



BLUE ZONES PROJECT



Blue Zones Project for Organizations

Clubs, Civic Groups, Non-Profits, Faith-Based Organizations,
Homeowners Associations, Caterers, Food Trucks, and Others

BROUGHT TO MONTEREY COUNTY BY:



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What is Blue Zones Project?

In identified blue zones areas across the globe, people reach age 100 at an astonishing rate. They move throughout the day, eat healthy meals, connect with each other, and feel a sense of pride and purpose. Residents of blue zones like Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; and Loma Linda, California have maintained their healthy lifestyles for generations.

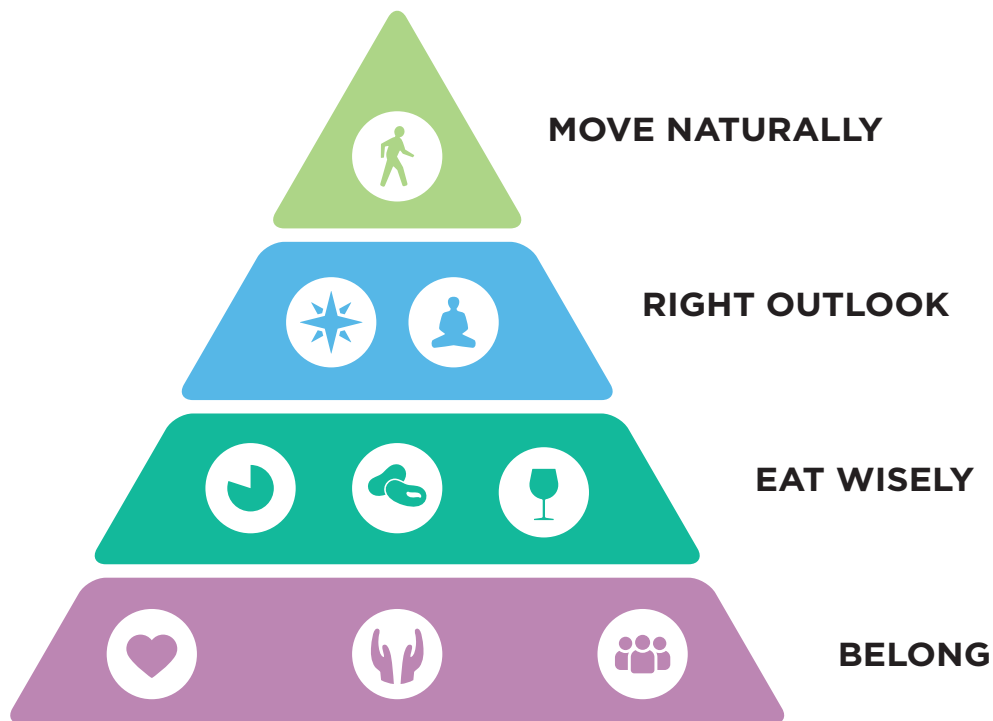
Blue Zones Project® aims to apply lifestyle principles, research, and learning from these areas to transform American cities and towns—making healthy choices easier and helping people live longer, healthier, and happier lives.

Blue Zones Project is a community-led effort, and our community has joined in. To achieve our goal of becoming a certified Blue Zones Community®, we need the participation of individuals, restaurants, grocery stores, schools, worksites, local government, and organizations like yours. Together, we'll make healthy choices easier by shaping our surroundings for the better.

Imagine a place where healthy foods are easier to find and enjoy, where biking and walking are as easy as driving, and where friends, neighbors, and coworkers share and support each other in more active ways. If we all do our part, we will all share in the benefits of living in a community where well-being is a way of life.

A Powerful Approach

Blue Zones communities in vastly different locations share nine specific principles associated with longer, healthier, and happier living. We call these principles the Power 9®, and they create a strong natural platform for well-being.



Blue Zones Project works to build in this kind of support for well-being—making healthy choices default behaviors rather than relying on individual behavior change alone. We group the Power 9 principles into four, actionable categories that help transform communities into places that encourage people to Connect, to Eat Wisely, to nurture the Right Outlook, and to Move Naturally.

Evidence-based actions in each category lead to environmental changes that strengthen social ties, reshape spaces, and sharpen policies to support healthy choices. The healthy choice becomes the easy choice wherever community members live, work, learn, and play, and blue zones principles become embedded in our community.

Share in the Benefits

Blue Zones Project has identified specific activities that help organizations make healthy choices easier. By getting involved in Blue Zones Project and completing this Participation Checklist for Organizations, you can:

- **Fuel the movement to Move Naturally**, reducing health problems and costs associated with sedentary lifestyles—and boosting energy within your organization. About 69 percent of the American population can be classified as overweight or obese; the estimated annual healthcare costs of obesity-related illness represent nearly 21 percent of annual medical spending. Checklist actions encourage cycling, active meetings and events, active interests, and supportive social connections.
- **Lead the way to Right Outlook**, advancing a sense of purpose, meaning, and loyalty within your organization. People who find meaning at work are 93 percent more engaged and more than three times as likely to stay with their organizations. Checklist actions help people rediscover their talents and find opportunities to volunteer and give back to the community.
- **Make it easy to Eat Wisely**, influencing food choices for better well-being and productivity. People make more than 200 food decisions every day, and what we eat impacts our health and daily performance. One study linked unhealthy eating to a 66 percent higher risk of productivity loss. Checklist actions support a healthy shift in the tobacco and food environment, leading to healthier choices.
- **Help people in your organization Connect** with each other and the broader community, increasing awareness of your group and its positive impact. People are twice as likely to succeed at new behaviors if they practice them with a friend. Checklist actions involve your members in social activities that inspire and reinforce healthy habits and connections.
- **Become a Blue Zones Project Recognized Organization for your contribution to this important community-wide effort.** Blue Zones Project has a strong reputation for generating local and national press for marshaling innovation, creating healthier environments, and attracting visitors and businesses to communities. Local team members work to create awareness of participants and progress through social media and other outreach.

Participation Checklist

Contact your local Blue Zones Project team to discuss available resources, support, and any questions you have about participating in your community's Blue Zones Project. The following steps will help you get the most out of your organization's involvement.

Step 1: Identify and activate leaders

Establish a foundation of support for Blue Zones Project participation and progress.

Goals:

- ☐ Identify a primary Blue Zones Project contact within your organization to lead involvement and interest.
- ☐ Create a well-being team to support your participation and champion involvement among members.
- ☐ Host a Blue Zones Project presentation for all members, sharing the history of Blue Zones and how Blue Zones Project helps communities and organizations make healthy choices easier, aiming for >25% of members to sign the Personal Pledge.

Step 2: Engage your members in hands-on activities

Achieve sufficient involvement in Blue Zones Project to make a positive impact on member well-being.

Goals:

- ☐ Encourage members to sign and complete the Blue Zones Project personal pledge, aiming for >25% participation.
- ☐ Work with your local Blue Zones Project representative to offer Moais, Purpose Workshops, and volunteer opportunities, aiming for >25% participation among members.

Step 3: Transform your environment

Make healthy choices easier for all members by making permanent and semi-permanent changes to the organization's surroundings and practices. Choose a minimum of one action per category: Move Naturally, Eat Wisely, Right Outlook, and Connect. For more details on how and why to implement these

actions, see the Implementation Guidelines section following this checklist.

✓ **Goals:**

☐ Complete **two or more** of the following **Move Naturally** actions.

Ensure bike racks are available to encourage alternative transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage stretching, exercise, and/or movement at meetings, events, or gatherings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant and maintain a garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize Walking Moai® teams	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinate a trail day, or other recreation opportunity, to encourage members to spend more time in nature.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support Blue Zones Project built environment policy priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Complete **two or more** of the following **Right Outlook** actions.

Host or attend a Purpose Workshop (as an organization/member group) that supports connecting with personal purpose.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote volunteer opportunities in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Host a charitable giving campaign or provide easy opportunities for your members to give.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create an easy way for members to share gratitude and appreciation with each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organize Purpose Moai teams.	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Complete **two or more** of the following **Eat Wisely** actions.

Create a tobacco-free environment and designate your organization as a “Tobacco-Free Zone.”	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer healthy, nutritious food options at meetings, special events, vending machines, and concessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don’t use unhealthy foods for fundraisers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Host Potluck Moais.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Install a water cooler or filtered dispenser.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support Blue Zones Project food and tobacco policy priorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
For Caterers and Food Trucks ONLY: Must offer at least two Blue Zones Inspired dishes on your menu. Please refer to the Healthy Dish Guidelines and submit dishes for approval.	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Complete **two or more** of the following **Connect** actions.

Establish a health-and-well-being council that meets regularly at the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read the best sellers The Blue Zones or The Blue Zones Solution and organize book discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Host a family fun night, game or move night or other monthly get together that encourages family and/or social connections.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish an organized group sports team, such as softball or bowling and open up participation to all members.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Step 4: Communicate and celebrate your success

Share your accomplishments within and outside your organization to generate positive recognition and associate your organization with community-wide well-being.

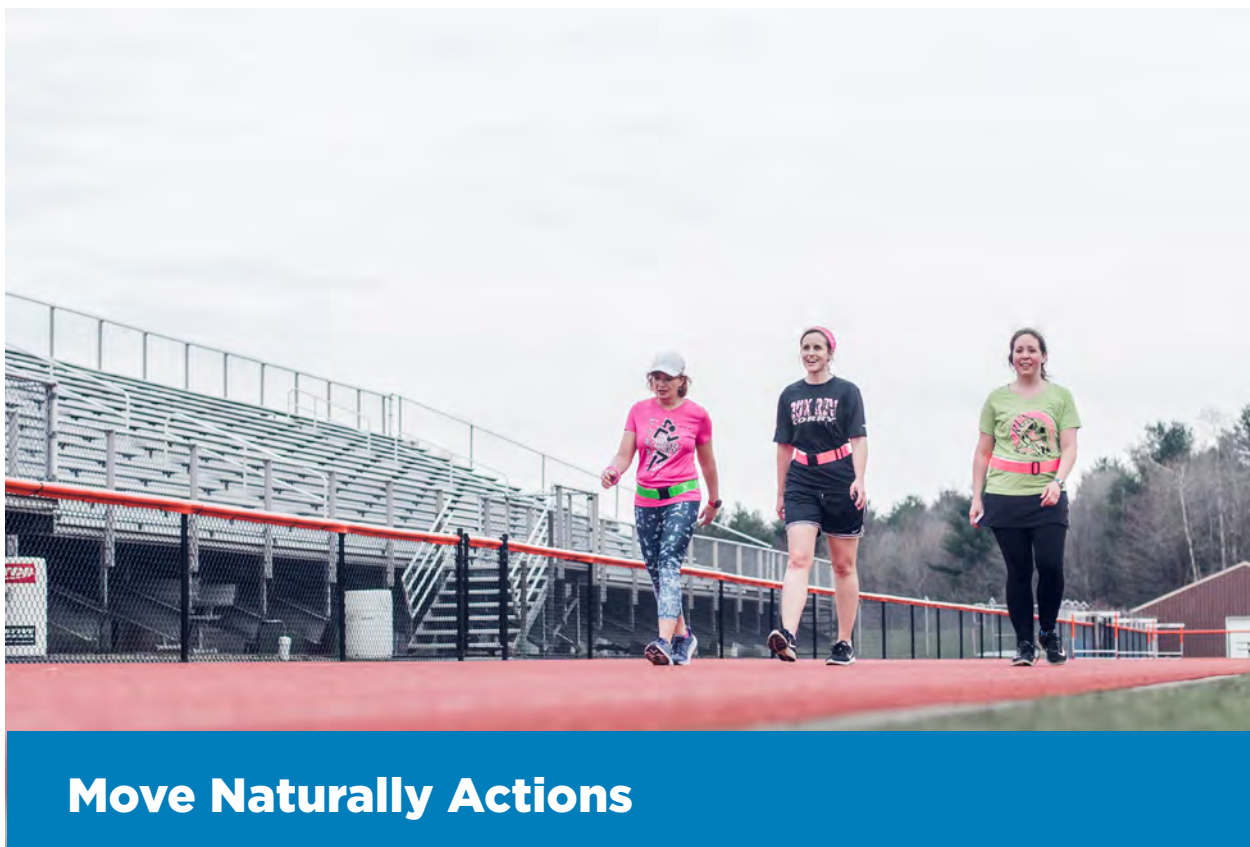
Goals:

- ☐ Use one or more of the following **marketing/promotional actions** to increase awareness, engagement, and recognition of your organization's participation in Blue Zones Project.

Add a Blue Zones Project web banner to your website.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote Blue Zones Project with a status update on your group's Facebook page and link it to bluezonesproject.com	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tweet about Blue Zones Project and link it to bluezonesproject.com.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write a blog post explaining and promoting Blue Zones Project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include information on Blue Zones Project in your next newsletter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email members about Blue Zones Project involvement and accomplishments.	<input type="checkbox"/>

- ☐ Once your organization has completed the Participation Checklist, identify completed goals and provide the checklist and any supporting documentation to your Blue Zones Project representative.
- ☐ Participate in a formal announcement/celebration after the Blue Zones Project team has confirmed that you've completed the actions needed to become a Blue Zones Project Recognized Organization. Your Blue Zones Project representative will work with you to organize and promote this event.

Implementation Guidelines



☐ **Ensure bike racks are available to encourage alternative transportation.**

How to do it: Install safe, secure, and accessible bike racks on the property. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- ☐ Make sure bicycle parking is easy to access and allows cyclists to safely join or exit from the local road network.
- ☐ Stands should be designed to allow both wheels and frames to be locked to something immovable, and they should be located in a highly visible area to deter theft.
- ☐ Ideally, bicycle parking should be covered and protected from the weather.
- ☐ If space is an issue, consider reallocating car parking, using storage spaces or two-tier stand systems, or contacting local authorities about using on-street parking.

Why do it: Bike racks give citizens and members who commute via bicycle the feeling of security that their bike will be protected. Lack of secure parking is one of the top three things that prevents people from biking to their destination. Bike racks send the message that cycling is welcomed by

the organization. It is a great way to incorporate natural movement into our daily lives.

Validation: Photo.

□ **Encourage stretching, exercise, and/or movement at meetings, events or gatherings.**

How to do it: Set a time out of the work day for staff to walk around the work area or go outdoors. You can set up a stretching area and have stretching breaks during meetings. If events or gatherings are local, set up a walking group that can walk there instead of driving.

Why do it: Stretching, exercising, and movement gatherings can introduce a way to move naturally to members in a relaxed environment. Finding a way to incorporate moving naturally into each participant's life is one of the key tenants to living a longer, happier life.

Validation: Description and photo.

□ **Plant and maintain a community garden.**

How to do it: Start by choosing some vegetables and herbs that you would like to grow. Map out growing space in a member's yard or rent or share a garden plot. Then, take a look through the "how-to projects" featured on the National Gardening Association website (www.garden.org) and choose a project that's right for you and your space. Start planting and enjoying your delicious produce!

Why do it: Gardening is common in all Blue Zones areas. This activity provides low-intensity range-of-motion exercise, stress reduction, and fresh, delicious vegetables. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out that you can burn 150 calories by gardening (standing) for approximately 30–45 minutes (<https://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening/>).

Validation: Description and photo.

□ **Organize Moai walking teams (pronounced "Mo Eye").**

How to do it: In Okinawa, a moai refers to a small social group that meets regularly. Organizing Walking Moais within your organization will create committed groups of friends who make health a priority. Contact your local Blue Zones Project team for information on Moais in your local community.

Why do it: This encourages people to meet new friends and to spend time with them. When folks surround themselves with health-conscious people, it creates a positive effect on their own behaviors. Studies show that if a

person's three closest friends are overweight, she or he is twice as likely to be overweight as well.

Validation: Description featuring number of participants and sessions and photo.

□ **Coordinate a trail day, or other recreation opportunity, to encourage members to spend more time in nature.**

How to do it: Plan a day of hiking, bird-watching, or paddling and utilize some of your communities greatest resources while creating a fun and memorable experience. Pick a location, activity, and time and communicate it to members. Consider group transportation or carpooling as parking may be limited.

Why do it: Studies have shown the **green (outdoor) exercise** and simply spending time in nature can have a multitude of health benefits. Help instill this healthy habit on your members while strengthening relationships in the process.

Validation: Description and photo, communication or other visual support.

□ **Support Blue Zones Project built environment policy priorities.**

How to do it: Support work that is underway to make your community more walkable, bikable, and livable. Join a committee or organize member participation in City Council or other community meetings, become a walking school bus drop off site or help coordinate a route, enact agreements to make your facilities usable by members of the community and more. Discuss the work that is underway in your community with your Blue Zones Project representative for ideas on how to plug in.

Why do it: Designing communities for active living leads to healthier and more active citizens.

Validation: Description and photo, communication or other visual support.



Right Outlook Actions

□ Host or attend a Purpose Workshop (as an organization/member group) that supports connecting with personal purpose.

How to do it: Promote and host (or attend) a Purpose Workshop to help individuals identify their values, strengths, and gifts. You may use the Blue Zones Project Purpose Workshop materials or purpose-related materials from other organizations you trust. Promote your Purpose Workshops to the community through emails and social channels, which may introduce new people to your organization. Coordinate with your local Blue Zones Project team to schedule one of these free workshops.

Why do it: Discovering a clear sense of one's own strengths and talents not only deepens one's sense of purpose but encourages stronger contributions at work, in relationships, and in service to the community. People with a strong sense of purpose live seven years longer than people without. They have lower rates of heart disease, lower healthcare costs, and weigh less. They even report higher levels of happiness. (source?)

Validation: Description including date of event(s), participation number and other outcomes. Include photos, invitations, or other visual support items.

□ Promote volunteer opportunities in the community.

How to do it: Choose a charitable organization that suits your group's skills and interests. One place to start might be to contact your local United Way (<https://www.unitedway.org/get-involved/volunteer>) to find organizations in your area that are in need of volunteers. You could also contact schools, churches, hospitals, assisted-living facilities, or other local service organizations you are passionate about. In the same way, provide information about your organization and the volunteer opportunities you have available for the community. Contact your local Blue Zones Project team to learn about volunteer opportunities through Blue Zones Project.

Why do it: People who volunteer have lower rates of cancer, heart disease, and depression, as well as lower healthcare costs. They also report being happier, perhaps because they focus their energy on helping others in need. According to the Well-Being Index, the happiest people socialize with friends and family about seven hours a day.

Validation: Description and photo, communication or other visual support.

□ Host a charitable giving campaign or provide easy opportunities for your members to give.

How to do it: Determine which charity (or charities) the organization aligns with well. Review finances to determine how much you want to give and if you want to match individual giving. From there, develop an annual giving campaign generating awareness and involvement. Additional Resource: "Guide to Giving in the Workplace": <https://www.charitynavigator.org/index.cfm?bay=content.view&cpid=159#.VztplLgrJpg>

Why do it: Giving activities help employees/members view the organization in a positive manner and reinforces the idea that they are part of a larger, altruistic movement. These feelings can strengthen pride and commitment to the organization and build engagement and productivity.

Validation: Description and photo, communication or other visual support.

□ Create an easy way for members to share gratitude and appreciation with each other.

How to do it: Create a gratitude or appreciation board for members to post notes on or a jar or box to collect and share in a written communication.

Why do it: Expressing gratitude and appreciation for the good things in your life has numerous positive benefits for you and those around you. Individuals with **dispositional gratitude** have been shown to report better health.

Validation: Description and photo.

□ **Organize Purpose Moai teams (pronounced “Mo Eye”).**

How to do it: In Okinawa, a moai refers to a small social group that meets regularly. Organizing Purpose Moais within your organization will create committed groups of friends who make health a priority. Contact your local Blue Zones Project team for information on Moais in your local community.

Why do it: This encourages people to meet new friends and to spend time with them. When folks surround themselves with health-conscious people, it creates a positive effect on their own behaviors. Studies show that if a person’s three closest friends are overweight, she or he is twice as likely to be overweight as well.

Validation: Description featuring number of participants and sessions and photo.



- ☐ **Create a tobacco-free environment and designate your organization as a “Tobacco-Free Zone.” Provide tobacco cessation information to your members.**

How to do it: Inform your members and guests that you do not permit tobacco or smoking anywhere on your property. Remind your members that there are free and confidential smoking cessation tools available. One example is QuitNet® by MeYou Health.

Why do it: There is no safe level of tobacco use or secondhand smoke. It is a serious health risk in any amount. Keep tobacco out of your environment to protect people's health and to promote anti-tobacco attitudes among children.

Validation: Policy and photos of signage or communication.

- ☐ Offer healthy, nutritious food options at meetings, special events, and concessions.

How to do it: Offer meals and snacks that encourage members to eat foods in appropriate portion sizes and with healthy caloric and sodium levels. For additional information and resources, use the Blue Zones Project Catering

Guidelines, which can be obtained from your local Blue Zones Project team.

Why do it: Nutrition is a key factor in weight, cholesterol, and blood-pressure management, and in the prevention of some chronic conditions.

Validation: Photo and description including list of items.

❑ Don't use unhealthy foods for fundraisers

How to do it: Eliminate unhealthy fundraisers like candy, cookie-dough, and soft-drink sales. Instead, use healthy food or non-food fundraisers. Alternatives include: fruit baskets, magazines, wrapping paper, and healthy foods cookbooks.

Why do it: When organizations participate in junk-food fundraisers, they contradict the messages the community learns about health. For examples of healthy fundraising options, visit the following websites:

Action for Healthy Kids: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/office-challenges/1207-healthy-fundraising>

Ideas for Healthy Fundraising: California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition). <http://californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/Ideas%20for%20healthy%20fundraising%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

Validation: Description and photos or communication pieces.

❑ Organize Potluck Moai teams (pronounced “Mo Eye”).

How to do it: In Okinawa, a moai refers to a small social group that meets regularly. Organizing Potluck Moais within your organization will create committed groups of friends who make health a priority. Contact your local Blue Zones Project team for information on Moais in your local community.

Why do it: This encourages people to meet new friends and to spend time with them. When folks surround themselves with health-conscious people, it creates a positive effect on their own behaviors. Studies show that if a person's three closest friends are overweight, she or he is twice as likely to be overweight as well.

Validation: Description featuring number of participants and sessions and photo.

□ **Add a water cooler or filtered water dispenser to encourage hydration.**

How to do it: Add a water cooler or crock, water bottle filling station or tap, or other filtered water dispenser to make it easier and more enjoyable to hydrate.

Why do it: Adequate hydration is important for not only normal body functioning but also can reduce the risk of having health problems long term. Despite, the **majority of adults do not receive adequate water intake.** Making good tasting water more accessible will help your members hydrate.

Validation: Photo and description.

□ **Support Blue Zones Project food and tobacco policy priorities.**

How to do it: Support work that is underway to improve the food environment and to discourage tobacco use and protect public spaces from second hand smoke. Join a committee or organize member participation in City Council or other community meetings, become a drop off site for a food co-op, or start a community garden on your property. Discuss the work that is underway in your community with your Blue Zones Project representative for ideas on how to plug in.

Why do it: Addressing the access and affordability of fresh fruits and vegetables promotes more consumption and better health outcomes. Making tobacco products more difficult to access and less socially acceptable, particularly to youth, can reduce community smoking rates.

Validation: Description and photo, communication or other visual support.

□ **For Caterers and Food Trucks ONLY: Must offer at least two Blue Zones Inspired dishes on your menu. Please refer to the Healthy Dish Guidelines and submit dishes for approval.**

How to do it: Use the Healthy Dish Guidelines and reference Blue Zones dishes at restaurants for inspiration on creating your own. Plant-based options can be simple and easy to create using creativity and a little research.

Why do it: Offering Blue Zones inspired dishes not only caters to the health-conscious consumer but offers healthier options for all. It is a simple implementation that benefits both the business and community by bringing intentional variety.

Validation: Description including ingredient list and photo.



Connect Actions

❑ Establish a health and wellness council that meets regularly at the organization.

How to do it: Form a council of people who are knowledgeable and experienced in leading a healthy life, planning activities, and communicating information to members and other contacts with whom they work.

Why do it: The council ensures the visibility of the organization's commitment to health and wellness. It also provides a support structure for members who are interested in changing their habits to promote a healthier life.

Validation: Meeting agendas or minutes and photo.

❑ Read *The Blue Zones* or *The Blue Zones Solution* and organize book discussions.

How to do it: Buy, borrow, or check out from the library *The Blue Zones* or *The Blue Zones Solution*. Form a book group and discuss lessons presented at the end of each chapter, including how you can incorporate them into your daily life. The *The Blue Zones* book discussion guide is available at: <http://www.bluezones.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BlueZonesStudyGuide.pdf>

Why do it: People in the original Blue Zones not only live longer, they have less chronic disease than in the U.S. population overall. The practices and habits of the world's longest-lived people can help others improve well-being and increase their chances of living a long, healthy life. (source?)

Validation: Photo and description.

□ **Host a family fun night, book club or monthly get together that encourages family and/or social connections.**

How to do it: Connect with family and friends who want to participate monthly or weekly in spending quality time with others. Designate one person each month/week to plan an activity for the get together. Example activities: hosting a potluck, movie night, game night, day trip downtown, or walking a 5k.

Why do it: Hosting family-oriented events creates a comfortable environment in which families can meet other families and facilitates the potential for long-lasting friendships. Holding such events encourages people within the community to connect with one another and creates larger support systems for everyone involved.

Validation: Photo and description.

□ **Establish an organized group sports team, such as softball or bowling and open up participation to all members.**

How to do it: Connect with other members of your organization by establishing in club, intramural or other organized group sports teams. Consider options that may appeal to new members of your group such as volleyball, softball, bowling, or e-sports. Promote the opportunity and open up participation to all members.

Why do it: Participating in group sports not only fosters closer relationships but studies have shown **the participants of club sports report greater well-being** than those who engage in a similar level of activity alone.

Validation: Photo and description.



BLUE ZONES PROJECT

bluezonesproject.com