



MUSCATINE A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

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





CONGRATS, MUSCATINE,
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 saw **a 17 percent improvement in exercise levels and a 13.6 percent decline in stress levels.** This can be attributed to sidewalks, streets, and the beautification of the community as a whole. A community resurgence, anchored in putting the well-being of our residents first, is happening. Our community is seeing **more than \$425 million invested in businesses and infrastructure,** revitalizing the core of one of America's iconic river towns.

Muscatine 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 Muscatine 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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A rural landscape in Iowa featuring a green field in the foreground, a large tree, and several buildings in the background.

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.

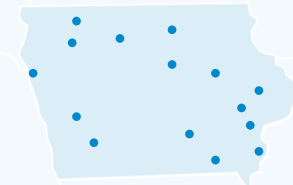
Wellmark knew that doing so would introduce an innovative approach that moves beyond diet and exercise regimens and applies the principles of behavioral economics to make healthier choices easier choices. The projected outcomes? Improved health and well-being for Iowans.

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

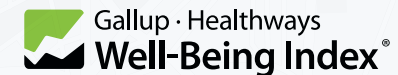
Change requires action. It isn't enough to do something one time; lasting change, which is a central tenet of Blue Zones Project, must be created from permanent and semi-permanent changes and alterations to the environment, policies, programs, and social networks. These actions allow healthy choices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

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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



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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THE VISION OF HEALTHIER, LONGER LIVES FROM BLUE ZONES AREAS ACROSS THE GLOBE IS COMING TO LIFE IN MUSCATINE. IN SUPPORTING A COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES, MUSCATINE HAS MADE A WISE INVESTMENT IN ITS FUTURE, AND I AM THRILLED TO RECOGNIZE THE COMMUNITY'S ACHIEVEMENTS.

Dan Buettner

New York Times best-selling author

National Geographic Fellow

Blue Zones founder



PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN MUSCATINE

As a pioneer in innovation, Muscatine 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.



THE RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE OF BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS MOTIVATED OUR COMMUNITY TO PUT MORE POSITIVE CHANGES IN PLACE IN ONE YEAR THAN WE EVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED. THESE ARE THE KINDS OF POLICIES AND CHANGES THAT WON'T BE LOST OR REVERSED OVER TIME BUT WILL CONTINUE TO IMPACT LIVES IN THIS COMMUNITY FOR MANY, MANY YEARS.

DeWayne Hopkins
Former Mayor
City of Muscatine

Improved Walkability Moves Muscatine Well-Being

Together, citizens and local leaders in Muscatine are moving more and more naturally. Since launching Blue Zones Project, our city has experienced a 17 percent improvement in exercise levels since 2012.

Our award-winning Complete Streets policy is supporting healthier movement by transforming four streets, adding safe crossings near schools, building new trails and sidewalks for residents, and revitalizing a major thoroughfare to emphasize walkability and livability. A new trail links two existing trail systems and allows people to travel to more places on foot and by bike, including the community's first roundabout.

\$425 MILLION

Invested in businesses and infrastructure

17%

Improvement in exercise levels across our community

The opportunity to be outdoors helps our residents connect with each other, reduce stress, and boost positive feelings. Four community gardens are bringing people together and providing fresh, local food while area restaurants offer healthier options and outdoor "parklets" for dining and socializing.

Our community has invested **more than \$425 million in businesses and infrastructure**, revitalizing the core of one of America's iconic river towns.



A Community-wide Commitment to Blue Zones Project



23,968

Lives impacted

40%

People engaged

8,501

Individuals pledged to support well-being

23,595

Well-being actions taken by individuals

41%

Believe Blue Zones Project has made a positive impact on the community

78

Organizations implementing well-being principles

1,149

Changes made by organizations to support living longer, better

36

Organizations completing the pledge

22

Muscatine worksites are Blue Zones Worksites®

45%

Of Muscatine's locally owned restaurants that are Blue Zones Restaurants®

36%

Of Muscatine's public schools that are Blue Zones Schools®

40%

Of Muscatine's grocery stores that are Blue Zones Grocery Stores®



SEE IT IN ACTION

Blue Zones Project Highlight: Muscatine, Iowa

Muscatine 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/Muscatine



Media Coverage Places Muscatine 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

Muscatine Journal



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Quad-City Times

Voice of Muscatine
KWPC
AM 860 FM 95.1

Muscatine in the News

460

Total Mentions

25,497,229

Total Reach

\$73,081

Total Publicity Value*

* Publicity value calculated using Cisionpoint Media Monitoring service.



Look for our
feature in **Health Promotion Practitioner's** May/
June 2015 issue!



In the News

Healthier living comes full circle in Muscatine
Muscatine Journal

10.30.14

A blueprint for success in Muscatine
Muscatine Journal

10.10.12

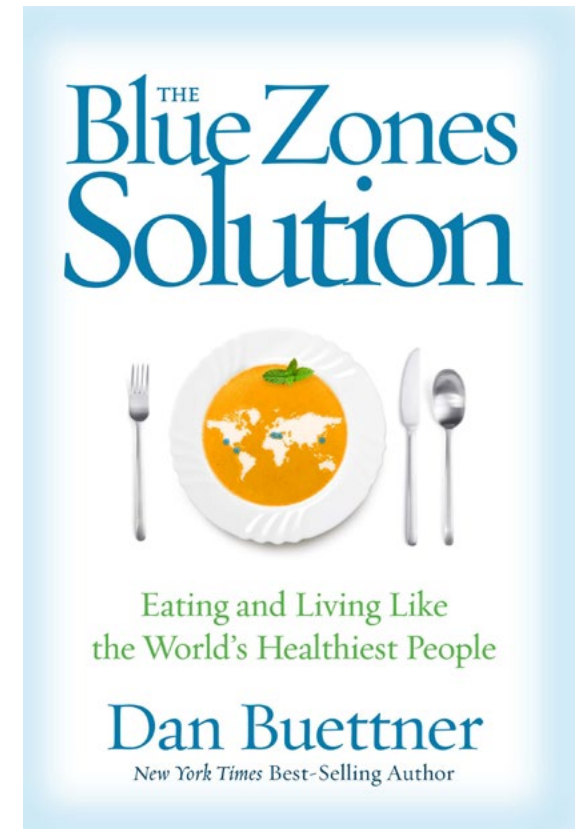
Destination: Blue Zones.
Cost: Nothing
Muscatine Journal

08.30.13



Muscatine recognized by governor
Muscatine Journal

05.14.15



In addition to great media stories covering our efforts, our 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*.



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.27

Right Outlook


 Know your purpose.

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

P.32

Eat Wisely

 Eat until 80 percent full.

 More veggies, less meat and processed food.

 Drink a glass of red wine each day.

P.40

Connect

 Create a healthy social network.

 Connect or reconnect with religion.

 Prioritize family.



MOVE NATURALLY

Together, we are moving more and more naturally. Since launching Blue Zones Project, we have seen a 17 percent increase in exercise levels.

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.²

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.³

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.⁴ 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 Muscatine 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:

252

Actions taken throughout the Muscatine community to impact moving naturally

63

Walking Moai teams

425

Walking Moai participants

2

Walking School Buses



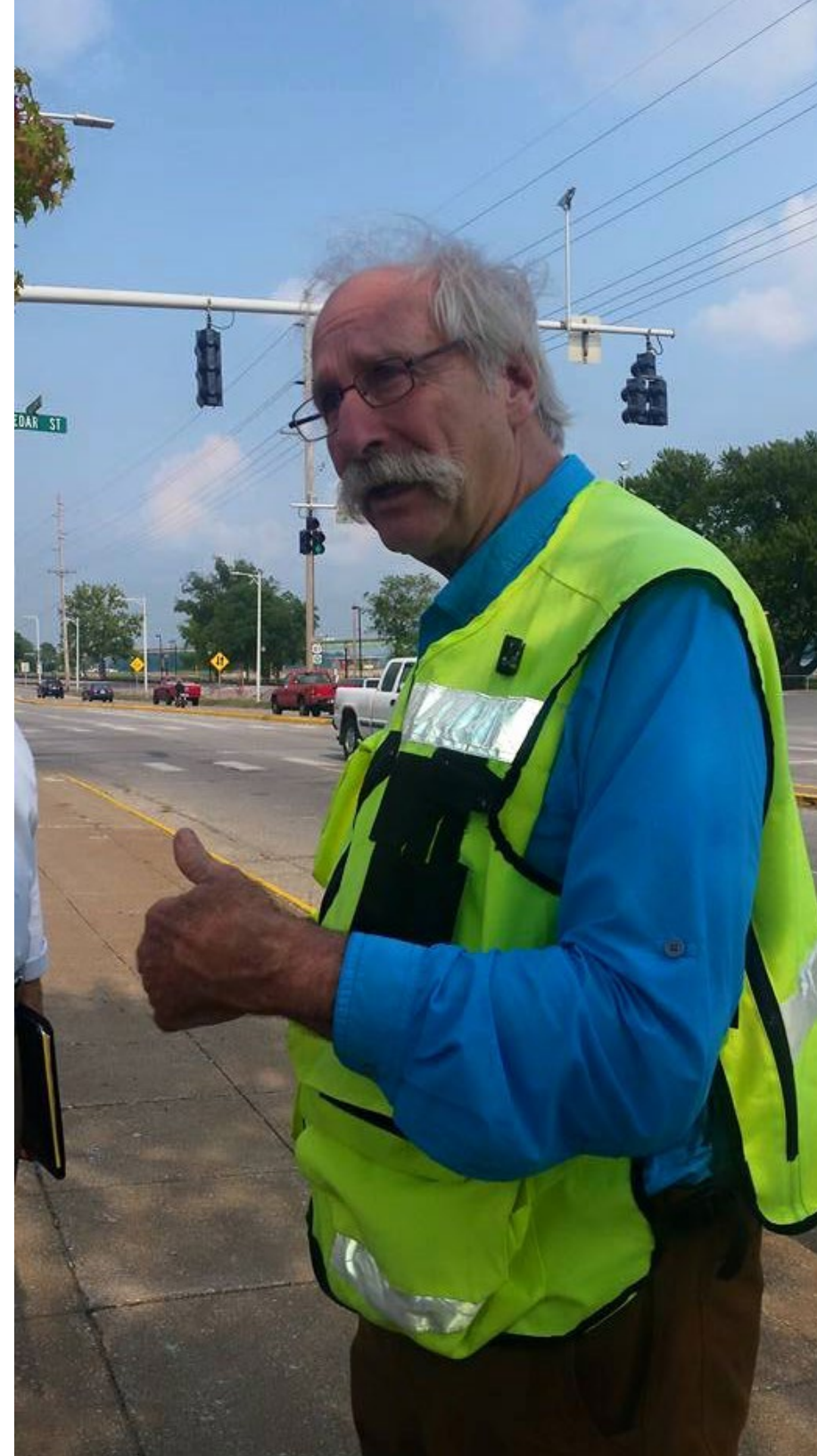
WHAT'S A MOAI?

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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I AM SO IMPRESSED WITH MUSCATINE.
WITH THEIR PUBLIC WORKS STAFF,
WITH THEIR LEADERSHIP, THE CITY
COUNCIL. THIS TOWN IS READY TO
BRING CHANGE.

Dan Burden
Walkability Expert
Blue Zones



TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENTS

In 2013, the Muscatine city council passed a Complete Streets policy that was nationally recognized as one of the top policies in the country by Smart Growth America.

Complete Streets policies ensure roads are safe for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Since then, positive built-environment projects that encourage natural movement are popping up all across the city with new trails and sidewalks.

Two major complete street projects have been completed, the reconstruction of Cedar Street and Colorado Street. The Cedar Street corridor, which connects the students and community around Muscatine High School, Jefferson Elementary School, Central Middle School YMCA, and Trinity Hospital, was made into a safe and attractive route for pedestrians and bicyclists, through adding a new trail, sidewalks, and a roundabout designed to reduce traffic accidents.

The Colorado Street reconstruction project added sidewalks and safe crossing zones so students could move naturally and safely to Colorado Elementary School, for the first time.

A bike and pedestrian master plan was adopted that details the approximately **7 miles of new sidewalks and 15 miles of new trails that will have to be constructed** to fully realize the community's vision of "all members of the

community having the opportunity to travel safely to their destination by foot, bike, or by other non-motorized means."

The city has begun to make an annual allocation to construct sidewalks in locations currently lacking sidewalks. In 2014 and 2015, **2.5 miles of sidewalk have been constructed in locations previously lacking sidewalks, and 1.25 of new trails were constructed. By the end of 2016, another mile of new sidewalks will have been constructed, and another 5 miles of trail will have been built.** By designing a community where it's easy to move, Muscatine is supporting well-being as a way of life.



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WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT DOWNTOWN WITH THE RIVERFRONT IN A WAY THAT MEETS OUR COMMUNITY'S UNIQUE NEEDS AS WE MOVE INTO THE FUTURE AND LOOK TO GROW MUSCATINE. THIS PROJECT, PAIRED WITH RECENT BUSINESS COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS, IS CREATING A MORE ENGAGED, THRIVING MUSCATINE.

Gregg Mandsager
City Administrator
Muscatine



A rendering of future upgrades to be made along Mississippi Drive, reconnecting people with the river and downtown. With the support of Blue Zones Project and walkability expert Dan Burden, this new riverfront renovation is underway, putting an emphasis on livability and vitality.

In The News

Progress Edition: Downtown Muscatine looks forward to development

Muscatine Journal

03.27.16

Muscatine's street smarts pay off

Muscatine Journal

03.27.16

SEE IT IN ACTION

New Ways to Walk and Bike in Muscatine, Iowa

Watch the video:

explore.bluezonesproject.com/Muscatine



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WE ARE VERY PROUD TO HAVE OUR COMMUNITY RECOGNIZED BY THE NATIONAL COMPLETE STREETS COALITION AND SMART GROWTH AMERICA. THE ADOPTED COMPLETE STREETS POLICIES WILL SERVE AS A CRITICAL TOOL IN BRINGING THIS GOAL TO FRUITION, AS WELL AS HELP MUSCATINE ACHIEVE BLUE ZONES PROJECT COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION.

Andrew Fangman
City Planner
City of Muscatine

ORGANIZATIONS MOVING NATURALLY

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

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



WALKING HELPS KIDS

Children who walk to school are more alert and ready to learn, strengthen their social networks and develop lifetime fitness habits.^{9, 10} A Walking School Bus allows a group of children to walk to school under the supervision of two or more adults.

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.¹¹

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.³

With so much time spent at work, it's important that these environments are set up to help people move more. **Actions were completed by 22 worksites to help people move more, including adding standing desks, 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.¹²

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

Five schools completed actions to help get students moving, including adding two Walking School Buses, brain breaks, and additional recess and physical education time.

Restaurants and Grocery Stores

Grocery stores in Muscatine remind shoppers that parking further away is one way to easily add more activity into their day. Restaurants are installing bicycle racks to encourage people to consider active transportation to common destinations (and work up a healthy appetite, too). Small efforts like these make moving naturally easier than ever before in Muscatine.

RIGHT OUTLOOK

3,900+

volunteer hours have been logged by 1,500 volunteers in Muscatine. Together we've added \$86,797 in value for the community.¹

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.**²



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 without.¹³



How Right Outlook Impacts Our Community

Through volunteering, Purpose Workshops, and Purpose Moais, Muscatine supports individuals in discovering their innate gifts. We help our community members find opportunities that match their passion and commitment to deepen their sense of purpose.

Muscatine is thriving. Since 2012, our residents' outlook has been on the rise. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index asks residents to rate their life evaluation as thriving, struggling, or suffering. **Nearly two-thirds of all residents fall into the "thriving" category, up more than fourteen percent since 2012.**



THRIVING

Well-being that is strong, consistent, and progressing in a particular element.

STRUGGLING

Well-being that is moderate or inconsistent in a particular element.

SUFFERING

Well-being that is very low and at high risk in a particular element.



BY THE NUMBERS

102

Actions taken by organizations to build strong connections

4,571

Actions taken by individuals to practice having the right outlook, like designating a space at home for meditation or prayer, learning a new hobby, or discovering their purpose

2

Purpose Workshops with 176 participants

10

Purpose Moais with 48 participants

914

Volunteers with Blue Zones Project logging 2,467 hours

1,517

Volunteers in Muscatine logging 3,900 hours

OUTCOMES

Our community is less stressed. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index shows stress levels have dropped 13.6 percent since 2012.

With more than 3,900 hours logged by 1,500 volunteers, Muscatine added \$86,797 in value for the community.¹

Seventy-eight percent of the volunteers in the Muscatine United Way volunteer database are Blue Zones Project volunteers. As part of preparing for Blue Zones Project work in the community, United Way set up the first online volunteering database in Muscatine. The database is a place for our residents to find opportunities to volunteer and to report their volunteering hours. Since launching in 2011, the database has nearly 300 volunteers. The partnership between United Way and Blue Zones Project has been strong, with the United Way launching the database and Blue Zones Project helping to recruit volunteers in the community.

Additionally, more than 175 people sought to discover their gifts and deepen their sense of purpose through Purpose Workshops and the creation of 10 Purpose Moais with 48 participants. Muscatine Community College students were introduced to the idea of purpose as a regular course for freshmen that leveraged the Purpose Moai curriculum.

Volunteer Fever

- 1 3,900 volunteer hours logged in Muscatine
- 2 1,517 Muscatine volunteers
- 3 2,467 Blue Zones Project volunteer hours
- 4 914 Blue Zones Project volunteers



ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE RIGHT OUTLOOK

Worksites

Fewer than 50 percent of Americans find meaning at work. Employers who invest in making work meaningful for their employees are more likely to see production rise and turnover decrease.¹⁴

First National Bank established a fundraising committee that raises money from all employees and then determines what charities they want to support with those funds. To date, First National Bank employees have assisted more than 50 local organizations.

Actions Completed by 22 Worksites

- 1 Creating designated quiet spaces
- 2 Posting company mission
- 3 Encouraging volunteering
- 4 Offering Purpose Workshops



Schools

Mindfulness is paying attention to the here and now with kindness and curiosity.

Research suggests that teaching mindfulness skills to students increases attention and improves social skills while decreasing test anxiety. It also creates a sense of calm connection to nature, and it improves sleep. These skills allow children to better cope with the stress and noise in life.¹⁵

Three Muscatine schools implemented mindfulness programming to support the community's youngest minds. Research shows that students who participate in similar programs improved in the areas of empathy, perspective taking, optimism, emotional control, and mindfulness. They also were more likely to show improvements on trustworthiness, helpfulness, and sharing while showing less rule breaking and starting fewer fights than the control group.¹⁵

”

BLUE ZONES IS A PERFECT COMPLEMENT TO WHAT WE WANT TO DO AS A COMPANY WITH A HEALTH STRATEGY FOR OUR MEMBERS. IT JUST MAKES SENSE THAT IF WE CAN REACH MORE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY AND START TO THINK ABOUT WELL-BEING AND HEALTH, WE'LL BE SUCCESSFUL AT TURNING DOWN THE HEALTH COST CURVE. AND THAT'S CRITICAL FOR ANY COMPANY WHO WANTS TO STAY COMPETITIVE IN THE UNITED STATES.

Gary Carlson
Vice President, Member &
Community Relations
HNI Corporation

Well-being is growing in Muscatine with community gardens at schools, worksites, churches, and private property.

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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.**¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ Blue Zones Project helps people choose wisely. Muscatine 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. Schools removed vending machines so kids aren't tempted by sugary snacks and sodas during the school day.

335 actions taken by organizations to support eating wisely

6,345 actions taken by individuals to eat wisely, like joining a Plant-Based Potluck Moai, adding healthy items to their grocery list, or growing a garden

30 cooking classes with more than 177 participants bringing healthier cooking home to their families, ongoing for more than three years
7 Plant-Based Potluck Moais with 43 participants

9 gardens: four community gardens, four school gardens, 1 worksite garden



BY THE NUMBERS

Since the early 1900s plate sizes have grown from

9.5 INCHES
TO
12.5 INCHES¹⁹

We've increased how much we eat by

27%¹⁹



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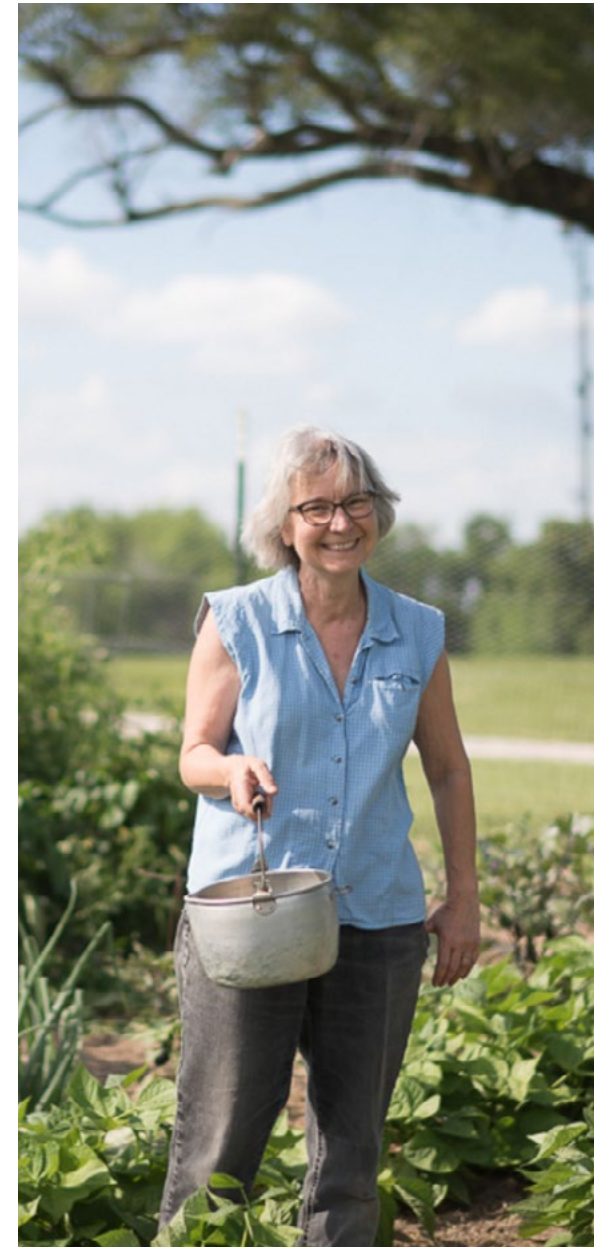
MULFORD COMMUNITY GARDEN, FOR ME, MEANS BEING THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS. SHOWING THE LOVE OF GOD TO OUR COMMUNITY IN A TANGIBLE WAY BY PROVIDING A MEANS FOR PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES LIVE HEALTHIER LIVES THROUGH GROWING THEIR OWN PRODUCE. THE GARDEN PROVIDES NEW WAYS TO MAKE CONNECTIONS IN AND CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY.

Heather Harroun
Community Garden
Coordinator at Mulford
Evangelical Free Church

Growing Well-Being

With four community gardens springing up each season, Muscatine is literally growing well-being. New gardens popped up on church grounds, and outside the downtown Hy-Vee Mainstreet grocery store. Gardens empower people to grow fresh, local food, and in many cases to donate it to local food banks. Mulford Church donates produce regularly, with a stand setup outside the church most Saturdays during the growing season with free produce for anyone in the community.

The Muscatine Community Garden Association was formed to sustain community garden efforts. The group also celebrates Muscatine's community gardens with an annual end of the season garden party at one of the local gardens.





COMMUNITY GARDENS



PEAS IN A POD

People who garden tend to eat more fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. In a survey of home and community gardeners in San Jose, California, participants doubled their vegetable intake and consumed the nationally recommended daily servings of vegetables. Another study from Denver, Colorado, showed gardeners ate more fruits and vegetable than non-gardeners.²⁰



HOME IS WHERE THE GARDEN IS

An American Community Gardening Association report showed community gardens can increase home prices for residences near the garden as much as 9.4 percentage points within five years. The report also showed community gardens contribute to a reduction in violent and non-violent crime in the neighborhood and an overall increase in the feeling of safety.²¹



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Schools are taking part, too, with gardens at all Blue Zones Schools tended by students. The produce is being used in nutrition education and some is even making its way onto plates in the lunchroom as salads, sides, and entrees.

Students who have access to school garden programs score significantly higher on science achievement tests than students who are taught by strictly traditional classroom methods.²²

In the News

How does your garden grow? With grants & donations & lots of community interest

Muscatine Journal

06.24.14

Outdoor dining could open more opportunities for Muscatine

CBS4

06.12.14

SEE IT IN ACTION

Iowa Community Gardens:
Growing Well-Being

Watch the video:

explore.bluezonesproject.com/Muscatine



Carver Pump employees enjoyed their first lunch harvested by their employee garden. They made a dill salmon dip, quinoa salad, caprese salad, zucchini spears, strawberry spinach salad, bean salad, and cucumber onion salad.

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 10 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.

Restaurants are seeing noticeable business benefits.

Avenue Subs experienced a 12 percent increase in sales after becoming a Blue Zones Restaurant. Offering healthy options, smaller portions, and lower-calorie desserts contributed to this success.

Boonies Restaurant saw sales with their food supplier increase 25 percent after installing a new outdoor parklet as part of their Blue Zones Restaurant transformation.

Guadalajara rearranged its lunchtime buffet and added a salad bar with blue tongs to draw attention to healthy options like vegetables, fruit, and whole pinto beans.

Local worksites are promoting these healthy options and leveraging Blue Zones Restaurants for catering.



BY THE NUMBERS

1,000 CALORIES

in a typical American entree in a restaurant.²³

2 EXTRA POUNDS

gained a year by eating one meal away from home a week.²⁴

5.5% INCREASE

in same-store sales at restaurants that increased their better-for-you/low-calorie servings between 2006 and 2011.²⁴

5.5% DECREASE

in sales at restaurants that did not increase their better-for-you/low-calorie servings.²⁴



Cooking classes are held regularly at Hy-Vee grocery store. The most popular cooking class was called “Ancient Grains.” The menu items all included quinoa, millet, buckwheat, and kaniwa.

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.²⁵ 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 classes, 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. From 2015-2016 Muscatine Hy-Vee saw a **2.89 percent increase in produce sales; a 12.56 percent increase in Health Market sales; a 9.85 percent increase in Hy-Vee water.**

60%

of the food we purchase is highly processed, fatty, salty, or sugary.²⁶

75%

increase in produce sales at the Hy-Vee Mainstreet grocery store when the space dedicated to produce was increased by 60 percent.

”

IT IS A PLEASURE TO SEE AN INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSE GO FROM “HESITANT” TO “EMBRACING” REGARDING THE USE OF WHOLE GRAINS, VEGETABLES, AND LEGUMES. OUR CLASSES GIVE PARTICIPANTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE ALL THEIR SENSES IN EXPLORING THE SELECTION AND PREPARATION OF DIFFERENT FOODS.

Nancy Dew
Muscatine Hy-Vee Dietitian

Worksites

Seventy percent of Americans eat at their desks several times a week, which can lead to distracted, disengaged, and mindless overeating.²⁷

Trinity Hospital transformed its cafeteria with new equipment to feature grilled items instead of fried items and began offering salad and wrap options. Musco Lighting provides free fruit for employees throughout the facility.

Actions Completed by 22 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.²⁸

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

Students who attend schools that sell foods with low nutrient density and sugar-sweetened beverages have a lower intake of fruits, vegetables, and milk at lunch and higher daily percentages of calories from total fat and saturated fat.²⁹

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.**¹⁹ By optimizing the school environment, students are nudged towards healthier choices.

Actions Completed by Four Schools

- 1 School gardens
- 2 Farm-to-school programs
- 3 Healthier vending machines
- 4 New policies for celebrating and fundraising with food



Outdoor dining parklets brought neighbors together at local restaurants while 425 people built strong relationships with new friends and neighbors at Moai walking groups.

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.³⁰ 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 14 years longer than those who don't.**³¹



CONNECT



IT'S ACTUALLY NICE THAT YOU CAN SEE PEOPLE WHO ARE WALKING AROUND AND SAY HELLO WHILE YOU'RE DINING, AND WE HAVE A BEAUTIFUL VIEW OF THE RIVER FROM WHERE WE'RE SITTING. SO, IT JUST BRINGS SOME EXTRA ATMOSPHERE TO MUSCATINE THAT WE DIDN'T REALLY HAVE BEFORE.

Shelly Mahary
Resident
Muscatine

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.³²

How Connectedness Impacts our Community

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

Muscatine also encourages social connections throughout the community with our new community gardens, at outdoor dining parklets, and along new trails.

In April 2014, Muscatine introduced a program to increase the vibrancy of downtown dining options. The outdoor dining parklet decks fit into the size of a parking spot and promote an active streetscape, economic and social vitality, and pedestrian- and retail-friendly activity.



BY THE NUMBERS

84

Actions taken by organizations to build strong connections

4,571

Actions taken by individuals to connect, like implementing regular family dinner nights, joining a Moai, or volunteering

63

Walking Moais with more than 425 participants

10

Purpose Moais with 48 participants

7

Plant-Based Potluck Moais with 43 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.

Actions were completed by 22 worksites to help employees connect and boost social connections, including things like “lunch with a co-worker” programs, flexible work schedules, offering strengths assessments, and implementing Moais.

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.³³

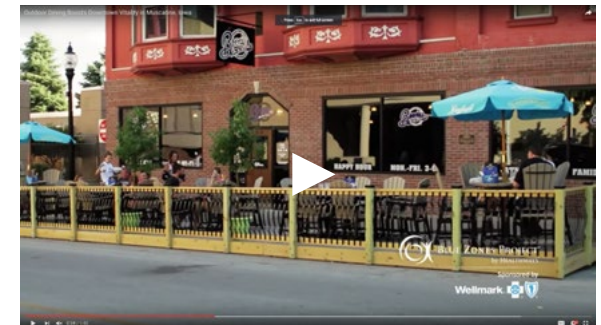
To bolster real, human interaction, Muscatine got students to plug in differently. One school embraced connecting students to the world around them by establishing the **Legacy Project**, a program that encourages students to interact with and share stories with older adults.

SEE IT IN ACTION

Outdoor Dining Boosts Downtown Vitality in Muscatine, Iowa

Watch the video:

explore.bluezonesproject.com/Muscatine





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,³⁴ and inversely, you are 20 percent more likely to succeed at new behaviors if you do them with a buddy.³⁵



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.³⁷



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!³⁶



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.³⁸ 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.³⁹

CONGRATS, MUSCATINE!

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 Muscatine one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living better, together.



APPENDIX

Designated Organizations

Blue Zones Grocery Stores

Muscatine Hy-Vee

Muscatine Hy-Vee Mainstreet

Blue Zones Schools

Central Middle School

Grant Elementary School

Madison Elementary School

McKinley Elementary School

Blue Zones Restaurants

Avenue Subs

Boonies on the Ave

China Garden

Elly's Tea Coffee House LLC

Guadalajara

Mami's Authentic

Missipi Brewing Company

Port City Underground

Tantra Thai Bistro

Yacky Shack

Blue Zones Worksites

Bridgestone Bandag

Carver Pump Company

CBI Bank & Trust

City of Muscatine

First National Bank of Muscatine

Gentle Family Dentists

Grain Processing Corporation

Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry

HNI Corporation Headquarters

Kent Corporation

Members Community Credit Union — Cedar Street

Members Community Credit Union — Colorado Street

Monsanto Muscatine

Muscatine Community College

Muscatine Community YMCA

Muscatine Power and Water

Muscatine Power and Water — Generation Plant

Musco Sports Lighting

Stanley Consultants

UnityPoint Health — Trinity Muscatine

United Way of Muscatine

Van Meter Inc.

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