



# Healthwise

The Official Newsmagazine of MFHN

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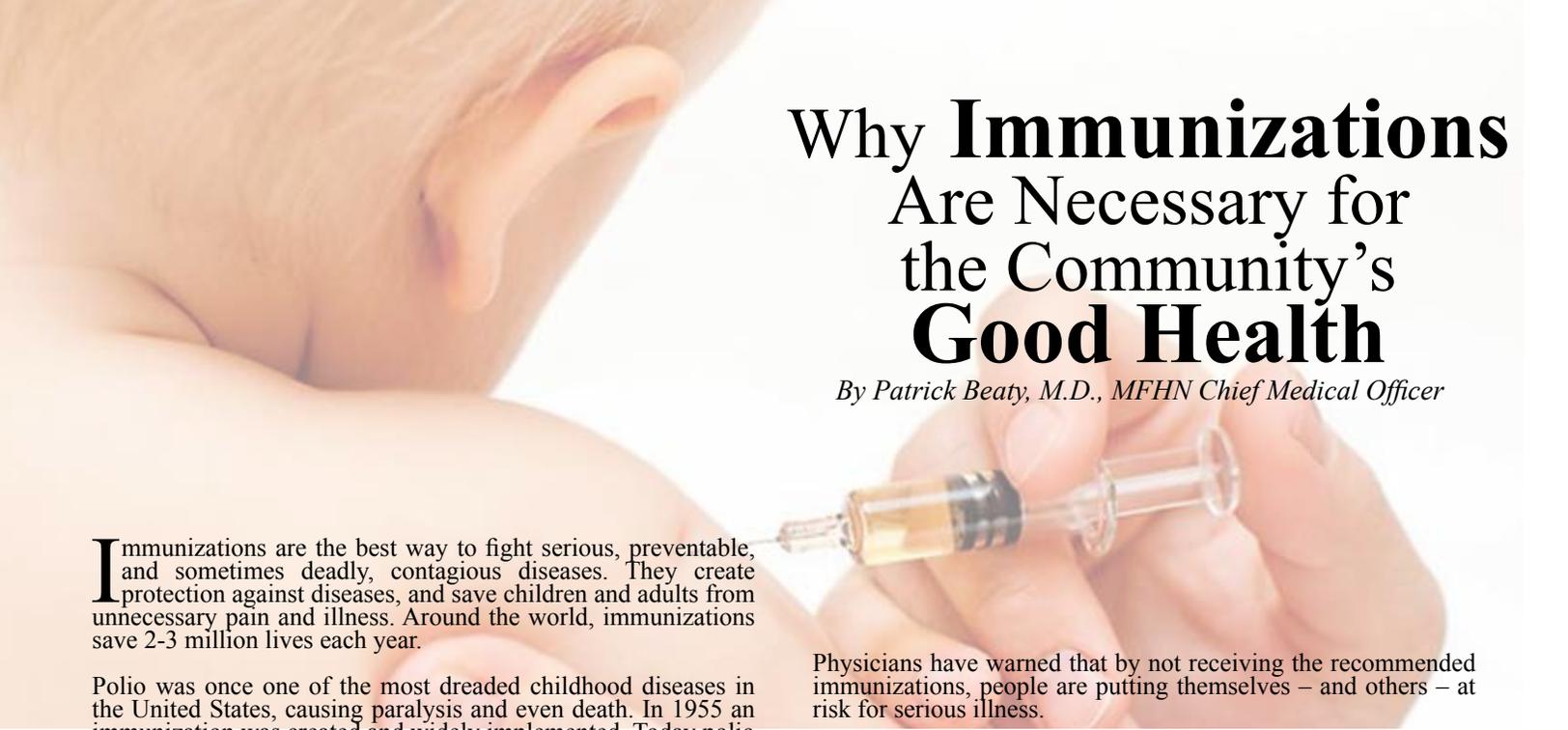
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# Why Immunizations Are Necessary for the Community's Good Health

By Patrick Beaty, M.D., MFHN Chief Medical Officer

**I**mmunizations are the best way to fight serious, preventable, and sometimes deadly, contagious diseases. They create protection against diseases, and save children and adults from unnecessary pain and illness. Around the world, immunizations save 2-3 million lives each year.

Polio was once one of the most dreaded childhood diseases in the United States, causing paralysis and even death. In 1955 an immunization was created and widely implemented. Today polio has been nearly wiped out worldwide.

## Community Immunity

Having many people in a community immunized helps protect everyone. This is known as "community immunity." You – and every person in our community – play an important part in community immunity. When you make certain you and your children receive the immunizations that physicians prescribe, you are protecting yourself, your loved ones, and everyone around you.

Community immunity creates a protective shield which reduces exposure to infections. Community immunity is very important because it helps ensure that those who are not able to get certain immunizations are afforded some protection. Community immunity helps control many contagious diseases, including flu, measles, hepatitis, and pneumonia.

## Immunization Safety

Because they are most often given to millions of people, immunizations are developed and tested to assure high levels of safety. Like any other medical product, there may be risks. Accurate information about the value of immunizations – as well as their possible side effects – is always available from reliable sources such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

## Preventing Disease Outbreaks

Despite the wide number of available immunizations, there is only one disease that has been completely eliminated from humans, and that is smallpox. Immunizations control, but so far have not eliminated any other human disease. However, there are many nations that have not had an outbreak of a disease in a long time. Polio is an example of this. Polio used to be a much-feared and extremely dangerous disease. Today Polio has disappeared from the U.S. but still affects people in India, Pakistan and Nigeria.

Last Fall, the World Health Organization declared that North and South America are free of measles, a highly infectious disease that used to kill 500,000 children around the world each year. However, two years before the announcement was made, the U.S. faced an outbreak of measles linked to a case at Disneyland that was spread to 667 people in 27 states. According to the CDC, most of those infected had not received the two recommended doses of the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine.

Physicians have warned that by not receiving the recommended immunizations, people are putting themselves – and others – at risk for serious illness.

## Traveling Abroad

Today, people travel easily all throughout the world. This makes it easier to come in contact with diseases. Before you travel outside the country, it is a good idea to check with your doctor. He or she may recommend an immunization or two that will help prevent you from becoming ill from diseases that are hardly ever seen here.

Immunizations are an important part of caring for one's health from birth and all throughout life. Please remember to schedule annual physical and well-child visits. Your healthcare provider will immunize you on a regular schedule to help protect you, your family, and the people of our community from illness.

## A Message from the President & CEO

*Dear Friends:*

*On Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, Metropolitan Family Health Network will host the statewide kick-off ceremonies for the annual National Health Center Week. The theme for this year's event is "Celebrating America's Health Centers: The Key to Healthier Communities."*

*Federally Qualified Health Centers like MFHN care for patients and our communities in many ways. We make top-quality health care services available to everyone, regardless of one's ability to pay. We provide information about becoming and staying healthy, and we encourage taking an active role in one's personal health. We also advocate to obtain the funding and programs that will better assist in serving your needs.*

*We hope you will join us on August 14<sup>th</sup> at our 935 Garfield Avenue center. There will be a wealth of information, free health screenings, snacks and food, and fun and games for the family. Look inside for more information.*

**Joan Dublin**

Joan Dublin, RN, MPA, ACHE  
President and Chief Executive Officer

# Stay Safe Outdoors This Summer



**T**his is the season to get outdoors and enjoy all the fun things that only summer offers. Being active outdoors is great for your health and your mood. However, it's important to exercise a bit of caution so that you keep yourself and your children safe.

**Enjoy the sun in moderation** to avoid sunburn, sunstroke and heat stroke. Protect your skin from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays by using a sunscreen with at least SPF 15 and both UVA and UVB protection every time you go outdoors. Wear clothing that covers you, especially areas that tend to be delicate like shoulders, knees and feet. Always wear a hat, particularly one that covers neck and scalp. Don a pair of sunglasses to look cool ... and prevent eye damage.

The elderly, infants, toddlers and those who are chronically ill are most at-risk of heat-related illness. But, even young and healthy people can suffer from heat-related illness if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.

Symptoms of heat stroke include extremely high body temperature, red and dry skin, rapid pulse and confusion. These can lead to loss of consciousness, brain damage and even death.

To prevent heat- and sun-related illness ...

- Dress in loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing when out in the sun.
- Schedule outdoor activities for morning and evening hours.
- Limit time spent exercising or working in the garden or the yard when it's hot.
- Never leave anyone in a parked car ... especially one that's sitting in the sun. Keep your car locked to prevent children from getting inside.
- Drink plenty of water. Avoid dehydrating drinks such as coffee, alcohol and sugary sodas and juices.
- Stay cool with cool showers or baths.
- Check with your doctor about the effects of the sun and heat when taking prescription drugs.

**New Jersey has one of the highest rates of Lyme disease in the U.S.** Lyme disease is caused by a bite from a blacklegged or deer tick, which is brown. When the ticks are young, they are often not much bigger than a poppy seed. To transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, a tick must be attached to one's skin for 36 to 48 hours. Removing a tick as soon as possible is important as it's the best way to prevent infection. Untreated, Lyme disease can damage one's joints, nerves, and brain for months or years after becoming infected.

To prevent Lyme disease ...

- Wear protective clothing – shoes, long-sleeve shirts, long pants tucked into socks, hats and gloves –when in wooded or grassy areas.
- Apply an effective insect repellent with 20% or higher concentration of DEET to skin. (Parents, apply repellent to children, avoiding hands, eyes and mouth.) Follow repellent directions carefully as it can be toxic. Apply products with permethrin to clothing or buy pretreated clothing.
- Discourage ticks from living in your yard. Cut back grass and dispose of leaves.
- Avoid parks and beach areas that are overgrown with grass and weeds.
- Inspect yourself, your children and your pets for ticks. Remove any ticks that you may find by using a narrow tweezers and pulling the tick straight out. It can be helpful to shower using a washcloth as soon as returning indoors.

**Be careful of poisonous plants!** Any person working or playing outdoors can risk being exposed to poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac plants. If you touch the stem, leaves, berries or roots of these plants you may have a reaction, usually a painful rash. If you walk in an area that has these plants it may get on your shoes or clothing; you can then transfer the contamination to your face or body by touching your shoes or clothing. Even inhaling the smoke from these poisonous plants that are being burned can irritate your nose and lungs.

Poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac are not contagious. However, you can be infected if you touch the clothing or shoes of someone who has been in contact with the plants.

Most often, poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac rashes will disappear in one to three weeks, and the majority of the time, the rashes can be treated at home. If you or your children come in contact with these plants, wash the skin right away. If you develop a rash – which can be very itchy – don't scratch it. Mild cases of the rash can be treated with soothing lotions and creams such as calamine or hydrocortisone. Cool baths can also bring some relief. If the rash starts to ooze, call and make an appointment to see your healthcare professional right away, as you may need prescription medication.



## Reap the Benefits of **Eating Well**

**E**ating healthy always requires some effort. To get the vitamins and minerals your body needs, you should eat a wide variety of foods. By choosing healthy foods you may improve your health and that of your family members as well.

The rewards of healthy eating add up over your lifetime. Here are a few important things you can do to live a healthier life.

### **1. To reduce the chance of heart disease and stroke ...**

A healthy diet is naturally lower in sodium and higher in potassium, the mineral that lowers blood pressure. So stay clear of processed foods that are high in salt – and very often – unhealthy fat. Eating fish twice a week, increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables, grains, lean meats and healthy fats – like olive and canola oil – can help lower blood pressure and ward off heart attacks and strokes.

### **2. To lower Type 2 diabetes risk ...**

High cholesterol and obesity are factors that raise one's chances of developing Type 2 diabetes. A diet that is rich in healthy fats will help lower cholesterol levels and make it easier to maintain a healthy weight. In addition, many people with Type 2 diabetes may be able to control their blood sugar levels without medi-

cation by healthy eating and exercising. Opt for foods that are fiber-rich such as oatmeal, apples, beans and prunes. Avoid foods that are high in trans-fats and sugars, such as fried foods, baked goods (cakes, pie crusts, frozen pizza and cookies) and stick-type margarines.

### **3. To sleep more soundly, build stronger bones and more ...**

Eating foods rich in calcium and high in magnesium promotes better sleep, calms nerves and anxiety, increases energy, helps with digestion, relieves muscle aches/spasms, maintains heart health, and helps prevent migraine headaches and osteoporosis. Some of these foods include milk, yogurt, cheese, sardines, the yolks of eggs, salmon, tuna, spinach, collard greens, Swiss chard and almonds.

### **4. To have more energy ...**

By reducing one's consumption of sugar, the body will break down food in a continuous, slow manner. This will keep your energy levels steady. It will also reduce cravings for high carbohydrate/low nutrient "junk" foods.

### **5. To stave off colds ...**

Foods that are rich in vitamins A, C, D, E, B6, folic acid, iron and zinc can strengthen your immune system. That sounds like a big order, but it's really much easier

than you may think. Vitamin A foods include carrots, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe and squash. Leafy greens, strawberries, oranges, and papaya are good sources of vitamin C. Fatty fish – salmon, mackerel, tuna and sardines – are great sources of vitamin D. To boost your intake of vitamin E, grab a handful of almonds, peanuts, sunflower seeds or hazelnuts. Vitamin B6 is found in bananas, tuna and chickpeas. Beans and peas contain folic acid. Chicken and turkey, as well as beans, broccoli and kale, are iron-rich. Zinc can be found in oysters, crab, poultry, yogurt and chickpeas.

### **6. To lower weight ...**

A diet high in fiber will cause one to feel full longer. So add foods that are high in fiber and drink plenty of water if you're looking to curb your appetite and shed the pounds. Raspberries, apples and pears, whole wheat spaghetti, bran flakes, lentils, beans and broccoli top the high fiber list.

### **7. To reduce the risk of cancer ...**

Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and beans are essential to any healthy diet and they seem to be important in reducing the risk of preventing many types of cancer. Limiting processed meats and drinking alcohol in moderation are also important preventive steps.

# Take Control of Your Well Being



**E**veryone wants to be healthy. People who practice healthy lifestyle choices are mentally sharper, more physically fit, and happier. They spend less money on healthcare, have more energy, and enjoy better relationships. They perform better in school and on the job.

Sometimes making healthy choices seems like a lot of work! Here are 10 changes that are easy to do every day. Practice these often and they will become habits without even thinking about it!

**1. Drink more water.** Drinking 8 or more glasses of water a day helps your body stay hydrated and removes toxins that can make you ill.

**2. Go for a walk.** Activities like walking, taking an exercise class and swimming are good for your heart and lungs. Exercise also increases creativity, lowers stress and improves sleep. Try to exercise for 30 minutes five days a week.

**3. Eat 2 to 3 pieces or servings (1/2cup) of fruit** like blueberries, apples, pears

and cherries. Fruit is packed with vitamins and disease-fighting nutrients.

**4. Eat a large salad.** Salad greens and vegetables are rich in vitamins and minerals. Be creative! Add celery, radishes, tomatoes, mushrooms, onions, apples, and walnuts to your salad. Just remember to go easy on the dressing.

**5. Train your brain.** Practicing meditation or deep breathing for at least five minutes eases depression, anxiety and stress. Take time to read, learn something new and/or work a crossword puzzle; these activities keep our brains “young.”

**6. Snack between meals.** Eating healthy snacks like almonds, sliced vegetables and fruit and hummus will help stabilize your mood, regulate your blood sugar levels, and help balance your weight.

**7. Practice gratitude.** Once a week, write down at least 10 things for which you are grateful. Studies show that gratitude increases health and happiness.

**8. Go easy on the sugar.** Americans eat 130 pounds of sugar a year! That’s 22 teaspoons a day! Most sugar is hidden in foods that one frequently consumes. One easy thing to do is to replace sugary sodas with water. Read food labels. Substitute fruits, veggies and nuts for cookies, candy and ice cream.

**9. Get out into the sun.** Sunlight helps your body produce vitamin D, which can strengthen bones, help stave off depression and protect from some cancers. Getting anywhere from 5–15 minutes of sunlight two to three times a week is enough to enjoy the vitamin D-boosting benefits of the sun.

**10. Aim for 8 hours of sleep each night.** Like exercise, sleep has multiple benefits for body and mind. Sleep deprivation, on the other hand, is linked to accidents and weight gain. Most people need 8–9 hours of sleep each night. To encourage peaceful sleep, turn off the TV and the computer an hour before bedtime.

**R**ight now, most all students are enjoying their summer vacation. But before you know it, September will be here and those young people will be back to school.

There are probably a lot of things you need to do in preparation for back-to-school, but none is more important than making certain that your children's health is in tip-top shape, head-to-toe.

Listed below are some of the things that you should begin taking care of now, if you haven't done so already.

***First, check with your children's school to find out ...***

- What immunizations are required at each grade level.
- What permission slips may be required for medical, dental and hearing screenings held on-site at your children's school.
- Any forms or requirements you may need to submit that will alert the school nurse and teachers about allergies and medical issues (such as asthma or diabetes) that your children may have, as well as medications that your children may need to take during the course of the school day.
- If there are special permission forms needed for your children to participate in sports.
- If your child's list of contacts (emergency and otherwise) is up-to-date.

***Then, schedule an appointment for an annual check-up as soon as possible ...***

• First – make and keep your appointment for a well-child physical exam with your child's pediatrician. It's a good idea to bring any health information the school has requested with you so the pediatrician and staff members can take care of it for you right then and there.



## **Back-to-School Health Checklist for Parents and Caregivers**

The doctor may suggest that your child receive a flu shot, and may have you schedule an appointment to have that done at a later date. During the exam, your pediatrician will test your child's vision, and may suggest that you schedule an appointment with an eye specialist – an ophthalmologist. If this is the case, be sure to follow through. Children who can't see well, won't do well in school.

The pediatric staff may also check your child's hearing, especially if your youngster has been prone to ear infections.

• ***Schedule a dental appointment for your child.*** Cavities are the most common chronic childhood disease. Cavities can cause pain. Cavities can also keep a child from being able to eat, speak and sleep properly, which in turn can prevent a child from learning and enjoying play and recreation. The dentist will exam your child's teeth, and if necessary will apply fluoride

varnish (for baby teeth) and dental sealants (for permanent teeth). These are safe, pain-free ways of protecting teeth from decaying and causing problems.

• ***Make sure your child's clothing and shoes fit properly.*** Ill-fitting apparel – things that are too big or too tight – can cause children to alter their posture, or walk in a way that may affect their shoulders, hips, back or feet long-term. Choose a backpack that is as lightweight as possible and that's proportionate to your child's age and size.

Making certain that your children's health is well cared for is the best way that you can provide her/him with every advantage to enjoy and succeed in learning.



## **M.D. Spotlight**

**Hallie A. Williams, D.D.S., M.P.H.**  
Director of Dental Services

Dr. Williams joined the Metropolitan Family Health Network staff in April 2012. She is a board-certified dentist.

Dr. Williams attended Syracuse University (NY) where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Biology. She then went on to New York University College of Dentistry where she was awarded her Doctorate of Dental Surgery, and followed that by attaining a Master's degree in Public Health from Columbia University School of Public Health.

Highly experienced, Dr. Williams began her professional career 28 years ago at the Northern Dispensary in New York City. She has also cared for dental patients at Martin Luther King, Jr. Health Center in the Bronx (NY), Urban Health Plan, Inc. (Bronx), Prasad Children's Dental Health (Hurleyville, NY) and in a private practice in New York City. She was also the Dental Director at Housing Works, Inc. in Brooklyn, NY.

## MFHN's New Appointment-Confirming Text System

Be sure we have your current cellphone number!

We are now using text messaging so patients can confirm their upcoming appointments, and we can lessen wait times. It's quick, easy, and designed for your convenience. Here's how it works:

- Three days in advance, we will text you a message with the date and time of your appointment.
- When you receive the message you will be able to confirm whether or not you will be here just by texting "Yes" or "No."
- If you text "Yes," you will not receive another message and we will expect to see you at the appointed day and time.
- If you text "No," we will contact you about rescheduling your appointment at a new date and time.

## Dental Screenings in the Schools

Cavities are the most common chronic childhood disease, but they are easily prevented. In June, Metropolitan Family Health Network began working with the Jersey City Public Schools to provide free dental screenings and oral hygiene education for students. In our first visits to two schools, the MFHN Dental Team examined just shy of 100 children, and made a number of referrals to the MFHN Dental program for follow-up care. MFHN will resume dental screenings when school is back in session in September.



**Make Sure Your Kids Are Ready for Going Back to School!**

Call 201-478-5827 and schedule appointments for annual physical exams and immunizations today.

## MFHN Achieves Patient Centered Medical Home Level 3 Accreditation



**Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH)** is a model for providing health care in which treatment is coordinated through one's primary care physician. In Patient Centered Medical Home, the primary care doctor is the head of a patient's health care team, which includes other health care providers, and the patient. Electronic health records are used to ensure that information is shared and team members see a patient's "whole picture."

There are three levels of accreditation, and MFHN recently attained Level 3, signifying that our organization demonstrated strong performances in better patient experience, better health, and lower per capita cost.

Thanks to Helen Dao, and everyone on staff who helped make this possible.

*Don't Miss Our Annual Celebration of*  
**2017 National Health Center Week**  
"Celebrating America's Health Centers: The Key to Healthier Communities"  
at Metropolitan Family Health Network, 935 Garfield Avenue in Jersey City, NJ

**Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

- Festivities for Men, Women and Children of All Ages
  - Health and Dental Screenings
  - Information and Advice on Healthy Living and Eating
  - Games
  - Music
  - Delicious Food and Snacks
  - Giveaways
- Kick-off Ceremony, featuring Elected Officials, New Jersey Primary Care Association's 23 Member Organizations, and Guest Speakers at 11 a.m.

**Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
*A special day for Metropolitan's  
857 Bergen Avenue patients*

Visit us at [www.MetropolitanFHN.com](http://www.MetropolitanFHN.com) for more details.



# Kids' Corner: Summer Fun!



There are just a few more weeks of summer vacation left! Hope you are having fun and that you are doing things that are good for your body and your brain.

We wanted to make sure that you were not running out of ideas for things to do. Here's a list of some fun stuff for you, your brothers, sisters, cousins and friends.

- 1. Grow a sweet potato vine plant!** Get a jar that holds 32 oz. (a mayonnaise jar) and fill it half way with water. Choose a sweet potato that has sprouts and stick 4 toothpicks around the sweet potato, about 1/3 of the way down. Place the potato in the jar so the bottom part is in the water (the toothpicks will keep it from falling in). Place the jar someplace where it will get sunlight, but not hot, afternoon light. Make sure to add water from time to time. In 2 - 4 weeks, the sweet potato will have roots and the vine will start growing!
- 2. Go on a "penny hike" with your friends.** Every time you reach a corner, flip a penny. If it's heads, you go right, and if it's tails, you go left.
- 3. Create a play, and make you and your friends the stars.** Come up with an original idea or use one of your favorite stories. Ask grownups for old clothes you can use for costumes. Put on the play for family and neighbors.
- 4. Have a balancing challenge – outdoors!** Get a group of kids together. Fill paper cups half-way with cold water and give each person a cup. At the count of three, everyone puts the cup on top of their head. The person who keeps the cup with the water on their head the longest wins.
- 5. Go to the library.** Ask the people who work there to help you find books that are just-right for your age. Bet you'll find lots of things to learn about and enjoy.
- 6. Construct cool, edible sculptures with marshmallows and toothpicks.** Make bridges, merry-go-rounds, forts, whatever you want. It's like playing with TinkerToys or K'nex, only better!
- 7. Draw pictures of the sky from your window at different times of the day and night.** Color or paint the pictures. Use safety scissors to cut out construction paper frames and glue them on each one.
- 8. Help with inside chores.** Make your own bed. Clear the dishes off the table after dinner. Fold your clothes when they come out of the dryer.
- 9. Help with outside work.** Sweep the front walk. Pull weeds out of the flower beds. Water the plants.
- 10. Jog!** Start by running just one block. Then, add a block every week until you run 12 blocks – you will be running about one mile!

