

BRK Pizza celebrates earning the Blue Zones designation.

BRK Pizza ioins effort

LIZ FREEMAN

LIZ.FREEMAN@NAPLESNEWS.COM; 239-263-4778

A pizza joint goes Blue Zones? Yes,

you read that right. The family-owned BRK Pizza in North Naples has become a Blue Zones approved restaurant with a new plant-based pizza and business philosophy that reflects the healthy living initiative.

Located at 6355 Naples Blvd., the eatery uses fresh produce from local farmers, offers gluten-free choices and takes part in charitable programs in the community, so pursuing the Blue Zones designation was a natural thing to do, Randy Trombino, owner of the restaurant.

The Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida was introduced to the region in 2015 based on the world travels of Dan Buettner, who identified communities worldwide where people share lifestyle traits and live to 100 or older. He wrote

traits and live to 100 or older. He wrote a New York Times bestseller about the nine principles of longevity. The "Power Nine" principles include eating a plant-slant diet, moving natu-rally by walking, biking or similar ac-tivity, having a sense of purpose, lim-iting alcohol intake, putting family first helgening to a secial group and first, belonging to a social group and more

The NCH Healthcare System is underwriting the Blue Zones initiative in Collier and south Lee counties.

The community-wide undertaking over the next 8 to 10 years involves voluntarily implementing health-fo-cused changes in workplaces, schools, government entities, restaurants, gro-cery stores and physical settings so healthier choices are easier and become a way of life. Trombino sponsored a contest

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» Learn more about Blue Zones: southwestfloridabluezones.com

Learn more about Southwest Florida's commitment to become a Blue Zones community: collier.bluezonesproject.com

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» Find the Blue Zones books at bluezones.com/resources/books

among his dozen employees to come up with a plant-based pizza without cheese, red sauce or meat to fit the bill of a healthier alternative pizza.

Six of his employees entered the competition and Brandley Tanelus, 17 and a senior at Naples High School, came up with what was needed for a "power pizza.

The pizza features a multigrain whole wheat crust, fresh mushrooms, spinach, black olives, pineapple, garlic, onion, extra virgin olive oil and a bal-samic glaze drizzle to bring out all the flavors, Trombino said. "We tested a lot of different pizzas,"

he said of the contest. Tanelus said all the vegetables need-

ed something to boost the flavor, and his idea was to add pineapple. "It needed something to spark it up,"

Tanelus said.

For some time, the restaurant has offered gluten-free choices and they've become quite popular, where they aver-age selling 144 gluten-free pizzas a week

"By making small changes, we realized we could have an impact and help make Naples a healthier, happy place to eat, live, work and play," Trombino



Naples High School student Brandley Tanelus, left, developed a Blue Zone-inspired pizza for his employer, BRK Pizza, and boss, Randy Trombino. Inset: Power Pizza