Wellness Ambassador of the Month – February 2017
Rebecca Grunewald

How long have you worked at UC Davis?
I have worked at UC Davis for almost 15 years.

What does wellness mean to you?
Wellness to me is about mental and physical health. I prioritize those two equally because they are tied together. Wellness also includes being in balance in all aspects of life.

Why did you become a wellness ambassador?
I know Stacey Brezing from Staff and Faculty Health and Well-being, and I heard about the training she was doing near my office. I poked my head in to the Wellness Ambassador Quarterly Training, and I got intrigued by the meeting (and the healthy lunch, of course!)

How long have you been a wellness ambassador?
I have been a Wellness Ambassador for about 7 months.

What has been rewarding or positive about your experience thus far?
So far, it has been a rewarding experience, and I'm in awe of how fast the Wellness Ambassador Program has taken off. I have tried to model my programs based on how Staff and Faculty Health and Well-being do their programs. Around Christmas time last year, I organized a “Maintain Don't Gain Salad Potluck”. It was different from the somewhat notoriously unhealthy barbecues in the department, and it gave me the chance to host an event that many people enjoyed. I asked Linda Adams, the dietitian at Occupational Health Services, to give a talk about healthy eating. Participants were really engaged and asked questions about healthy eating and new fads, like pseudo nutritious foods (for example, bullet coffee). We learned the importance of soluble fibers in our diet, and simple nuances of nutrition to keep in mind when eating. I asked participants to bring ingredients that were nutritious and delicious and I mixed the salads similar to a salad bar setting. Everyone enjoyed the experience as it was something new!

What are some of the challenges you face as a wellness ambassador?
Our department’s offices don’t have a well set up breakroom or kitchen area. The offices are separate and some people have cubicles or are in remote locations. The main challenge is getting my coworkers away from their desks. The Mini grant changed this positively as we used the grant to get a corn hole (a bean bag tossing game) as well as volleyball and badminton sets. We’re all so excited to use them more as the weather gets warmer!

What is one piece of advice you would like to share with new wellness ambassadors?
I would encourage attending the quarterly meetings because it will make you return to your department with many fresh ideas. Build on others’ ideas and add your unique spin on it!

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?
I try to spread wellness ideas as much as I can to the people nearest to me. As a supervisor, I model the mental and physical aspects so that it encourages my coworkers too. I take walks and check in with them so that their work load is comfortable and I remind them to be mindful of their work life balance. I am still learning as an ambassador, but I really try to help my coworkers and be a positive influence!

What is your favorite thing to do in your spare time?
In my free time I love to travel. I’ve been to Japan and Mexico! I really enjoy embracing new cultures, and I love to walk to around in new cities!
To be part of wellness initiatives with Rebecca Grunewald please email bgrunewald@ucdavis.edu.