BLUE TIP: Mugwort, ginger and turmeric are staples of an Okinawan garden, and all have proven medicinal qualities. By consuming these every day, Okinawans may be protecting themselves against illness. — "The Blue Zone Solution"



Peace Lutheran Early Learning Center joins Blue Zones.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

## More businesses join campaig

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The Blue Zones way of life is catching on with employees of child care centers and medical practices.

Two more businesses have gained recognition from the local Blue Zones Project, an initiative in Southwest Florida to help people live longer and

healthier. Peace Lutheran Early Learning Center, which has 33 employees, and Synergy Elite Medical, with half a dozen employees, have taken steps to make healthier choices easier. At the Peace child care center, locat-

ed at 9850 Immokalee Road, employees take part in weekly walking groups; meals for the children and employees are often baked or fresh food instead of fried; and parents are encouraged to bring healthy snacks for birthday celebrations instead of cake.

The center has 165 children, from infants to pre-kindergarten, in 11 classes. The teachers are encouraging physical activities and fewer sugar-sweetened snacks.

"We believe that the Blue Zones Project will help our students learn skills for healthy living that will benefit them for the rest of their lives," Lori Lingsch, the school's director, said.

The Blue Zones Project was introduced to Southwest Florida in 2015 based on the world travels of Dan Buettner, who identified communities



Staff of Synergy Elite Medical, a concierge medical practice in North Naples, celebrates the company joining Blue Zones.

worldwide where people share lifestyle traits and live to 100 or older. He wrote a New York Times bestseller about the

nine principles of longevity.

The "Power Nine" principles include eating a plant-slant diet, moving naturally by walking, biking or similar activity, having a sense of purpose, limiting alcohol intake, putting family first, belonging to a social group and

The NCH Healthcare System is

underwriting the Blue Zones initiative in Collier and south Lee counties.

The community-wide undertaking over the next 8 to 10 years involves voluntarily implementing health-focused changes in workplaces, schools, government entities, restaurants, grocery stores and physical settings so healthier choices are easier and be-come a way of life. At Synergy Medical, a concierge-

based practice with a personal training

ONLINE

» Learn more about Blue Zones: southwestfloridabluezones.com

» Learn more about Southwest Florida's commitment to become a Blue Zones community:

collier.bluezonesproject.com naplesnews.com/bluezone

» Find the Blue Zones books at bluezones.com/resources/books

and nutrition component, the business model is similar to the Blue Zones mission. It made sense to get on board with the wellness initiative, Greg Allen, executive director of Synergy, said.
"It's for our employees," Allen said.

"We want to make healthier choices easier for them."

Although employees are health focused by nature and have access to a gym on site, the Blue Zones project has brought new ideas to the staff, like volunteerism, he said. The staff also have started a weekly book meeting to share what they are reading, Allen

Although no employees are breast feeding presently, the Blue Zones project showed Synergy that it didn't have a private place for a breast feeding employee down the road, he said.

Synergy opened as a new business about one month ago at 2400 Vanderbilt Beach Road.