



Enhancing wellness, one step at a time.

IN WELLNESS NEWS

It's been an exciting fall! EWS Network was the finalist for all 3 spots in the Benefits Canada Healthy Workplace Awards for companies with employees under 1000. London Hydro was the recipient of this award. We were also honoured with the Benefits Plan Engagement Award for our work with Libro Credit Union. This award recognizes a "high-performing employer that has harnessed staff commitment through effective employee engagement. The judging criteria included innovation, leadership, demonstrated people engagement and overall impact."

To see more about their program and the press release, click here:

<https://www.libro.ca/Community/Media/Releases/20141015LibroNationalAwardBenefitsCanada.aspx>

Locally, we had 4 companies receive Platinum and Gold awards through the Waterloo Region Healthy Workplace awards:

Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro: Gold

Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro: Platinum

Teledyne Dalsa: Gold

Waterloo North Hydro: Platinum

The intent of this awards program is to recognize and celebrate workplaces in Waterloo Region who demonstrate a strong commitment to improving the health of their employees. Workplaces that have comprehensive wellness programs find that their employees' morale improves, energy increases, stress and injuries are reduced and health is improved overall.



Waterloo North Hydro also won the **Innovator Award** for creative wellness programming that has a focus on supportive environments. They introduced glassware to all meeting rooms and supplied all staff members with reusable BPA free water bottles, fillable at new tap retrofits and sinks, effectively eliminating plastic water bottles.

If you need help or advice on how to qualify for these awards or need some help in getting a wellness program started, contact me at karen@ewsnetwork.com; I'd be happy to help!

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IN THE FIELD

We try to engage employees in as many different ways as possible:

- 1-1 consultations where they can talk about any of their health concerns (or their family members') with a qualified wellness consultant, right on site
- Group programs in the form of group fitness classes, lunch and learns, team challenges and team building events
- Awareness programs such as newsletters, posters, wellness fairs and walkabouts (outreach to all employees with samples and handouts)

This fall, we had a number of different initiatives that we did at various locations. We held a Yogurt Parfait Day and an Oatmeal Promo day, where we set up an oatmeal bar with a couple of different kinds of oatmeal and a wide selection of toppings; we hosted a Slow Cooker day to try to reduce the stress of making dinner at the end of the day; we had a wellness fair with biometric screening, lunch and learns on Digestive Health, a Healthy Living group challenge, a FitBit challenge and we participated in an obstacle race with different workplaces in Guelph, along with an activity challenge. These are just a sample of the types of programming that we do to educate and motivate employees to lead healthier lives.





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Some of the feedback we received included these excerpts:

"Thanks for the challenge. I feel like a million bucks."

"I've been incorporating exercises using the ideas that Gloria and I discussed at our consultation meeting last week. I don't usually work out on Friday mornings but the Healthy Living Challenge motivated me to go."

"I had a fantastic time making the chili yesterday – can't wait for the next class."

"The Healthy Living Challenge is helping me drink more water and reduce my coffee intake. I have never drank so much water in a day in my entire life. I usually only drink 2 – 3 cups of coffee a day, but I am consciously cutting that back to 2 cups of coffee max – and am picking up the water bottle instead."

"I am now consciously selecting foods to ensure I am obtaining the minimum amount of recommended fruits and vegetables."

"The Healthy Living Challenge has also helped me to realize that goals aren't just long term, there are also goals to meet daily and this will help me build the discipline needed to not only get the physique I want, but also to maintain a healthy lifestyle."

"As of this morning, I'm now down 38 pounds since June 9 and I recently enjoyed a weekend with my father in Algonquin of 30km of canoeing, 25km of biking and 20 km of hiking and was still able to get right back into my gym routine afterwards, something that would have likely been unimaginable at my previous weight. I feel like I have increased my energy levels; my hockey playing has been noticeably better than last winter and I am actually anxious to play hockey, unlike last year where it felt like a burden. My new goal is to lose another 15 lbs by the end of hockey season in April which I believe to be realistically achievable given the excellent wellness guidance that I have already received to date from our on-site wellness consultant. I plan to continue to take advantage of her expertise over the next year."

"I booked an annual physical, something I have never done. Thank you for your encouragement."

"I consciously try to eat better and get moving more. We walk on breaks all the time here and have kept it up long after the pedometer challenge is over."

The options for engaging your employees are endless. Making wellness fun, interesting and light-hearted but educational, brings a different energy into the workplace and this transfers into a more vibrant and productive workforce.

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WALKING THE TALK

I attended the 5th annual Corporate Wellness Conference in Washington, D.C in September and learned a lot about program design and the engagement of employees. I also learned a lot about the power of incentives!! Most companies in the U.S. have a corporate wellness program and those people with low health scores are often required to work with the wellness consultant to improve their scores. Failure to do so can result in the employee having to pay their insurance premium or some other type of penalty. Although the US healthcare system is very different from ours, we still need to move more towards prevention, since the cost of poor health is borne by all us – individuals, employers and governments. Healthy employees provide such a positive impact on the bottom line that the business case for a workplace wellness program could not be more clear. If you need help with your business case, let me know; I have numbers from our clients that I can share with you.

I also attended the Can Fit Pro conference this year, where I continue to be personally motivated by all the fitness professionals who attend, the new fitness trends and nutrition experts available.

The weather hampered my cycling this summer a bit, but I still enjoyed it whenever I could and participated in the Tour de Hans at the end of September. My family also completed the Bad Ass Dash together; a challenging race with tons of obstacles and lots of mud!

Find out what motivates you; write it down, picture it, verbalize it to your friends and family and go for it! What do you want to do next? I'm looking forward to your stories!

Yours in health and wellness,

Karen Kelly

