



HARLAN A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

The ninth certified Blue Zones Community® in the nation invests in well-being for a more livable, vibrant, and healthy future.





CONGRATS, HARLAN,
FOR PUTTING WELL-BEING
ON THE MAP!

We deserve a round of applause.
And maybe even a standing ovation.
Because we made it happen.

After launching Blue Zones Project®, our community **invested more than \$600,000 in projects that encourage our residents move naturally**, including new sidewalks, wider trails, and the beautification of the community as a whole. Our community's resurgence, anchored in putting the well-being of our residents first, is happening.

Harlan has always been a great place to live, work, and visit. And it's only getting better.

We did this together. By putting our personal and collective well-being first, we're making healthy choices easier, creating more economic opportunities, and ensuring a better quality of life for everyone. Here's to making Harlan one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living better, together.

THE JOURNEY TO BECOME A BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

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PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN IOWA

A GREAT STATE

What does it take to become a healthier state? What does that mean for those who live and work there? These were the questions on the minds of community leaders in 2011 when Governor Terry Branstad challenged Iowa to become the healthiest state alongside the Healthiest State Initiative. An answer came with Blue Zones Project, a community-wide initiative that united civic leaders, businesses, restaurants, schools, grocers, families, and others in an effort to enhance the community landscape and improve the overall well-being of Iowans. With this vision as a foundation, the Blue Zones Project partnership is bringing value to communities statewide — with things like improved health, a strong economy, and happier, healthier, and highly productive residents who spend more time living well.

AN INNOVATIVE SPONSOR

Wellmark® Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® chose to invest in the lives of Iowans by bringing Blue Zones Project to the state for what would be the cornerstone of Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative.

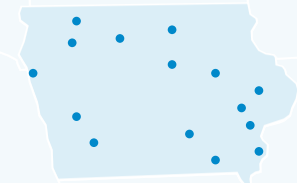
Wellmark knew that doing so would introduce an innovative approach that moves beyond diet and exercise regimens and applies the principles of behavioral economics to make healthier choices easier choices. The projected outcomes? Improved health and well-being for Iowans.

A Transformative Solution

Blue Zones Project helps transform U.S. communities like ours into Blue Zones Communities — areas where people live longer with a higher quality of life. The secrets to well-being and longevity are found in the Power 9® — nine common principles from the Blue Zones® longevity hotspots of the world. Blue Zones Communities are places where residents, employers, and others collaborate to create environments where healthy choices are easier for everyone.

The results?

Vibrant communities where residents are happier, healthier, and more engaged with each other. Iowa was among the first to embark on this journey to well-being. Fifteen communities and five years later, the results are undeniable.





IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGHER WELL-BEING, WE HAVE FOUND THAT PEOPLE LIVE LONGER, HAPPIER LIVES AND BUSINESS AND LOCAL ECONOMIES FLOURISH. A RELIABLE WELL-BEING METRIC PROVIDES COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS WITH THE DATA AND INSIGHTS THEY NEED TO HELP MAKE SUSTAINED TRANSFORMATION A REALITY. AFTER ALL, IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE IT, YOU CAN'T MANAGE IT.

Dan Buettner
New York Times best-selling author
National Geographic Fellow
Blue Zones founder

Measuring the Impact

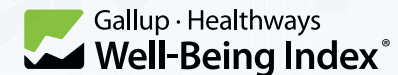
Change requires action. It isn't enough to do something one time; lasting change, which is a central tenet of Blue Zones Project, must be created from permanent and semi-permanent changes and alterations to the environment, policies, programs, and social networks. These actions allow healthy choices to become easy choices today and for many years to come.

From 2010 – 2015, according to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®, Iowa has outpaced the nation in overall well-being, improving at twice the rate of the national average.



GALLUP-HEALTHWAYS WELL-BEING INDEX

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is the most proven, mature, and comprehensive measure of well-being in the world. Measuring well-being gives policy, community, and business leaders the data to benchmark populations, understand gaps and opportunities, and then prioritize interventions to measurably improve well-being. Improving well-being has been shown to lower health care costs and increase worker productivity, in turn, enhancing organizational and community competitiveness.



15 Communities Commit to Well-Being

In October 2011, 84 Iowa communities submitted statements of interest to be selected for Blue Zones Project, and an elite 15 were chosen. Communities received support from national experts and thousands of community members.

Across the state, Blue Zones Project has seen:

520,000

Lives impacted by environmental changes designed to help people move naturally, eat wisely, develop the right outlook, and connect with others.

430,000+

Actions taken by individuals to improve well-being for themselves, their families, and friends.

610

Worksites, schools, grocery stores, and restaurants achieved Blue Zones Project designation.

21,164

(And counting) Actions taken by those organizations to make healthy choices easier, helping residents, employees, and patrons live longer, better lives.

180,245

Total feet of bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks built to encourage people to move more naturally.

142

Walking School Bus routes created to encourage students to move naturally.

15

All 15 communities passed new Complete Streets policies to enable safe access for all users — drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY?

Worksites, schools, grocery stores, and restaurants complete various **action items** on a **pledge** in order to earn their Blue Zones Project **designation**.



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LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS
IN HARLAN HAVE EMBRACED
THE BLUE ZONES MODEL AND
WORKED TOGETHER TOWARD
THIS COMMON GOAL FOR
MORE THAN TWO YEARS.
WE APPLAUD THEIR EFFORTS
AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE
CONTINUED FOCUS ON WELL-
BEING IMPROVEMENT.

Dan Buettner
New York Times best-selling author
National Geographic Fellow
Blue Zones founder



PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN HARLAN

As a pioneer in innovation, Harlan is leading the way for a movement that is now more than 26 communities strong nationwide.

Our neighbors, teachers, and community leaders have made tremendous strides in optimizing the places where we all live, work, learn, and play.

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OUR COMMUNITY'S ACHIEVEMENT OF BECOMING A CERTIFIED BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY IS WHAT I SEE AS ANOTHER NOTCH, AND A SIGNIFICANT NOTCH, IN OUR CONTINUED QUEST TO BE KNOWN AS A COMMUNITY WITH A GREAT QUALITY OF LIFE. THIS IS A TIME FOR US TO REJOICE, BUT ALSO A TIME TO CHALLENGE OURSELVES TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD IN IMPROVING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

Gene Gettys
Former Mayor
Current City Administrator
City of Harlan

Walkability Inspires Active Lives in Harlan

Harlan invested more than \$600,000 in new infrastructure to help residents move naturally, including widening a one-mile walking trail, new trees and lighting at Pioneer Park, and more than three miles of new sidewalks around town.

When you visit our community, you can't help but breathe in fresh air as you stroll down the 1.2-mile trail in Pioneer Park. Newly planted trees provide shade, prevent water runoff, and reduce energy use. Abundant lighting keeps you safe at night, and around town, 3.17 miles of sidewalks have been filled so you can keep walking wherever you want to go. Traffic is calmed by reduced speeds thanks to a Complete Streets training that Blue Zones Project provided to city planners. If you stop for lunch at the Sandwich Bowl, you'll notice there's always an option for a half-sized sandwich, and a healthy side of apples or carrots is offered with your entrée. Since May 2016, 60 percent of patrons now request carrots or an apple, rather

than the previous default side item, a bag of chips. Our schools are dishing out healthy options, too. Steam tables have been added to school cafeterias to offer more vegetable options, and at least two fruit selections are available every day. By using the school garden, students learn more about nutrition than before. In addition, brain breaks keep kids focused during the school day. After the implementation of brain breaks, measurements of the time students were off task decreased from 32 percent to 14 percent.

No matter where you are in Harlan, you are offered healthy options. Harlan is a Blue Zones Community you'll want to call home.



A Community-wide Commitment to Blue Zones Project



5,106

Lives impacted

1,990

Individuals pledged to support well-being

4,113

Well-being actions taken by individuals

25

Organizations implementing well-being principles

1,163

Changes made by organizations to support living longer, better

17

Organizations completing the pledge

11

Harlan worksites that are Blue Zones Worksites®

2

Locally owned restaurants in Harlan that are Blue Zones Restaurants®

2

Public schools in Harlan that are Blue Zones Schools®

2

Harlan grocery stores that are Blue Zones Grocery Stores®



SEE IT IN ACTION

Blue Zones Project Highlight: Harlan, Iowa

Harlan is making well-being a way of life. Hear from our leaders and neighbors about how an emphasis on well-being makes our community a better place to live.

Watch the video:

explore.bluezonesproject.com/Harlan



Media Coverage Places Harlan on National Stage

Blue Zones Project in Iowa has attracted local and national recognition, with more than 1,600 media stories to date.

Since the launch in 2012, Blue Zones Project in Iowa has been heralded for innovative approaches to population health management in notable publications such as [O](#), [The Oprah Magazine](#).

The Des Moines Register



In the News

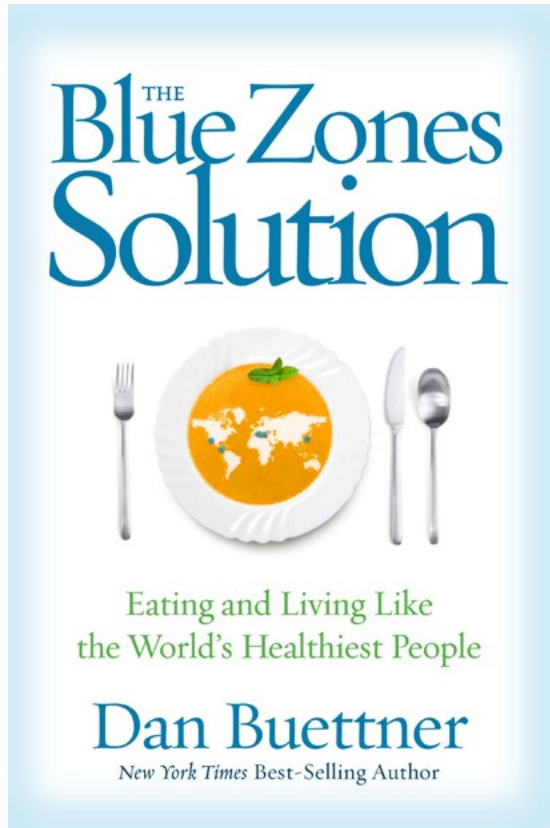
More than 200 turn out for movie night, Blue Zones Celebration

Harlan Tribune
09.18.16

Harlan Moves Closer to Blue Zones Certification

Harlan Tribune
03.24.15





In addition to great media stories covering our efforts, the Blue Zones Project Iowa story is featured prominently in Dan Buettner's latest *New York Times* best-selling book, *The Blue Zones Solution: Eating and Living Like the World's Healthiest People*.



Harlan Blue Zones Project leaders meet with Governor Branstad, May 2015.



ROAR INTO HARLAN
BIKE NIGHT
AUG 22

GUIDE TO THE POWER 9


The landscape for well-being in America cannot be improved without committed partnerships. That's why leaders across many sectors joined forces to take action and positively impact our residential and business communities. This broad, holistic approach is making healthy choices easier.

Using the secrets to longevity as our guide — [the Power 9](#) — businesses and residents have taken actions to make well-being a way of life.

THE POWER 9

P.19

Move Naturally

 Make daily physical activity an unavoidable part of your environment.

P.26

Right Outlook

 Know your purpose.

 Downshift: work less, slow down, and take vacations.

P.30

Eat Wisely

 Eat until 80 percent full.

 More veggies, less meat and processed food.

 Drink a glass of red wine each day.

P.37

Connect

 Create a healthy social network.

 Connect or reconnect with religion.

 Prioritize family.

MOVING NATURALLY

Together, Harlan residents are moving more, and more naturally. Since launching Blue Zones Project, Harlan has invested more than \$600,000 in new infrastructure to encourage residents to be active.

We generally exercise too hard or not at all. However, the world's longest-lived people don't pump iron, run marathons, or join gyms. Instead, they live in environments that constantly nudge them to move naturally. They live in places where they can walk to the store, a friend's house, or places of worship. Their houses have stairs. They have gardens in their yards. It's not just about moving, it's about moving naturally.



WHY MOVEMENT MATTERS

About 69 percent of the American population can be classified as overweight or obese.¹

Our children's life expectancy is projected to be shorter than that of their parents for the first time in history. Obesity is not just a health problem, it's an economic one, too. The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illness are a staggering \$190 billion, or nearly 21 percent of annual medical spending. Childhood obesity alone is responsible for \$14 billion in direct medical costs.²

The good news is there is a solution for this growing issue. **Increasing simple movements like standing, walking, stretching, and bending can help burn an extra 350 calories a day.** Studies show that just by making our communities more walkable, the prevalence of obesity can decrease by more than 10 percent.³ That adds up to even bigger possibilities like lowered incidences of heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory issues and increased productivity, vitality, and years of quality life.

How Moving Naturally Impacts Our Community

City planners, schools, worksites, and organizations across our community have come together to create environments and support programs that help Harlan residents move naturally. Our city has emerged as a leader for street and community design that nudges people to healthier daily habits. Here are some reasons why:

- 10 Walking Moai teams
- 41 Walking Moai participants
- 1 Walking School Bus Routes
- 60 Children walking each week on bus route



WHAT'S A MOAI?

Moai is a concept from Okinawa, Japan, that roughly means coming together for a common purpose. When you find your Moai, you find your personal board of directors — a committed group of individuals supporting each other and working collectively to improve well-being, for life.

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IT'S CELEBRATING
WHAT THE PEOPLE
OF AMERICA ARE
NOW WAKING UP
TO, AND REALIZING
WHAT THEY WANT.
IT'S GOING TO
HAPPEN IN IOWA
FIRST.

Dan Burden
Walkability Expert
Blue Zones



TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENTS

A community resurgence — anchored in putting the well-being of our residents first — is happening in Harlan.

In 2014, the Harlan city council passed a Complete Streets policy. Complete Streets policies ensure roads are safe for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Positive built-environment projects are popping up all over our city, as evidenced by the many new trails and sidewalks that encourage people to move naturally.

A \$350,000 investment in trails and sidewalk.

Our city invested \$350,000 in expanding Pioneer Park and its 1.2-mile walking trail to include ten-foot-wide sidewalks and new lighting. Wide sidewalks increase accessibility for the disabled and allow residents to walk more comfortably side by side; better lighting enhances safety and encourages extended use at dawn and dusk. This investment provides a safe, comfortable space for people to gather and play, and it demonstrates a commitment to the well-being of our residents.

Bike lanes. Two new bike lanes were added on Cyclone Avenue from Highway 59 to Sixth Street to provide a safe route for bicyclists to travel between the school campus and downtown.

Traffic calming. When vehicles move more slowly, accidents are less severe. To protect its residents from dangerous accidents, Harlan reduced residential speed limits to 25 miles per hour (mph) and the speed limit on busy 12th Street from 55 mph to 30 mph in several areas. The addition of 358 feet of sidewalks in this location also enhances safety, reduces traffic congestion, and promotes healthy living by making transportation safe, comfortable, and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Installation of 3.17 miles of sidewalk. As part of our Pedestrian Master Plan, 3.17 linear miles of sidewalk have been installed and over 50 intersections had crosswalk markings added or repainted. All of this ensures people have safe places to walk.

ORGANIZATIONS MOVING NATURALLY

The health of our community is directly related to the health and vitality of our people.

Organizations across Harlan have recognized their responsibility to create environments that support their employees and patrons in moving more.

Worksites

We spend about one third of our waking hours at work. Over the last 50 years, the percentage of jobs requiring moderate physical activity has fallen from 50 percent in 1960 to 20 percent today.⁸

This means four out of five jobs are sedentary or only require light activity. This decline in physical activity translates to Americans burning 120–140 fewer calories each day, which results in burning 12–15 fewer pounds each year.

As waistlines expand so do our medical costs. Annually, obesity-related illnesses cost more than \$190 billion in health care costs and \$153 billion in lost productivity, annually.²

With so much time spent at work, it's important that these environments are set up to help people move more. **Our community saw 11 worksites complete actions to help people move more, including completing an ergonomic checklist, sharing walking routes, and offering stretch breaks and fitness classes.**

These are small changes that can lead to huge results for the average person over the course of a career.



Schools

Every day children are learning habits they will carry for the rest of their lives.

Establishing healthy habits like moving naturally is so important in the early stages of life. Physical activity and stretch breaks during the school day can improve grades, increase concentration, and improve math, reading, and writing test scores.⁹

Additionally, research shows that including 10-minute activity breaks on a daily basis can promote improvement across these areas by up to 20 percent.

Our community saw two schools complete actions to help get students moving, including adding a Walking School Bus, implementing brain breaks, and incorporating lifestyle activities into physical education class. One school also offers recess before lunch, encouraging kids to move more and eat better.

The Harlan Community School District began its first Walking School Bus in the Fall of 2014. Participation grew from around 10 students in the first year to 60 students in 2016. Students are accompanied by student volunteers from various sports teams and activity groups at Harlan Community High School.



WALKING HELPS KIDS

Children who walk to school are more alert and ready to learn, strengthen their social networks and develop lifetime fitness habits.^{10,11} A Walking School Bus allows a group of children to walk to school under the supervision of two or more adults.

Restaurants and Grocery Stores

Grocery stores in Harlan remind shoppers that parking further away is one way to easily add more activity in their day. Small efforts like these make moving naturally easier than ever before in Harlan.



RIGHT OUTLOOK

1,900+

residents pledged support to living longer, better.

Having the right outlook is a common thread in Blue Zones areas.

The longest-lived people have regular habits to shed stress. Okinawans take a few moments each day to remember their ancestors, Adventists pray, Ikarians take a nap, and Sardinians enjoy happy hour. **It doesn't matter what you do, just so long as it helps you keep the right outlook.**

Blue Zones centenarians also put an emphasis on connecting with their reason for being. Whether through family, career, or community, living with purpose pays off. **Blue Zones researchers have found that people who have a clear sense of purpose in life tend to live about seven years longer than those who don't.**

WHY RIGHT OUTLOOK MATTERS

No matter where we live, stress and the pressures of daily life can weigh us down.

Practicing regular methods to downshift from everyday stress and understand our purpose can improve well-being. **Stress leads to chronic inflammation, which is tied to every major age-related disease.**

Research shows that those who connect with a sense of purpose and wake up to live with it each day outlive those who don't. In fact, those with a sense of purpose had a 15 percent lower rate of death than those who did not.¹²

How Right Outlook Impacts Our Community

Through volunteering, Harlan helps individuals discover their innate gifts. We help our community members match their passions to volunteer opportunities to deepen their sense of purpose.

25

Volunteers with Blue Zones Project

OUTCOMES

Our community rallied together to collect more than 700 Blue Zones Personal Pledges through a community-wide challenge. Peterson Wellness Center and the Harlan Community School District were major partners in the success of the challenge.



ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE RIGHT OUTLOOK

Organizations across Harlan are creating environments and practices that encourage the right outlook. By keeping this top of mind throughout the community, everyone is enjoying more health and vitality.



Worksites

Fewer than 50 percent of Americans find meaning at work. Employers that invest in making work meaningful for their employees are more likely to see production rise and turnover decrease.¹³

Our community saw **11 worksites complete actions to improve outlook and purpose among employees, including creating designated quiet spaces, posting the company mission or vision, and encouraging volunteering.**

Employees at Elm Crest Retirement Community logged 500 volunteer hours in 2014. In general, volunteers have lower mortality rates, are less likely to be depressed, have increased life satisfaction, and report a higher sense of purpose. They also report being happier — perhaps because they focus energy on helping those in need.

”

VOLUNTEERISM IS VERY IMPORTANT, SO WHEN WE TALK ABOUT IT AND WE PROMOTE IT, IT'S JUST SOMETHING PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THEIR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS DO, AND IT JUST REEMPHASIZES THAT IT'S IMPORTANT IN A SMALL TOWN AND IN A LARGE TOWN. PEOPLE NEED HELP, AND BY VOLUNTEERING IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.

Tim Nauslar
Elm Crest Retirement
Community



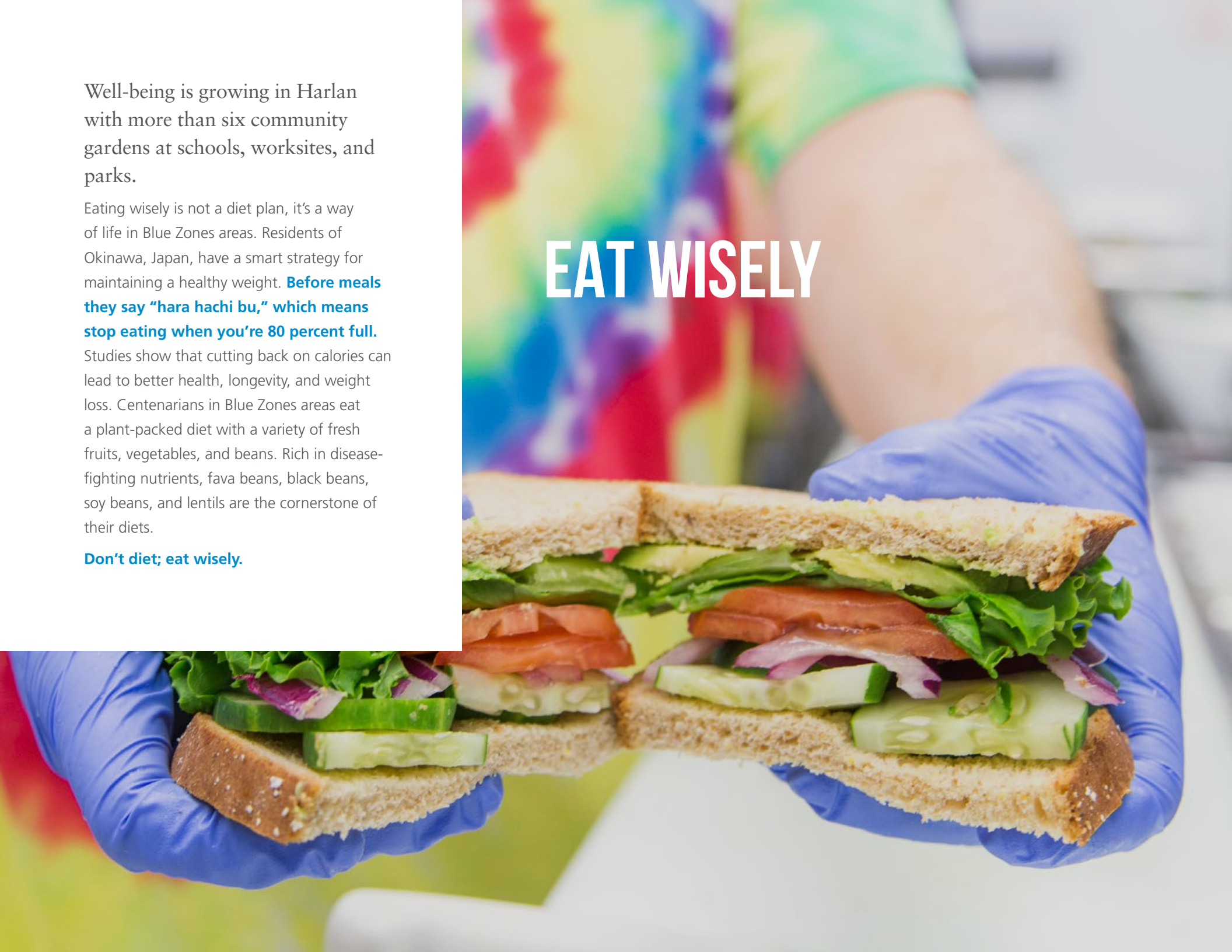
Well-being is growing in Harlan with more than six community gardens at schools, worksites, and parks.

Eating wisely is not a diet plan, it's a way of life in Blue Zones areas. Residents of Okinawa, Japan, have a smart strategy for maintaining a healthy weight. **Before meals they say "hara hachi bu," which means stop eating when you're 80 percent full.**

Studies show that cutting back on calories can lead to better health, longevity, and weight loss. Centenarians in Blue Zones areas eat a plant-packed diet with a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and beans. Rich in disease-fighting nutrients, fava beans, black beans, soy beans, and lentils are the cornerstone of their diets.

Don't diet; eat wisely.

EAT WISELY



WHY EATING WISELY MATTERS

It is estimated that by 2030, 86 percent of the American population will be overweight or obese if current eating habits and exercise habits remain the same.¹⁴

Food is fuel, and what we eat impacts our productivity, too. A 2012 study revealed that **unhealthy eating is related to a 66 percent increased risk of loss of productivity.** Health-related employee productivity loss accounts for 77 percent of all productivity loss and costs employers up to three times more in annual health care expenses.¹⁵

In addition to looking and feeling better, **the benefits of healthy eating are numerous. In the U.S. estimated savings are \$114.5 billion per year (in 2012 dollars) in medical savings, increased productivity, and reductions in heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and osteoporotic hip fractures.**¹⁶ Poor diet is a major risk factor for these five health conditions, all of which reduce life expectancy. By making subtle but substantial changes to our food options, we can be healthier.

How Eating Wisely Impacts Our Community

People make more than 200 food decisions every day.¹⁷ Blue Zones Project helps people choose wisely. Harlan implemented small changes and defaults in restaurants, worksites, grocery stores, and schools. For example, restaurants created new, irresistible, good-for-you menu options. Grocery stores stocked their shelves with nutritious, tasty foods.

3 Plant-Based Potluck Moais with 13 participants

7 gardens: two community gardens, three school gardens, two gardens at worksites



BY THE NUMBERS

Since the early 1900s plate sizes have grown from

9.5 INCHES
TO
12.5 INCHES,¹⁷

We've increased how much we eat by

27%¹⁷



Community Gardens

With two community gardens springing up each season, Harlan is literally growing well-being. Gardens empower people to grow fresh, local food, and in many cases to donate it to local food banks. In the first three years, the gardens have grown more than three times in size and have doubled the number of families they serve.

Schools are taking part, too, with both Blue Zones Schools featuring gardens tended by students. The produce is being used in nutrition education and is making its way onto plates in the lunchroom as salads, sides, and entrees. The Primary Elementary School garden has grown more than five times its original size, while the Intermediate Elementary School garden has grown threefold. Harlan Municipal Utilities donated land to Harlan High School that is now used as part of the agricultural curriculum. Students harvest the garden and sell the produce to a local grocery store as a healthy fundraiser.

Two worksites have on-site gardens for employees. Medivac offers a garden for employees and their families that includes multiple kinds of produce as well as herbs. Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and Industry also added an herb garden for their employees.

”

THE MOST REWARDING PART FOR ME IS JUST TO SEE THE KIDS SO EXCITED ABOUT LEARNING SOMETHING AND WANTING TO. EVERY DAY THEY ASK, ‘WHEN CAN WE DO THE GARDEN? WHEN CAN WE TALK ABOUT THE GARDEN?’ WE WILL BE ABLE TO USE ALL OF THIS PRODUCE IN OUR CAFETERIA, SO THE KIDS WILL ACTUALLY GET TO EAT THE THINGS THEY’VE GROWN. I THINK THAT MAYBE THEN THEY’LL TRY THINGS THEY WOULDN’T NORMALLY TRY, SINCE THEY HAD A HAND IN HELPING WITH IT.

Gina Schmitz
Teacher
Harlan School District



”

IT'S NICE
TO PASS ON
HEALTHY
CHOICES
TO OUR
CUSTOMERS
HERE IN
HARLAN.

Randy Feldman
Owner
Sandwich Bowl

ORGANIZATIONS EATING WISELY

Changes made to our restaurants, grocery stores, and schools can make a huge impact on the health and well-being of the community as a whole. By working together, we can make eating wisely second nature, not a chore.

Restaurants

Our community saw two restaurants complete actions to make healthy food choices easier— things like offering half-size portions, creating new healthy entrees for adults and children, serving food on smaller plates, and serving healthier sides as the default option.

Our Blue Zones Restaurants are seeing noticeable business benefits. Sandwich Bowl now offers carrots and apples as side items. Since May 2016, 60 percent of patrons now request carrots or an apple, rather than the previous default side item, a bag of chips. This number is up from 45 percent earlier in the year. Consumers are more likely to select a healthy choice when it is offered than they are to opt out of a less healthy offering. This simple strategy makes the healthy choice the easy choice when dining out in Harlan.



BY THE NUMBERS

1,000 CALORIES

in a typical American entree in a restaurant.²¹

2 EXTRA POUNDS

gained a year by eating one meal away from home a week.²²

5.5% INCREASE

in same-store sales at restaurants that increased their better-for-you/low-calorie servings between 2006 and 2011.²²

5.5% DECREASE

in sales at restaurants that did not increase their better-for-you/low-calorie servings.²²



IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR FAREWAY TO BECOME A DESIGNATED BLUE ZONES GROCERY STORE BECAUSE THAT'S KIND OF WHAT WE ARE LOOKING TOWARD. WE ARE LOOKING TOWARD HEALTH, WE ARE LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE. WE ARE WANTING TO COME UP WITH OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND GIVE THEM A CHOICE.

Jeremy Dean
Assistant Manager
Harlan Fareway

Grocery Stores

The actions we take to determine what we eat begin at the grocery store. Many grocery stores currently lead people to unhealthy foods in the way they are designed, the deals they promote, and the packaging of the food they sell.²³ Our community is taking the lead in taking the grocery store back.

Our community saw two grocery stores complete actions to make healthy food choices easier — things like sharing healthy

recipes, offering cooking demonstrations, ensuring water is available in checkout lanes, offering healthy foods on end caps and in special displays, and offering a Blue Zones checkout lane full of healthy options.

Over the past three years, Hy-Vee has increased the number of displays that draw attention to healthy offerings and tripled the amount of shelf space for fresh-cut produce. Since making these changes, produce sales have increased by 5 percent each year. Promotion of water throughout the store boosted sales by 20.5 percent while soda sales decreased by 8 percent.

Worksites

Seventy percent of Americans eat at their desks several times a week, which can lead to distracted, disengaged, and mindless overeating.²⁴

Luckily, in Harlan, **11 worksites completed actions to make healthy food choices easier.**

Mytrue Medical Center offers fresh fruit and vegetables at cost for employees throughout the facility.

Actions Completed by 11 Worksites

- 1 Healthy potlucks and worksite gardens
- 2 Improved cafeteria options
- 3 Healthier vending machine choices



Schools

With childhood obesity at 17 percent, there's never been a more important time to examine what students are eating at school.²⁵

The place they go to learn about history and science should be the place they go to learn about eating wisely as well.

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Harlan Community School District purchased 17,000 pounds of produce. The following year, our schools purchased nearly **28,000 pounds of produce, a 64 percent increase from the previous year.**

A grant from the University of Iowa allowed Harlan Community High School to improve the cafeteria environment with the Smarter Lunchrooms Checklist. Updates included healthy choices posters, improved lighting, and placing healthier options in closer reach, such as white milk in front of chocolate milk.

Students who attend schools that sell foods with low nutrient density and sugar-sweetened beverages have lower intake of fruits, vegetables, and milk at lunch; lower daily intake of fruits and vegetables; and higher daily percentages of calories from total fat and saturated fat.

Redesigning the school lunchroom is a simple and cost-effective way to nudge students into eating healthier without creating strict policies. Research by Brian Wansink of Cornell University found that simple changes to the lunchroom design tripled salad sales, doubled fruit sales, doubled sales of healthy sandwiches, and reduced the purchase of ice cream. By optimizing the school environment, students are nudged towards healthier choices.¹⁷

Actions Completed by Two Schools

- 1 School gardens
- 2 Farm-to-school programs
- 3 Redesigning lunchrooms
- 4 New policies for celebrating and fundraising with food

”

THE REACTION FROM STAFF FOR THE MOST PART HAS BEEN, 'I'M SURPRISED AT HOW THE LITTLE THINGS I DO IN MY LIFE IMPACT ME IN SUCH A POSITIVE WAY.' FOR EXAMPLE, DRINKING THE AMOUNT OF WATER THAT IS NECESSARY, THAT WE KNOW WHAT RESEARCH SAYS AND HOW THAT MAKES ME FEEL. GOING TO LUNCH WITH FRIENDS OR PEERS. THAT SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL KIND OF HEALTH IS SO IMPORTANT FOR STAFF.

Justin Wagner
Superintendent
Harlan School District





CONNECT

Through Walking Moais, 41 people built strong relationships with new friends and co-workers.

The world's longest-lived people in Blue Zones areas have always understood the power of social connectedness and putting their families first.

In Okinawa, "Moais" — groups of about five people who commit to each other for their whole lives — provide social connection and emotional and sometimes financial support in times of need. Moai members have the security of knowing there is always someone there for them.

Putting family first and investing time with loved ones can add up to six years to your life.²⁶ Having a sense of belonging is an important part of enjoying a long and healthy life. It doesn't matter which faith you belong to, **studies have shown that people who belong to a place of worship and attend four times a month live four to fourteen years longer than those who don't.**²⁷



WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

Our connections to friends, family, and those around us are very powerful. They have the ability to shape our lives in more ways than we realize. Research shows that even your friends' friends' friends — people you don't even know — have the ability to affect your health, happiness, and behaviors.²⁸

How Connectedness Impacts our Community

Spending time with people who positively influence one another is crucial. In Harlan, we embraced the power of social connections to bring residents together through groups, clubs, and faith-based organizations.

More than 41 people have joined ten Walking Moais throughout the community, building long-lasting friendships while exploring our community on foot.



BY THE NUMBERS

10

Walking Moais with more than 41 participants

2

Plant-Based Potluck Moais with 13 participants

ORGANIZATIONS CONNECTING

There are many ways to promote connections in organizations throughout the community.

By providing these opportunities, everyone in the community feels like a part of something bigger.

Worksites

The digitalization of the work day has done wonders for productivity but not much for social connectivity.

Americans change jobs more often than ever before, and working from home or in isolated conditions can further a lack of socialization among coworkers and peers.

Our community saw 11 worksites complete actions to help employees boost social connections, including things like “lunch with a co-worker” programs, flexible work schedules, offering strengths assessments, and creating Moais.

In September 2015, Walking Moais were formed at Mytrue Medical Center. Over ten weeks, 41 employees walked together in ten groups, logging 1,200 miles.

Schools

Students will tell you that they’re connected with their classmates, but, they mean that they’re connected by their cell phones, which children receive at the age of six, on average.²⁹

To bolster real, human interaction, Harlan got students to plug in differently. Harlan Middle School embraced connecting students to the world around them by establishing the **Legacy Project**, a program that encourages students to interact with and share stories with older adults.

Restaurants

Eating together fosters togetherness in all kinds of families, even those that are the size of whole communities.

We passed an outdoor dining ordinance in 2014, and our restaurants are encouraged to apply for permits to allow people to dine outdoors.



FRIENDS ALWAYS SHARE

Friends provide more than good times, memories, and companionship — they also share health habits and other traits with one another. Did you know that if your friends are smokers, unhappy, or obese, you're more likely to adopt these same traits? You are twice as likely to be overweight if your three closest friends are overweight,³⁰ and inversely, you are 20 percent more likely to succeed at new behaviors if you do them with a buddy.³¹



GOOD FRIENDS AND FAMILY MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER



EAT TOGETHER BETTER

Adolescents who eat dinner with their family are 15 percent less likely to become obese. Additionally, a report by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse points out that teens who eat dinner with their families more than three times a week are less likely to do poorly in school.³³



SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The amount of time you spend socializing each day has a direct impact on your well-being. To have a good day, a person needs around six hours of socializing. So, get socializing!³²



DON'T GO IT ALONE

It's getting harder to be connected. In 2004, 25 percent of Americans felt they had no one to confide in. A lack of social connectedness leaves people vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and other anti-social behaviors.³⁴ Social isolation and feelings of loneliness can increase the chance of premature death by 14 percent—nearly double the risk of premature death from obesity.³⁵



CONGRATS, HARLAN!

A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

We did this together. By putting our personal and collective well-being first, we're making healthy choices easier, creating more economic opportunities, and ensuring a better quality of life for everyone.

Here's to making Harlan one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living better, together.

APPENDIX

Designated Organizations

Blue Zones Grocery Stores

Fareway

Hy-Vee

Blue Zones Schools

Harlan Primary Elementary School

Harlan Intermediate Elementary School

Blue Zones Restaurants

Hy-Vee Kitchen

Sandwich Bowl

Blue Zones Worksites

CDS Global

Concerned, Inc.

Elm Crest Retirement Community

Harlan Community School District

Hy-Vee

Medivac Ambulance

Myrtue Medical Center

Nishnabotna Valley REC

Shelby County Chamber of Commerce &
Industry

Shelby County State Bank

Town and Country Credit Union

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