

# BLUE ZONES

“Without your health, you've got nothing going on. I thank God every day for good health.” – Ric Flair

## LeGrand Caribbean Market increases fresh produce consumption with Fresh Access Bucks

**Sebastien Saitta**  
Blue Zones Project-Southwest Florida

The core mission of Blue Zones Project is to make healthy choices easier where we live, work and play. LeGrand Caribbean Market recently took a step in making that happen for the Immokalee community by participating in Feeding Florida's Fresh Access Bucks (FAB).

FAB is a statewide incentive program designed to encourage SNAP recipients to redeem their benefits toward the purchase of fresh, healthy foods through farmers markets, as well as in the retail space. This is done with a focus on the local corner store like LeGrand Caribbean Market to ensure all food insecure individuals have access to affordable, fresh, locally-sourced produce in their community.

FAB gives SNAP customers free money toward fresh fruits and vegetables by matching what a SNAP cardholder spends — up to \$10 every time they shop. For example, a SNAP shopper who spends \$5 of their SNAP benefits at a participating retail outlet with a fresh produce purchase receives an additional \$5 to purchase fresh, local produce. FAB's retail incentive program provides a 1:1 match for SNAP purchases that include at least one fresh fruit or vegetable. SNAP shoppers can then exchange Fresh Access Bucks for fresh fruits and vegetables that day or on their next shopping trip.

Fresh Access Bucks are available every day the FAB retail location is open and SNAP shoppers may double their benefits multiple times per day without penalty. Over the course of the program, FAB supports participating retail outlets to increase Florida based produce sourcing and promotional needs for greater capacity and sustainability.

“In 2019, 55% of Le-

Grand's sales were paid with SNAP, and 25% of those sales were for produce,” said David Longfield-Smith, Retail Food Lead at Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida. “With FAB, this means more healthy food for people in need and more sales for the market which makes it a real win-win.”

Even before participation with FAB, Franck LeGrand, general manager of LeGrand Caribbean Market was passionate about healthy eating. After losing 100 pounds by making simple dietary and lifestyle changes, he began working with Blue Zones Project in 2018 when he agreed to be a part of a Market Make-over pilot program that included installing 22 feet of dry produce displays. This has since become the focal point of the store and is one of the first places customers go to upon entering which helps increase produce purchases.

In fact, according to recent Community Well-Being Index data, Immokalee/Ave Maria residents have reported a 14% increase in fruit and vegetable consumption from 2017-2019.

“Making these changes has impacted customers' buying decisions in a very positive way,” said LeGrand. “Knowing the effect that proper diet has had in my life, I am happy to include FAB to help them further experience the benefits of healthier eating.”

LeGrand Caribbean Market joins 50 locations



Store manager Franck LeGrand stands outside LeGrand Caribbean Market in Immokalee. SUBMITTED

throughout Florida currently participating in FAB. To learn more about the FAB initiative or to find a mobile market near you, visit [www.FreshAccessBucks.com](http://www.FreshAccessBucks.com).

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

Sebastien Saitta is with Blue Zones Project-Southwest Florida.



New produce department at LeGrand Caribbean Market in Immokalee. FLORIDA

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