



Summertime Blue Zones

Worksite summit to teach businesses about healthier choices

By Liz Freeman

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Leaders of the Blue Zones Project recognize summer is a good time to get the attention of business owners with more time on their hands.

That's why a 3-hour program is scheduled for July 28 to bring businesses together to learn about the wellness initiative.

Businesses of all sizes and industries are welcome to learn about the Blue Zones campaign to help people make healthier choices in their daily lives, said Bree Fung, a representative with the local project.

About 40 businesses are signed up to attend the worksite summit at The Strand in North Naples. The location aims to be a little easier for businesses in south Lee County to attend.

"We are moving into Estero and Bonita Springs," Fung said.

A first worksite summit was held last summer and 70 business groups attended, she said.

The Blue Zones Project of Southwest Florida was introduced to the area last year. It is based on the world travels of Dan Buettner, who identi-

fied communities worldwide where people share lifestyle traits and live to 100 or older. He wrote a New York Times best-seller about the nine principles of longevity.

The NCH Healthcare System is underwriting the initiative in Collier and south Lee counties, which is expected to span 8 to 10 years.

The project involves voluntarily implementing health-focused changes in workplaces, schools, government entities, restaurants, grocery stores and physical settings so healthier choices are easier and become a way of life.

So far six businesses have been approved as Blue Zones worksites where they enhance existing wellness programs or launch them for employees, and offer programs to

their workforces to be healthier and more connected, she said.

Officials with some of the six businesses will be on hand at the July 28 summit to share their experiences gaining the designation, she said.

The six approved workplaces are Wyndemere Country Club, Moorings Park, Gulfshore Concierge Medicine, London Bay Homes, the Florida Department of Health in Collier and the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club.

To qualify as a Blue Zones worksite, a business needs to have enough program options available to achieve a point threshold and 25 percent of the workforce needs to take the pledge to be Blue Zones focused, she said.

Apart from the estimated 40 business representatives slated to attend the July 28 summit, another 60 businesses are in the application stages, she said.

ONLINE

- Learn more about Blue Zones: southwestflorida.bluezones.com
- Learn more about Southwest Florida's commitment to become a Blue Zones community: collier.bluezonesproject.com
- Find the Blue Zones books at naplesnews.com/bluezone
- Find the Blue Zones books at bluezones.com/resources/books

For more information about the worksite summit that will be held July 28, from 8:45 a.m. to noon, call or RSVP at 239-624-2312 or email at BlueZonesProjectSWFL@Healthyways.com. The website is southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com. The summit location is The Club at the Strand, 5840 Strand Blvd.