Wellness Ambassador of the Month – April 2018
Suzette Smiley-Jewell

How long have you worked at UC Davis?
I have worked at UC Davis for 14 years.

What does wellness mean to you?
Wellness is being well rounded. It means incorporating physical and mental aspects, and the spiritual aspect, based on however you choose to define spirituality.

Why did you become a wellness ambassador?
I have always been interested in self improvement and becoming healthier. I like to find new ways to improve my attitude. I really like the people I work with and I wanted to share resources with them. I chose to become a wellness ambassador as it gave me the opportunity to make the workplace better.

How long have you been a wellness ambassador?
2 years (Since Summer 2016)

What has been rewarding or positive about your experience thus far?
The best part of being a Wellness Ambassador is hearing my coworkers saying how much it means to them that they received some beneficial information from resources I shared with them. It makes me happy when they tell me they went to a wellness activity, and it helped them. I also organize weekly walks which makes everyone feel positive. Another rewarding experience was the succulent making event we went to as a department. The Arboretum and Staff and Faculty Health and Well-being Program promoted the event and it was great to make our potted plants and display them at our desks, as a reminder of what a good time we had.

What are some of the challenges you face as a wellness ambassador?
I've noticed that it is slightly more difficult to involve the men in wellness events! Also, staff tend to attend more than faculty. It's hard to get everyone involved all the time, but hopefully by organizing a variety of activities, we can continue to promote all aspects of wellness in my department. For example, I want to try organizing a mindful coloring session to reach different groups of people, so that they don't feel the focus is always on physical health.

What is one piece of advice you would like to share with new wellness ambassadors?
I would recommend sending a survey first to ask who's interested in what type of activities.

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 share as much information as I can, and I do it regularly. I think I try to set an example for others because I am always willing to try new things. Though I work in a smaller department now, I have previously used the mini grant from the Staff and Faculty Health and Well-being Program to put together Yoga and Tai Chi workshops too. I would also like to mention that I really appreciate UC Davis is promoting wellness, and I am so happy that the whole initiative is not just about lowering health care costs. We are all getting paid to take 15 minute health breaks during the day. We can utilize this and do simple things like leaving our desks and walking around because UC Davis wants us to relieve the stress, to feel better your and improve our work life balance while we are at work. I try to advocate for this with my coworkers during our walks!

What is your favorite thing to do in your spare time?
I like to exercise and hang out with my family and pets. I have 3 chickens and 1 dog, who keep me entertained! Walking my dog contributes to my wellness and is one of the ways I get rid of my stress.

To be part of wellness initiatives with Suzette Smiley-Jewell please email smsmiley@ucdavis.edu