making the 20 minutes a day work for you is that the savasana needs to happen when you need it. There is no perfect time, just make the time and clear a space so you are not bothered by your phone, family or other distractions that may interfere with your rest. You can make it a family activity or go it alone. However it is done, the benefits will be immediate and cumulative over time. No fretting if

a day is missed. You will notice but the body is forgiving. It will let you know how much it was missed the next time you get to your mat.

Here are a few ways you can explore savasana.

## Basic savasana



1. In a quiet, clean and distraction free space, place a mat on the floor. Have an eye bag or a clean sock to place over your eyes. As savasana is a cooling posture, have a blanket to cover up, if needed.



2. Lay your body on the mat. Interlock your hands behind your head on the occipital bone. Gently draw your chin to your chest and as you place your neck back on the ground, vertebrae by vertebrae, lengthen the back of the head gently with your hands as you place it on the floor.
3. Place your eye cover of choice and enjoy!

If you experience lower back pain or would like another variation to vary savasana from time to time, here is chair savasana.



Now, to make time for your 20 minutes of rest a day. This is all that is needed to begin to make a difference to our daily health. The key piece to making the 20 minutes a day work for you is that the savasana needs to happen when you need it.



1. Using a chair that does not roll away or a sofa, place your mat in front of the space you are using.
2. Have your eye pillow or clean sock ready to grab when you are ready. A blanket too.
3. Bring your bottom to the edge of the sofa or front of the chair and place your calves on the top of the chair or sofa. If the chair is hard, try folding a blanket on the top. Make sure the backs of your knees are away from the edge just a little bit.
4. Lay your body on the mat. Interlock your hands behind your head on the occipital bone. Gently draw your chin to your chest and as you place your neck back on the ground, vertebrae by vertebrae, lengthen the back of the head gently with your hands as you place it on the floor.
5. Place your eye cover of choice and enjoy. Again, and only if needed place a blanket over the body. **B**





# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

## Walnut brownies

**Prep time:** 10 min  
**Cook time:** 20 min  
**Makes:** 16 brownies

Fudgy thick brownies are a tasty treat with fresh fruit. These ones pack additional fibre and protein – perfect for your mid-afternoon break.

- 1 can (19 oz/540 ml) white kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2/3 cup (150 ml) packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) skim milk
- 2 egg whites
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) soft non-hydrogenated margarine, melted
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) vanilla
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) whole-wheat flour
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) wheat germ
- 1 tsp (5 ml) baking powder
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) chopped toasted walnuts

### Directions:

1. In food processor, puree beans until coarse. Add in sugar, milk, egg whites, margarine and vanilla and puree until smooth, scraping down sides a few times.
2. In a large bowl whisk together flour, cocoa, wheat germ and baking powder. Pour bean mixture over flour mixture. Stir in walnuts to combine. Scrape batter into parchment paper lined 8-inch (1.5 L) square baking pan, smoothing top.
3. Bake in 350F (180 C) oven for about 22 minutes or until cake tester inserted comes out clean. Let cool on rack.

*These brownies need to be covered with plastic wrap or cut and stored in airtight container in refrigerator for up to 4 days. They can also be frozen for up to 2 weeks.*

*Per brownie: Calories 137, Protein 4g, Total Fat 5g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrate 20g, Fibre 3g, Sugars 10g, Sodium 132mg, Potassium 222mg*

Courtesy of the Heart and Stroke Foundation

# wellness

## WORD SEARCH

Created by Puzzlemaker

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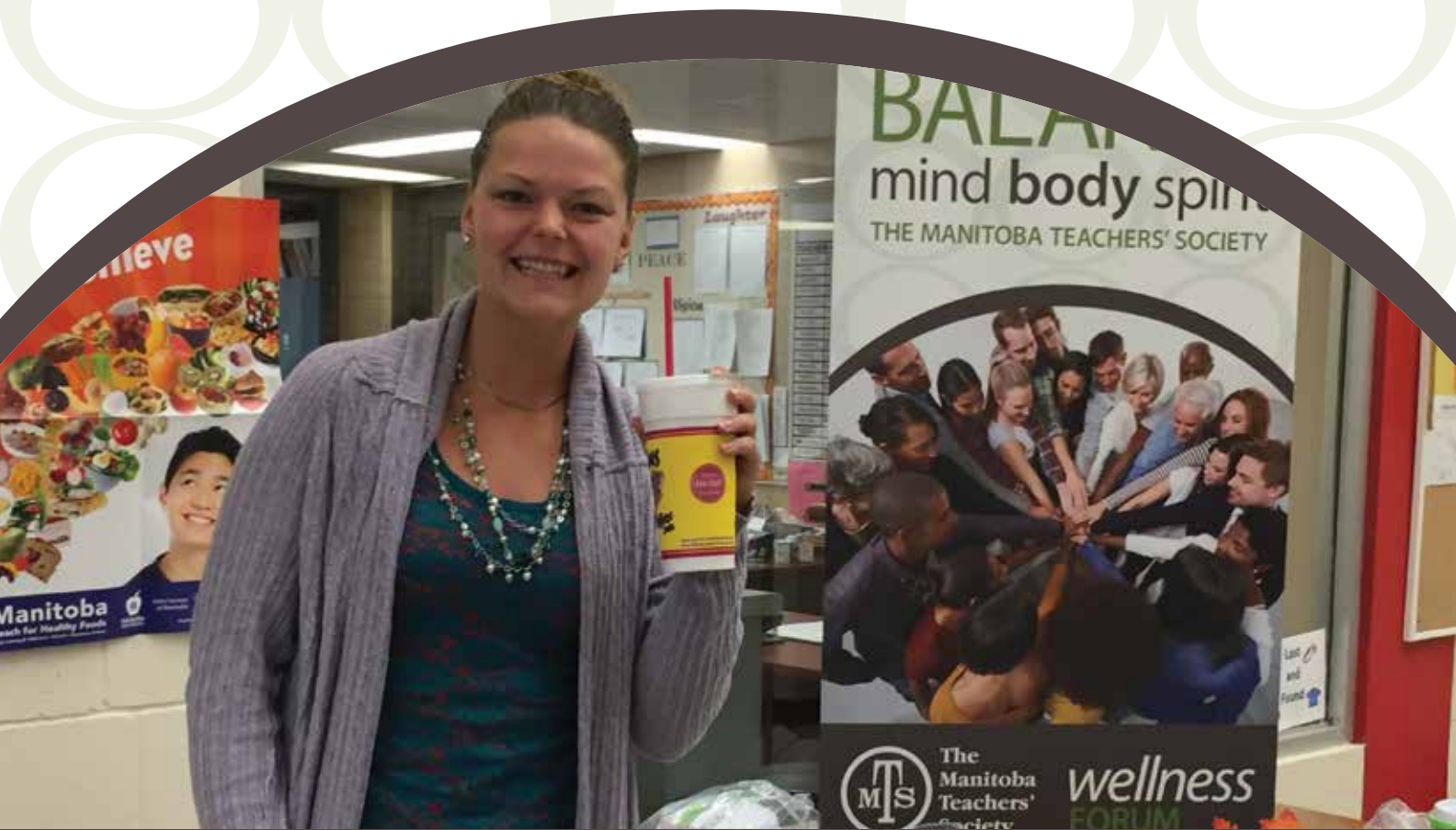
"I notice you always wash your hands after we play.  
Frankly, I find that offensive."



# wellness SCHOOL VISIT

Balance was thrilled to work with Park West School Division on their divisional PD Day on September 24th. Thanks to the efforts of Bonnie Morris, Park West Teachers Association ESJ Chair Western Region and Adam Grabowski President of Park West School Division, 200 participants got to enjoy Booster Juice Smoothies as their mid-morning snack while they helped themselves to Balance resources such as posters, financial literacy booklets, cook books and more. Thanks for making Balance a part of your event!

**BALANCE**  
mind body spirit  
THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



The  
Manitoba  
Teachers'  
Society

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