

## WFWP New Jersey Starts the New Year with Health and Wellness

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The beginning of the year always brings a time of reflection on the previous year as well as thinking about what the next year will bring. Some may make resolutions and goals for what they'd like to focus on or accomplish in the new year. At WFWP in New Jersey, we wanted to start off the new year with a fun and memorable program focused on health and wellness. Especially as women, we so often give and give to those around us - our families, our jobs, our children, our homes - but when we take a moment for self-care and mindful relaxation, we can be rejuvenated to give from our whole and authentic hearts.

Thus, on January 28, 2023, about 60 participants gathered at the Clifton Public Library - Allwood Branch for "Heart, Mind, and Spirit: Health and Wellness Day." Smiles were all around as we met with new friends and enjoyed some of the activities set up: adult coloring, dominos, and card games. Especially popular was the paint a rock activity where people could paint a fun design on a rock for their garden or potted plants. Participants

also flocked to the hand massages, where they also learned a little bit about reflexology. It was also a family friendly affair, with toys and games available for kids while moms got to connect and participate.



*Welcoming remarks given by WFWP Vice President, Katarina Connery*

There was also some time to move and groove with some energetic Zumba! Our instructor led us through several movements, with adjustments for all different fitness levels; we were all smiling, sweating, and dancing together. After a presentation on health and nutrition, we closed the day with relaxing yoga, utilizing our chairs and stretching from head to toe. Yoga is great for stretching, meditation, and practicing mindfulness.

The health and nutrition presentation was given by Allison Thibault, Lead Clinical Dietitian for RWJ Barnabas Health, about the seven pillars of a healthy lifestyle.

### **Pillar 1: Community**

Have daily interaction with other people, checking in with how others are feeling and doing. Having that support system is very valuable. The quality of your relationships - with yourself, friends, family, church, etc. - is very important for overall health. Even an interaction at the grocery store check-out, your persona and positivity can have an impact on others. A sense of belonging is also another aspect of this.

### **Pillar 2: Physical Activity**

Your body is meant to move. And the American Heart Association warns that sitting is the new smoking. Since your heart is a muscle, the more you use it, the stronger it becomes, and physical activity helps strengthen your heart. Strong muscles also help keep our bones strong, which weaken as we age.

### **Pillar 3: Nutrition**

It's not just about how we nourish ourselves, but about our entire wellbeing. When you feel better and healthy, then you treat others better. Eating lean protein, fish, eggs, and very minimal fast food and fried foods is what to strive for. Fiber from whole grains and vegetables are also important.

### **Pillar 4: Water**

At a minimum, drink 50 to 75% of your body weight in ounces of water every day. Coffee and tea don't count. As a tip, drink some water first thing in the morning, the time when you are most dehydrated. Water also helps with having healthy bowels.

### **Pillar 5: Meditation and Stress Management**

How you react to things can be life-changing? How can we change our outlook on experiences in order to reduce stress? The more stress in our lives, the higher the risk of disease. Meditation is a great way to manage stress, even 5 to 7 minutes a day makes a difference. Stress can't be completely avoided, but learning how to manage it well is game-changing.



*Participants listening to the nutrition message*

### **Pillar 6: Spirituality**

Having something that you're a part of emotionally and spiritually makes a huge difference. That may be your church community or a spiritual practice you are part of, either individually or with a group of close friends. Being part of something bigger is important for our wellbeing.

### **Pillar 7: Sleep**

We need 7 to 9 hours of restful sleep every night. Inadequate sleep leads to stress and increased risk of disease. Studies also show that we eat more when sleep deprived, and we are impaired in decision making. There are many great tools such as meditation to help us relax before sleeping.

As you are thinking about this coming year, we hope these tips will be helpful in incorporating even just one or two action steps in your health and wellbeing. We each get one life to live on this beautiful planet, so let's live it well.