

"The longest-lived people eat a plant-based diet. They eat meat but only as a condiment or a celebration. Nothing they eat has a plastic wrapper." — Dan Buettner, author of "The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who've Lived the Longest"

SCHOOL GAINS BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVAL



Students get ready to celebrate the school's Blue Zones Project recognition. BLUE ZONES PROJECT OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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Bonita Springs Charter School is at the top of the class with the Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida.

The tuition-free public charter school with 1,270 students from kindergarten through eighth grade is the first Blue Zones Project approved school in Bonita Springs. The school is located at 25380 Bernwood Drive.

Recognized as a Lighthouse School for its achievements in "The Leader in Me," part of the FranklinCovey's leadership program, the school has always been focused on good health and wellness of its students, Erin Sidwell, school enrollment administrator, said.

Pursuing the Blue Zones Project designation was a natural goal to undertake.

"We have been working on this designation for a long time," she said.

The Blue Zones Project was introduced to Southwest Florida in 2015 based on the travels of National Geographic explorer Dan Buettner, who identified communities worldwide where people share lifestyle traits and live to 100 or older. He wrote a New York Times bestseller about the nine principles of longevity.

The "Power Nine" include moving naturally by being physically active, eating a plant-slant diet, knowing your purpose in life, taking time to relax, having a healthy social network and putting loved ones first.

Other principles include participating in a religious community, limiting alcohol consumption, and stopping to eat when you are 80 percent full.

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