Wellness Ambassador of the Month – June 2018
Maria Tuccori

How long have you worked at UC Davis?
I have been working at UC Davis for about 15 and a half years.

What does wellness mean to you?
According to me, wellness ties into balance. Balancing your work with what makes you happy outside of work is important. That is one of the reasons I joined the WA program, because I wanted to add happiness in a structured way to myself and my whole department.

Why did you become a wellness ambassador?
I wanted to bring more unity in the departments. I work in a cluster that supports 2 departments, hence I noticed that there was almost no interaction amongst coworkers. We work in a stressful environment, so I wanted to reduce stress in a constructive way.

How long have you been a wellness ambassador?
I have been a Wellness Ambassador for 2 years.

What has been rewarding or positive about your experience thus far?
Firstly, my department was awarded the Wellness grant twice, which gave us the motivation to keep going. It is exciting to be able to find activities and do them in a group, especially because my coworkers are able to see the benefits of balance between work and play. Trying to incorporate ideas and activities that make everyone feel included is also rewarding.

We hosted a fairy garden/Zen garden making workshop, which was really successful! The gardens are a reminder to de-stress and they are small enough to fit on our desks. This has been one of my favorite events because the participation and enthusiasm was absolutely wonderful. I’m grateful for my Co-Wellness Ambassadors, Elizabeth Lowrie and Sam Arcement who help me through it all. For the event, we purchased succulents and figurines, and asked our peers to donate items to decorate this gardens. We had more than 26 people attend, which was almost double of what we were expecting. Although we had limited funds, we made our event similar to a potluck-style event, and we encouraged people to bring their own materials so that they could still participate!

What are some of the challenges you face as a wellness ambassador?
There are challenges in getting consistent participation, as everyone is busy at different times. Occasionally, we have some challenges with funding our activities, but we try to make it a shared or combined event, so that it all works out.

What is one piece of advice you would like to share with new wellness ambassadors?
I would ask you to join the program and pitch your ideas to your department, because you can make connections, and grow your networks. Also, spreading positivity has a boomerang effect, and you will also personally benefit from being a wellness ambassador.

Staff and Faculty Health and Well-being aims to build an environment that makes the healthier choice the easier choice, while providing staff and faculty with the required support to make UC Davis the healthiest community. How do you feel you have contributed to our mission?
My goal for this year is to encourage faculty in our department to give presentations on their work. I works with plant pathologists, and I focus on academic personnel, so I’m aware of all the new research. If I can get people to speak about their work and research, I believe it would inspire others and give researchers the motivation to have occupational wellness. This could bridge the gap between staff, faculty and students and can make us learn about the impacts of the people around us who are researching.

What is your favorite thing to do in your spare time?
In my free time I love to hike and jog. I like to be outdoors, and almost every weekend I hike up the radio tower in Vacaville as part of my weekly wellness!

To be part of wellness initiatives with Maria Tuccori please email mttuccori@ucdavis.edu.