

“The average American now consumes 46 slices of pizza, 200 pounds of meat, and 607 pounds of milk and other dairy products, and washes it down with 57 gallons of soda pop a year. We consume 8,000 teaspoons of added sugar and 79 pounds of fat annually. We eat 4.5 billion pounds of fries and 2 billion pounds of chips a year.” — Dan Buettner, *The Blue Zones Solution: Eating and Living Like the World’s Healthiest People*



Interagency Council of Naples celebrates earning its Blue Zones Project recognition recently. SUBMITTED: BLUE ZONES



Dennis and Barbara Reffler, of Landmark Naples, a 55-plus community in North Naples, display Blue Zones Project recognition with Dr. Allen Weiss, president and chief executive officer of the NCH Healthcare System. SUBMITTED: BLUE ZONES

Blue Zones initiative still strong in Naples

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Two more organizations have gained Blue Zones Project recognition for taking steps to help people get healthier.

Landmark Naples, an active adult community for people 55 and older, has placed signs around the public areas to remind residents to refrain from smoking, and it is using smaller plates at its snack bar to promote smaller portions.

The second addition to the Blue Zones project is Naples Interagency Board, a networking organization to promote connections among different

businesses and organizations to promote philanthropy.

The nonprofit organization gained its Blue Zones recognition by becoming tobacco free, switching to healthier snacks at meetings and by promoting volunteerism.

To date, more than 110 companies have gained Blue Zones recognition in Southwest Florida. The NCH Healthcare System is underwriting the project expense locally during the start-up years.

Landmark Naples, with 460 manufactured homes on Gulf Coast Drive in North Naples, got involved in the initiative through the effort of Barbara Reffler, a 66-year-old retired nurse who learned

about and decided to get the community involved. She talked to residents about the initiative and collected signatures of residents to take the Blue Zones pledge, to take actions to be healthier. Petition signatures of least 25 percent of people in a community, business or civic group is a necessary first step toward gaining project recognition.

“I had over 130 signatures,” she said.

Landmark is a very active community, Reffler said. The community held a “purpose” workshop with local Blue Zones leaders to help people realize their purpose in life or activities that help them with fulfillment, which often involves volunteering for people who

are retired. That also helps them stay connected to others socially, which is a Blue Zones principle.

The average age in Landmark is around 70 yet there are some very active 90 year olds, she said.

Besides going smoke free at Interagency Naples, the group promotes volunteerism among its members, Adam Corcoran, president of the group, said.

“Not only do we look to create a social atmosphere, we look to encourage one another in a healthy way,” he said in a press release. “It was clear to us that the Blue Zones Project mission aligned with what we look to accomplish at Naples Interagency.”