

The Blue Zones Project gets more supporters

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Five more organizations have signed on to the Blue Zones Project to help promote better health among employees and clients.

Barre Fusion Pilates Studio, Foxfire Golf & Country Club and Local Roots farmers market are three of the five that have gotten involved in the initiative. The other two are the Southwest Florida alumni chapter for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and the Thomas Riley Artisans' Guild.

They join more than 110 other companies and organizations that have made changes in daily activities to help instill healthier lifestyle habits. The philosophy is that over time, healthier choices will become the easier choice, and each incremental step can improve health and well-being.

The NCH Healthcare System is underwriting the Blue Zones initiative in Collier and south Lee counties, to make health-focused changes in workplaces, schools, government entities, restaurants, grocery stores and physical settings.

The Blue Zones project was introduced to Southwest Florida in 2015 based on the world travels of Dan Buettner, a National Geographic explorer, who identified communities worldwide where people share lifestyle traits and live to 100 or older. He wrote a book on his research findings, "The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer From the People Who've Lived the Longest," which became a New York Times best-seller in 2008.

Barre Fusion, a Pilates studio in North Naples, eliminated sugar-laden beverages, hosts well-being events for clients and became a tobacco-free worksite to become recognized by the Blue Zones project.

The studio and the wellness initiative share a mission of helping clients get healthier, Lisa Daniel, owner of Barre Fusion, said.

"We strive to teach our clients the core principals of a true mind-body connection," she said in a news release. "(The) Blue Zones Project is helping to transform people every day with healthy choices so that they may live longer with a higher quality of life, and Barre Fusion aligns with these values."

The Foxfire residential community in East Naples, which has 900 residential units, established a health and wellness committee to help promote better habits, and it also organized walking groups so residents can be more active and connect to one another. It also hosts workshops to help people find what their life's purpose may be and to be more

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Barre Fusion Pilates studio promotes the Blue Zones Project in Southwest Florida. THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT

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engaged.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville alumni chapter in Southwest Florida, which encourages alumni to get involved in fundraising for scholarships and other activities, switched to healthier foods at meetings and at special events.

Local Roots, which operates farmers markets at Coconut Point and elsewhere in the region, helped get bicycle racks installed at its locations, offers healthy food and promotes locally grown produce at its markets.

Lastly, the Thomas Riley Artisans' Guild has promoted walking groups among its employees, and replaced half of its vending machine options with healthier choices. The guild, which has 70 employees, provides fine interior woodwork finishes and custom furniture to homeowners, interior designers and general contractors.

Matthew Riley, chief executive officer of the company, which was founded by his father, Thomas Riley, said a core value of the company is "shoulder to shoulder" collaboration among its workforce. The Blue Zones project helps people be better at what they do.

"The healthier we are, the better we can perform our jobs to the highest level, which leads to better results for our clients and happier lives for all of us," he said.



Thomas Riley Artisans' Guild earns recognition as a Blue Zones Project in Southwest Florida.

THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT