



CORRY, PA

A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

The first certified Blue Zones Community® in the Northeastern U.S. invests in well-being for a more livable, vibrant, and healthy future.







CONGRATS, CORRY, FOR PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP!

You deserve a round of applause.
And maybe even a standing ovation.
Because together we made it happen.

In Corry, we are seizing every opportunity
to move well-being in the right direction.

**After launching Blue Zones Project® in our
community, we've seen tobacco use and health
risks fall, while financial well-being, physical
activity, and community pride are on the rise.**

City leaders, business owners, teachers, and
volunteers are coming together to transform our
environments into places where optimal health
ensues and a culture of well-being flourishes.

Our community's resurgence is happening. Corry
has always been a great place to live, work, and
visit. And it's only getting better.

We did this together. By putting our personal
and collective well-being first, we're making
healthy choices easier, creating more economic
opportunities, and ensuring a better quality of
life for everyone. Here's to making Corry one
of the healthiest cities in Pennsylvania, where
residents are living better, together.

THE JOURNEY TO BECOME A BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Blue Zones Project® helps communities implement the longevity and happiness lessons learned from the world's extraordinary people and cultures to measurably improve well-being and create enhanced community vitality. The method of work is to drive community-led semi-permanent and permanent change in man-made surroundings. This approach is designed to make healthier choices easier, more ubiquitous, and sustainable. The effect: people moving more naturally, taking more time to downshift daily, discovering the power of purpose, eating wisely, and deepening their connections with friends, family, and their faith. Over time, these collective choices compound to sustainably improve well-being. In 2019, a broad base of Corry's leadership set an initial three-year course to do just that.

The value of Blue Zones Project is measured by the engagement of its citizens; the number, type, and scope of semi-permanent and permanent changes implemented; the prevalence and incidence rates of lifestyle risks and disease; and measurable improvements in well-being; all of which ultimately led to lower medical costs, better workforce productivity, and a strengthened regional economy.

Since 2019, Corry has undergone its own community transformation, exceeding targets set to engage individuals and organizations and to implement citywide policy changes. Well-being has reached new highs according to the most recent Sharecare Community Well-Being Index (CWBI) and other community indicators.

Our community improved in all five key well-being areas measured by the CWBI—community, social, purpose, physical, and financial—and overall well-being improved by 6.1-points.

A broad coalition has supported Corry's efforts to adopt 18 policies and plans like Active Transportation, Rails to Trails, Produce Express, and Tobacco 21 Pennsylvania that will guide future decision-making toward an even more vibrant and active community. This work was bolstered by \$3.8 million in grant funding leveraged by the community with the support of Blue Zones Project.

The return on investment for the project is and will continue to manifest. The semi-permanent and permanent changes already made will continue to compound over time to produce an even bigger future return for Corry. The return on investment can be measured in a myriad of ways, as the value captured is unique to each citizen, family, and organization. In this way,

Corry has been enriched as a “choice community”—a place where more people and businesses choose to be. Conservatively, the three-year estimated healthcare and workforce productivity savings for Corry totals \$4 million.

With sustained momentum, continued implementation of city policy and plans, and advancement of the project in key areas, Corry stands to drive even greater improvements to community well-being in the future.

When Blue Zones Project first engaged Corry leadership more than three years ago, together we established an ambitious plan for the city to become Pennsylvania's first Blue Zones Community®. Today, Corry stands as a new benchmark across the state and country for what bold leaders can achieve in rural communities when they invest in the health and well-being of their citizens. Congratulations for creating an even better Corry!



THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT STORY

What do Ikaria, Greece; Loma Linda, California; Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; and Nicoya, Costa Rica, have in common? Their citizens lead vibrant, healthy, and amazingly long lives. These places are known as blue zones longevity hotspots, where people live measurably longer, with lower incidences of chronic disease and a higher quality of life.



More than 86 percent₁ of the nearly \$3 trillion in annual U.S. healthcare costs are spent on chronic disease. Yet much of this disease can be prevented and reduced in impact through lifestyle changes.

According to a long-term population study of Danish twins, 80 percent of a person's lifespan is determined by lifestyle choices, environmental factors, and access to care. Only 20 percent is genetic.₂ Unfortunately, in most places, our environment encourages unhealthy choices. Americans are bombarded daily with messages for unhealthy products and surrounded by modern "conveniences" that make us more sedentary and isolated.

Discovering Blue Zones

In 2004, Dan Buettner teamed up with National Geographic, the National Institute on Aging, and the world's best longevity researchers to identify pockets around the world where people lived measurably better, longer. In the five original blue zones regions, they found that people reached age 100 at rates ten times greater than the U.S. average, with lower rates of chronic disease. These original blue zones areas are in vastly different parts of the world, from Sardinia, Italy and Ikaria, Greece to Okinawa, Japan, Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula, and stateside in Loma Linda, California. Studying the factors that influenced health and longevity in these places, researchers found that residents share nine specific traits. Dan Buettner captured these insights in his New York Times best-selling books, *The Blue Zones* and *The Blue Zones Solution*.



BLUE ZONES POWER 9

The secrets to well-being and longevity are found in the Power 9®—nine common principles from the world’s blue zones longevity hotspots. They can be grouped into four categories. These principles are the basis for how Blue Zones Project impacts communities to make healthy choices easier:

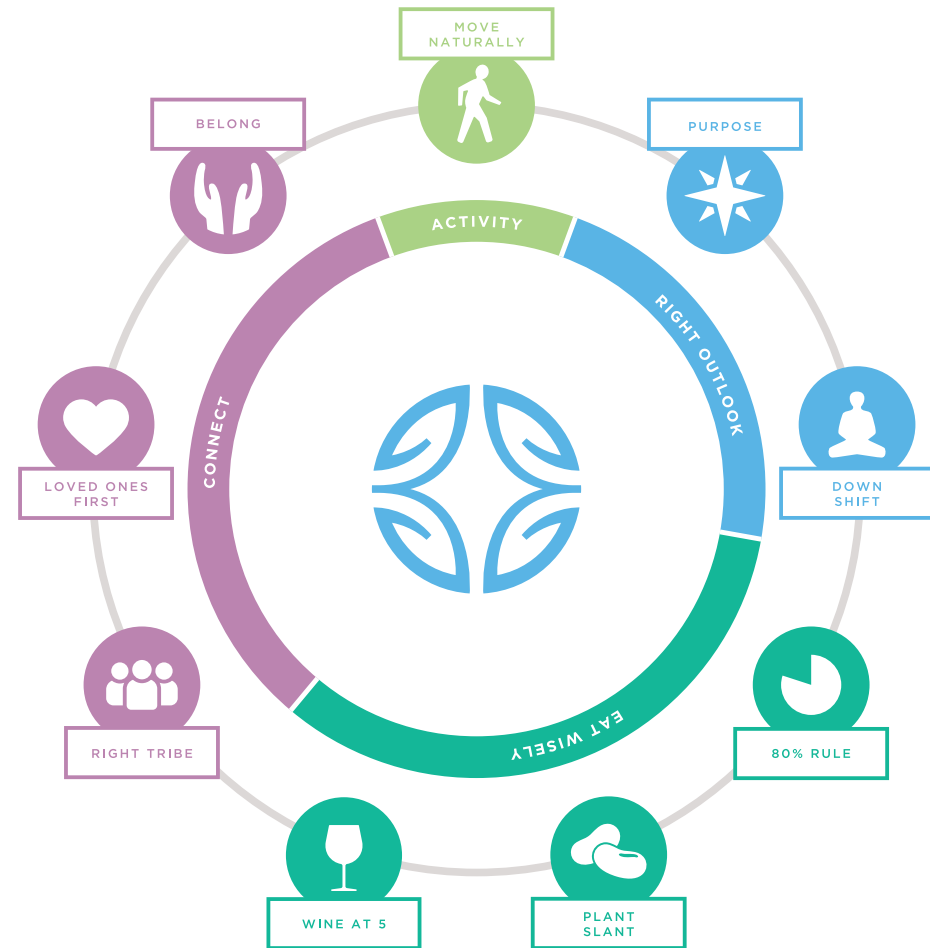
Move Naturally. Homes, communities, and workplaces are designed to nudge people into physical activity. Focus should be given to favorite activities, as individuals are more likely to practice them regularly. For example: gardening, walking, or biking to run errands, and playing with one’s family are great ways to incorporate natural movement into the day.

Right Outlook. Individuals know and can articulate their sense of purpose. They also take time to downshift, ensuring their day is punctuated with periods of calm.

Eat Wisely. In most cases, fad diets do not provide sustainable results. Individuals and families can use time-honored strategies for healthier eating habits, including:

- Using verbal reminders or smaller plates to eat less at meals
- Adopting a diet with a plant slant
- For adults with a healthy relationship with alcohol, drinking a glass of wine with friends

Connect. Research indicates it is exceedingly important that people surround themselves with the “right” people—those who make them happy and support healthy behaviors. Put loved ones first by spending quality time with family and friends, and by participating in a faith-based community.



Because healthier environments naturally nudge people toward healthier choices, Blue Zones Project focuses on influencing the Life Radius®, the area close to home in which people spend the majority of their lives. Blue Zones Project best practices use policy, places, and people as levers to transform those surroundings. Our communities have populations with greater well-being, improved health outcomes, reduced costs, stronger resiliency, and increased civic pride, all of which support healthy economic development.





SHARECARE COMMUNITY WELL-BEING INDEX

The world's most definitive measurement of well-being

Based on over 3M surveys and over 600 elements of social determinants of health data, Sharecare's Community Well-Being Index serves as the definitive measure of community well-being across and within populations. Measuring well-being gives policy, community, and business leaders the data to benchmark populations, understand gaps and opportunities, and then prioritize interventions to measurably improve well-being. Improving well-being has been shown to lower health care costs and increase worker productivity, in turn, enhancing organizational and community competitiveness.



Community
Well-Being Index

Measuring the Impact

Change requires action. It isn't enough to do something one time; lasting change, which is a central tenet of Blue Zones Project, must be created from permanent and semi-permanent changes and alterations to the environment, policies, programs, and social networks. These actions allow healthy choices to become easy choices today and for many years to come.

When Blue Zones Project launched in Corry, overall community well-being sat at 53.9 according to Sharecare Community Well-Being Index (CWBI) data, falling below state and national averages. **Today, overall well-being in Corry is 60, a 6.1-point increase.** This improvement highlights the intentional efforts to improve the health of Corry's residents.

Well-Being on the Rise in Corry

	2019	2022	Percent Increase
Overall Well-Being Score	53.9	60.0	11.3%
Purpose Well-Being	54.9	58.0	5.6%
Social Well-Being	55.5	58.2	4.9%
Financial Well-Being	55.4	60.6	9.4%
Community Well-Being	49.1	58.0	18.1%
Physical Well-Being	53.9	60.0	11.3%





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IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGHER WELL-BEING, WE HAVE FOUND THAT PEOPLE LIVE LONGER, HAPPIER LIVES AND BUSINESS AND LOCAL ECONOMIES FLOURISH. A RELIABLE WELL-BEING METRIC PROVIDES COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS WITH THE DATA AND INSIGHTS THEY NEED TO HELP MAKE SUSTAINED TRANSFORMATION A REALITY. AFTER ALL, IF YOU CAN'T MEASURE IT, YOU CAN'T MANAGE IT.

Dan Buettner
New York Times best-selling author
National Geographic Fellow
Blue Zones founder



PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN CORRY

As a pioneer in innovation, Corry is the first community in Pennsylvania to embark on its journey to transform well-being with Blue Zones Project.

Corry is prioritizing the health of its neighbors and investing in policies and programs to improve health equity for those who need it most. Our neighbors, teachers, and community leaders have made tremendous strides in optimizing the places where we all live, work, learn, and play.

Corry is a community to be proud of, and our well-being transformation is only just beginning.



BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN CORRY'S MISSION TO MOVE OUR COMMUNITY FORWARD. BY HOSTING VARIOUS WELLNESS EVENTS AND LAUNCHING WALKING MOAIS, THEY'VE BROUGHT RESIDENTS TOGETHER, HELPING TO BUILD COMMUNITY. THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT TEAM HELPED SECURE GRANT FUNDING FOR OUR COMMUNITY THAT NOT ONLY ENHANCES OUR CURRENT EFFORTS BUT WILL HAVE A LASTING IMPACT ON GENERATIONS TO COME.

Chelsea Oliver
Former Corry City Council Member
CYPN Officer

A COMMUNITY IN ACTION

The landscape for well-being in America cannot be improved without committed partnerships. That's why leaders across many sectors joined forces to take action and positively impact our residential and business communities. This broad, holistic approach is making healthy choices easier.

Local businesses, organizations, residents, and city leaders came together to make incremental changes that caused a ripple effect, improving well-being across the city and bringing individuals together to create lasting change.

People of all ages and backgrounds participated in Blue Zones Project Corry: more than 1,500 residents. Many attended free cooking demonstrations and Purpose Workshops. Hundreds donated their time toward volunteer opportunities and joined a supportive Moai for connecting and walking or connecting and

eating healthier in small groups. Many residents also supported Blue Zones Project planning and implementation by serving on committees.

A critical mass of places optimized their environments for healthy living. **More than 75 organizations participated in Blue Zones Project.** Worksites, schools, restaurants, grocery stores, faith-based organizations, and community groups made changes that produced new gardens, brought attention to healthier foods, created safer walking routes, offered space to de-stress, and energized employees, members, and residents with new connections and purpose.

From a policy standpoint, Corry is creating, supporting, and implementing:

- An Active Transportation Plan for the City of Corry and a Rails to Trails Master Plan
- A comprehensive food skills and nutrition education effort to help everyone learn easy ways to eat healthy
- Adoption and enforcement of tobacco-free outdoor spaces and engaging in legislation for Tobacco 21 efforts



THE WORLD IS WATCHING

Blue Zones Project has attracted local and national recognition, with more than 1,600 media stories to date.

Blue Zones Project Corry has been heralded for innovative approaches to population health management in various publications, including those noted below.

*The Corry
Journal*

AHL
AMERICAN HEALTHCARE LEADER

Parade

Erie Times-News

ERIE NEWS
NOW

GoERIE

BLUE ZONES PROJECT CORY IN THE NEWS

1,015

Total Mentions

1.7 Billion+

Total Reach

\$5,758,215

Total Publicity Value*

*Publicity value calculated using Cision
Media Monitoring service.

In the News

Corry embraces Blue Zones Project

Erie Times News
2/16/2020

County government now 'Blue Zones Approved'

Erie News Now
2/19/2021

Pandemic hasn't stopped Corry Blue Zones work

Erie Times News
9/18/2020

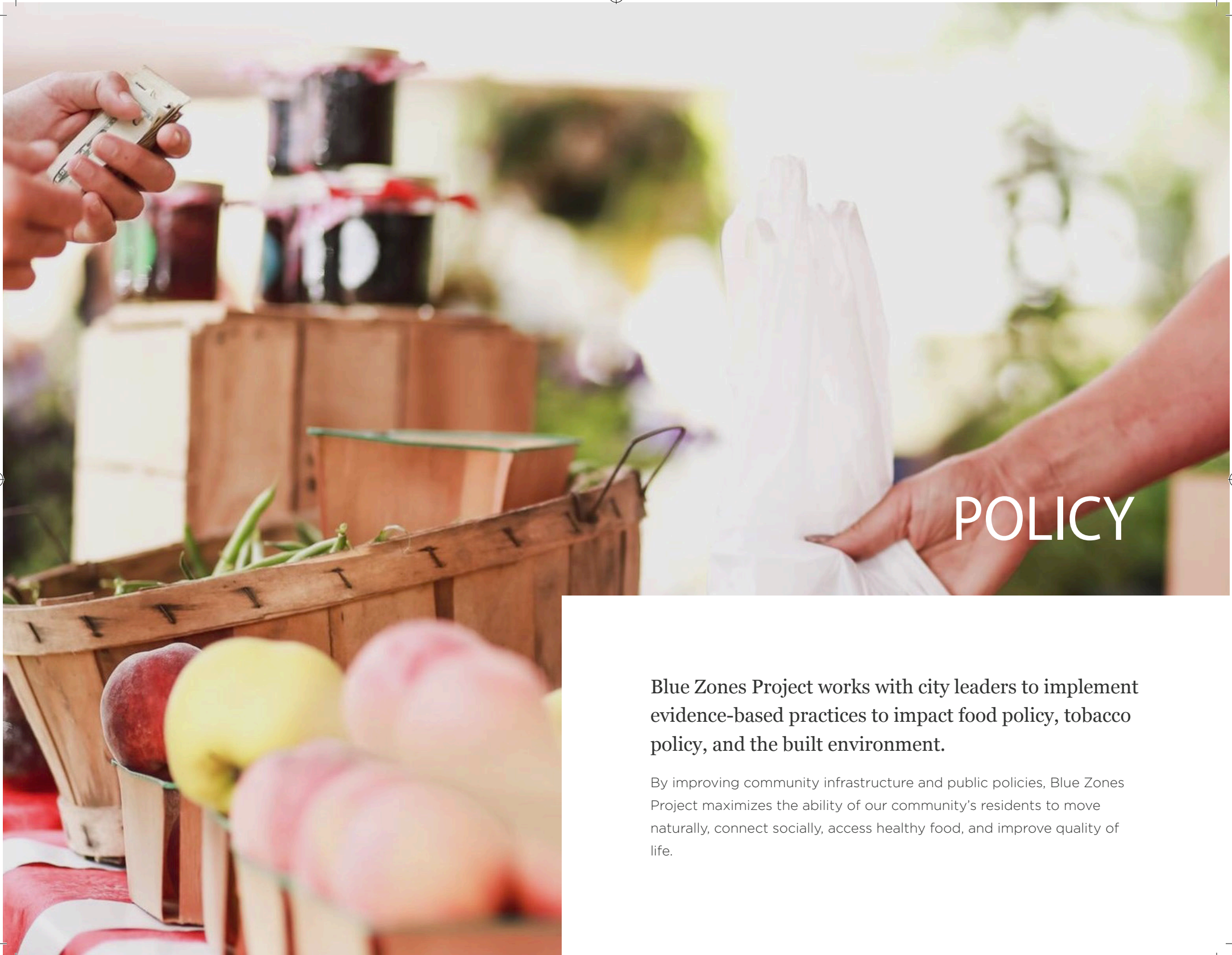
Corry Blue Zones receives \$130,000 in funding

Erie Times News
11/19/2019



By the Numbers! Experts Pick the 60 Healthiest Cities in America

Parade
1/10/2020



POLICY

Blue Zones Project works with city leaders to implement evidence-based practices to impact food policy, tobacco policy, and the built environment.

By improving community infrastructure and public policies, Blue Zones Project maximizes the ability of our community's residents to move naturally, connect socially, access healthy food, and improve quality of life.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

We generally exercise too hard or not at all. However, the world's longest-lived people don't pump iron, run marathons, or join gyms.

Instead, they live in environments that constantly nudge them into moving without thinking about it. They live in places where than can walk to the store, a friend's house, or places of worship. Their houses have stairs. They have gardens in their yards. It's not just about moving; it's about moving naturally.

Why Movement Matters

About 69 percent of the American population can be classified as overweight or obese.³ Our children's life expectancy is projected to be shorter than that of their parents for the first time in history. Obesity is not just a health problem, it's an economic one, too. **The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illness are a staggering \$190 billion, or nearly 21 percent of annual medical spending.** Childhood obesity alone is responsible for \$14 billion in direct medical costs.⁴

The good news is there is a solution for this growing issue. Increasing simple movements like standing, walking, stretching, and bending can help burn an extra 350 calories a day. **Studies show that just by making our communities more walkable, the prevalence of obesity can decrease by more than 10 percent.**⁵ That adds up to even bigger possibilities like lowered incidences of heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory issues and increased productivity, vitality, and years of quality life.

How Moving Naturally Impacts Our Community

City planners, schools, worksites, and organizations across our community have come together to create environments and support programs that help Corry residents move naturally.

Blue Zones Project Corry partnered with local initiatives and leaders to create an Active Transportation Plan and assisted with a regional Rails to Trails Master Plan to enhance the trails system and provide more opportunities to walk and bike throughout the community.



IMPACT OF COMMUNITY DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

- Since 2019, Corry's Walk Score went from 65 (somewhat walkable) to 72 (very walkable). The community's Bike Score also saw significant improvement over the same time period.
- Summer trail usage increased 9.3 percent between 2019 and 2021.
- Winter trail usage increased 205 percent between 2020 and 2022.
- Corry was the first WalkWorks grant recipient in Erie County and was the only plan to finish on time in 2020 despite the pandemic.
- Seven additional miles of bike infrastructure is currently under construction.

ALL TRAILS LEAD TO BETTER WELL-BEING

In Corry, we are investing in new trails that allow residents to move naturally.

We are fortunate to have the beautiful Corry Junction Greenway Trail (CJGT) right in our hometown. Running between Corry and Clymer, New York, this hilly trail winds through scenic streams and forests.

Blue Zones Project Corry team members participated in the City of Corry's Strategic Planning "Improve and Connect our Green Spaces" and "Revitalize our City Center" championship teams and provided regional technical advice on the overall strategic plan.

Working with local partners, Blue Zones Project provided continued support and leadership in the enhancement and promotion of Corry's trail system.

Key Actions and Innovations

- Completed Corry's Active Transportation Plan that identified two routes extending the Corry

Junction Greenway Trail to the future Rail Park & Trail Head. This work has been documented by the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance Connections Committee Trail Gap document for the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

- Supported and promoted the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's National Celebrate Trails Event where we saw the highest daily trail count with more than 150 individuals in attendance.
- Provided Impact Corry with data in support of their application for the 2021 AARP Community Challenge Grant, which was awarded and created a trail spur leading from the main CJGT to Mead Park, a leading community asset.
- Assisted with the Bike Fix It Project by helping assemble and advertise the station for the Grand Reveal event in October 2019. As part of the reveal, Blue Zones Project organized a slow-roll event led by then County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, which became the foundation for a video project created by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council and the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Association.

- Purchased signage for NWPA Trail Association to improve trail safety along with wayfinding signage and public art benches for the new downtown rail park and trail extensions through Impact Corry.

Because of this work, **seven additional miles of bike infrastructure are currently under construction, summer trail usage increased more than nine percent, and winter trail usage increased an impressive 205 percent.**

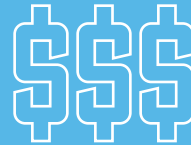


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THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT TEAM TOOK THE LEAD ON ACTIVITIES FOR NATIONAL CELEBRATE TRAILS DAY, UNITING IMPACT CORRY, THE TRI-COUNTY SNOWBLAZERS, AND CORRY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK FOR A CELEBRATION OF OUR TRAIL ASSETS. AT THE EVENT, PEOPLE WALKED TOGETHER, TALKED TO EACH OTHER, ASKED ABOUT FUTURE PLANS, AND SIGNED UP (THEN SHOWED UP) TO HELP BUILD NEW TRAILS. THE VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING IMPACT CORRY AND OTHER COMMUNITY INITIATIVES TRULY BENEFIT FROM BLUE ZONES PROJECT SUPPORT. THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE ALLOWS US TO ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION PATHS TO IMPROVE THE CORRY COMMUNITY.

Kimberly Hawkes
Impact Corry





LOCAL BUSINESS

Walkers and bicyclists tend to spend more money at local businesses than drivers. Complete Streets are more accessible to walkers and bikers, which improves traffic to local businesses. Residents are more likely to shop locally along Complete Streets, which invests in local businesses and creates job growth.⁶

60%

Sales increase in shops in San Francisco's Mission District after the area became more friendly to pedestrian and bicycle activity.⁶



PROPERTY VALUES

Walkable communities with tree-lined streets and slowed traffic increase neighborhood desirability and property values. Homes located in very walkable neighborhoods are valued \$4,000 to \$34,000 more than homes in neighborhoods with average walkability.⁷



EMPLOYMENT

Complete Streets projects that add pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can double the amount of jobs created in an area. Complete Streets projects create 11-14 jobs per \$1 million spent while automobile infrastructure projects create only seven jobs per \$1 million spent.³



WALKABLE COMMUNITIES THRIVE

55%

of Americans would rather drive less and walk more.⁹

73%

currently feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.⁹

66%

of Americans want more transportation options so they have the freedom to choose how they get where they need to go.⁹

TOBACCO

City policies have a lasting, community-wide impact on shaping our environments to support well-being.

Tobacco policies that support well-being include increasing the number of smoke-free environments throughout a community and making tobacco and other smoking devices less accessible.

Tobacco cessation. Blue Zones Project organized tobacco cessation classes in Corry, both in person and virtually, eliminating the travel barrier to get to Erie. Successful reduction in smoking rates has the potential to reduce healthcare costs by nearly \$6,000 per smoker, per year.

Tobacco-free ordinances. With support from Blue Zones Project, the City of Corry implemented new policies requiring all city-owned or leased properties and city-sponsored events to become smoke-free. The initiative also required new signage to be placed at city parks and building entrances.

Engaging young people in shaping future tobacco legislation. Tobacco Policy Committee members and students attended a Tobacco 21 rally, providing the opportunity to meet with several state legislators and the governor.

Community efforts like these led to a substantial decrease in tobacco use. **Since 2019, rates in Corry dropped from 21.4 percent to just 15.7 percent, landing well below state and national tobacco use rates during the same time frame.**

Going forward, actions like updated district

wellness policy standards for K-12 tobacco education and the support of trained facilitators to lead regular tobacco cessation classes with Corry Higher Education will continue to positively influence reduced tobacco use across the community.

FOOD

Food policies that support well-being include making fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible at farmer's markets, establishing community gardens, and positioning unhealthy foods less prominently in grocery stores.

It is estimated that by 2030, if current eating and exercise habits remain the same, 86 percent of the American population will be overweight or obese.¹⁰ Plate sizes are growing (from 9.5 inches in 1900 to 12.5 inches today) and so are our appetites. We're eating 27 percent more than we used to.¹¹

Food is fuel, and what we eat impacts our productivity too. A 2012 study revealed that unhealthy eating is related to a 66 percent increase in the risk of lost productivity. Health-related employee-productivity loss accounts for 77 percent of all productivity loss and costs employers up to three times more in annual healthcare expenses.¹²

In addition to looking and feeling better, the benefit of healthy eating in the U.S. is financial, estimated to be \$114.5 billion per year (in 2012 dollars) in medical savings, increased productivity, and reductions in heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and osteoporotic hip fractures.¹³ Poor diet is a major risk factor for these five health conditions, all of which reduce life expectancy.

With a rich agricultural heritage, Corry sits in northwestern Pennsylvania, surrounded by many family farms and scenic countryside. During Blue Zones Project's initial three-year transformation phase, we were able to shift the food landscape by creating greater awareness around the benefits of a plant-forward diet and ensuring all residents had access to fresh, healthy foods.

Key Actions and Innovations

- Blue Zones Project staff won a \$1,000 grant for Corry's Farmer's Market to cover the purchase of two new handwashing stations, hand sanitizer, and signage to meet Pennsylvania's new COVID-19 standards and remain open during the pandemic.
- Provided guidance to the Corry YMCA on creating a nutrition program for its daycare designed to meet nutritional needs, reduce risk of developing diet-related disease, and establish healthy habits early in life. This work was accomplished through a grant from the Erie County Food Policy Advisory Council, and the YMCA received \$15,000 in grant funding to create farm-to-school and farm-to-family programming.
- Blue Zones Project Corry's food policy committee built a solid relationship with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern Pennsylvania, allowing adaptive drive-thru Produce Express events that strengthened local access to healthy food regardless of income during the COVID-19 pandemic.



POLICY

- Collaborated with the Corry Young Professionals Network (CYPN) to continue the operation of Corry's Farmer's Market, growing attendance, extending hours, broadening the vendor base, and adding healthy eating education through food demos, presentations, and guest speakers at the market. Priority was placed on access to healthy, fresh produce by supporting CYPN's launch of a weekly farmer's market produce bag delivery system, where individuals in Corry who were unable to attend the market in person could still purchase a bag and receive fresh produce delivered to their door at no additional cost.

Since 2019, Corry Farmer's Market attendance rose nearly 20 percent, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and Produce Express now delivers healthy food twice monthly, serving 120 families in the community.



DID YOU KNOW?

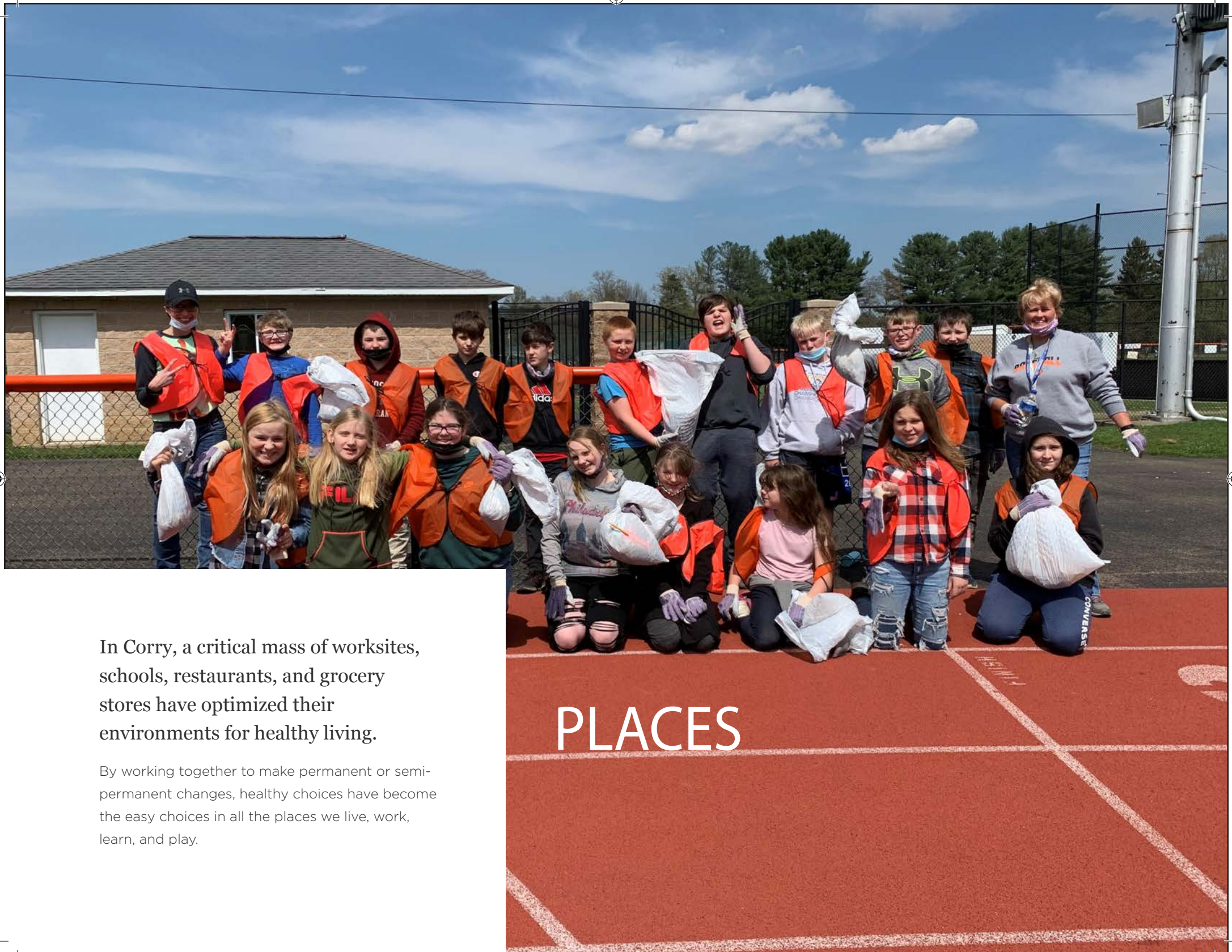
In the U.S., healthy eating could generate an estimated savings of \$114.5 billion per year through reduced medical costs, increased productivity, and declines in heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and osteoporotic hip fractures.¹³

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BLUE ZONES PROJECT CORRY
HELPED WITH OUR FARMER’S
MARKET, WHICH IS A GEM
IN OUR COMMUNITY AND
SUMMER HIGHLIGHT FOR
MANY. THE FARMER’S MARKET
BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER
AND PROVIDES INCOME FOR
LOCAL FARMERS AS WELL
AS FRESH PRODUCE FOR
[RESIDENTS].

Sara Culver Provencio
Former Executive Director, Redevelopment Authority of Corry
CYPN member





In Corry, a critical mass of worksites, schools, restaurants, and grocery stores have optimized their environments for healthy living.

By working together to make permanent or semi-permanent changes, healthy choices have become the easy choices in all the places we live, work, learn, and play.

PLACES

WORKSITES

Why worksite well-being? We spend about one third of our waking hours at work.

Move more. Over the last fifty years, the percentage of jobs requiring moderate physical activity has fallen from 50 percent in 1960 to 20 percent today.¹⁴ That means 80 percent of our jobs are sedentary or only require light activity. This decline in physical activity translates to Americans burning 120-140 fewer calories each day, which results in burning 12-15 fewer pounds each year. As waistlines expand so do our medical costs. Annually, obesity-related illnesses cost more than \$190 billion in healthcare costs and \$153 billion in lost productivity.⁴

Eat better. Seventy percent of Americans eat at their desks several times a week, which can lead to distracted, disengaged, and mindless overeating.¹⁵

Connect and Downshift. The digitalization of the workday has done wonders for productivity but not much for social connectivity. Americans change jobs more often than ever before and working from home or in isolated conditions can further a lack of socializations among coworkers and peers. Fewer than 50 percent of Americans

find meaning at work.¹⁶ Employers that invest in making work meaningful for their employees are more likely to see production rise and turnover decrease.

When people connect with a sense of purpose and wake up to live with it each day, they have lower rates of heart disease, lower healthcare costs, weigh less, and even report higher levels of happiness. Yet 46 percent of men and 40 percent of women say they're still trying to figure out the meaning and purpose of life.¹⁷

Our community saw 10 worksites take actions to support employees, including things like establishing employee wellness committees and newsletters, improving cafeteria options, and starting worksite gardens.

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WE WANT TO BE THE LEADERS OF HEALTH CARE IN OUR COMMUNITY, BUT WE ALSO WANT TO BE KNOWN FOR WELLNESS, GOOD HEALTH, AND A GOOD LIFE. WITH OUR EMPLOYEES, WE STARTED BY LOOKING AT WHAT WE HAD, WHICH WAS A VERY LOOSE KNIT EMPLOYEE HEALTH PROGRAM BASED PRIMARILY ON IMMUNIZATIONS AND INJURIES. WITH BLUE ZONES PROJECT, BEING AN APPROVED WORKSITE, IT ALLOWED US TO LOOK AT NOT ONLY WHAT WE HAVE, BUT HOW WE CAN MAKE IT BETTER. IT'S IMPORTANT TO BE A LEADER IN HEALTHCARE AND NOT JUST BE KNOWN FOR TAKING CARE OF SICK PEOPLE.

Barb Nichols
President & CEO, Corry Memorial
Hospital



PLACES

Worksites in Corry are prioritizing employee well-being and creating a healthier, more engaged workforce.

Corry Counseling Services set out to become the first Blue Zones Project Approved™ worksite in Corry, and they succeeded! The executive leadership team took impressive steps to improve well-being for the organization, which included establishing new policies for volunteer time off, nursing moms, and food catering. An employee wellness committee was formed, and an incentivized wellness program was established. Corry Counseling Services also went the extra mile to transform the physical environment by creating a Downshift Room, adding a bike rack for employees and clients, and purchased five container gardens—one for each department within the organization to maintain.

As one of Blue Zones Project Corry's primary sponsors, **Corry Memorial Hospital** led by example. Providing healthy foods onsite was a priority—a Blue Zones-inspired dish is featured on the cafeteria menu during the work week, healthy vending options and signage are

featured throughout, and an employee farmer's market was launched. Blue Zones well-being resources are featured on the company Intranet and an employee wellness committee was formed and meets quarterly, in addition to maintaining an employee resource board and monthly wellness newsletter.

D&E Machining Ltd. is committed to the health of its staff and providing more opportunities for healthy movement throughout the day. The company added an outdoor basketball hoop for colleagues to connect and play during breaktime, as well as an herb garden and flower bed at the front entrance for lighter movement and de-stressing. To promote healthier eating, leadership established a healthy snack honor system and created a food catering policy for company events and meetings.





WELL-BEING SAVES EVERYONE MONEY



THRIVE, DON'T SUFFER

For employees with the highest levels of well-being — those with the highest scores in the “thriving” category — the cost of lost productivity is only \$840 a year. Among the “suffering” employees — those with the lowest scores in the “thriving” category — the annual per person cost of lost productivity due to sick days is \$28,800.¹⁸



WHAT IS DISEASE BURDEN?

Disease burden cost is how much money a person spends due to disease, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, back pain, diabetes, depression/anxiety, and sleep apnea/insomnia.¹⁸



IT PAYS TO BE HAPPY

Respondents in the “thriving” category averaged \$4,929 per person annually in disease burden cost versus \$6,763 a year for respondents in the struggling and suffering categories. For an organization with 1,000 workers, thriving employees would cost their employers \$1.8 million less every year. Furthermore, the average annual new disease burden cost for people who are thriving is \$723, compared with \$1,488 for those who are struggling or suffering.¹⁸

SCHOOLS

Every day children learn habits that they will carry for the rest of their lives. Establishing healthy habits is so important in the early stages of life.

Leveraging Power 9 principles, schools in Corry helped students and staff move more, eat better, connect with purpose, and downshift.

Move more. Physical activity and stretch breaks during the school day can improve grades, increase concentration, and improve math, reading, and writing test scores.¹⁹ Additionally, research shows that including 10-minute activity breaks daily can promote improvement across these areas by up to 20 percent.

Eat better. Redesigning the school lunchroom is a simple and cost-effective way to nudge students into eating healthier without creating strict policies. Research from Cornell University found that simple changes to the lunchroom design tripled salad sales, doubled fruit sales, doubled sales of healthy sandwiches, and reduced the purchase of ice cream.¹¹ By optimizing the school environment, students are nudged toward healthier choices.

With childhood obesity at 19 percent, there's never been a more important time to examine what students are eating at school.²⁰ The place they go to learn about history and science should be the place they go to learn about eating wisely as well.

Connect and Downshift. Schools embraced connecting students to the world around them—especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.



WALKING HELPS KIDS

Children who walk to school are more alert and ready to learn, strengthen their social networks and develop lifetime fitness habits.^{21,22} A Walking School Bus allows a group of children to walk to school under the supervision of two or more adults.



HEALTHY CAMPUSES, HEALTHY KIDS

Corry Area School District leaders are instilling a lifetime of healthy habits in their students.

Administrators at all three Corry Area School District buildings sought to engage youth ambassadors to lead the charge of well-being among student populations. “Beaver Blue Crews” (BBC) were formed during the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed at establishing peer to peer leadership at the elementary, primary, and middle/high school levels.

BBC added Wellness Wednesday Healthy Tips of the Day into morning announcements to improve the well-being knowledge and engagement of their peers. Since the BBC program’s inception in 2021, participants have attended nearly 35 meetings focused on well-being at school.

Key Actions and Innovations

- Began hosting Blue Zones Project Purpose Workshops and cooking classes at the Middle-High School. Eighty-five students and staff were engaged through this programming.
- Installed water refill systems at the primary and intermediate buildings so students could increase water intake and provided more than 800 reusable water bottles to the student population.
- Expanded school district wellness committee meeting frequency from two to four times per year to help maintain best practices for student and staff well-being.
- Added an Activities Zone to the annual district holiday party providing students an opportunity to have fun while moving naturally.

- Blue Zones Project Corry team members participated in CASD Family Involvement Nights to engage students and parents in healthy community opportunities.

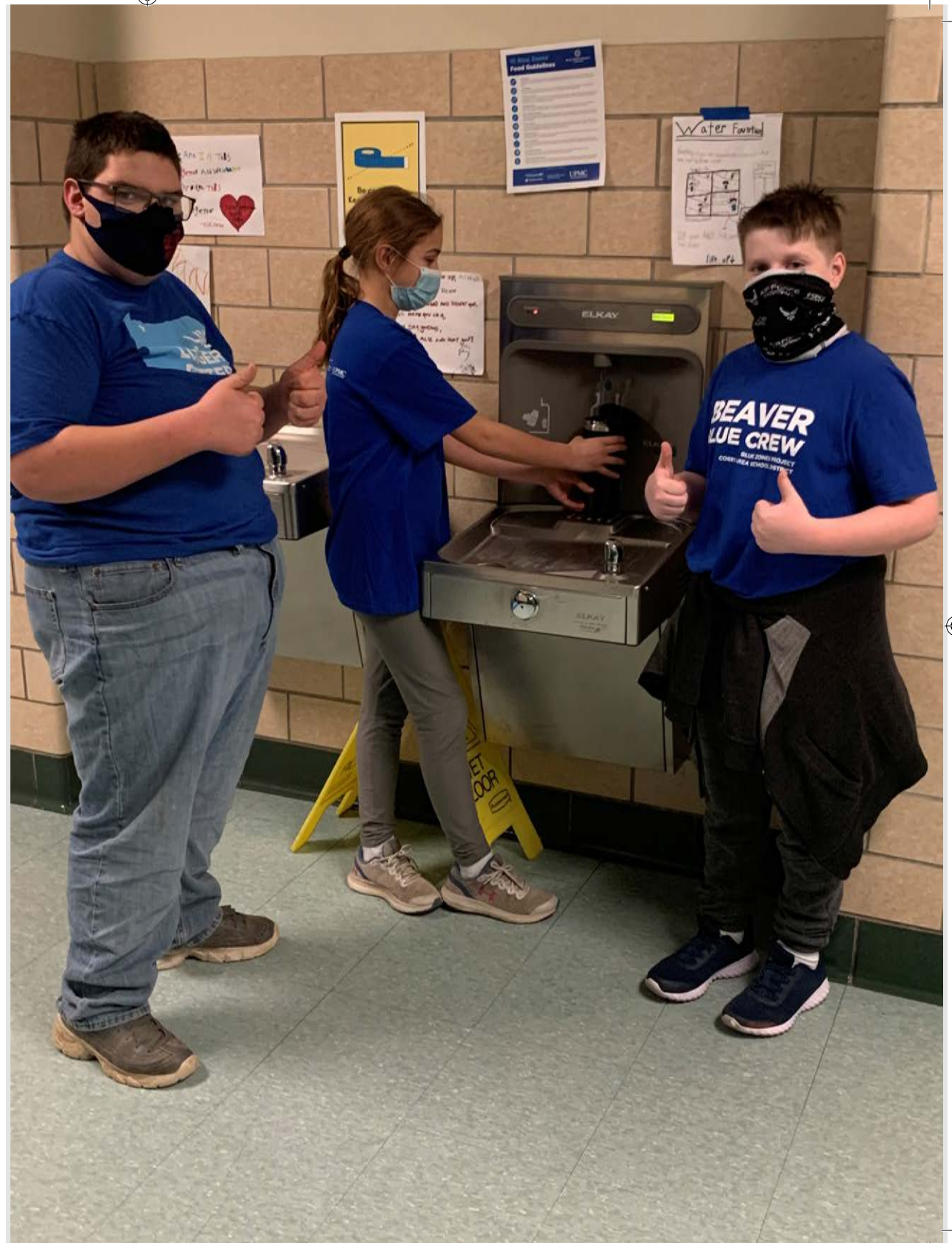
Because of this work, **more than 1,900 young people in Corry are going to school in environments that better support their mental, physical, and social well-being.**



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THE CORRY AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT TRULY BELIEVES IN DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR CHILDREN. BECAUSE OF OUR GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION, ACCESS TO MANY OUTSIDE SERVICES CAN BE DIFFICULT. THAT SAID, WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN... WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES THAT SIMPLY DO NOT NORMALLY OCCUR WITHIN A SCHOOL DISTRICT. THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT, AND ALL THAT IT SUPPORTS AND INSTILLS, IS ONE OF THOSE OPPORTUNITIES. IT IS A MINDSET THAT I SEE POSITIVELY AFFECTING ALL MEMBERS OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

Dan Daum
Director of Elementary Education
Corry Area School District



RESTAURANTS

The typical American entrée (without an appetizer or dessert) has 1,000 calories, with some entrees ranging up to a shocking 2,500 calories!²³

For the average adult, eating one meal away from home each week translates to gaining roughly two extra pounds per year.²⁴ With nearly one half of every food dollar spent on food prepared outside the home, it's important that restaurants make it easier for their customers to make the healthy choice by offering healthy entrees.

People appreciate the change. In a five-year study of sales at chain restaurants, those that increased their better-for-you/low-calorie servings saw a 5.5 percent increase in same-store sales, while those that did not suffered a 5.5 percent decrease.²⁴

Two locally owned restaurants stepped up to make healthy food choices easier—things like creating new healthy entrees for adults and children and serving healthier sides as the default option.

At **Ploss' Lunch Box**, you can now order one of four new Blue Zones-inspired dishes off the menu, including a black bean burger or portabella wrap and a Blue Zones Special of the Day. French fries have been replaced with fresh fruit or the vegetable of the day as the default side dish and water is served with meals. Ploss' also worked with Blue Zones Project Corry team members to create and promote a Blue Zones Worksite Catering Menu as part of their catering service.

Customers at **The Juice Shop** can stop by one of the restaurant's new decorative water dispensers for complementary water infused with fresh fruits and herbs. Owner Jenn Utegg wanted to provide more healthy options for her community. After partnering with Blue Zones Project, four Blue Zones-inspired dishes, including the Go Greek Salad and Hummus Veggie Sandwich, were added to the adult menu and The Juice Shop added a kid's menu with healthy options. A paper menu promotes all current and new offerings.

”

BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS HELPED RAISE AWARENESS IN OUR COMMUNITY AROUND HEALTHY EATING AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO OUR OVERALL WELL-BEING. WE'RE THRILLED THAT OUR COMMUNITY HAS BEEN SO SUPPORTIVE. OFFERING A VARIETY OF HEALTHY FOODS IS ONE WAY WE'RE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH.

Jenn Utegg
Owner
The Juice Shop



GROCERY STORES

Americans go to the grocery store more than twice a week.

The actions we take to determine what we eat begin at the grocery store, and more than 60 percent of the food we purchase is highly processed, fatty salty, or sugary.²⁵ Many grocery stores are currently designed to lead people to unhealthy goods in the way they are designed, the deals they promote, and the packaging of the food they sell.²⁶ Our community is taking the lead in taking the grocery store back.

Sander's Market, the only locally owned grocery store in Corry, completed actions to make healthy food choices easier for customers—things like offering healthy foods on end caps and in special displays clearly marked with Blue Zones signage, implementing grocery shopping tours and plant slant food demonstrations onsite, and creating a Blue Zones checkout lane full of healthy options.

Additionally, the market established a Blue Zones Project Information Hub, which features healthy recipes, Power 9 information, the Blue Zones Food List, a Blue Zones scavenger hunt, informational fliers about local Blue Zones Project activities, and a dedicated Blue Zones

grocery shopping list specifically for Sander's Market that notes aisles where Blue Zones shelf talkers are located.

Going forward, Blue Zones Project will continue to partner with Sander's Market in Corry to offer quarterly shopping tours and cooking demonstrations and maintain up-to-date healthy signage.

The extra effort to educate customers about which foods are healthy shows that Sander's Market in Corry is invested in the well-being of its community.

Actions Completed by Sander's Market

- 1 Creating a Blue Zones checkout lane
- 2 Offered healthy grocery shopping tours
- 3 Hosted plant-based cooking demos
- 4 Established Blue Zones Project Information Hub



BY THE NUMBERS

Approximately **1,000 residents** attended grocery shopping tours at Sander's Market

Nearly **700 individuals** attended healthy food demonstrations offered at the store



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AS CORRY'S ONLY LOCALLY OWNED NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET, SANDER'S GOT INVOLVED WITH BLUE ZONES EARLY IN THE PROJECT TO HELP LEAD THE WAY TO A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY. OUR CUSTOMERS WANT HEALTHY OPTIONS, AND WE WANT TO BE THE GROCERY STORY WHERE THEY CAN FIND THOSE OPTIONS EASILY. BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS HELPED US HIGHLIGHT HEALTHY FOODS UP AND DOWN OUR AISLES, AND THEY'VE BROUGHT EDUCATION INTO THE STORE THROUGH GROCERY SHOPPING TOURS AND FOOD DEMOS.

Mike McCray
Manager
Sander's Market Corry



PEOPLE

Blue Zones Project encourages people to optimize their homes and social environments via the Personal Pledge, provides opportunities for individuals to discover meaning at Purpose Workshops, facilitates volunteer experiences to help people connect with the community, and offers programs that deliver support through healthy social networks.



PEOPLE

STRONG SOCIAL CONNECTIONS HELP RESIDENTS MOVE MORE, EAT BETTER, CONNECT, AND DOWNSHIFT

Our connections to friends, family, and those around us are very powerful. They can shape our lives in more ways than we realize.

Research shows that even your friends' friends' friends—people you don't even know—can affect your health, happiness, and behaviors.²⁷

The world's longest-lived people in blue zones areas have always understood the power of social connectedness. In Okinawa, "Moais"—groups of about five people who commit to each other for life—provide social connection, emotional, and sometimes financial support in times of need. Moai members have the stress-shedding security of knowing there is always someone there for them.

Spending time with people who positively influence one another is crucial. In Corry, we embrace the power of social connections to bring citizens together through groups, clubs, and faith-based organizations.



WHAT'S A MOAI?

Moai is a concept from Okinawa, Japan, that roughly means coming together for a common purpose. When you find your Moai, you find your personal board of directors — a committed group of individuals supporting each other and working collectively to improve well-being, for life.

”

I AM SO GLAD BLUE ZONES PROJECT CAME TO OUR LITTLE TOWN. I HAVE ENJOYED OUR WALKING MOAIS. THESE WALKS HAVE SOLIDIFIED FRIENDSHIPS, OLD AND NEW, AS WELL AS HELPED US ON OUR HEALTH JOURNEYS. HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO SEE THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT TEAM AT ALL THE EVENTS IN CORRY, ESPECIALLY FIRST FRIDAYS. I HOPE OUR FUTURE CONTINUES TO HAVE BLUE ZONES PROJECT IN IT!

Peggy Howell
Walking Moai Member

PEOPLE

Move more. Fifty-one Walking Moais were created throughout the community, building long-lasting friendships while exploring our community on foot.

Eat better. Cooking classes and demonstrations brought individuals together to learn to cook new plant-based dishes. **Nearly 360 Corry residents attended a plant-based cooking demonstration.**

Connect and have the right outlook. Blue zones centenarians also put an emphasis on connecting with their reason for being. Whether through family, career, or community, living with purpose pays off. Blue Zones researchers have found that people who have a clear sense of purpose in life tend to live about seven years longer than those who don't.³

Through volunteering, Purpose Workshops, and Purpose Moais, Blue Zones Project Corry encourages individuals to discover their innate gifts. We help our community members match their passions and commitment to volunteer opportunities that deepen their sense of purpose.

More than 200 people sought to discover their gifts at a Purpose Workshop and put their skills to work by giving back to Corry through volunteer work. **With more than 465 hours donated, volunteers in Corry have generated \$13,926.75 in value for the community.**²⁸

Today, **62-percent of Corry residents report they are thriving in life, compared to just 45 percent in 2019.**



BY THE NUMBERS

More than **950 Corry residents** attended educational events focused on well-being



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IT'S BEEN A GREAT EXPERIENCE TO SEE HOW THE BLUE ZONE PROJECT HAS IMPACTED OUR COMMUNITY, IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF INDIVIDUALS OVERALL PHYSICALLY AND INCREASING AWARENESS OF HOW TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE. I HAVE TRULY ENJOYED THE BLUE ZONES ACTIVITIES AND HAVE MADE CHANGES TO MY OWN EATING HABITS, MAKING MANY OTHER HEALTHY CHOICES FOR MY PERSONAL WELL-BEING.

Linda Yeane
Blue Zones Project Corry Committee Member and Volunteer



PLANT-BASED COOKING CATCHES FIRE

Eating together makes a big difference. Obesity is associated with significantly increased risk of more than 20 chronic diseases and health conditions that cause devastating consequences and increased mortality.

Adolescents who eat dinner with their families are 15 percent less likely to become obese.²⁹ A report by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse points out that teens who eat dinner with their families more than three times a week are less likely to do poorly in school.³⁰

Opportunities to attend community-based, in person cooking classes in the Corry community prior to Blue Zones Project were few and far between. It's no surprise then, that plant-based cooking demonstrations attracted high interest among community members of all ages and skill levels, providing the opportunity to learn how to prepare fresh, healthy, and delicious meals with plant-based ingredients.

Blue Zones Project built relationships with local chefs like Betsy Grinder, who led a majority of the Project's free cooking classes held regularly at sites across the community. Another partnership with the Corry Area School District led to regular engagement with high school students involved in the district's culinary programs. Through a series of curated experiences, students learned about longevity foods from the world's blue zones and crafted their own plant-based dishes to help them eat like a centenarian. And cooking demonstrations held at Corry worksites allowed the Project to reach many employees interested in plant-slant eating.



BY THE NUMBERS

1,000 CALORIES

in a typical American entree in a restaurant.²³

2 EXTRA POUNDS

gained a year by eating one meal away from home a week.²⁴



PEOPLE

In addition to ongoing classes for the public, Blue Zones Project worked directly with several local non-profits to reach individuals who regularly access local food distributions.

These specialized demonstrations provided attendees with hands-on experience to support their interest in making healthy meals at home using the ingredients often found in their food box donations.

When COVID-19 hit, Blue Zones Project Corry team members took the lead in collaborating with colleagues from other Blue Zones Project communities across the country. Residents of these communities across the U.S. learned to make plant-based meals at home through virtual cooking classes featuring local chefs from other Blue Zones Projects, highlighting their regions' unique culture and influence by utilizing fresh, local produce.



Stories of Success

- Through regularly scheduled Blue Zones Brunches, Blue Zones Project partnered with the local YMCA to prepare items on-site for members of the Y and the community. These monthly brunches offered tastings and education around plant-based eating.
- To expand the number of activities offered at the Corry Farmer's Market, Blue Zones Project led numerous cooking demonstrations and food tastings during market hours to help inspire, educate, and motivate attendees to try plant-based recipes. Highlighting everything from fresh fruit smoothies to pickled vegetables, shoppers could pick up the featured recipe card and find all the fresh, local ingredients on sale at the market.
- LECOM's Parkside at Corry, an independent living center, works with Blue Zones Project, chef Betsy Grinder, and Corry Memorial Hospital to introduce and offer longevity foods to their residents. With regular Blue Zones

presentations, cooking classes, and Blue Zones-inspired dishes available in the nearby hospital cafeteria, residents are learning the value and joy in eating a plant-slant diet.

- The growing interest in plant-based eating sparked the addition of a Corry Signature Dish contest held in conjunction with Corry's Potato Festival. The contest accepts plant-based recipes that highlight the region's plentiful potato crop.



BY THE NUMBERS

In 2019, 41.2% of Corry residents had someone in their life who encouraged them to be healthy. Today, 52.9% of residents get healthy encouragement from loved ones, an **increase of 28.4% in just three years.**



GOOD FRIENDS AND FAMILY MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER



FRIENDS ALWAYS SHARE

Friends provide more than good times, memories, and companionship — they also share health habits and other traits with one another. Did you know that if your friends are smokers, unhappy, or obese, you're more likely to adopt these same traits? You are twice as likely to be overweight if your three closest friends are overweight,³¹ and inversely, you are 20 percent more likely to succeed at new behaviors if you do them with a buddy.³²



SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The amount of time you spend socializing each day has a direct impact on your well-being. To have a good day, a person needs around six hours of socializing. So, get socializing!³³



EAT TOGETHER BETTER

Adolescents who eat dinner with their family are 15 percent less likely to become obese. Additionally, a report by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse points out that teens who eat dinner with their families more than three times a week are less likely to do poorly in school.³⁰



DON'T GO AT IT ALONE

It's getting harder to be connected. In 2004, 25 percent of Americans felt they had no one to confide in. A lack of social connectedness leaves people vulnerable to depression, anxiety, and other anti-social behaviors.³³ Social isolation and feelings of loneliness can increase the chance of premature death by 14 percent — nearly double the risk of premature death from obesity.³⁴

CONCLUSION

WITH GRATITUDE

Blue Zones Project Corry is a testament to effectiveness of collective impact. We have seen tremendous improvement in the health and well-being of our community and its residents over the past three years.

The improvements we've seen would not have been possible without the passion and dedication of hundreds of volunteers, dozens of organizations, and our primary sponsors: Highmark | AHN St. Vincent, LECOM Health | Corry Memorial Hospital, and UPMC.

Thank you to every sponsor, community leader, committee member, volunteer, ambassador, community partner, and organization for the countless hours invested, not just in the work of Blue Zones Project, but in making Corry a healthier place to live, work, learn, and play.

Thank you for believing in the dream of a healthier community, and for putting your passions and resources to work. Because of you, Corry is experiencing tremendous well-being improvement.



BROUGHT TO
CORY BY:



LECOM HEALTH
CORY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

UPMC
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE



CONGRATS, CORY!

A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

We did this together. By putting our personal and collective well-being first, we're making healthy choices easier, creating more economic opportunities, and ensuring a better quality of life for everyone. **Here's to making Corry one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living better, together.**

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Designated Organizations

Blue Zones Grocery Stores

Sander's Market

Blue Zones Restaurants

Ploss' Lunch Box

The Juice Shop

Blue Zones Schools

Corry Area Intermediate School

Corry Area Middle-High School

Corry Area Primary School

Blue Zones Worksites

Corry Area School District

Corry Counseling Services

Corry Fabrication LLC

Corry Memorial Hospital

D&E Machining Ltd.

FurHaven Pet Products

Hensa STMP

Tonnard Manufacturing Corp.

Viking Plastics

YMCA of Corry

Other Organizations

LECOM Health's Parkside at Corry

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