

# BLUE ZONES

“Health is the thing that makes you feel that now is the best time of the year.” – Franklin Pierce Adams

## Walking improves your health, lowers risk of dying from cardiovascular disease and more

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

Walking is one of the best ways to improve your health and Move Naturally, one of the Blue Power 9 principles shared by the longest-lived people in the world.

Walking eases joint pain, eliminates toxins, helps reduce stress, and even strengthens immunity. In fact, a study from the American Cancer Society followed 140,000 older adults and reported that those who walked six hours per week had a lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and cancer than those who were not active, but that walking even as little as two hours per week could begin to reduce the risk of disease and help you live a longer, healthier life.

It is no secret that walking is good for you, yet what if we can take the power of walking and multiply it? Purpose, a Blue Zones Power 9 longevity principle just so happens to be the right ingredient to make this happen, and Blue Zones Project recognized HOA communities like TwinEagles and Diamond Oaks Village are using it.

Researchers at Michigan State University found that dog owners are 34 percent more likely to fit in 150 minutes of walking per week than non-dog owners. The study also found that owning a dog promotes health and fitness even after you take your dog for a stroll, increasing leisure-time physical activity by 69 percent.

Dog owners at TwinEagles recently took the benefits a step further by participating in the first pooch parade charity walk benefiting Humane Society Naples. Participants sported their Blue



Lustgarten Walk participants begin their walk at the Talon Golf Course at TwinEagles. SUBMITTED

Zones Project shirts and paraded their pets wearing their Blue Zones Project bandanas throughout the community.

Diamond Oaks Village in Bonita recently organized a one-mile walk around their community to benefit the Parkinson's Association of SWFL. Eighteen residents participated to help fight the disease that affects nearly 1 million people in the US according to the Parkinson's Foundation.

“The Blue Zones Project initiative was the catalyst for monthly charity walks, although, this walk was the biggest event to date because of the impact that Pancreatic cancer has had on our membership,” said Karen Iannuzzi, Blue Zones committee member at TwinEagles.

The walk took on a personal note with Diamond Oaks Village Leasing Consultant, Leah Johnson whose mom is battling Parkinson's, and several other participants who are fighting the disease themselves.

“Even though they couldn't walk that far, they still walked with us in spirit throughout the whole thing,” said Vicky Burnett, Lifestyle Coordinator at Diamond Oaks Village.

Tony Serrano, Field Marketing Manager at Diamond Oaks Village added, “The residents love to socialize and stay active which this event afforded them the opportunity to do so. On top of that, they have always donated their time and money to causes that they believe in.”

To donate to the Parkinson Association

Village of Southwest Florida, visit [parkinsonassociationswfl.org](http://parkinsonassociationswfl.org).

“These walks are a true testament to how the principles we promote can bring a community together for the greater good of all people,” said Chante Pemberton, HOA and engagement lead at Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida.

*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).*

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