



# UPPER NAPA VALLEY, CA

The first certified Blue Zones Community® in Northern California invests in well-being for a more livable, vibrant, and healthy future.

A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY



BLUE ZONES PROJECT



# CONGRATS, UPPER NAPA VALLEY, 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 the Upper Napa Valley, we are seizing every opportunity to move well-being in the right direction. Since launching Blue Zones Project® in our community, we've seen thousands of individuals take steps to improve their well-being. 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 well-being transformation is happening. The Upper Napa Valley has always been a great place to live, work, learn, and play—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 the Upper Napa Valley one of the healthiest regions in California, 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 2021, a broad base of Upper Napa Valley's leadership set a 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 lead to lower medical costs, better workforce productivity, and a strengthened regional economy.

Since 2021, the Upper Napa Valley has undergone its own community transformation, exceeding targets set to engage individuals and organizations, and to implement community-wide policy changes. Well-being among individuals engaged in the Project has reached new highs according to the most recent Sharecare Community Well-Being Index (CWBI) and other community indicators.

Our community improved in four key well-being areas measured by the CWBI — community, social, financial, and physical —and overall well-being improved by 3.9-points among individuals engaged in the Project.

A broad coalition has supported the Upper Napa Valley's efforts to adopt 97 policies, plans, and initiatives like Complete Streets, support for the Vine Trail, Farm to School pilots, a food skills inventory research project and tools, the Napa County Mobile Market, flavored tobacco bans, and tobacco-free city events that contribute to an even more vibrant and active community.

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

Napa Valley has been enriched as a community where more people and businesses choose to be. Conservatively, the three-year estimated healthcare and workforce productivity savings for the Upper Napa Valley totals \$600,000 with an additional \$22.8 million in savings projected over the next ten years.

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

When Blue Zones Project first engaged Upper Napa Valley leadership, we established an ambitious plan together for the community to become Northern California's first Blue Zones Community®. Today, Upper Napa Valley stands as a model across the state and country for what bold leaders can achieve when they invest in the health and well-being of their citizens. Congratulations for creating an even better Upper Napa Valley!

A man and a woman are shown in a lush garden setting, smiling and engaged in preparing food. The woman, on the left, has long dark hair and is wearing a white sweater. The man, on the right, has short brown hair and a beard, and is wearing a white button-down shirt. They are both looking down at a metal colander filled with green vegetables. The background is a soft-focus garden with various plants and trees. The title 'THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT STORY' is overlaid in white text on the right side of the image.

# 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 hot spots, where people live measurably longer, with lower incidences of chronic disease and a higher quality of life.



More than 86 percent<sub>1</sub> of the nearly \$3 trillion in annual U.S. healthcare costs are spent on chronic disease<sub>1</sub>. 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.<sub>2</sub> 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 hot spots. They can be grouped into four categories. These principles are the basis for how Blue Zones Project impacts communities to make healthy choices easier:

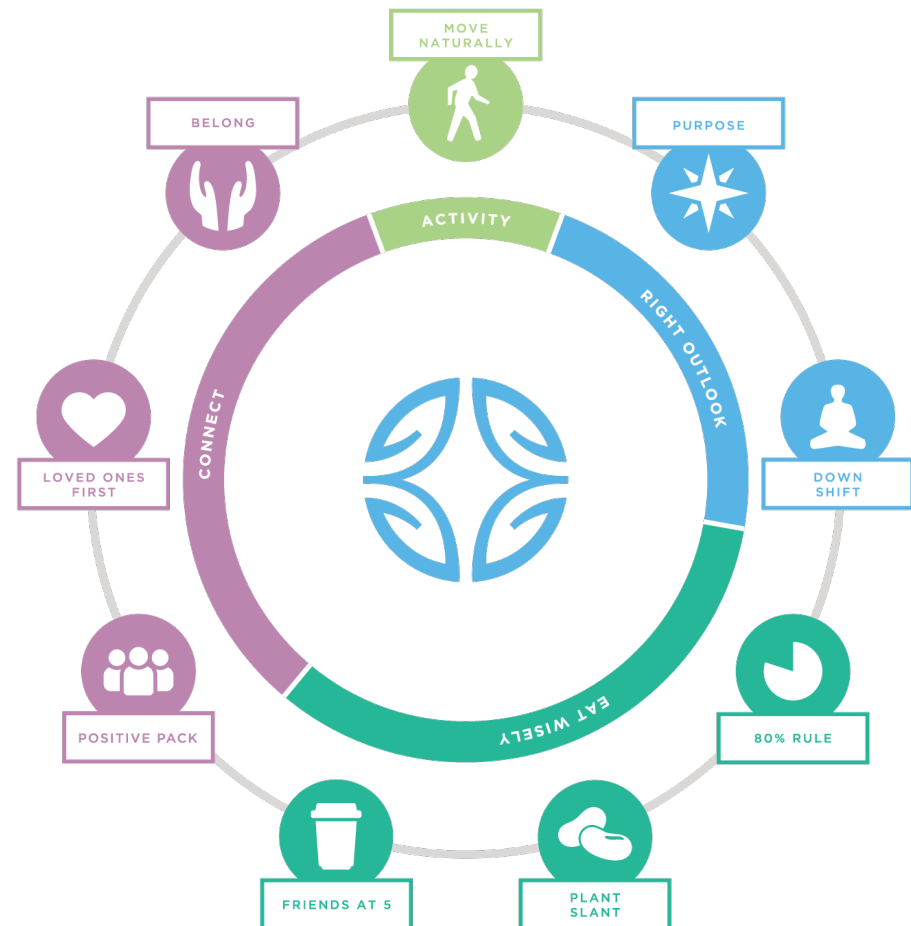
**Move Naturally.** Homes, communities, and workplaces are designed to nudge people into physical activity. Focus should be given to favorite activities, as individuals are more likely to practice them regularly. For example: gardening, walking, or biking to run errands, and playing with one’s family 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
- Enjoying a cup of coffee or glass of wine with friends during regular social hours

**Connect.** Research indicates it is exceedingly important that individuals 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.





## BLUE ZONES PROJECT LIFE RADIUS

Blue Zones Project takes a unique, systematic approach to improving well-being by focusing on our life radius.

Blue Zones Project is based upon Dan Buettner's discoveries and additional well-being research. A community-led well-being improvement initiative, Blue Zones Project is designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to a community's environment, policy, and social networks. More than 75 communities have joined the movement since the first pilot project in 2009. Upper Napa Valley is the first community in Northern California to make the commitment to transform well-being with Blue Zones Project.

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 4M 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.



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 the Upper Napa Valley, overall community well-being sat at 70.7 points out of 100 according to Sharecare Community Well-Being Index (CWBI) data. More than 15 percent of area residents engaged with the Project, and the impact shows. **Today, overall well-being in the Upper Napa Valley among residents engaged with Blue Zones Project is 74.6 points.** Each point increase in well-being score leads to an approximate 2 percent reduction in emergency room (ER) visits and hospital utilization, and an approximate 1 percent reduction in total healthcare costs.

This improvement highlights the intentional efforts to improve the health of Upper Napa Valley’s residents.

Well-Being in Upper Napa Valley

	2021 <i>baseline</i>	2024 <i>*engaged</i>	Point Change
Overall Well-Being Score	70.7	74.6	3.9 ↑
Community Well-Being	69.3	76.3	7.0 ↑
Social Well-Being	70.4	76.3	5.9 ↑
Purpose Well-Being	69.2	68.8	0.4 ↓
Physical Well-Being	72.1	76.0	3.9 ↑
Financial Well-Being	67.0	75.6	8.6 ↑

*\* Indicates respondents who self-identify as having been engaged with Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley.*



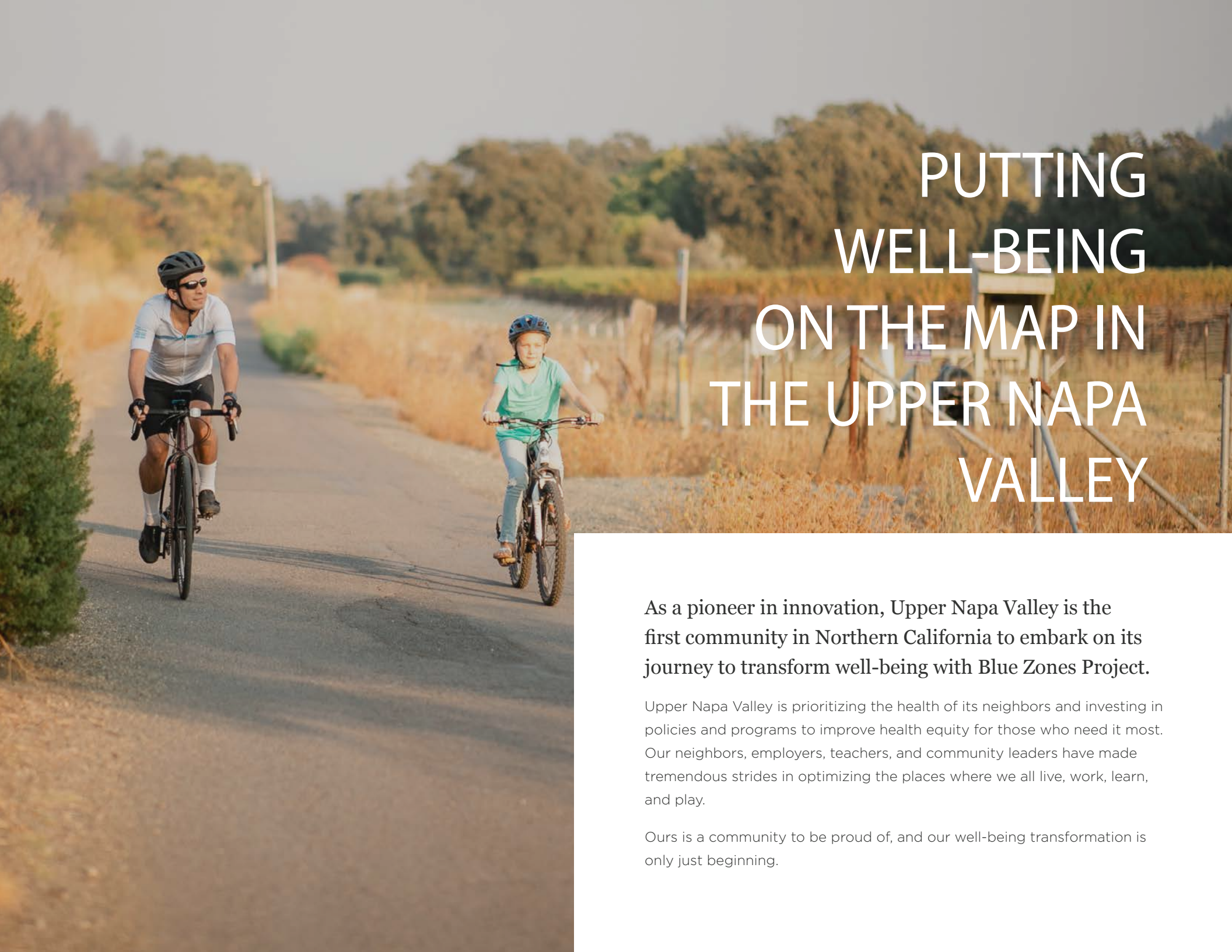


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IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGHER WELL-BEING, WE HAVE FOUND THAT PEOPLE LIVE LONGER, HAPPIER LIVES AND BUSINESS AND LOCAL ECONOMIES FLOURISH. A RELIABLE WELL-BEING METRIC PROVIDES COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS WITH THE DATA AND INSIGHTS THEY NEED TO HELP 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



A man and a child are riding bicycles on a paved path. The man is on the left, wearing a white cycling jersey, black shorts, a black helmet, and sunglasses. The child is on the right, wearing a green shirt, blue pants, and a blue helmet. They are both smiling and looking forward. The path is surrounded by dry grass and trees in the background.

# PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN THE UPPER NAPA VALLEY

**As a pioneer in innovation, Upper Napa Valley is the first community in Northern California to embark on its journey to transform well-being with Blue Zones Project.**

Upper Napa Valley 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, employers, teachers, and community leaders have made tremendous strides in optimizing the places where we all live, work, learn, and play.

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



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ADVENTIST HEALTH HAS BEEN SERVING THIS COMMUNITY, PROVIDING HEALTH CARE FOR 145 YEARS, BUT THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT LETS US GET INTO THE COMMUNITY AND MAKE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE WITH INITIATIVES THAT ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

Dr. Steven Herber  
President & CEO  
Adventist Health St. Helena  
Hospital

## 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.

A vital part of Upper Napa Valley’s well-being improvement initiative, Blue Zones Project encourages changes to our community that lead to healthier options. When our entire community participates—from our worksites and schools to our restaurants and grocery stores—the small changes contribute to huge benefits for all of us: lowered healthcare costs, improved productivity, and ultimately, a higher quality of life.

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

**More than 2,500 community members of all ages and backgrounds participated in Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley.** Many attended free cooking demonstrations and Purpose Workshops, 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 33 organizations participated in Blue Zones Project.** Worksites, schools, restaurants, grocery stores, 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 and community planning standpoint, Upper Napa Valley is creating, supporting, and implementing:

- A Complete Streets Plan created for the Town of Yountville, with a Mobility Plan to follow
- An Affordable Housing Playbook Capacity Building and Plan in development in partnership with the City of Calistoga
- Separated bike lane demonstration projects in the cities of Calistoga and St. Helena situated along school routes, allowing students and residents to experience safer infrastructure improvements and provide feedback
- The creation of way-finding maps to increase walkability in St. Helena and Yountville
- The inclusion of a smoke-free multi-unit housing ordinance in Calistoga's 2023 - 2031 Housing Element
- An updated Special Event Permit for

the Town of Yountville that includes smoke-free requirements for events held on public property

- A Farm to School pilot and ongoing support for school gardens and garden curriculum, including school garden environmental scans
- A food skills inventory to identify assets and gaps to inform a community food skills development plan



## THE WORLD IS WATCHING

Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley has attracted local and national recognition, with more 300 than media mentions to date.

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

### BLUE ZONES PROJECT UPPER NAPA VALLEY IN THE NEWS

303

Total Mentions

1.3 Billion

Total Reach

\$2.4 Million

Total Publicity Value\*

*\*Publicity value calculated using Cision Media Monitoring service.*

*Napa Valley*  
**Register**

 **hoodline**

NAPA  
VALLEY *life*  
MAGAZINE

**KSRO** 1350 AM  
103.5 FM  
SONOMA COUNTY'S NEWS TALK

*Tountville Sun*

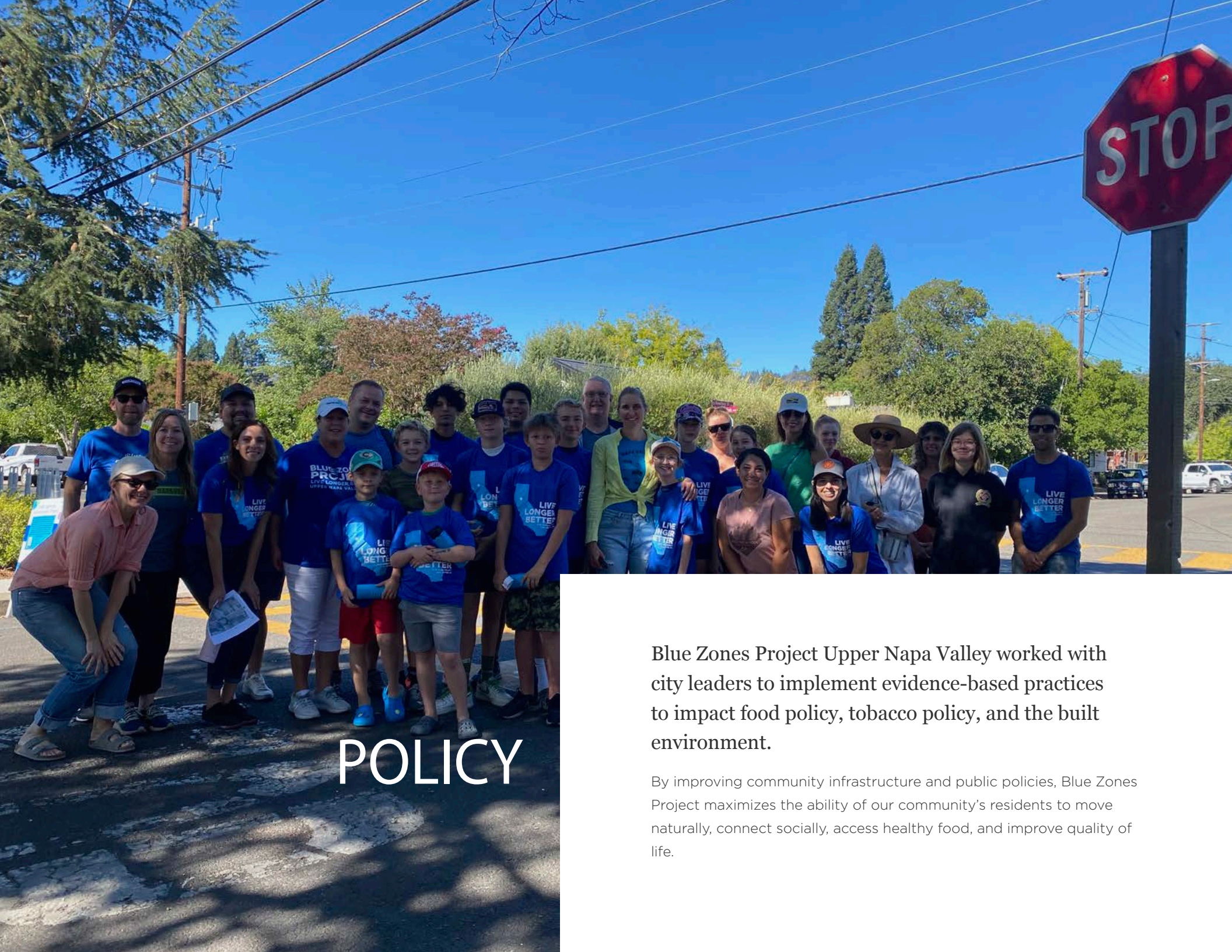
THE NORTH BAY  
**Business  
Journal**  
SINCE 1967  
NORTH SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: SONOMA, NAPA AND MARIN COUNTIES

The Press Democrat

healthleaders







# POLICY

Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley worked 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

Walkable and bikeable communities are safer and more profitable, yet only 1.2 percent of metropolitan land area is considered walkable.<sup>3</sup>

The world's longest-lived people reside 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.

The built environment can support—or discourage—moving naturally. Built environment policies help communities move away from automobile-centric development to better accommodate all users and modes of transportation.

### Why It Matters

Transforming our surroundings holds the key to a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future. Imagine a world where neighborhoods are designed to encourage walking, where streets are vibrant and safe, and where economic growth

goes hand in hand with environmental sustainability.

In suburban areas dominated by cars, obesity rates soar as people drive more, walk less, and bear the burden of excess weight. The statistics are alarming—a mere hour spent behind the wheel each day increases the risk of obesity by 6 percent. And in areas devoid of sidewalks, the danger escalates, with pedestrians more than twice as likely to fall victim to vehicular accidents.<sup>4</sup>

But transformation is always possible. Initiatives like Complete Street projects not only revitalize communities but also create 11 to 14 jobs per \$1 million spent—far surpassing the employment opportunities of traditional automobile infrastructure projects (seven jobs per \$1 million spent).<sup>5</sup> Picture the impact: a return to the walking and biking levels of 1969 could slash 3.2 billion vehicle miles, curbing carbon emissions by 1.5 million tons and other pollutants by 89,000 tons—equivalent to removing a quarter of a million cars from the roads annually.<sup>4</sup>

The solution lies in forward-thinking policies that prioritize safe, active living. By fostering environments conducive to

natural movement, we can rewrite the narrative of more sedentary lifestyles and pave the way for vibrant, thriving communities.

**Together with local partners, Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley supported the development, adoption, or implementation of 23 built environment initiatives.** Work to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety was furthered by Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and demonstration projects in Calistoga and St. Helena. New community engagement with the Napa County Park Rx Coalition led to the launch of OuterSpacial—an app that challenged residents to visit local parks and provided walking maps to reintroduce residents to their neighborhoods. And the local Blue Zones Project team supported capacity building for important efforts like affordable housing and support for an 8.2-mile expansion of the Vine Trail.





## IMPACT OF COMMUNITY DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

- City planners, Public Works teams, schools, worksites, and organizations across our community have come together to create environments and support programs that help Upper Napa Valley residents move naturally.
- Blue Zones Project developed 40 walking routes across the Upper Napa Valley region, working with partners to identify routes that would meet the needs of the community.
- Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley partnered with local initiatives and leaders to create Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) demonstration projects to educate the community and provide more opportunities to walk and bike safely.



## Safer Streets for All

In the picturesque towns of Calistoga and St. Helena, the Blue Zones Project, in partnership with the **Napa County Bicycle Coalition** and local community leaders, embarked on an experiential initiative to promote safe cycling and healthier lifestyles through temporary bike lane demonstration projects. These efforts not only aimed to improve traffic safety but also created a sense of community involvement and empowerment, highlighting the importance of active living.

The community safety event in Calistoga, which culminated in a protected bike lane set up by Blue Zones Project along North Oak Street, was a resounding success. The Napa County Bicycle Coalition played a pivotal role, guiding children through a bike rodeo and leading a community ride, with the support of the local police department. The event brought together residents of all ages, offering activities such as fire, cycling, and water safety demonstrations, ensuring that the day was both educational and fun. Spanish-speaking volunteers from **Innovative Health Solutions** were on hand to engage with the Latinx community, ensuring inclusivity for all.

The collaboration extended far beyond Blue Zones Project. **Calistoga Joint Unified School District**, under Superintendent Audra Pittman's leadership, played an active role, alongside **UpValley Family Centers**, **Promotoras**, and engaged parents. The event received further support from the **Calistoga Police Department**, **Fire Department**, and local organizations like **Aldea**, **NSO**, and the **Rotary Club**. The atmosphere of collective responsibility and community spirit was palpable.

The impact of these temporary bike lanes was immediate. Superintendent Pittman noted how children's enthusiasm grew throughout the week. "More students are riding their bikes and walking to school. Anytime we do something that helps families feel like their kids are going to be safer, it increases participation," she observed. This excitement mirrored the sentiments of many parents and children who relished the newfound safety of protected bike lanes. Giovanna Miramontes from Innovative Health Solutions recalled overhearing a child exclaim, "Oh, wow, they fixed the bike lane." This simple statement encapsulated the community's desire for safer infrastructure.



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I WAS SURPRISED BY HOW EXCITED THE KIDS WERE. MORE STUDENTS ARE RIDING THEIR BIKES AND WALKING TO SCHOOL THROUGHOUT THIS WHOLE PROCESS. ANY TIME WE DO SOMETHING THAT HELPS THE FAMILIES FEEL LIKE THEIR KIDS ARE GOING TO BE SAFER INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE THAT WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL.

Audra Pittman  
Superintendent  
Calistoga Joint Unified School District

## POLICY: BUILT ENVIRONMENT

In addition to fostering excitement, Blue Zones Project conducted an informal survey that revealed widespread support for permanent bike lanes. Community members expressed a desire to see these lanes extended to other parts of town, such as Grant Street and downtown areas. City officials recognized the long-term benefits, particularly for school children who would gain safer routes to and from school. As a result, the city began planning to make these lanes a permanent fixture.

In neighboring St. Helena, demonstrative changes to the built environment also proved a success. There, Blue Zones Project, in collaboration with Napa County Bicycle Coalition, supported Safe Routes to School initiatives. The St. Helena bulb-out demonstration, a temporary art installation at the busy intersection of Kearney Street and Madrona Avenue, was aimed at calming traffic and improving pedestrian safety. Approved by the City Council in early 2023, the project garnered attention from residents, volunteers, and local media.

Community outreach efforts were extensive. Volunteers from Blue Zones Project and its partners spread the word about the bulb-out project through

newsletters, social media, and local events like the St. Helena Harvest Festival, where residents shared feedback on potential permanent installations. Data collection was a key part of the process, with Public Works collecting speed data before and after the demonstration, while bilingual community surveys provided further insight into residents' opinions. Although some disliked the aesthetics of the temporary bulb-outs, the Blue Zones Project team responded with photo examples of what a permanent installation might look like, which helped shift perceptions.

Launched in September 2023, the St. Helena bulb-out remained in place until the end of December, offering the city a real-world trial of various traffic-calming measures. The project included high-visibility crosswalk striping, traffic-calming equipment, and temporary artwork to draw attention to the busy intersection. The lessons learned from this temporary installation will help shape future infrastructure projects, ensuring the safety of both cyclists and pedestrians in the long term.

Through these demonstration projects, Blue Zones Project and partners

succeeded in not only improving road safety but also creating lasting connections within the community. These efforts have laid the groundwork for future initiatives, ensuring that Calistoga and St. Helena can continue to foster healthier, safer, and more active communities for generations to come. Because of their initial success, both the protected bike lane in Calistoga and St. Helena bulb-out were made permanent.





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WHAT WE DID IN CALISTOGA WITH BUILT ENVIRONMENT DEMONSTRATIONS HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT FOR ME BECAUSE IT REALLY GOT SOMETHING ON THE GROUND THAT PEOPLE COULD EXPERIENCE AND SEE AND INTRODUCE NEW DESIGNS TO THE AREA. IT BROUGHT ALL THE PEOPLE TOGETHER THAT NEEDED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

Carlotta Sainato  
Napa County Bicycle Association





## COMPLETE STREETS DRIVE ECONOMIC VALUE



### 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.<sup>6</sup>



### 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.<sup>7</sup>



### 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.<sup>5</sup>



### WALKABLE COMMUNITIES THRIVE

55%

of Americans would rather drive less and walk more.<sup>8</sup>

73%

currently feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.<sup>8</sup>

66%

of Americans want more transportation options so they have the freedom to choose how they get where they need to go.<sup>8</sup>

## TOBACCO

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

**Smoking-related illness in the United States costs more than \$300 billion each year, including nearly \$170 billion for direct medical care and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity.**<sup>9</sup> Comprehensive community policies can limit exposure to second-hand smoke and lead to lower use of tobacco and e-cigarettes overall.

Despite tobacco use rates running lower than state and national averages, Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley and local partners knew they could deter smoking at city properties and provide tobacco risk education to the area's youth.

**Tobacco awareness and education.** Blue Zones Project's Tobacco Policy Committee led a Community Education Campaign in Calistoga and St. Helena to educate the community on tobacco issues in the community. A goal of the campaign was to collect community signatures to support future city policies that will prevent tobacco use and limit exposure to tobacco smoke.

Additionally, Blue Zones Project's Tobacco Policy Committee created a flavor ban infographic, distributed to local tobacco retailers and Chambers of Commerce, to support California's statewide ban and educate retailers, with the assistance of Napa County Public Health and UpValley Family Centers.

Awareness and educational initiatives can have broad well-being and financial impact, as a 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 Upper Napa Valley community has advanced many tobacco-free ordinances. In Calistoga, the Project supported the inclusion of a smoke-free multi-unit housing

ordinance in the city's 2023-2031 Housing Element (set for implementation by December 2026) through letters, sample ordinance documents, and meetings with local officials, while also gathering personal stories from residents affected by secondhand smoke to strengthen future advocacy.

In Yountville, Blue Zones Project collaborated with the town to update its Special Event Permit in late 2023, requiring smoke-free policies for events on public property and encouraging similar practices on private land.

**Engaging young people in tobacco messaging.** Blue Zones Project collaborated with school districts in St. Helena and Calistoga to hold student anti-smoking poster contests. The winning designs, judged by the Project's Tobacco Policy Committee, were displayed in schools and around town, promoting anti-tobacco messages to the community.

Additionally, the Project worked with both school districts to create non-punitive tobacco protocols that guide staff on how to handle students caught with tobacco products. The protocols aim to provide support and cessation resources





## POLICY: TOBACCO

rather than focusing on punishment. A bilingual resource list was also created to provide information about tobacco cessation and ways for youth to get involved in prevention efforts. These protocols were adopted by school boards and shared with staff for implementation.

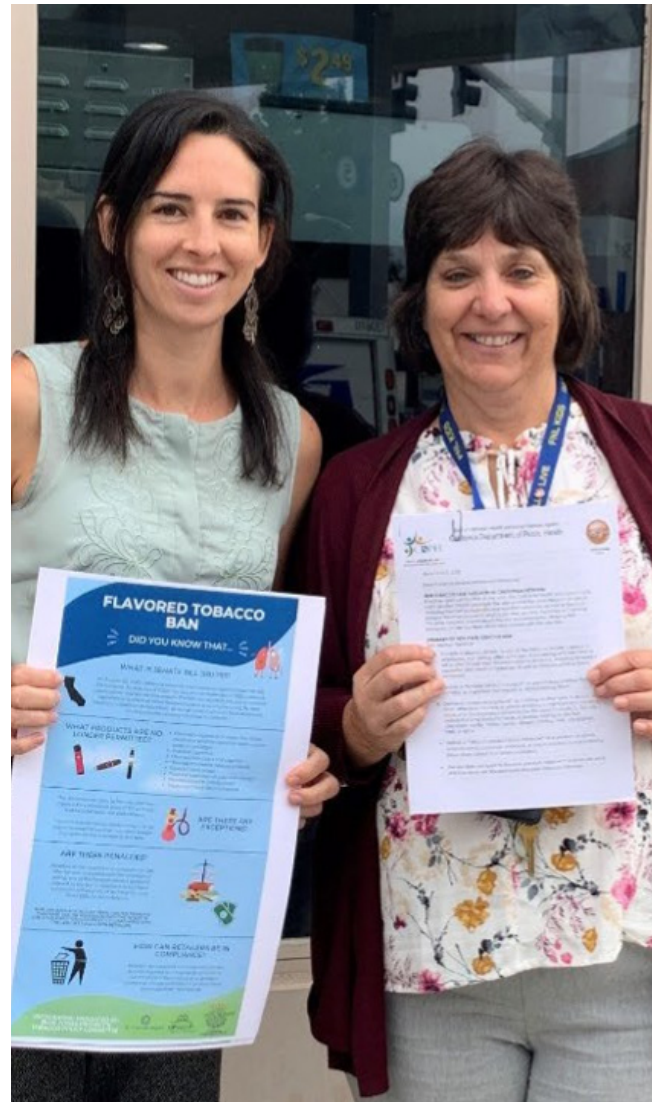
**These initiatives will continue to positively influence the rate of tobacco use across the Upper Napa Valley, which sits at a low 2.5 percent, down from 5.1 percent at the start of the Project in 2021.**



### WHY IT MATTERS

According to the CDC, nearly nine out of ten adults who smoke cigarettes daily first try smoking by age 18.<sup>10</sup>

Current use of any tobacco product among U.S. high school students sits at 12.6 percent.<sup>10</sup>



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**THE BLUE ZONES BRAND BRINGS VALIDITY WHEN OFFICIALS KNOW THAT THE COMMUNITIES ARE INVESTED IN THIS PROJECT. WE NEED TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING AND IT HAS TO BE FROM LOCAL ADVOCATES. THEY CAN DO WHAT THEY DO BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEIR COMMUNITY. THAT’S WHAT IT’S ALL ABOUT.**

Jessica Chapin  
Staff Services Analyst - Chronic  
Disease and Health Equity Unit  
Napa County Health and Human  
Services Agency



## FOOD

### Food policy has the power to improve the availability of produce across neighborhoods.

Collaborative, community-based policies can foster a healthier local food system, improving access and making produce more visible via schools, corner markets, farmers markets, neighborhood gardens, mobile businesses, and more.

**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.**<sup>11</sup>

Plate sizes are growing (from 9.5 inches to 12.5 inches over the last century) and so are our appetites: we're eating 27 percent more than we used to!

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.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to looking and feeling better, the benefit of healthy eating in the U.S. is a financial one. It's estimated that the economic cost of four nutrition-related chronic diseases between 2011 to 2020 was \$16 trillion (or nearly 9 percent of gross domestic product annually) after accounting for direct health care costs, lost productivity, and lost wages related to obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and as many as 13 types of cancer.<sup>13</sup> Poor diet is a major risk factor for these serious health conditions, all of which reduce life expectancy.

Blue Zones Project focuses on shaping food policy to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and ensuring access for all residents.

During Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley's three-year transformation phase, local partners and champions helped the Cities adopt policies and programs that remove barriers and improve

access to healthy foods across the community.

#### **Building Capacity for Food Systems Policy.**

Blue Zones Project established a Food Policy Committee that united regional partners to strategize around food systems policy. The committee, in partnership with the St. Helena Hospital Foundation, created a comprehensive resource for community members experiencing food insecurity, highlighting local food access points. Additionally, Blue Zones Project launched a Farm to School working group in collaboration with Innovative Health Solutions and three Napa County school districts. The group designed a pilot program featuring a "Harvest of the Month" initiative, supporting school gardens, and offering gardening skills and food education. Calistoga schools continued advancing farm-to-school efforts with the Project's support.

**Food Access Policy Resolution.** In a landmark effort, Blue Zones Project worked alongside local stakeholders to draft a Napa County food policy resolution aimed at increasing access to healthy food options. The resolution committed city councils to address food insecurity by making nutritious foods available for pick-up at various locations, implementing food market regulations,



## POLICY: FOOD

promoting healthy food in restaurants, and supporting best practices for food retail. This resolution served as a vital policy experience for all involved, guiding the development of initiatives to improve access to balanced and affordable food in under-served neighborhoods.

**Food Skills Inventory and Policy Audit.** Blue Zones Project also spearheaded a food skills inventory project to assess the community's capacity for food skills development. This research effort included tools such as an inventory toolkit, a survey questionnaire, and an interview guide, which were used to identify gaps and assets in food skills programs throughout Upper Napa Valley. Additionally, Blue Zones Project developed a 70-question food policy questionnaire as an audit tool for government agencies, childcare centers, and community organizations. The audit examined existing food policies, emergency preparedness, transportation barriers, and other critical issues to help identify areas for policy improvement.

Through these initiatives, Blue Zones Project and partners laid the foundation for long-term food access solutions in Upper Napa Valley, promoting healthier communities and sustainable food systems.



”

WHEN WE SCREEN FOR FOOD INSECURITY, WE'RE EVERYWHERE IN THE COMMUNITY, IN PERSON. FOR PEOPLE THAT HAVE A LANGUAGE BARRIER, WE HELP THEM FILL IT OUT. SO, THEY REALLY TELL US, YOUR FRESH PRODUCE DISTRIBUTIONS ARE REALLY MAKING A DIFFERENCE. WE CAN ACTUALLY EAT.

Noemi Mauricio  
Supervising RN and Clinical-Community  
Educator for Mobile Health  
St. Helena Hospital Foundation  
(Blue Zones Project Food Policy  
Committee Co-Chair)

## Food on the Move with the Napa County Mobile Market

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the extent of food insecurity in the Upper Napa Valley, especially in marginalized communities. With many aid programs ending, over 10,000 residents, including nearly 3,000 children, now face challenges accessing nutritious food. To address this urgent need, the Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley team and partners embarked on creating a mobile market as a marquee project, aiming to bring fresh, locally grown, and culturally relevant produce to under-served communities.

The development of the mobile market involved extensive collaboration with local partners such as **Innovative Health Solutions**, **Napa Farmers Market**, and **Feeding it Forward**. The process began with focus groups and surveys, particularly engaging Spanish-speaking communities to gather insights and shape the project based on their needs. Blue Zones Project also facilitated a project panel session, bringing together local and regional experts to discuss successful models of mobile markets and produce prescription programs.

To jump start the mobile market pilot, Blue Zones Project staff:

- Convened partners to determine feasibility; roles and responsibilities
- Conducted focus groups with the community to gather insight to help shape the project
- Led planning and design of the pilot mobile market
- Identified grants and supported applications for potential funding

With **Napa County Public Health** highlighting this initiative as a promising way to improve food access, Blue Zones Project worked to establish the mobile market project, building relationships with community centers, schools, and residential areas. The mobile market aims to provide healthy food at affordable prices, directly reaching farmworker households and other vulnerable populations.

Partners adapted the model into a two-month pilot program, featuring eight food distributions. This phase will allow key partners to test logistics and refine the market for long-term success. Moving forward, additional funding and grants will be sought to expand the market's reach

and make it a permanent resource in the Upper Napa Valley.

Through this initiative, the mobile market can support not only low-income families but also local farmers by ensuring they are paid fair wages for their produce. The collective effort is a significant step toward addressing food insecurity and creating sustainable food access for Upper Napa Valley's most vulnerable populations.







## PLACES

Across the Upper Napa Valley, 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.



## WORKSITES

### Worksites engage employees and support healthy choices.

Employers are in a powerful position to help us move more, eat better, and connect. About one-third of our waking hours are spent at work. Fewer jobs require moderate physical activity, a percentage that has fallen from 50 percent in 1960 to 20 percent today.<sup>14</sup> Some 70 percent of Americans eat at their desk several times a week.<sup>15</sup> As waistlines expand, so do medical costs for employers. Creating healthier work environments can shift that trend, trimming costs and enhancing productivity.

Our community saw 16 worksites take actions to support employee well-being, and **13 of these worksites took extra steps to become Blue Zones Project Approved™ worksites, positively impacting more than 1,727 employees.**

Participating worksites implemented a variety of Blue Zones Project best practices to engage employees. Actions included things like providing employees access to self-monitoring equipment (e.g. scales, blood pressure monitors, glucose testing), making food-related improvements, and establishing quiet spaces to downshift during the workday, and more.

## Impact of Healthier Work Places

- Every approved worksite has implemented and supported ongoing rest and microbreaks, reminding employees to move throughout the day via software prompts, well-being signage, and through ergonomic assessments.
- **The City of St. Helena** is helping employees find deeper meaning at work, with more than 50 percent of staff attending a Blue Zones Project purpose workshop.
- To allow employees a quiet space to de-stress and relax during workday breaks, **The Town of Yountville, Clif Family Winery, and Silver Oak Cellars** created a designated Downshift spaces where employees can recharge.
- **UpValley Family Centers** galvanized staff with an employee walking challenge that encouraged healthy competition and activity.
- Employees can now eat healthier on the job at **Jessup Cellars | Handwritten Wines** thanks to a policy that ensures at least 50 percent of food and beverage options offered in the worksite meet Blue Zones Food Guidelines.



### WHY IT MATTERS

According to a Quantum Workplace report, employees are 14 percent more engaged when given time off to recharge, 18 percent more engaged when given time for healthy activities, and 10 percent more engaged when provided healthy good options at the workplace.<sup>16</sup>





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UPVALLEY FAMILY CENTERS IS PROUD TO BE A DESIGNATED BLUE ZONES WORKPLACE. WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ALL THE STEPS REQUIRED TO BE BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVED. ACHIEVING THIS MILESTONE IS BOTH IMPORTANT AND REWARDING IN SUPPORTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AS OUR ORGANIZATION AIMS TO HELP THE UPPER NAPA VALLEY BECOME A CERTIFIED BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY.

Jenny Ocon  
Executive Director  
UpValley Family Centers





## Far Niente Helps Employees Eat Better, Move More, and De-stress

**Far Niente Winery**, a historic vineyard founded in 1885, is far from idle despite its name meaning “doing nothing” in Italian. Under the leadership of Julie Secviar, Vice President of Human Resources, the winery has cultivated a thriving workplace that fosters employee well-being, growth, and community impact. With nearly 200 employees, the company embarked on its journey to become a Blue Zones Project Approved worksite, showcasing their commitment to holistic health and wellness.

Secviar’s leadership and vision have made a remarkable impact, seamlessly balancing the winery’s homage to its storied past while looking forward to sustainable growth. One of the key initiatives was the partnership with Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley, aimed at improving the overall well-being of Far Niente’s employees. The journey began in May of 2023, and within six months, the winery achieved approval, integrating innovative wellness practices throughout the workplace.

Among these were several creative

programs designed to support physical, mental, and social health, including:

- Introducing flexible furniture options, allowing employees to choose between standing or sitting while working.
- Cultivating an employee garden, offering staff a space to relax and reconnect with nature.
- Integrating Blue Zones Project well-being information into the organization’s internal marketing and communication strategy.
- Providing opportunities for colleagues to participate in charitable giving and/or give back to the community through corporate social responsibility programs.

Secviar’s team also incorporated a range of employee benefits, such as weight management, tobacco cessation programs, health coaching, and financial well-being tools. Even family-oriented social gatherings and charitable giving initiatives became part of the workplace culture.

The results of these initiatives have been stunning. Employees have taken full advantage of the new walking paths, using them for outdoor meetings and

quick breaks to recharge. The cultural shift has even reached the snack table—once stocked with doughnuts, now filled with healthy granola and fresh fruit, thanks to a wellness grant from Kaiser Permanente and a partnership with Fruit Guys. Secviar notes, “I think they feel that we care because we’re really looking out for them as people. They’re not widgets.”

Far Niente’s commitment to mental health has also yielded tangible success. The partnership with Nivati, a mental health services provider, saw a significant increase in Employee Assistance Program (EAP) utilization, climbing from the typical 3% to an astounding 67%. This speaks volumes about the trusting and supportive environment cultivated at the winery.

Even more impressive is the winery’s net promoter score of over 95%, reflecting the employees’ satisfaction and connection to the organization. The turnover rate remains below 2% per quarter, further evidence that Far Niente is more than just a workplace—it’s a community.

Looking ahead, Secviar is determined to expand the winery’s well-being initiatives. She is preparing to introduce a stretching program for employees and hopes to

## PLACES: WORKSITES

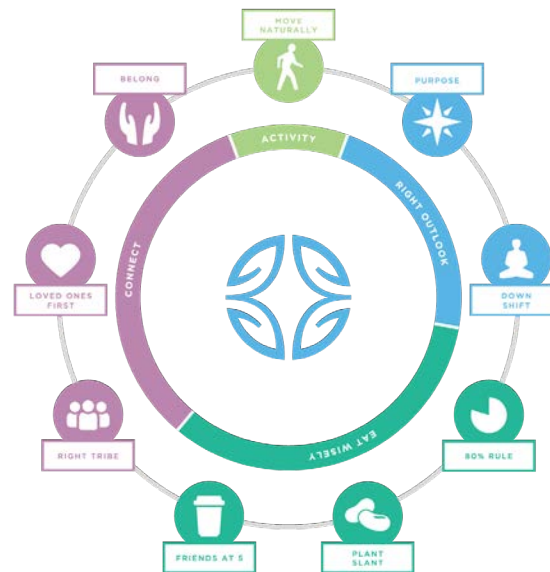
deepen relationships with organizations like the Farmworkers Union. Additionally, Far Niente's leadership team has committed to an ambitious sustainability plan, which includes improving employee well-being scores, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol risks, and increasing participation in community outreach efforts. The winery aims to improve its overall well-being score to 74.15 by offering annual biometric screenings and fostering healthy habits through wellness challenges and seminars.

Secviar's forward-thinking approach ensures that Far Niente continues to evolve, balancing its rich heritage with a deep commitment to employee health, growth, and community involvement. As the winery grows, so too does its impact—on its employees, the community, and the industry as a whole.



### INVESTING IN WELL-BEING

Far Niente reports a turnover rate of less than two percent per quarter, a result of their investment in employee well-being.



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WE HAVE EMBRACED OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OUR EMPLOYEES AND THE COMMUNITY THAT SURROUNDS US. WE CONTINUALLY STRIVE TO IDENTIFY NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE BEYOND OUR WALLS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL. THROUGH OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH BLUE ZONES, WE HAVE FORMALIZED OUR EFFORTS AND CONTINUALLY WORK ON IMPROVING AWARENESS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AS STEPS TOWARDS A BETTER LIFE.

Julie Secviar  
VP of Human Resources  
Far Niente



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### 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.<sup>17</sup>



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## WELL-BEING SAVES EVERYONE MONEY



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### 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.<sup>17</sup>



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### 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.<sup>17</sup>



## SCHOOLS

### Area schools get students moving and learning more.

Schools can shape healthy habits for life. Over the past 40 years, rates of obesity among children have soared. **Approximately 25 million children and adolescents (more than 33 percent) are now overweight or obese, or at the risk of becoming so.**<sup>4</sup> Physical activity and stretch breaks during the school day can improve grades, increase concentration, and raise math, reading, and writing test scores.<sup>18</sup> Simple changes in lunchroom design can entice students toward healthier choices.<sup>19</sup>

**Across Upper Napa Valley, six schools earned the designation Blue Zones Project Approved™.** Schools implemented policies and introduced food options that encourage healthy eating on campus, integrated physical activity into the day, and incorporated other Blue Zones Project principles into the curriculum and campus space for more than 1,630 students.

### Impact of Healthier Schools

- During wellness week events, **RLS Middle School, Calistoga High School, and St. Helena Primary School** partnered with Blue

Zones Project to offer Blue Zones-inspired healthy menu items and fresh smoothie recipes to help students discover tasty new foods.

- Physical Education teachers incorporate lifestyle-focused activities into PE curriculum. **RLS Middle School** offers yoga, Walk and Roll to School Day, and Bike to School Day as part of these efforts.
- The **St. Helena Unified School District** prohibits the sale and consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages on campus and discontinued the use of unhealthy foods for fundraisers and food as rewards to help students eat wisely at school.
- Both area school districts have robust wellness committees that meet regularly to address issues that affect the well-being of the entire school community. The committee includes student input and ideas to ensure engagement in well-being initiatives.



#### WALKING HELPS KIDS

Children who walk to school are more alert and ready to learn, strengthen their social networks and develop lifetime fitness habits.<sup>20, 21</sup>

A Walking School Bus allows a group of children to walk to school under adult supervision.



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IT'S INCREDIBLY EXCITING FOR SHUSD TO HAVE ALL FOUR SCHOOLS WITHIN THE DISTRICT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVAL. COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS THROUGHOUT THE LAST FEW YEARS BETWEEN TEACHERS, STAFF, PARENTS, STUDENTS, ADMINISTRATION, AND BLUE ZONES PROJECT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN MADE TO PROVIDE MORE WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL! THIS IS A WIN AND JUST THE BEGINNING OF POSITIVE CHANGES THAT CAN CONTINUE IN SHUSD AND IN THE COMMUNITY.

David Pauls  
Physical Education Teacher  
RLS Middle School



## Developing Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds at Calistoga Joint USD

**Calistoga Joint Unified School District** is a shining example of how a small district can create big waves in student well-being and academic success. Serving around 860 students from Calistoga and the surrounding areas, the district offers a rigorous academic program while nurturing creativity, problem-solving, and student engagement. With small class sizes, dedicated resources, and individualized attention, Calistoga ensures that every student feels a deep connection to their school and the wider community.

The district goes beyond academics, embedding real-world experiences into the educational fabric. Spending time in the school garden provides a hands-on learning space where students gain environmental lessons. Field trips are a regular feature, and the district's outdoor education program kicks off in the 4th grade, culminating in a week-long adventure to Yosemite National Park by

the time students reach the 6th grade.

In April 2024, both the elementary and junior-senior high schools achieved Blue Zones Project Approved status, a reflection of their dedication to well-being.

Knowing that poor eating choices and hungry bellies make it harder for students to learn, Director of Food Services Rosa Rubio has led the charge in transforming school meals and promoting healthy habits throughout the district.

With funding secured to update cooking equipment and salad bars, the schools now offer healthier food options. Thanks to specialized culinary training for staff, breakfast and lunch offerings include more whole foods, a greater variety of fruits and vegetables, and delicious, health-conscious recipes such as garbanzo bean pesto pasta and lentil soup. A second-chance breakfast program has also proven successful, ensuring students stay energized and focused throughout the school day.

Rubio's commitment to collaborating with students themselves has created a sense

of ownership in the wellness journey, with student leadership playing a pivotal role in generating ideas.

The positive impact of the district's healthier foods initiatives is evident in student engagement. **A survey revealed that 77% of respondents eat school meals weekly, and 62% enjoy fresh fruit or salad bar items.** The desire for more whole foods and greater nutritional awareness has driven ongoing improvements in the district's food service program.

At the heart of the district's wellness efforts is an engaging and fun atmosphere. The annual Wellness Week has become a community favorite, featuring daily themes like "Mindful Monday" and "Fuel-Up Friday." The elementary school's "Water for the Win" campaign increased water intake among students, while healthy posters in all school lunchrooms—featuring student role models—have inspired peers to make healthier choices.

In addition to promoting student health, the district also takes care of its staff of 125 employees. After school group hikes and yoga sessions are part of the district's





## PLACES: SCHOOLS

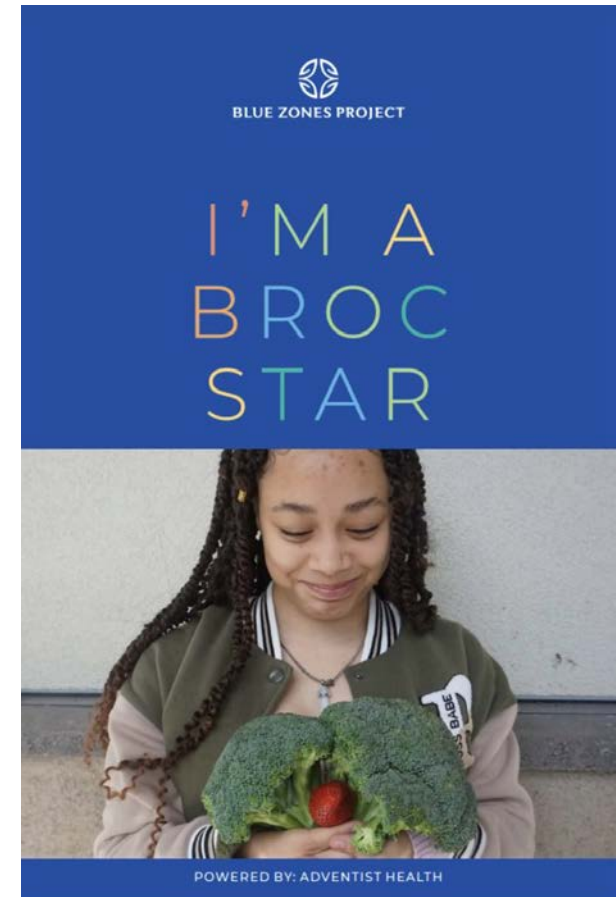
wellness offerings, helping employees recharge and connect with each other.

As a key partner in Blue Zones Project's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) demonstration projects, the district collaborated on the installation of a bike lane near Calistoga Elementary, promoting safer and more active commutes for students.

Looking ahead, school leaders are focused on sustainability. They plan to expand nutritional education and continue collecting student feedback. Special events like PE in the Park were immediate hits, and there are plans to make them annual traditions, with parents and community members invited to join the fun.

The district's success showcases its collaborative spirit and unwavering dedication to the health and well-being of students and staff. In partnership with organizations like UpValley Family Centers, and with the leadership of forward-thinking staff like Rosa Rubio, Calistoga Joint Unified School District is setting a

powerful example of what's possible when a community comes together to prioritize well-being. As they continue to innovate and dream big, the future looks bright for the students and families of Calistoga.



## RESTAURANTS

### Restaurant meals can weigh us down or lift us up.

The typical American entrée weighs in at 1,000 calories.<sup>22</sup> For the average adult, eating one meal away from home per week translates to gaining about two additional pounds a year. Evidence indicates people appreciate healthy changes. In a five-year study of sales at U.S. restaurant chains, 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.<sup>23</sup>

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.

**Upper Napa Valley residents and visitors now have six Blue Zones Project Approved™ restaurants to choose from.**

In these restaurants, patrons may find smaller portion and split-plate options,

healthier offerings highlighted through signage and staff-customer interactions, expanded use of local produce, and more.

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.

**Tra Vigne**, Upper Napa Valley's first Blue Zones Approved restaurant, trains staff to mention the healthiest options when taking orders and provides quarterly refreshers on the Blue Zones best practices implemented at the restaurant to ensure guests are encouraged to eat wisely and healthy onsite practices are maintained by staff.

As part of their partnership with Blue Zones Project, Tra Vigne hosted a virtual Cooking Demonstration with Chef Anthony “Nash” Cognetti sharing his skills with the community by teaching attendees to make a special plant-based pasta dish.

**Clif Family Bruschetteria** is a healthy food truck fueled by seasonal ingredients from

Clif Family Farm. Their ever changing menu features Blue Zones-inspired and helps customers make educated choices by labeling foods with icons indicating foods that are vegetarian, gluten-free, and more. They prioritize scratch cooking, even making many of their condiments, sauces, and other “extras” themselves.

Restaurants across Upper Napa Valley continue to provide healthy culinary experiences for residents and visitors alike, showcasing all of the flavors the region has to offer.



## Café 1878 Serves Up Well-Being

**Café 1878** is more than just a place to grab a bite—it's a sanctuary of health, wellness, and connection within **Adventist Health St. Helena** hospital. Under the leadership of award-winning Food and Nutrition Director Erick Neuharth and Chef Christopher Young, the café is a fixture of nutritious and affordable food options for hospital employees, patients, and the public alike. Both chefs bring decades of culinary experience to the table, crafting meals that prioritize health without compromising on flavor. The name “Café 1878” reflects its rich history, rooted in the year the hospital began its mission. Today, it still carries that spirit of healing and well-being, now as a full-service café with indoor and outdoor seating that offers breathtaking views of the Upper Napa Valley.

The café operates five days a week, offering healthy breakfast and lunch options, and embodies a deep commitment to making nutritious food easily accessible. From fresh produce to an innovative menu that draws inspiration from Blue Zones principles, Café 1878 has transformed the way people approach food. The menu

is intentionally designed to promote healthier eating habits by placing these nutritious dishes first in the buffet line, encouraging customers to fill their plates with wholesome foods.

### Key Actions and Innovations

- Developed 15 new Blue Zones-inspired dishes.
- Uses locally sourced produce during the growing season to support area growers and provide fresher options to the community.
- Does not have a deep fryer and features primarily grilled, baked, or broiled foods. “Fried” items are prepared in an air fryer.
- Trains staff each quarter on the enhancements made to the restaurant through their engagement with Blue Zones Project.
- Displays Blue Zones-inspired recipe cards for customers to take home.

The café's commitment to health extends beyond its menu. An employee gratitude wall was created, fostering a culture of connection and appreciation within the

café's team.

In June 2023, Adventist Health St. Helena celebrated 145 years of service dedicated to transforming communities through health, wholeness, and hope. Café 1878 embodies these values, offering food that nourishes not just the body, but the spirit. One unique testament to the café's success is its staff's incredible tenure. Three members of the team—Bertin Loyola, Horacio Arcila, and Luz Olguin—have collectively served for over 100 years. Lovingly referred to as the “centenarian crew” by their colleagues, their dedication has played a pivotal role in creating a stable, harmonious work environment. “It may not have been one of the pledge items to become an approved restaurant,” Neuharth says, “but that level of commitment contributes to the success of the entire team and the ability to make sustainable changes.”

Café 1878's impact extends far beyond the hospital. Through its thoughtful menu innovations and commitment to wellness, it has become a vital part of the Adventist Health community, showing that food can be a powerful tool for healing and well-being.



”

IT IS REWARDING TO CREATE NEW RECIPES AND REVISIT TRIED AND TRUE DISHES THROUGH HEALTHIER LENS. I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE WAYS WE GET TO SERVE EACH OTHER HERE AT CAFÉ 1878 THROUGH FOOD AND WELL-BEING. IT IS MY HOPE THAT EVERYONE WHO ENJOYS A MEAL WITH US CAN SEE HOW MUCH WE CARE.

Christopher Young  
Chef  
Café 1878



## GROCERY STORES

### Local grocery stores promote healthy foods and cooking skills.

Grocery stores influence food decisions. The actions we take to determine what we eat begin at the store. **About 60 percent of the food we purchase is highly processed, fatty, salty, or sugary.**<sup>22</sup> Grocery store promotions and design layout can influence those choices for the better.

In the U.S., healthy eating could generate an estimated savings of \$114.5 billion per year through reduced medical costs, increased productivity, and decline in heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and osteoporotic hip fractures.<sup>24</sup>

Americans visit the grocery store almost twice a week on average, and their food choices impact their health and productivity. The design of many grocery stores and the deals they promote often point people to unhealthy foods. Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley created awareness around these issues, and a local grocer took steps to offer healthy food education opportunities to

customers and made design, display, and promotional changes that point people toward produce, whole grains, locally grown foods, and other healthy buys.

#### **Three Upper Napa Valley grocery stores took steps to become Blue Zones Project Approved.**

At **Sunshine Foods**, a St. Helena staple for over 50 years, owner Jay Smith and staff took steps to become the first approved grocery store in Upper Napa Valley. From the Blue Zones designation decal at the front of the store all the way to the healthy Blue Zones checkout lane, shoppers can easily find more nutritious choices throughout their shopping experience.

Serving as one of Napa Valley's finest grocery stores since 1968, **CalMart** is committed to finding the best traditional, organic, and specialty foods that support every food lifestyle. The store promotes Blue Zones-inspired options through a front-of-store display with products that rotate monthly, along with a Blue Zones food scavenger hunt. Serving as a popular lunch spot with grab-and-go and deli options, the store now offers fresh-made salad options every morning.

**Howell Mountain Market** creates an environment of well-being starting at the moment customers step out of their cars. From designating Blue Zones parking spaces to placing children's cereals with lower nutritional profiles on the highest shelves and offering in-store Blue Zones-inspired food demonstrations, the store makes healthy choices the default for shoppers of all ages.

All three stores feature prominent Blue Zones displays and messaging throughout, showcasing healthy options and local farms where their California-grown products originate.



#### **WHY IT MATTERS**

Sixty percent of purchases are unplanned. Placing attractive produce or other healthy products at the front of the store, at the deli, or at the checkout area can encourage “impulse” purchase of these healthy items.<sup>25</sup>





”

I'M GRATEFUL TO ADVENTIST HEALTH FOR HELPING WITH THE FUNDING NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN, AND TO THE ST. HELENA COMMUNITY, OUR FAMILIES, AND OUR TEAMS FOR SUPPORTING US IN THIS AND THROUGH THE YEARS. WITHOUT THEM, NONE OF THIS WORKS. IT HAS TO BE THROUGH THEM, AND THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN DO IT WELL IS IF WE GIVE THEM SOMETHING THEY REALLY BELIEVE IN, AND THIS IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS.

Jay Smith  
Owner  
Sunshine Foods





# PEOPLE

Blue Zones Project encourages people to optimize their homes and social environments, 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.



## 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.<sup>26</sup>

People of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds across the Upper Napa Valley have come together to create positive change in their community through Blue Zones Project. From the program launch in 2021 to community certification in 2024:

**2,524**

individuals involved in the project.

**364**

residents donated their time, skills, and passions toward volunteer opportunities tracked as part of Blue Zones Project.

**205**

residents participated in Purpose Workshops to rediscover and apply their gifts in their daily lives.

**135**

people met up with a Moai to connect over a healthy meal or move naturally together.

**736**

individuals attended a plant-based cooking class.



### 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.



### THE RESULTS ARE IN

Measures from the Sharecare Community Well-Being Index reveal the impact:

- Physical well-being among residents engaged in Blue Zones Project is up 3.9 points since baseline measures in 2021.
- Social well-being among residents engaged in Blue Zones Project is up 5.9 points since baseline measures in 2021.

## PEOPLE

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 Upper Napa Valley, we embrace the power of social connections to bring citizens together through groups, clubs, and community organizations.

**Move more.** 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. Over 736 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.<sup>3</sup>

Through volunteering, Purpose Workshops, and Purpose Moais, Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley 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 205 people sought to discover their gifts at a Purpose Workshop and put their skills to work by giving back to the region through volunteer work. At least 364 volunteers donated their time with Blue Zones Project in Upper Napa Valley, generating additional value for the community.



### BY THE NUMBERS

More than **2,270 Upper Napa Valley residents** attended educational events focused on well-being





## Building Community, One Meal at a Time

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.

Across the Upper Napa Valley, Blue Zones Project brought community members and organizations together using food as a central element to strengthen connections and promote healthier living. This initiative has given rise to several dynamic efforts that embody the Power 9 principles, fostering a sense of community, well-being, and longevity.

One example is a long-standing potluck moai in Yountville, which evolved from a simple cooking demo into a walking moai group and later expanded to include shared potluck meals. This organic growth reflects the community's commitment to supporting one another through meaningful, consistent social interactions. In addition, the **Town of Yountville** continues to embrace the Blue Zones initiative, launching its first Yoga Moai, further enhancing community wellness through mindful movement and connection.

The **Grace Community Meal** is another testament to the power of food in building community. By introducing residents to new and different types of food, this meal program raised awareness about healthier food options available locally. As many as 175 participants per event were exposed to nourishing ingredients and learned how to prepare these meals at home, extending the impact beyond the communal table. To ensure continued success, a private donor stepped up to fund the meals for an additional 18 weeks.

The **UpValley Latino Group** has also played a key role in advancing the Blue Zones mission, finding great value in the cooking demonstrations and helping bring these life-enriching principles to even more families in the community. And the **St. Helena Farmers' Market** provides another avenue to

work and cooking demos, serving as a vital hub for residents to access fresh, healthy produce while also learning how to prepare it.

In another creative collaboration, a Napa Valley mobile home park hosted a series of cooking demos followed by line dancing sessions. This combination of healthy food and movement created a fun, engaging environment where participants could bond with neighbors, stay active, and embrace the joy of living well.



### BY THE NUMBERS

**1,000 CALORIES**

in a typical American entree in a restaurant.<sup>22</sup>

**2 EXTRA POUNDS**

gained a year by eating one meal away from home a week.<sup>23</sup>



## PEOPLE

engage locals in Blue Zones Project food policy

But perhaps the creation of community around the table was most keenly felt at the Thanksgiving Senior Appreciation Lunch, held in November 2023. After a two-year pause due to COVID-19, this gathering offered an opportunity to reconnect and celebrate the community's seniors, who hold a special place in the heart of Upper Napa Valley. Organized with the support of **Local Q 707**, **EV Floral Design**, **UpValley Family Centers**, and the **City of Calistoga**, the event honored the seniors and reignited the joy of in-person connection.

Sixty additional individuals who couldn't attend received appreciation meals, ensuring that the warmth and gratitude extended to the entire senior population, thanks to UpValley Family Centers. This event also underscored the importance of community partnerships, as organizations and volunteers rallied together to create a meaningful day, highlighting the deep ties and shared purpose that have come to define the region's Blue Zones efforts.

Through these collective efforts, Upper Napa Valley is not just promoting healthy living—it's redefining what it means to live well, together.





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PEOPLE LOOK FORWARD TO WEDNESDAY NIGHTS HERE AND NOT JUST FOR THE FOOD. THE FOOD HAS BEEN MARVELOUS, BUT FOR THE CAMARADERIE. EVERYBODY HAS RECONNECTED WITH SOMEONE THEY KNEW BEFORE, ‘OH MY GOSH, I WORKED WITH YOU 20 YEARS AGO.’ IT’S BEEN VERY SATISFYING IN THAT WAY AND PERSONALLY, IT JUST HIT ME AT A TIME WHEN I WAS RECOVERING FROM SURGERY AND REALIZED I NEEDED A CHANGE IN MY OWN LIFE.

Grace Church Community Meal Participant







#### FRIENDS ALWAYS SHARE

Friends provide more than good times, memories, and companionship — they also share healthy 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,<sup>27</sup> and inversely, you are 20 percent more likely to succeed at new behaviors if you do them with a buddy.<sup>28</sup>



## GOOD FRIENDS AND FAMILY MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER



#### 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 connecting!<sup>29</sup>



#### EAT TOGETHER BETTER

Adolescents who eat dinner with their family are 15 percent less likely to become obese.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup>



#### 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 anti-social behaviors.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup>

# CONGRATS, UPPER NAPA VALLEY!

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 the Upper Napa Valley one of the healthiest regions in the nation, where residents are living better, together.**



## CONCLUSION

### WITH GRATITUDE

Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley is a testament to the 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 sponsor: Adventist Health.

Thank you to every 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 the Upper Napa Valley 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, the Upper Napa Valley is experiencing tremendous well-being improvement, and we've set the foundation for continued success in the years ahead.



POWERED BY:





CONCLUSION

If there's one thing the story of Blue Zones Project Upper Napa Valley demonstrates, it's that many people and many organizations play an essential part in community success. Those recognized here contributed significant time, effort, and resources to the cause.

Special thanks to these leaders—and applause to all who continue to help make the Upper Napa Valley a healthier, happier community.

Steering Committee  
(Past & Present)

Anil Comelo	Jay Smith
Audra Pittman, Ph.D	Jenny Ocon
Billy Summers	Karen Relucio, MD
Brad Raulston	Laura Snideman
Chris Canning	Ruben Aurelio
Chuck McMinn	Steve Rogers
Diane Dillon	Steven Herber, MD, FACS
Elaine Jones	Whitney McAvoy
Eric Reichert	
Irais Lopez-Ortega	



## CONCLUSION

### Special Thanks

Blue Zones Project Leadership Team

Blue Zones Project Engagement Committee

Blue Zones Project Places Committee

Blue Zones Project Built Environment Policy Committee

Blue Zones Project Food Policy Committee

Blue Zones Project Tobacco Policy Committee

Community planners and elected officials who are implementing best practices to make our community safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars.

Champions who led the work in organizations that are making healthy choices easier for those they serve and our many volunteers and ambassadors who say “yes!” to well-being.



## APPENDIX

### Designated Organizations

#### Blue Zones Worksites

Adventist Health St. Helena  
C. Mondavi & Family  
City of Calistoga  
City of St. Helena  
Clif Family Winery and Farm  
Far Niente Wine Estates  
Grove 45  
Jessup Cellars | Handwritten Wines  
Pacific Union College  
Silver Oak Wine Cellars LLC  
Town of Yountsville  
Twomey Winery  
Up Valley Family Centers of Napa County

#### Blue Zones Schools

Calistoga Elementary School  
Calistoga Junior Senior High School  
Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School  
St. Helena Elementary School  
St. Helena High School  
St. Helena Primary School

#### Blue Zones Restaurants

Bon Appetit  
Café 1878  
Clif Family Bruschetteria Truck  
Nova Terra  
Ray Ray's Tacos  
Tra Vigne Pizzeria

#### Blue Zones Grocery Stores

Cal Mart  
Howell Mountain Market  
Sunshine Foods

#### Participating Organizations

Calistoga Chamber of Commerce  
St. Helena Chamber of Commerce  
St. Helena Farmers Market  
The Haven  
Yountville Chamber of Commerce



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