

HEALTHY LIVING

Find support for what ails you

Here are some of the support groups that meet regularly around the area:

The Naples area Crohn's and Colitis Foundation support group meets from 5-6 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month at Naples Regional Library, 650 Central Ave. The next meeting is Nov. 2. All whose lives are affected by **inflammatory bowel disease** are welcome to join the discussion with gastroenterologist Raymond Phillips. Attendance is free. For more information, call Paula Allain, LPN, at 649-1336, email pallainresearch@gmail.com or visit www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org.

The Parkinson Association of Southwest Florida Inc. has two support groups for anyone who has **Parkinson's disease** and also for those who care for them. Newcomers are always welcome from 1-2 p.m. every Tuesday at in the clubhouse at Aston Gardens, 4800 Aston Gardens Way in Pelican Marsh, and/or from 12:30-1:30 p.m. every Thursday in the clubroom at Brookdale Bonita Springs, 26850 S. Bay Drive in Bonita Springs. For more information, call PASFI at 417-4365 or email our office@pasfi.org.

Lighthouse of Collier Center for Blindness and Vision Loss invites all who are **blind or visually impaired** to meet from 10-11:30 a.m. every Wednesday at the center, 2685 Horseshoe Drive in Naples. Friends and family members who care for someone who is blind or visually impaired can also benefit from the group.

The nonprofit also hosts a brown bag lunch and program at 11 a.m. on the third Tuesday of every month for visually impaired people and their caregivers. The next program is Nov. 21. Guests should bring their own lunch and are welcome to stay afterward for games and social hour.

For brown bag lunch reservations or more information about programs and services, call Lighthouse of Collier at 430-3934 or visit www.lighthouseofcollier.org.

The **depression support group** provided by the Mental Health Association of Southwest Florida welcomes anyone who is suffering from this very real mental illness to meet from 10:30 a.m. to noon every Thursday at NAMI, 2335 Tamiami Trail. For more information, call 261-5405 or email info@mhaswfl.org. ■

Blue Zones expert says Naples area is among happiest places in the world

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

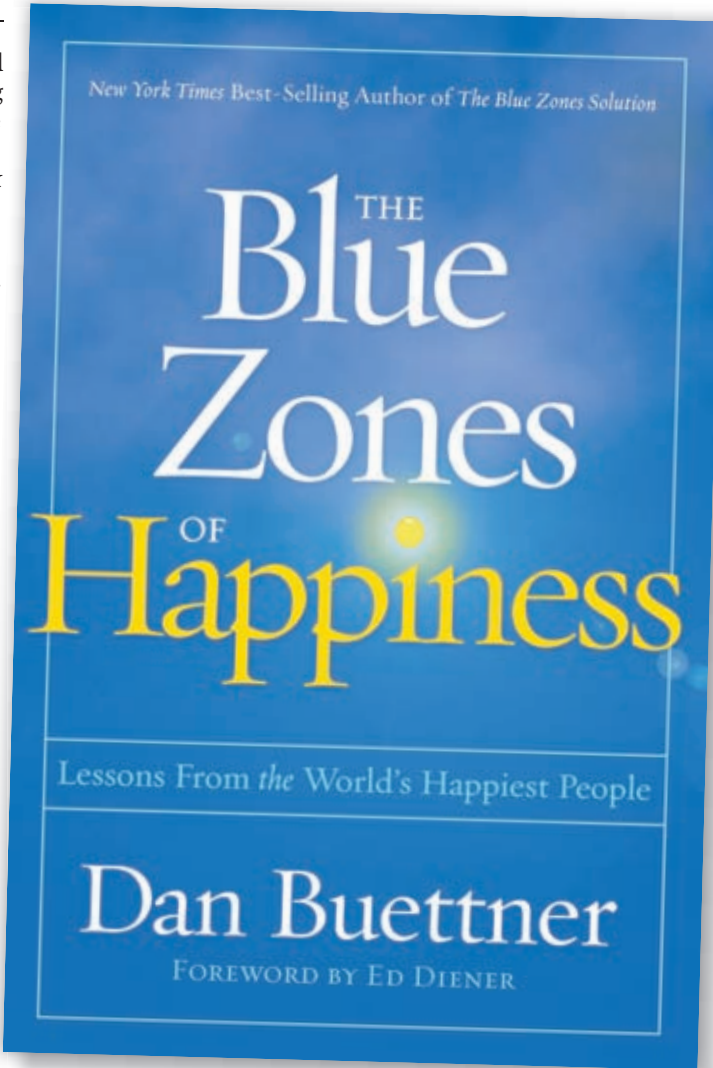
Dan Buettner has dedicated the last 15 years to helping people live healthier, more fulfilling lives. This work has resulted in three *New York Times* bestselling books: "The Blue Zones," "Thrive" and "The Blue Zones Solution." It has also inspired one of the largest community well-being improvement initiatives in America, The Blue Zones Project, which is established — and thriving — in Southwest Florida and more than 40 other communities across the country.

In his newest book, "The Blue Zones of Happiness," Mr. Buettner turns the spotlight from health to happiness and reveals surprising secrets of the world's happiest places. The Naples Metropolitan Statistical Area is included in his list of happiest communities highlighted in the book.

He also highlights Dr. Allen Weiss, president and CEO of NCH Healthcare system and his mission to shape the community of Southwest Florida. Dr. Weiss was attracted to Blue Zones Project because of its focus on long-term changes to the environment.

Active in Southwest Florida for more than three years now, Blue Zones Project is a community-by-community, well-being improvement initiative designed to support longer, better lives through permanent changes to environment, policy and social networks. Principles are based on lifestyles in pockets of the world where people live longer with less chronic disease and higher quality of life — or "Blue Zones."

For the last two years, the Naples MSA



have been achieved since the project launched in 2015:

■ The city of Naples completed a redevelopment project adding roundabouts, sidewalks and bike lanes to improve the walk- and bike-ability of the area.

■ More than 1,200 residents are in local walking groups, called Moais, and local homeowners associations host educational meetings to broaden awareness.

■ NCH became the first health-care system in the nation to be named a Certified Blue Zones Worksite. Through the certification process, the hospital achieved several milestones, including: Nearly 60 percent of NCH employees (2,149) pledged program participation. The hospital system experienced a 54 percent decrease in health-care expenditures over six years, leading to \$27 million in savings during a three-year period. And it eliminated the sales of sugar-sweetened beverages on its campuses, leading to an estimated 500 pounds of sugar not consumed each month.

Learn more

The public is invited to learn more about the Blue Zones Project at a presentation from 9-10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 2, in the Baker Tower conference room at the NCH North Naples campus.

There will also be Blue Zones Purpose Workshop from 1-3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 9, at Hodges University in Naples. All are welcome to learn more about their unique, gifts, talents and passions.

To RSVP for either of the above events, visit www.southwestFlorida.BlueZonesProject.com/events. ■



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