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| <p>Overview</p> | <p>Blue Zones Project® is a community well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes in environment, policy, and social networks. By helping people live longer, better through behavior change, communities can lower healthcare costs, improve productivity, and boost national recognition as a great place to live, work, and play.</p> |
| <p>Primary Goal/Mission</p> | <p>To lead and ignite a community-by-community environmental well-being transformation, where people live and work together in Blue Zones Communities® for a better life.</p> |
| <p>Programs/Campaigns</p> | |
| <p>Anyone who has ever made a healthy New Year’s resolution knows the challenges of maintaining it over time. Your circumstances and environment conspire against you, making the goal difficult to achieve. It’s the same challenge faced by traditional health improvement programs that rely on behavior change alone.</p> <p>Blue Zones Project is different because it takes a systematic approach to improve well-being that focuses on the “life radius” of the individual to make an impact on <i>people, places, and policies</i>. By optimizing environments — those settings where we spend our time and which influence our behavior — we can make the healthy choice the easy choice and naturally adopt healthy behaviors.</p> <p>People We engage people to improve their home and social environments with the <i>personal pledge</i>; provide opportunities to discover their <i>purpose</i>; curate <i>volunteer</i> experiences that help connect them to their community; and offer programs that connect them with <i>social networks</i> that support healthy behaviors.</p> <p>Places In demonstration communities, Blue Zones Project works to engage a critical mass of <i>worksites, schools, restaurants, grocery stores, and faith-based organizations</i> across the community to optimize their environments. With their efforts combined, healthy choices become the easiest to make, which results in happier, healthier, more productive people.</p> <p>Policy Community infrastructure and public policies can affect resident’s ability to move naturally, connect socially, and access healthy food. By working with city leaders to change food policy, tobacco policy, and the built environment, we can nudge people toward healthier behaviors.</p> | |
| <p>Impact</p> | |
| <p>In 2009, Blue Zones led a 10-month pilot project in Albert Lea, Minnesota, where residents increased their projected life expectancy by 2.9 years. Employers in that city not only reported a decline in healthcare claims costs, but also a drop in absenteeism. In 2010, Blue Zones and Healthways partnered with the Beach Cities Health District in Southern California to apply Blue Zones principles to three contiguous California communities, including Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, and Manhattan Beach. In 2011, Blue Zones and Healthways joined forces again to deliver Blue Zones Project to 15 communities in Iowa, sponsored by Wellmark® Blue Cross® and Blue Shield®. Communities across the country continue to take notice as sponsors such as Texas Health Resources (THR), Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA), NCH Healthcare System, and Cambia Health Foundation apply Blue Zones principles to make healthy choices easier in communities they serve.</p> <p>Albert Lea, Minnesota:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a two-year period, city employees: • Dropped employee absenteeism by 22% • Reduced tobacco use from 23% to 19% • 44% of adults still participate in a Moai | |

Beach Cities, California

- Reduced obesity by 14%
- Increased healthy eating by 9%
- Increased exercise by 30%
- Blue Zones Project facilitated over 4 million dollars in grants and gifts

State of Iowa:

- Received pledges of support from more than 210,000 Iowans across 15 demonstration sites.
- More than 1,400 organizations across the state adopted Blue Zones principles with 515 achieving status as recognized Blue Zones organizations.
- 515+ organizations have already achieved designation as a Blue Zones Worksite®, Blue Zones Grocery Store®, Blue Zones School®, or Blue Zones Restaurant®.

Select Iowa Community Outcomes:

SPENCER, IOWA

- Reduced city workers healthcare claims 20%
- Spencer Hospital reports only 1.4% increase in claims compared with national average of 7%
- 35% of population still volunteers for the Blue Zones Project
- Spencer hospital reports metabolic syndrome risk factors fell from 43 percent to 13 percent

CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

- 1.3 Million dollar PEP grant awarded to school
- University reports increase of 20 oz. water fills by 350,000 at their water fill stations
- Won National Award for best Complete Streets Policy
- Grocery Store reports 151% increase in healthy beverage sales at Blue Zones checkout counters

MASON CITY, IOWA

- 1.8 million appropriated for bike and walking connectivity
- Expanded public gardens; Built a new garden and added additional square feet to two others
- Move toward healthy fundraisers saw a 50% increase in student participation at Lincoln Intermediate

MUSCATINE, IOWA

- Muscatine Hy-Vee dedicated 60% more space to produce and saw a 75% sales increase
- Blue Zones Schools have prohibited the sale of sugar-sweetened beverages on their campuses
- One mile of new sidewalks is planned each year for the next 15 years

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| Reports/Case Studies | Buettner, D. (2012). <i>The Blue Zones: 9 Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest</i> . National Geographic Books. Buettner, D. (2015). <i>The Blue Zones Solution: Eating and Living Like the World's Healthiest People</i> . National Geographic Books. |
| Reference Video | TEDMED: Dan Buettner – What if “it’s the environment, stupid”? |
| Social Media Sites | You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/user/BlueZonesProject Facebook accounts exist for each Project area and community, here are just a few: Albert Lea: www.facebook.com/BlueZonesProjectAlbertLea Iowa: www.facebook.com/BlueZonesProjectIowa Forth Worth: www.facebook.com/BlueZonesProjectFW |
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