



Projections of selected works of celebrated painter Vincent Van Gogh are displayed at a preview of the Immersive Van Gogh exhibit in New York.

## Van Gogh

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haps except for visitors' cellphones. He said it's fitting that Van Gogh was often isolated: "He is a perfect artist and this is a perfect time because we've all been wrestling with isolation."

There has lately been an explosion of renewed interest in the Dutch post-Impressionist artist, and "Immersive Van Gogh" is just one of several traveling exhibits that marry his work with technology. There's even a rival in New York just a few miles away, "Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience."

Producers of "Immersive Van Gogh" in New York had so much space – the location on Pier 36 was once home to 25 basketball courts – that they've designed three galleries, each larger than the next, which viewers can wander about or sit on benches and watch Van Gogh's work float by.

Korins has added to the galleries several large mirrored sculptures – some curved, some straight – that reflect and refract the digital images. Visitors are also greeted at the entrance by one of Van Gogh's last self-portraits blown up to realize the nuance and brushstrokes of the master.

Korins hopes visitors can come away with more knowledge about Van Gogh than just that he was the artist who cut off his own ear and painted "The Starry Night." Korins reminds people that Van Gogh was a pauper who sold only one



Projections of selected works of celebrated painter Vincent Van Gogh are displayed at a preview of the Immersive Van Gogh exhibit at Pier 36 in New York. AP PHOTOS

painting in his lifetime. "He did so many self-portraits because he had no money to pay for models," Korins said. "He painted sunflowers because they were free."

One of the more remarkable additions tries to put viewers inside the mind of Van Gogh, who had a form of synesthesia called chromesthesia in which he was able to hear color and see sound. The audience walks through 10 booths based on the colors most often used in his paintings and gets a light and sound experience that mimics how people with chromesthesia react to certain colors.

"That condition now is considered a gift," said Korins. "But he was completely misunderstood. And so here's a way where you can sort of step into the experience."

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## BLUE ZONES PROJECT – SOUTHWEST FLORIDA



### How to eat your way to better brain health

by Elizabeth Pezzello

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, so let's talk about Brain health! As Emily Dickinson famously described, "The Brain is wider than the Sky," and the importance of Brain health is one that is top of mind (pun intended). Blue Zones Project aims to help the community follow a plant-based diet, otherwise known as the Blue Zones Power 9 longevity principle, plant slant. Research shows that in Blue Zones regions around the world, Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia are greatly reduced compared to its prevalence nationwide, where about half of Americans over 85 years old show signs of Alzheimer's. Not only is brain disease far less common in blue zones regions, but also depression, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes. Wouldn't it be incredible to lower these numbers in the United States? The good news is, it's entirely possible.

Science has proven that the Mediterranean diet which is a diet high in vegetables, beans, fruits, and nuts, while

low in meat and dairy, provides many protective benefits to overall health. The main differences in this diet versus the standard American diet (SAD), is the fact that it is high in plant intake and much lower in fat consumption, particularly saturated fat. The number one benefit of consuming a Mediterranean diet is reduction of inflammation in the body. Additional benefits include lower blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as protection from free radicals in the body that can cause cell damage. A study published by the American Academy of Neurology pointed to evidence that individuals who followed a Mediterranean diet reduced their risk of thinking and memory problems by 19 percent.

Carol Howell, founder of the Let's Talk Dementia non-profit organization and recognized Blue Zones Project organization, and author of "Momma Is Confused and So Am I" went through a personal journey with dementia and sadly lost her mother to the disease after a 13-year battle. Her mother's

hope all along was "If I could just help one person because I have this disease...", and Carol was able to accomplish just that by taking her specialization in dementia to now over 95 countries.

Carol stresses the importance of diet and its impact on dementia, and how diet can prevent and even lessen the symptoms of over 200 types of dementia, including Alzheimer's. "What we know is what we put in our body and what we don't put into our body, what we do to our body and what we don't do for our body, the people we eat with, the people we socialize with... all of those things lend themselves to a greater increased risk of dementia of some kind," says Carol. Carol also stresses the importance of lifestyle changes, and how Blue Zones preaches exactly what she preaches when it comes to the kind of changes that will truly make an impact on your life. "If we make the lifestyle changes now, then we don't have to fix a problem because we won't have a problem."

Healthy eating is paramount to your

body functioning at an optimal level. Carol encourages her clients to implement just one change a month to decrease the odds of developing dementia related diseases and start healing their brains. As a long-term goal and hope, Carol would love to see nursing homes provide Blue Zones inspired dishes to their tenants, as "it's never too late to make a change". Carol also recommends adding a tablespoon of MCT (medium chain triglyceride) oil to your diet as another preventative step to help the brain. MCT oil is like a "buffet for the brain", as Carol says, and has been proven to lessen or even eliminate symptoms of Parkinson's Disease.

Brought to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with Sharecare, Inc., Blue Zones Project is part of Southwest Florida's well-being improvement initiative that encourages changes in the community that lead to healthier options. For more information, visit [southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com](http://southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com).