



**BLUE ZONES PROJECT**  
by sharecare

# STRUCTURED FOR IMPACT

RAISING WELL-BEING,  
LIFTING NEIGHBORHOODS  
WITH THE GREATEST NEED

**Blue Zones Project is a community-led initiative transforming surroundings and social networks to make healthy choices easier for all.**

From the outset, we seek local insight to understand and reach diverse communities. With the knowledge of local team members, we champion and facilitate the involvement of socio-economically vulnerable populations and neighborhoods. We engage people and organizations: worksites, schools, grocery stores, restaurants, faith-based organizations, and others.

Our approach elevates diverse voices in historically under-resourced places and creates partnerships and policies with lasting positive impact. Our ability to connect many different constituents around common goals delivers tangible results. We've helped reduce food deserts, fund healthier eating, expand opportunities for active movement, and more.

## SAMPLE RESULTS: FORT WORTH, TX

**47**

participants in 4 think tanks  
**prioritizing vulnerable areas**

**100%**

of areas **showing well-being improvement, 2014-2020**

**+3.6**

**rise in Well-Being Index**  
for Fort Worth overall

**+5.4**

rise in the East Southeast:

- 58% Hispanic, 38% African American
- 78% low/moderate income
- 22% unemployment, 2.5 x city average

**62%**

of adults getting adequate exercise,  
**up from 53%**

**13.5%**

of adults smoking,  
**down from 19.6%**

**7.4%**

youth using e-cigarettes,  
**down from 19.9%**

**16.6%**

reporting food insecurity,  
**down from 18.1%**

# FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

Blue Zones Project Fort Worth launched with a structure to secure involvement and benefit for areas with the greatest well-being challenges, based on Well-Being Index data. **With local community leaders, Blue Zones Project formed neighborhood think tanks for four priority areas.** These groups of community members with strong local ties met quarterly to provide advice and advocacy. Participants helped develop culturally sensitive, focused approaches to neighborhood-level work, guiding outreach, partnerships, and activity.

**Think tank members served as ambassadors and influencers, leading to:**

- 8 large neighborhood events reaching 1,600 people
- 100+ events engaging residents in healthy cooking, moving naturally, and finding purpose
- Participation in Safe Routes to School pilots and neighborhood walking audits
- Robust volunteer initiatives in faith communities
- Community and local business support of a healthy corner store campaign

**A collaboration in the East Southeast's Stop Six neighborhood—historically underserved, and primarily African American—revitalized a corner store within walking distance of four schools.** In an area previously identified as a food desert, Ramey Market now features many healthy foods, including produce neighbors requested. An inviting mural painted by Dunbar High School students draws in customers. A new playground beside the school serves area families.



# ACTIVE INCLUSION

Policy decisions influence the built environment in ways that can make healthy choices easier or more difficult. Blue Zones Project champions planning and policy changes that give more community members easier access to healthy food and opportunities for activity.

**The Golden Gate Parkway redevelopment effort in Southwest Florida's Western Collier County offered the chance to influence the future of a major community corridor.** While nearby Naples is known for affluence, demographics are different in this part of the county.

- 70% of residents are Hispanic
- 76% are in the labor force
- 54% are foreign-born — English is typically not their first language
- 14% live below the poverty line
- 76% would be affected by the redevelopment

Collier County sought a plan to attract investment to Golden Gate Parkway, but initial community outreach limited input from the people most affected. Leveraging team member experience in engaging marginalized communities, Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida acted to ensure the largely Hispanic population living and working along the corridor had a seat at the redevelopment table. **Work included:**

- Creating a Spanish version of a resident survey and conducting public planning conversations with the help of Spanish translators
- Revising development plan language into terms laypeople could understand
- Conducting outreach to community members on their schedules: after work hours, at a Saturday farmer's market, and at a local Food Mart after Sunday church hours

**One powerful example of success occurred over two weekends, when the team gathered input from more than 150 area residents, most of them Spanish speakers.** Their priorities—including better lighting, safer routes for bikes, and easier access to healthy food sources for those without cars—helped shape the redevelopment effort.

# HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS

Kickapoo Park is an historically underserved neighborhood on tribal land in the southwest corner of Shawnee, Oklahoma. When the nonprofit Community Renewal sought input on creating better neighbor relationships, residents expressed strong interest in a community garden. The organization brought that interest to Blue Zones Project Pottawatomie County, and a collaborative effort grew the idea from seed to reality. Neighborhood residents now sign up to help in the active garden, and all are free to share in the produce.

# INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

An innovative healthy eating program for people with identified need launched in a small Oregon community with the help of many partners, including Blue Zones Project Umpqua. Veggie Rx empowers healthcare providers to “prescribe” vouchers to community members who screen positive for food insecurity and chronic illness. Participants fill prescriptions at partner markets, exchanging vouchers for fresh produce. **In 2019, 46 participants in a 12-week program purchased \$3,885 in fruits and vegetables, funded by sponsors.** Clinic staff, patients, and food providers formed healthy new connections.

## IN SHAWNEE: FROM SEED TO REALITY

Transitioning an identified lot from county to city ownership



Facilitating a low-cost lease

Engaging Oklahoma State University Extension in soil improvement



Working with the city to rearrange water lines



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RAISE WELL-BEING IN YOUR COMMUNITY. ENGAGE AND LIFT HISTORICALLY UNDER-RESOURCED NEIGHBORHOODS. MORE THAN 49 COMMUNITIES IN 11 STATES HAVE JOINED THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT MOVEMENT.

Learn more at [bluezonesproject.com](https://bluezonesproject.com)