

Blue Zones

“Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity.

John F. Kennedy



Potluck Moai with Blue Zones Founder Dan Buettner. SPECIAL TO THE NAPLES DAILY NEWS

Struggling with New Year's Resolutions? Join a Moai!

Deb Logan
Executive Director, Blue Zones Project - SWFL

How are your New Year's resolutions going? Thanks to our busy lives, our best intentions to eat healthier, exercise more, or prioritize friendships often take a second seat to competing priorities within a couple weeks of January 1st. With this understanding, Blue Zones Project - SWFL recommends a nearly foolproof way to be more successful with well-being goals. Based on research done in one of the original Blue Zones, Okinawa, Japan, the formation of groups which they call Moais (“mow-eyes”) serves to help people live healthier, happier and longer lives. The Okinawan culture historically supported the formation of these groups as children who grew up near one another often became friends and remained that way throughout their lives.

Fast forward to today in the United States, where families often move numerous times primarily for jobs or in retirement. It is significantly more challenging to maintain solid life-long friendships in this environment. So, when we need someone to encourage us to get out and take a walk, or support us when we are trying to eat healthier, who do we turn to? According to Framingham research, the average American

has one and a half true friends. That is not much of a support group when we are trying to navigate stress and prioritize our health and well-being.

Over the past four years, Blue Zones Project - SWFL has been helping people create Moais. Many groups started to support one another as walking buddies, but several have evolved to encourage one another to eat healthier by trying more plant-based meals either via potlucks or by going to Blue Zones Project Approved restaurants together.

Research shows that if a group commits to meeting on a regular basis, approximately 60 percent become good friends. Blue Zones Project - SWFL recently surveyed 22 plant-based potluck Moais (99 people) before they started meeting and again, three months into their journey. The results were astounding. During this short timeframe, these benefits accrued:

- Estimated life expectancy per the True Vitality Test increased on average, one year and three months
- 100% reported their Moai contributed to their overall well-being
- 100% said they are now eating more plant-based meals
- Almost 70% shared that they made new, good friends

- 17% reported losing weight, while others lowered their blood pressure, blood sugar and/or cholesterol

The results were so impressive that it was covered by the TODAY Show!

Blue Zones Project is hosting a Moai Launch on Saturday, Jan. 11, from 9 - 10 a.m. If you would like to join a Moai, attend the launch at one of four locations that is best for you. Attendees will be there only to form their Moai groups where they will decide when and where to meet for walking, potluck get-togethers, or restaurant hopping. To RSVP, visit the Eventbrite URL below each location. Come meet new people and improve your well-being along the way!

- Vineyards Park (6231 Arbor Blvd W, Naples)
RSVP: [MoaiLaunchVP.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/BlueZonesProjectVineyards)
 - Coconut Point (meet outside of Florida Blue, 8041 Plaza del Lago Dr, Estero)
RSVP: [MoaiLaunchCP.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/BlueZonesProjectCoconutPoint)
 - Eagle Lakes Park (1565 Tamiami Trail East, Naples)
RSVP: [MoaiLaunchELP.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/BlueZonesProjectEagleLakes)
 - Mackle Park (1361 Andalusia Terrace, Marco Island)
RSVP: [MoaiLaunchMP.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/BlueZonesProjectMacklePark)
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Walking Moai. SPECIAL TO THE NAPLES DAILY NEWS