

WELLNESS CONNECTION

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Interview with UI Stride Well Traveled Individual & Team Award Winners



By Seth Yoder

This month Seth Yoder sat down with both the 2021 UI Stride *Well Traveled* (Maureen Sorensen) and team (University Audits) winners to find out about the secrets to their success. Congratulations Maureen and University Audits!

UI Stride Well Traveled Individual Award Winner Interview with Maureen Sorensen, University Audits

Q. You ended the *Well Traveled* challenge with an impressive score. What do you attribute your success to?

A. I'd say the primary reason was the timing of the challenge. It coincided with spring weather and longer days, and it was easy to be outdoors and active after a long winter spent mostly inside at home.

Q. Do you have one highlight or memorable moment from this challenge that you would like to share?

A. The highlight for me was doing my first in-person running race since 2019. Last fall I signed up for an event scheduled for June with little hope that it would be able to be held. Thanks to the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, the event was held in almost the same conditions as pre-COVID.

Q. Did you start any new habits or routines during this UI Stride challenge or did you continue the same habits and routines you had prior to the challenge?

A. Doing stretching on a daily basis is something I always mean to do but thanks to this challenge, it did become a new habit.

Q. What advice would you give to other System Office employees who would like to improve their results in the next UI Stride campaign?

A. My advice is to find activities/exercises that you enjoy doing and incorporate them as much as possible. For instance, riding your bike or walking instead of driving whenever possible.

UI Stride Well Traveled Team Winner Interview with Team University Audits

Q. This was the longest UI Stride campaign to date. Did your team have any strategies on how to maintain motivation throughout the duration of the *Well Traveled* challenge?

A. We did not have a singular strategy for the entire team. Due to the constraints the work-from-home environment has created, the individuals on the team relied more on leaning into their personal wellness routines. Our team did find the communications and reminders from the UI Stride administrative team, as well as the wellness prompts from the website, helpful to encourage us to stick with our goals for the challenge. Additionally, the good weather during the spring campaign certainly helps by enabling us to get outdoors more often and participate in activities they may not do as much in the cooler months.

Q. Was there a particular highlight or memorable moment for your team during the challenge?

A. We found the trivia component of the campaign to be interesting. It was nice to learn new things about various parts of the United States, all while completing our wellness goals for the day or the week.

Q. What advice would you give to other System Office teams who would like to improve their results in the next UI Stride campaign?

A. Our team largely felt that maintaining a daily routine helped ensure we stayed on track and held ourselves accountable. We also recognized the importance of mixing up activities. The *Well Traveled* challenge provided a variety of activities to choose from and we found that mixing in new activities throughout the campaign helped prevent our routines from becoming stagnant. Perhaps

the most important advice is to choose activities you enjoy, because this will help you stay motivated and get the most out of the experience.

Q. Did your team learn any valuable lessons during the *Well Traveled* challenge and, if so, do you plan to utilize those lessons moving forward?

A. For some of the members of our team, they have learned to take more personal accountability for their wellness. They are accomplishing this by setting daily/weekly goals for themselves and recognizing themselves with rewards when they reach those goals. Other team members found the lessons they learned from the Thrive Thursdays to be highly impactful. While these lessons were useful at the time, they did find it challenging to remember every lesson and for that reason the team would like to see some of these tips sent out in reminder emails from the System Office Wellness Committee in future campaigns. Overall, the University Audits Team found the *Well Traveled* challenge to be rewarding and are looking forward to the next iteration of UI Stride.

