Wellness Ambassador of the Month – September 2018
Christopher Loureiro

How long have you worked at UC Davis?
I have been working at UC Davis for just over 5 years.

What does wellness mean to you?
Wellness means so many things to me: Physical health, emotional health, family-life balance as well as financial balance are, in my opinion, some of the most important aspects. All of us wear different hats in the various relationships we have in life, and wellness is finding your happy place.

Why did you become a wellness ambassador?
When the program began, I became interested because of the program’s vision. In my previous position, I was a part of the diversity club; I was the president of a speaking club, and I participated in several volunteering networks. Being a wellness ambassador allowed me to be in a leadership role once again with a community.

How long have you been a wellness ambassador?
I joined the program when it started in September of 2015, and continue to enjoy my role.

What has been rewarding or positive about your experience thus far?
I believe learning and sharing ideas is one of the most rewarding experiences thus far. I am able to share ideas with the people around me and we carry forward the best to promote wellness through the process. Meditation is one activity that I really find to be valuable and I encouraged people to go with me. Another aspect I find rewarding has been in making myself available to answer questions and encouraging others to try new things.

What are some of the challenges you face as a wellness ambassador?
The biggest challenge first and foremost is participation. Whether it is on the part of faculty or staff, scheduling and commitments pose a continual hindrance to progress. Additionally, finding activities that are appealing to our clienteles varied levels of interests can be difficult.

What is one piece of advice you would like to share with new wellness ambassadors?
Utilize surveys of the people you work with, to better understand the levels of interest in different activities. Having a kick-off event is also super helpful! It creates excitement, and people have the opportunity to see what activities initiatives you are offering and how you plan on building them. Also, look to your coworkers for support and network building.

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?
Explaining the ways to make walks more creative is one way I’ve contributed to the mission. In the past, we used to do 15 minute walks on Fridays at 10am. Now I’m offering a 30 minute “Lunchtime Loop”. It gets us away from our desks, and the walk is fun because we utilize the arboretum. We combine other exercises too. For example, if we see a bench we’d use it as a station to do push-ups or planking to get our heart rate up, then we continue walking to the next station; and do another exercise and so on. By the time we complete the Lunchtime Loop, we would have achieved dynamic stretching, chair dips while increasing our heart rate, all while having an enjoyable walk. It also demonstrates that walking can be more fun and creative. We can challenge ourselves and feel better physically and mentally.

In addition, every time the lunchtime Mindful Meditation or Yoga classes are offered, I make sure to put posters around the office so we can go to them as a department.

What is your favorite thing to do in your spare time?
My wife Kat and I enjoy the training and sport of Schutzhund with our German Shepherd Sheva!

To be part of wellness initiatives with Christopher Loureiro please email caloureiro@ucdavis.edu or you can visit him at the School of Education.