



Principal Leads by Example

Do as she does, not just as she says, for a healthy life

Carissa Carroll has a passion for doing what is best for kids, whether they are her own or her students at Bonita Springs Charter School, where she has served since the school opened 16 years ago. She's a wife of 21 years to Alan and mom to Mason, 20; Meah, 16; and Mitchell, 7. As principal of the Bonita Springs Charter School, she considers her 1,300 students and 115 teachers and team members family as well. Whether it is at home or at school, she wants to help her "family" members feel valued and empowered. She understands that giving youth time and love helps them thrive, particularly as they navigate life's many challenges.

Carroll credits her parents, Ken and Cynthia Idle, for teaching her

the importance of family, as well as modeling the key values by which she lives. She moved with her parents and three siblings from Cleveland to Estero when she was still in high school. For as long as she can remember, they have carried on a family tradition of gathering for Sunday meals. Their family meals allow multiple generations to share their lives and stay connected.

Youth of families who eat together benefit by achieving higher academic performance, self-esteem and a sense of resilience as well as a lower risk of substance abuse, teen pregnancy and depression.

When Carroll was asked to support the Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida, at a public meeting in October of 2015, she knew she would be a good fit.

"A healthy lifestyle is a driver for a healthy mind. I knew by bringing the project to our school, I would be helping our students and our team members have more opportunities to enjoy good health and, therefore, maximize learning. Blue Zones Project aligns with our mission to inspire students to lead and succeed," said Carroll.

For a school to get involved in Blue Zones Project, it takes a champion like Carroll. Schools may use their existing wellness

Sunday dinner with the Carroll family, (From left,) Mitchell, Carissa, Alan, Meah and Mason Carroll along with Carissa's parents, Ken and Cynthia Idle



committees, which typically include staff, parents and students, to review a list of proven best practices that improve well-being in a school setting. The committee picks what resonates for their school; there are no mandates, just suggestions.

Carroll and her committee recently implemented enough well-being initiatives to earn Blue Zones Approval. Her school is the first in Lee County to earn this stellar recognition. As such, Bonita Springs Charter School joins 11 Collier County schools that are helping to make healthier choices easier for students by adopting Blue Zones best practices.

While the mother puts family first, she understands the importance as an administrator as well.

"Putting family first is part of our school mission. When parents enroll a child in Bonita Springs Charter School, they commit to volunteering 20 hours a year. We know academic scores rise when parents are involved in their children's education," said Carroll.

Parent and community participation is vibrant at the school. Parents walked with their children during a national walking day at the school and throughout the community. They also participate in community outreach projects, including the Heart of the Lighthouse Hurricane Recovery Program and a Traditional Thanksgiving Classroom Potluck, during which the school honored those who served in critical roles before, during and after Irma, including law enforcement, fire and rescue, emergency management, meteorologists, food kitchens and others.

Whether at home or at work, Carroll is consistently leading by example and teaching the importance of those values her parents instilled in her so long ago: respect, tolerance, understanding, sharing and integrity, to name a few. She balances a very full job that she is passionate about, along with her active family life, by focusing on her personal mission to have faith, be kind and always be humble.

"I must care for my own mind, body, heart and soul so I can care for my loved ones."

She incorporates the Blue Zones Power 9 lifestyle principles, too. In addition to practicing putting family first, she prioritizes moving naturally by staying active. Her deep faith connects her to a sense of

belonging and surrounding herself with friends who support her provides her with the "right tribe." She practices relaxation, or "downshifts," by making sure to plan some mini-getaways with her husband and she thrives while living her purpose at school and home. In addition, she considers her husband her life partner as, together, they support their kids in their activities and instill the significance of education, church and volunteering. ✿

Deb Logan, Blue Zones Project SWFL's executive director, has 30 years' experience in health and wellness and about as many living in Naples, shared with husband, Rick, and female Aussie-doodle, Charlie.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CARROLL FAMILY

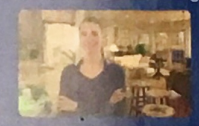
We've taken cleaning to a whole new level...

"We understand the needs of professional women"

- Michelle Spitzer, Owner MaidPro SWFL

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Home & Office Cleaning



Not your standard cleaners!

- Damage And Theft Protection
- Employee Backgrounds
- Knowledgeable Cleaners
- Satisfaction Guaranteed

MaidPro MUSCLE Services



NOW OFFERING MaidPro MUSCLE Services

- Immediately Dry & Green Carpet Cleaning
- Upholstery • Tile & Grout
- Pressure Washing
- Window Cleaning

\$75 OFF
CLEANING SERVICES

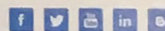
\$25 OFF Your 1st, 3rd & 5th Cleaning

25% OFF
MaidPro MUSCLE Services

Offers cannot be combined with other offers

maidpro

maidpro.com



contact us for your free estimate

239.596.5200

Servicing Marco Island, Naples, Bonita Springs, Sarasota and Fort Myers Area