

BLUE TIP: Grow indoor plants throughout your home. Pick up pots, soil, greenery such as a spider plant. Watering plants burns the same amount of calories as stretching and walking, and plants clean the air, as well as have health benefits to people who interact with them. — **“The Blue Zone Solution”**



PHOTOS BY LANCE SHEARER/SPECIAL TO THE DAILY NEWS
Trainer Nino Magaddino of Max Flex Fitness leads attendees in an exercise break. The Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida held a worksite summit July 28 in The Club at The Strand, promoting healthy choices for businesspeople and their companies.

Healthier, happier workplaces

Blue Zones worksite summit invites employers to make the healthy choice

LANCE SHEARER
CORRESPONDENT

If employees and customers at local businesses are “feeling blue,” that’s a good thing, say organizers of the Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida.

The group held their second annual worksite summit on July 28, to promote the benefits of embracing Blue Zones principles to create a “healthier, happier, more productive worksite.” About 85 business owners and managers gathered in the clubhouse of The Club at The Strand in North Naples to hear about how they could become a Blue Zones Worksite® (the organization has registered the phrase as a trademark) and listen to testimonials from business leaders who have already joined the program.

“The worksite is critical – that’s where we spend the majority of our day,” said Deb Logan, executive director of the local Blue Zones group. “Getting involved with Blue Zones helps people socialize and incorporate health into their daily life. Healthy employees are happy employees, and they will tend to stay with their employer.”

One of the employers who spoke to the group about the experiences of their companies was Jimmy Lynn, general manager of Wyndemere Country Club, which was the first Collier County company in its category to become certified.

“We got the employees behind us first, and then the members followed,” said Lynn. “It’s all about options. We give people choices,” and they will go

with the healthy choice when it is made attractive. “We feed our employees that way, and the members love ‘wine at five.’ I haven’t met anybody who doesn’t want to live longer and better.”

One of the cornerstones of the Blue Zones philosophy is the “Power 9,” a group of behaviors shared by populations around the world identified as living the longest, healthiest lives. One of these, wine at five, found that moderate drinkers outlive non-drinkers, and suggests participants enjoy one or two glasses of wine per day, preferably with friends and/or with food.

Brought to Southwest Florida through sponsorship by NCH Healthcare System, in collaboration with the national Healthways and Blue Zones organizations, Blue Zones Project is a community-wide well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to environment, policy, and social networks. From individuals to schools, worksites, restaurants, faith-based groups and up to entire communities, Blue Zones emphasizes evidence-based methods to help people live longer, better lives.

At the worksite summit, Logan introduced NCH CEO Dr. Allen Weiss, who provided the big picture on why Blue Zones certification and the commitment it represents are beneficial to employers, and then Blue Zones organization lead David Longfield-Smith to explain how businesses could become part of the project.

Attendees also heard testimony from Tessa Magaddino, employee wellness



Bree Fung of the Blue Zones Project Southwest Florida talks about Blue Zones principles. The group held a worksite summit July 28 in The Club at The Strand, promoting healthy choices for businesspeople and their companies.

coach at Moorings Park retirement community, which was certified as a Blue Zones Approved Worksite in February. Even though Moorings Park is a health-conscious facility that strives to further better health outcomes on its campus, and was working on related healthy living concepts well before the Blue Zones initiative officially debuted in Collier County, they still had to make internal improvements to qualify as a Blue Zones worksite.

“When we looked at the list of worksite precepts, number 33 – go smoke-free – jumped off the page,” said Magaddino. “There was a little pushback. Our smoking areas were the most beautiful places on the campus. We said, ‘let’s make them less attractive.’ We added no hiring of tobacco users, and as of July first, we are tobacco-free.”

Representatives from other local

organizations that have undergone Blue Zones certification also spoke, including Arthrex, the United Way, the City of Naples, Gulfshore Concierge Medicine, and the most recent, Naples Beach Hotel, which had a ribbon cutting the previous week.

The Blue Zones’ Bree Fung also singled out the chef at The Club at The Strand, which is going through the certification process itself, for the breakfast they provided for attendees at the summit. Food choices included bean and squash breakfast burritos in whole wheat wraps, tofu and sweet potato hash with rainbow peppers and onions, whole grain muffin squares and fresh fruit.

For more information about Blue Zones Project, contact the Blue Zones Project team at 239-624-2312 or visit www.bluezonesproject.com.