



SIoux CITY A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

The tenth certified Blue Zones Community in the nation invests in well-being for a more livable, vibrant, and healthy future.



Sponsored by





CONGRATS, SIOUX CITY, FOR PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP!

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

After launching Blue Zones Project®, our community embraced natural movement and active living by passing an active transportation plan and adding Walking School Bus routes, which allow **more than 640 kids to walk safely to school**. Our community's resurgence, anchored in putting the well-being of our residents first, is happening.

Sioux City 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 Sioux City one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living longer, better.

THE JOURNEY TO BECOME A BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

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PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN IOWA

A GREAT STATE

What does it take to become a healthier state? What does that mean for those who live and work there? These were the questions on the minds of community leaders in 2011 when Governor Terry Branstad challenged Iowa to become the healthiest state alongside the Healthiest State Initiative. An answer came with Blue Zones Project, a community-wide initiative that united civic leaders, businesses, restaurants, schools, grocers, families, and others in an effort to enhance the community landscape and improve the overall well-being of Iowans. With this vision as a foundation, the Blue Zones Project partnership is bringing value to communities statewide — with things like improved health, a strong economy, and happier, healthier, and highly productive residents who spend more time living well.



AN INNOVATIVE PARTNER

Wellmark® Blue Cross® and Blue Shield® chose to invest in the lives of Iowans by bringing Blue Zones Project to the state for what would be the cornerstone of Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative.

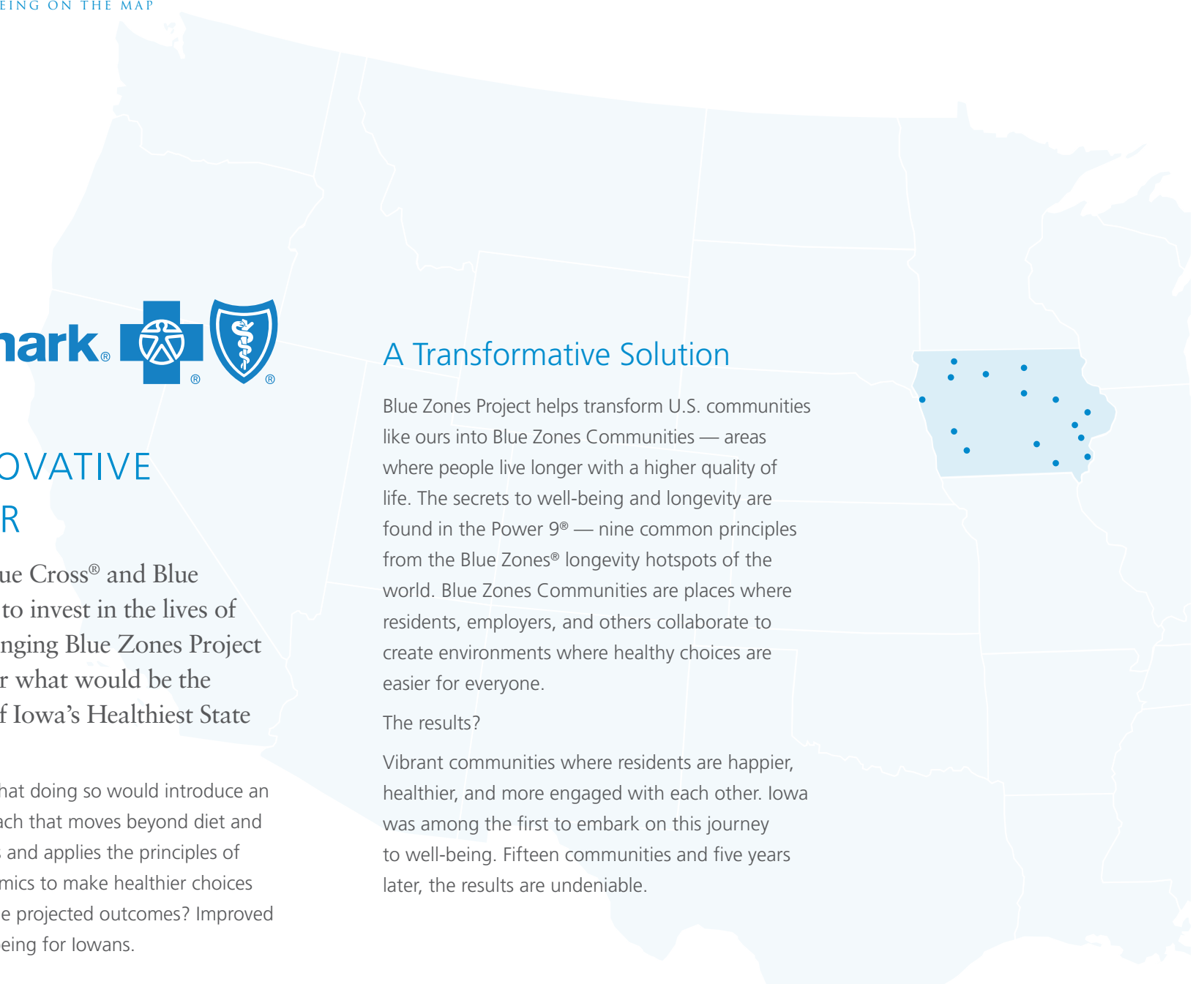
Wellmark knew that doing so would introduce an innovative approach that moves beyond diet and exercise regimens and applies the principles of behavioral economics to make healthier choices easier choices. The projected outcomes? Improved health and well-being for Iowans.

A Transformative Solution

Blue Zones Project helps transform U.S. communities like ours into Blue Zones Communities — areas where people live longer with a higher quality of life. The secrets to well-being and longevity are found in the Power 9® — nine common principles from the Blue Zones® longevity hotspots of the world. Blue Zones Communities are places where residents, employers, and others collaborate to create environments where healthy choices are easier for everyone.

The results?

Vibrant communities where residents are happier, healthier, and more engaged with each other. Iowa was among the first to embark on this journey to well-being. Fifteen communities and five years later, the results are undeniable.





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

Measuring the Impact

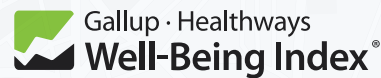
Change requires action. It isn't enough to do something one time; lasting change, which is a central tenet of Blue Zones Project, must be created from permanent and semi-permanent changes and alterations to the environment, policies, programs, and social networks. These actions allow healthy choices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

From 2010 – 2015, according to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®, Iowa has outpaced the nation in overall well-being, improving at twice the rate of the national average.



GALLUP-HEALTHWAYS WELL-BEING INDEX

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index is the most proven, mature, and comprehensive measure of well-being in the world. 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.



15 Communities Commit to Well-Being

In October 2011, 84 Iowa communities submitted statements of interest to be selected for Blue Zones Project, and an elite 15 were chosen. Communities received support from national experts and thousands of community members.

Across the state, Blue Zones Project has seen:

520,000

Lives impacted by environmental changes designed to help people move naturally, eat wisely, develop the right outlook, and connect with others.

430,000+

Actions taken by individuals to improve well-being for themselves, their families, and friends.

610

Worksites, schools, grocery stores, and restaurants achieved Blue Zones Project designation.

21,164

(And counting) Actions taken by those organizations to make healthy choices easier, helping residents, employees, and patrons live longer, better lives.



IT'S CELEBRATING WHAT THE PEOPLE OF AMERICA ARE NOW WAKING UP TO, AND REALIZING WHAT THEY WANT. IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN IOWA FIRST.

Dan Burden
 Walkability Expert
 Blue Zones

180,245

Total feet of bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks built to encourage people to move more naturally.

142

Walking School Bus routes created to encourage students to move naturally.

15

All 15 communities passed new Complete Streets policies to enable safe access for all users — drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.



WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY?

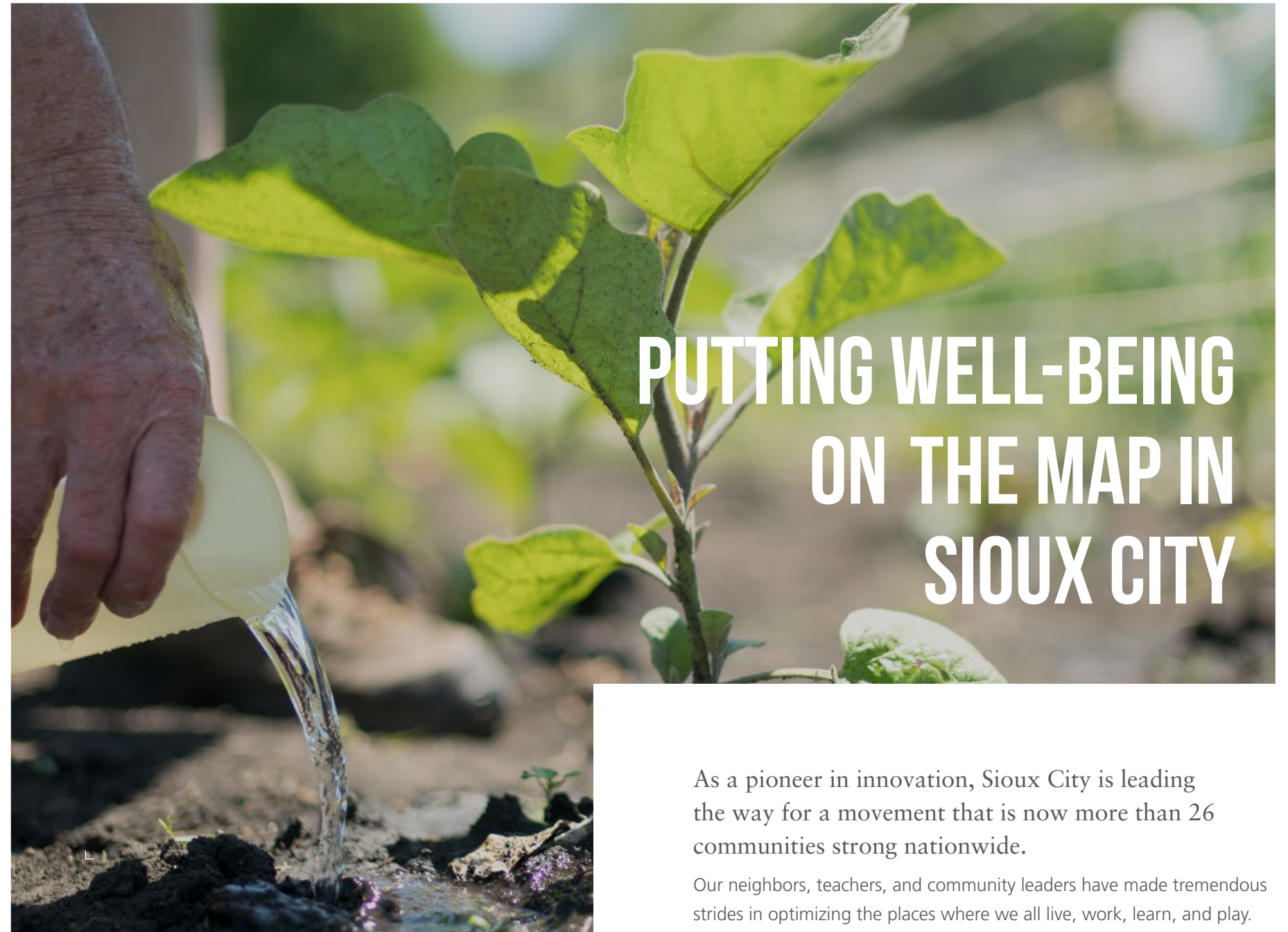
Worksites, schools, grocery stores, and restaurants complete various **action items** on a **pledge** in order to earn their Blue Zones Project **designation**.



”

THE VISION OF HEALTHIER, LONGER LIVES THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IS BEGINNING TO COME TO LIFE IN SIOUX CITY. THE COMMUNITY HAS MADE A WISE INVESTMENT IN ITS FUTURE. I APPLAUD THEIR EFFORTS AND LOOK FORWARD TO FOLLOWING THE CONTINUED POSITIVE PROGRESS.”

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



PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN SIOUX CITY

As a pioneer in innovation, Sioux City is leading the way for a movement that is now more than 26 communities strong nationwide.

Our neighbors, teachers, and community leaders have made tremendous strides in optimizing the places where we all live, work, learn, and play.



WE ARE PROUD TO BE NAMED A CERTIFIED BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY. BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS BROUGHT NEW IDEAS AND PASSION AROUND WELL-BEING TO OUR COMMUNITY AND HAS BOLSTERED THE EFFORTS THAT WERE ALREADY IN PLACE, LEADING TO SO MANY POSITIVE CHANGES FOR OUR CITY.

Bob Scott
Mayor
Sioux City

More Walking Means More Well-Being in Sioux City

Sioux City is planning for the future with a focus on active living, healthy food, and the well-being of our children and families. Nearly half of our schools offer Walking School Bus routes that allow kids to move, laugh, and talk on their way to school. In 2014, 641 students were supported by 288 volunteers and 1,141 volunteer hours.

The Siouxland area benefits from new policies that promote active and healthy living in Sioux City. A comprehensive active transportation plan, created in partnership with the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council and the University of Iowa's College of Urban and Regional Planning, ensures pedestrians and cyclists

have safe routes to get where they need to go. A new outdoor dining policy allows our residents to dine outside while enjoying the community. Checkout lanes in our grocery stores offer healthy options like fruits, nuts, and water. When Wal-Mart created a Blue Zones checkout lane, it saw a 200 percent increase in health bar sales. Our City Council enacted two new policies, one of which allows for public land to be used for gardens and farmers markets, and another that allows for public spaces, such as gyms or tracks, to be used by our citizens during off hours.

These comprehensive measures have had a positive ripple effect for the entire Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota tri-state region. In Siouxland, you don't have to think twice about whether you're making a healthy choice. It's an important benefit of being a Blue Zones Community.



A Community-wide Commitment to Blue Zones Project



82,694

Lives impacted

71%

Community awareness

25%

People engaged

18,131

Individuals pledged to support well-being

63,887

Well-being actions taken by individuals

38%

Percent who believe Blue Zones Project has made a positive impact on the community

142

Organizations implementing well-being principles

1,998

Changes made by organizations to support living longer, better

58

Organizations completing the pledge

30

The number of Sioux City's worksites that are Blue Zones Worksites®

25%

The percentage of Sioux City's locally owned restaurants that are Blue Zones Restaurants®

30%

The percentage of Sioux City's public schools that are Blue Zones Schools®

50%

The percentage of Sioux City's grocery stores that are Blue Zones Grocery Stores®



SEE IT IN ACTION

Blue Zones Project Highlight: Sioux City, Iowa

Sioux City is making well-being a way of life. Hear from our leaders and neighbors about how an emphasis on well-being makes our community a better place to live.

Watch the video here:
explore.bluezonesproject.com/SiouxCity



Media Coverage Places Sioux City on National Stage

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

Since the launch in 2012, Blue Zones Project in Iowa has been heralded for innovative approaches to population health management in notable publications such as **O, The Oprah Magazine**.

The Des Moines Register



Sioux City Journal

SIUXCITYJOURNAL.COM

Sioux City in the News

291

Total Mentions

75,117,034

Total Reach

\$71,091

Total Publicity Value*

* Publicity value calculated using Cisionpoint Media Monitoring service.

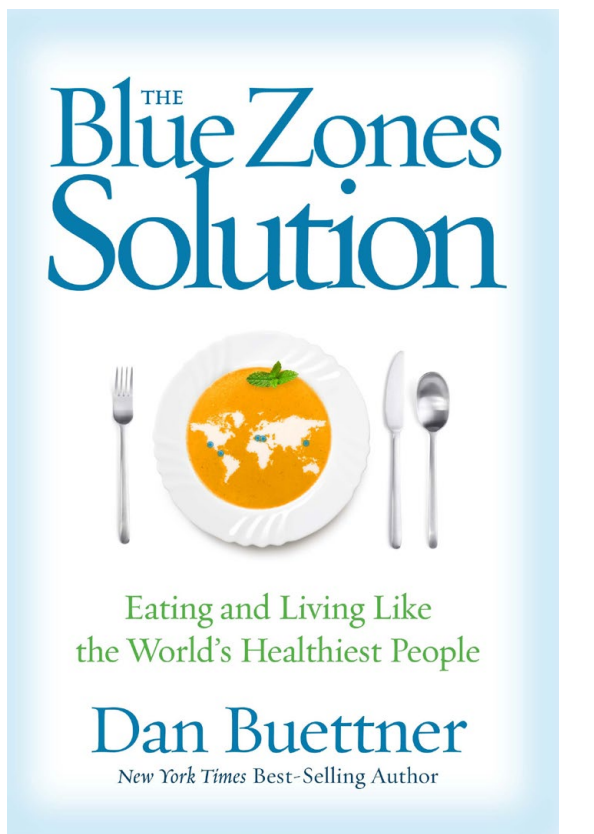
In the News

Applying healthy ways to way of life here
Sioux City Journal
9.30.14

Lifestyle habits to restore your vitality, well-being
Sioux City Journal
12.20.15



Sioux City Blue Zones Project leaders meet with Governor Branstand
May 2015



In addition to great media stories covering our efforts, our story is featured prominently in Dan Buettner's latest *New York Times* best-selling book, *Blue Zones Solution: Eating and living Like the World's Healthiest People*.



GUIDE TO THE POWER 9

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.

Using the secrets to longevity as our guide — **the Power 9** — businesses and residents have taken actions to make well-being a way of life.

THE POWER 9


P.19


Move Naturally

 Make daily physical activity an unavoidable part of your environment.

P.26

Right Outlook


 Know your purpose.


 Downshift: work less, slow down, and take vacations.

P.32

Eat Wisely

 Eat until 80% full.

 More veggies, less meat and processed food.

 Drink a glass of red wine each day.

P.41

Connect

 Create a healthy social network.

 Connect or reconnect with religion.

 Prioritize family.



EAT WISELY

OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF GROCERY STORES IN UNDERSERVED AREAS BY MAPPING FOOD DESERTS AND USING STATE AND FEDERAL INCENTIVES TO ATTRACT THREE NEW GROCERY STORES TO THE AREA.



MOVE NATURALLY

TOGETHER, SIOUXLAND RESIDENTS ARE MOVING MORE, AND MORE NATURALLY. SINCE LAUNCHING BLUE ZONES PROJECT, SIOUX CITY HAS HELPED OVER 640 OF OUR STUDENTS MOVE ACTIVELY TO SCHOOL ON A WALKING SCHOOL BUS.

SIOUX CITY OUTCOMES



RIGHT OUTLOOK

WITH MORE THAN 39,090 VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED BY 4,799 VOLUNTEERS, VOLUNTEERS IN SIOUX CITY ADDED \$869,752 IN VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY.



CONNECT

MORE THAN 600 SIOUX CITY RESIDENTS BUILT STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEW FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS WHILE EXPLORING THE COMMUNITY IN WALKING MOAI GROUPS.



Together, Siouxland residents are moving more, and more naturally. Since launching Blue Zones Project, Sioux City has helped more than 640 of our students move actively to school on a Walking School Bus.

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 they 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.²

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.³

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.⁴ 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 Sioux City residents move naturally. Our city has emerged as a leader for street and community design that nudges people to healthier daily habits. Here are some reasons why:

436

Actions taken by organizations to move naturally

12,472

actions taken by individuals to move naturally, like getting a bike or a dog to encourage regular movement

60

Walking Moai teams

600

Walking Moai participants

16

Walking School Bus routes



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.

TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENTS

A community resurgence, anchored in putting the well-being of residents first, is happening in Sioux City.

Our community is one of three cities in Iowa — and one of only 230 nationwide — to accept the Mayor’s Challenge, which promotes complete streets, biking and walking data, street guidelines, and other walkability and bikeability initiatives. This is supported by a new active transportation plan that maps out priorities and recommendations, like **19 new miles of bike lanes and trails.**

In 2014, the Sioux City city council passed a Complete Streets policy. Complete Streets policies ensure roads are safe for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Positive built-environment projects are popping up all across the city, including many new trails and sidewalks that encourage people to move naturally.

By designing a community where it’s easy to move, Sioux City is supporting well-being as a way of life.

In the News

Trails seen as key to Blue Zones success
Sioux City Journal
3.24.13

IT’S TIME TO MOVE IT: Blue Zones makes great strides in lives of Sioux City kids, adults
Sioux City Journal
3.23.14

Blue Zones encourages Siouxland to get moving
Sioux City Journal
2.19.16



THE SIOUX CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BELIEVES THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR STUDENTS IS A HIGH PRIORITY. WE CONTINUE TO ALIGN THE ENTIRE SCHOOL CULTURE WITH HEALTHFUL PRACTICES THAT POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THE STUDENTS’ UNDERSTANDING AND HABITS REGARDING NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Dr. Paul R. Gausman,
Superintendent
Sioux City Community School District



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.⁵

60%

Sales increase at shops in San Francisco's Mission District after the area became more friendly to pedestrian and bicycle activity.⁵



COMPLETE STREETS DRIVE ECONOMIC VALUE



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.⁶



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 7 jobs per \$1 million spent.⁷



WALKABLE COMMUNITIES THRIVE

55%

of Americans would rather drive less and walk more.⁸

73%

currently feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do.⁸

66%

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

ORGANIZATIONS MOVING NATURALLY

The health of our community is directly related to the health and vitality of our people.

Organizations across Sioux City have recognized their responsibility to create environments that support their employees and patrons in moving more.

Worksites

We spend about one third of our waking hours at work.

Over the last fifty years, the percentage of jobs requiring moderate physical activity has fallen from 50 percent in 1960 to 20 percent today.⁹ 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 annually.³

With so much time spent at work, it's important that these environments are set up to help people move more. Our community saw **86 worksites complete actions** to help people move more, **including adding standing desks, sharing walking routes, and offering stretch breaks and fitness classes.** These are small changes that lead to huge results for the average person over the course of a career.



Restaurants and Grocery Stores

Grocery stores in Sioux City remind shoppers that parking further away is one way to easily add more activity in their day. Restaurants are installing bicycle racks to encourage people to consider active transportation to common destinations (and work up a healthy appetite, too). Small efforts like these make moving naturally easier than ever before in Sioux City.

Schools

Every day children are learning habits they will carry for the rest of their lives.

Establishing healthy habits like moving naturally is so important in the early stages of life. Physical activity and stretch breaks during the school day can improve grades, increase concentration, and improve math, reading, and writing test scores.¹⁰



WALKING HELPS KIDS

Children who walk to school are more alert and ready to learn, strengthen their social networks and develop lifetime fitness habits.^{11, 12} A Walking School Bus allows a group of children to walk to school under the supervision of two or more adults.

Additionally, research shows that including 10-minute activity breaks on a daily basis can promote improvement across these areas by up to 20 percent.

Our community saw 23 schools complete actions to get students moving, including adding Walking School Buses, brain breaks, and additional recess and physical education time.

As of fall 2014, 641 students were regularly walking to school with a Walking School Bus, which is a program supported by 288 volunteers who donated 1,141 volunteer hours. These buses now serve 11 schools and offer 16 different routes.

Walking School Buses

- 1 641 students regularly walking to school
- 2 288 Walking School Bus volunteers
- 3 1,141 Walking School Bus volunteer hours
- 4 16 different Walking School Bus routes

SEE IT IN ACTION

Sioux City, Iowa — Walking School Bus

Watch the video:

Explore.BlueZonesProject.com



THE MOST REWARDING PART IS GETTING TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH KIDS. I GET TO SEE THEM BEFORE SCHOOL EVEN STARTS, WALK WITH THEM, GET SOME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND JUST BUILD MORE RELATIONSHIPS.

Tori Mills
Teacher
Irving Elementary



39,000+

39,000+ hours have been logged by 4,799 volunteers in Sioux City, adding \$869,752 to the community.¹

Having the right outlook is a common thread in Blue Zones areas.

The longest-lived people have regular habits to shed stress. Okinawans take a few moments each day to remember their ancestors, Adventists pray, Ikarians take a nap, and Sardinians enjoy happy hour. **It doesn't matter what you do, just so long as it helps you keep 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.**²

RIGHT OUTLOOK



WHY RIGHT OUTLOOK MATTERS

No matter where we live, stress and the pressures of daily life can weigh us down.

Practicing regular methods to downshift from everyday stress and understand our purpose can improve well-being. **Stress leads to chronic inflammation, which is tied to every major age-related disease.**

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.¹³



How Right Outlook Impacts Our Community

Through volunteering, Purpose Workshops, and Purpose Moais, Sioux City helps individuals discover their innate gifts. We help our community members find opportunities to match their passion and commitment with volunteer opportunities to deepen their sense of purpose.

Sioux City is thriving. Since 2012, our residents' outlook is on the rise. More than half of all residents fall into the "thriving" category when reflecting on their life evaluation, up nearly eight points since 2012, according to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®.



THRIVING

Well-being that is strong, consistent, and progressing in a particular element.

STRUGGLING

Well-being that is moderate or inconsistent in a particular element.

SUFFERING

Well-being that is very low and at high risk in a particular element.



BY THE NUMBERS

141

actions taken by organizations to build strong connections.

16,047

actions taken by individuals to practice having the right outlook, like designating a space at home for meditation or prayer, learning a new hobby, or discovering their purpose.

7

Purpose Workshops with 535 participants.

8

Purpose Moais with 47 participants.

1,560

volunteers with Blue Zones Project logging 6,257 hours.

4,799

volunteers in Sioux City logging 39,090 hours.

OUTCOMES

With more than **39,090 hours logged by 4,799 volunteers**, volunteers in Sioux City have added \$869,752 in value to the community.¹

Additionally, **more than 535 people sought to discover their gifts and deepen their sense of purpose through Purpose Workshops** and the creation of eight Purpose Moais with 47 participants. East High School students were introduced to the idea of purpose during a Purpose Workshop to help them prepare for the next stage of life. Morningside College and Briar Cliff University also hosted Purpose Workshops to engage students.



OUR LIVES ARE SO BUSY WITH WORK AND FAMILY THAT, OFTEN, WE IGNORE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF BEING HEALTHY, SUCH AS GETTING ENOUGH REST, EXERCISING, AND BEING CONSCIOUS OF WHAT WE EAT. AS A CATHOLIC BISHOP, I ALSO WANT TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO MAKE SURE THEIR SPIRITUAL HEALTH IS ACTIVE AS WELL. I AM VERY PROUD OF OUR DIOCESE FOR MAKING OUR HEALTH MORE OF A PRIORITY. BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS BEEN A BLESSING FOR ALL OF US.

Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Bishop of the Diocese of Sioux City



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.



WELL-BEING SAVES EVERYONE MONEY



IT PAYS TO BE 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.



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.

ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE RIGHT OUTLOOK

Organizations across Sioux City are creating environments and practices that encourage the right outlook. By keeping this top of mind throughout the community, everyone is enjoying more health and vitality.

Worksites

Fewer than 50 percent of Americans find meaning at work. Employers that invest in making work meaningful for their employees are more likely to see production rise and turnover decrease.¹⁴

Our community saw 86 worksites complete actions to help improve outlook and purpose among employees, including creating designated quiet spaces, posting the company mission or vision, encouraging volunteering, and offering Purpose Workshops.

Between 2013 and 2014, Mercy Medical Center experienced measurable improvements in employee wellness screening outcomes, including a **15.4 percent increase in ideal Body Mass Index, an 11.6 percent improvement in diabetic risk, and a 3 percent improvement in ideal cholesterol levels.** Mercy's workplace culture supports healthier choices, because when employees are able to care for themselves, they are better able to care for their patients.

Actions Completed by 86 Worksites

- 1 Creating designated quiet spaces
- 2 Posting company mission
- 3 Encouraging volunteering
- 4 Offering Purpose Workshops



BLUE ZONES PROJECT REALLY REFLECTS AND STRENGTHENS PALMER CANDY COMPANY'S COMMITMENT TO THE WELL-BEING OF ITS EMPLOYEES. PALMER CANDY HAS GROWN AS A COMPANY THANKS TO THE EXCELLENCE OF ITS PEOPLE. I COULDN'T BE MORE PROUD OF THE PALMER TEAM. FOCUSING ON THE HEALTH, HAPPINESS, AND LONGEVITY OF OUR TEAM AND THEIR FAMILIES MAKES US A BETTER AND STRONGER ORGANIZATION.

Marty Palmer
CEO
Palmer Candy Company

Schools

Mindfulness is paying attention to the here and now with kindness and curiosity.

Research suggests that teaching mindfulness skills to students increases attention and improves social skills while decreasing test anxiety. It also creates a sense of calm connection to nature, and it improves sleep. These skills allow children to better cope with the stress and noise in life.¹⁵

Our community saw seven Sioux City schools implement mindfulness programming to support the community's youngest minds. Research shows that students who participate in similar programs improved in the areas of empathy, perspective taking, optimism, emotional control, and mindfulness. They also were more likely to show improvements on trustworthiness, helpfulness, and sharing while showing less rule breaking and starting fewer fights than the control group.¹⁵

In the News

**Your Health Matters:
Local man attributes
90-pound weight loss to
Blue Zones mentality**

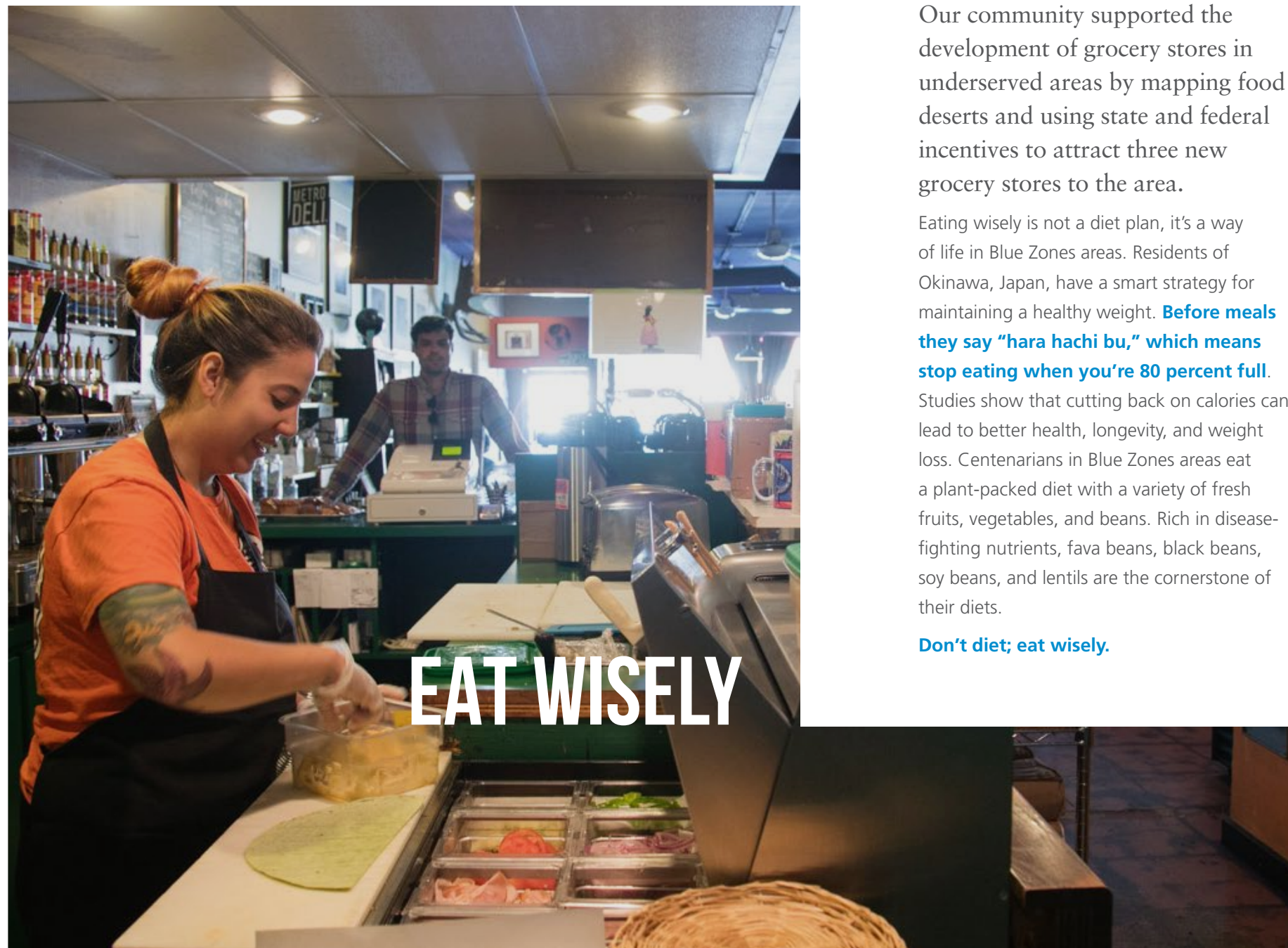
Siouxland Matters
6.10.15



MY LIFE HAS DRAMATICALLY CHANGED OVER TIME WITH THESE SMALL LIFE CHANGES. I THINK BLUE ZONES PROJECT HAS HELPED ME SEE THAT IT IS A COMPLETE LIFESTYLE TRANSFORMATION. I'M PROUD TO SAY I'M MUCH HEALTHIER AND HAVE LOST OVER 90 POUNDS. IN MY HEART, THIS IS THE WAY I WANT TO LIVE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

Will Meier
Sioux City Resident





Our community supported the development of grocery stores in underserved areas by mapping food deserts and using state and federal incentives to attract three new grocery stores to the area.

Eating wisely is not a diet plan, it's a way of life in Blue Zones areas. Residents of Okinawa, Japan, have a smart strategy for maintaining a healthy weight. **Before meals they say "hara hachi bu," which means stop eating when you're 80 percent full.** Studies show that cutting back on calories can lead to better health, longevity, and weight loss. Centenarians in Blue Zones areas eat a plant-packed diet with a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and beans. Rich in disease-fighting nutrients, fava beans, black beans, soy beans, and lentils are the cornerstone of their diets.

Don't diet; eat wisely.

WHY EATING WISELY MATTERS

It is estimated that by 2030, 86 percent of the American population will be overweight or obese if current eating habits and exercise habits remain the same.¹⁶

Food is fuel, and what we eat impacts our productivity, too. A 2012 study revealed that **unhealthy eating is related to a 66 percent increased risk of loss of productivity.** Health-related employee productivity loss accounts for 77 percent of all productivity loss and costs employers up to three times more in annual health care expenses.¹⁷

In addition to looking and feeling better, **the benefits of healthy eating are numerous. In the U.S. estimated savings are \$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.**¹⁸ Poor diet is a major risk factor for these five health conditions, all of which reduce life expectancy. By making subtle but substantial changes to our food options, we can be healthier.

How Eating Wisely Impacts Our Community

People make more than 200 food decisions every day.¹⁹ Blue Zones Project helps people choose wisely.

Sioux City implemented small changes and defaults in restaurants, worksites, grocery stores, and schools. For example: Restaurants created new, irresistible, good-for-you menu options. Grocery stores stocked their shelves with nutritious, tasty foods. Schools removed vending machines so kids aren't tempted by sugary snacks and sodas during the school day.

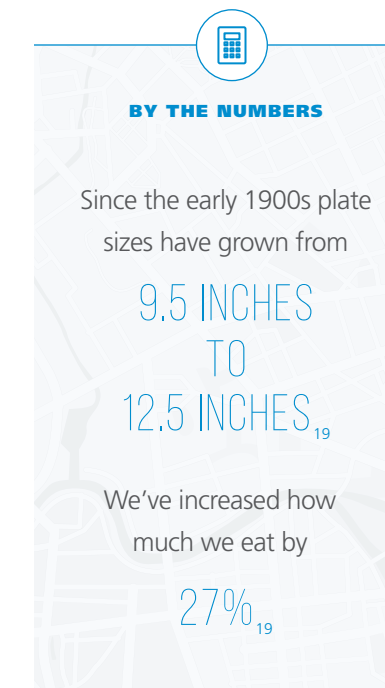
713 actions taken by organizations to support eating wisely

20,102 actions taken by individuals to eat wisely, like joining a Plant-Based Potluck Moai, adding healthy items to their grocery list, or growing a garden

24 cooking classes with 372 participants bringing healthier cooking home to their families

16 Plant-Based Potluck Moais with 209 participants

10 gardens: five community gardens, five school gardens, 23 gardens at worksites



Growing Well-Being

With five community gardens springing up each season, Sioux City is literally growing well-being.

New gardens popped up in public parks, on church grounds, and in neighborhoods. The “Up from the Earth” initiative encourages our community to “grow an extra row” of fresh, local produce and donate it to those in need. Through this program, more than 6,000 pounds of produce have been donated to Sioux City food pantries.

Our community worked together to map existing food deserts — those areas lacking immediate access to nutritional foods — and used state and federal incentives to add three new grocery stores: Hy-Vee Mainstreet, Save-A-Lot, and Specialty Foods in those areas.



COMMUNITY GARDENS



PEAS IN A POD

People who garden tend to eat more fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. In a survey of home and community gardeners in San Jose, California, participants doubled their vegetable intake and consumed the nationally recommended daily servings of vegetables. Another study from Denver, Colorado showed gardeners ate more fruits and vegetable than non-gardeners.²⁰



HOME IS WHERE THE GARDEN IS

An American Community Gardening Association report showed community gardens can increase home prices for residences near the garden as much as 9.4 percentage points within five years. The report also showed community gardens contribute to a reduction in violent and non-violent crime in the neighborhood and an overall increase in the feeling of safety.²¹



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Schools are taking part, too, with gardens at Blue Zones Schools tended by students. The produce is being used in nutrition education.

Students who have access to school garden programs score significantly higher on science achievement tests than students who are taught by strictly traditional classroom methods.²²

In the News

Riverside Elementary School designs a community garden
Sioux City Journal

06.10.15



The Riverside Elementary School garden brought together community members, students, parents, and teachers. Students planted broccoli, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, scallions, radishes, and asparagus. They eat this food and share the harvest with the community. By June 2015, they had harvested and distributed more than 73 pounds of produce.

Mater Dei school garden helps feed Iowa's healthiest school
Sioux City Journal

07.11.15

Outreach effort planned for new Dale Street Farmers Market
Sioux City Journal

08.9.14

SEE IT IN ACTION

Blue Zones Restaurants Serve Up Healthy Options Across Iowa

Watch the video:
Explore.BlueZonesProject.com



ORGANIZATIONS EATING WISELY

Changes made to our restaurants, grocery stores, and schools can make a huge impact on the health and well-being of the community as a whole. By working together, we can make eating wisely second nature, not a chore.

Restaurants

Many of our community's restaurants have realized business benefits since becoming certified Blue Zones Restaurants. Hy-Vee Mainstreet Grill created several healthy options that follow the Blue Zones Guidelines for Healthy Foods and are noted on the menu with a Blue Zones Project Approved checkmark.

Since this change, **black-bean burger sales have increased by 200 percent and portabella sandwich sales have increased by 37 percent.** Hy-Vee estimates that 25 percent of customers are now opting for the healthier side items of carrots or apples.

Rebos is making healthy choices easier for our residents. All patrons are greeted with a glass of water, which is lowering soda sales. White rice was removed from the menu and replaced with brown rice.

Shahi Palace offers residents healthy Indian cuisine. After becoming a Blue Zones Restaurant, sales of dal (lentil) soup and the new peanut-butter-wheat-roti kid's menu item grew by 71 percent.



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

5.5% INCREASE
in same-store sales at restaurants that increased their better-for-you/low-calorie servings between 2006 and 2011.²⁴

5.5% DECREASE
in sales at restaurants that did not increase their better-for-you/low-calorie servings.²⁴





IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT FRESH INGREDIENTS ARE HEALTHIER THAN CANNED INGREDIENTS. MY MAIN INTEREST IS IN FLAVOR. GOOD INGREDIENTS JUST TASTE BETTER. OUR BLUE ZONES MENU BUMPS UP THE PROTEIN WITHOUT LOSING ANY OF ITS FLAVOR. CHANCES ARE IT TASTES SO GOOD, YOU'LL FORGET IT'S ALSO GOOD FOR YOU.

Clay Lillie
Chef
Clyde's Grill and Pub

Grocery Stores

The actions we take to determine what we eat begin at the grocery store.

Many grocery stores currently lead people to unhealthy foods in the way they are designed, the deals they promote, and the packaging of the food they sell.²⁵ Our community is taking the lead in taking the grocery store back.

Our community saw eight grocery stores complete actions to make healthy food choices easier — things like sharing healthy recipes, offering cooking classes, ensuring water is available in checkout lanes, offering healthy foods on end caps and in special displays, and offering a Blue Zones checkout lane full of healthy options.

60%

of the food we purchase is highly processed, fatty, salty or sugary.²⁶

75%

increase of produce sales at the Hy-Vee Mainstreet grocery store when the space dedicated to produce was increased by 60 percent.



Worksites

Seventy percent of Americans eat at their desks several times a week, which can lead to distracted, disengaged, and mindless overeating.²⁷

In Sioux City, **86 worksites** completed actions to make healthy food choices easier — things like starting healthy potlucks and worksite gardens, improving cafeteria options, and adding healthy choices to vending machines.

American Pop Corn Company improved healthy vending options by 47.7 percent between 2013 and 2014 by adding two healthy beverage machines and eliminating two candy machines. The company has seen **nearly 100 percent participation in its biometric screening program**. Their 2014–2015 health screenings showed a 55 percent improvement in employees' HDL, or "good" cholesterol, a 14.5 percent decline in their LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, and a 9.4 percent decline in the number of employees using nicotine.

Schools

With childhood obesity at 17 percent, there's never been a more important time to examine what students are eating at school.²⁵ The place they go to learn about history and science should be the place they go to learn about eating wisely as well.

Our community saw **23 schools** complete actions to make healthy food choices easier for students — things like growing gardens and starting farm-to-school programs, stocking vending machines with healthier options or limiting access throughout the day, redesigning lunchrooms to nudge students toward healthier foods, and implementing new policies around celebrations and fundraising with food.

Students who attend schools that sell foods with low nutrient density and sugar-sweetened beverages have lower intake of fruits, vegetables, and milk at lunch and higher daily percentages of calories from total fat and saturated fat.²⁹



In the News

More options, healthier choices: Restaurants zeroing in on Blue Zones
Sioux City Journal

09.30.13

Sioux City grocery stores promote health through Blue Zones designation
KTIV

07.19.13

Sioux City Hy-Vee go “blue”

Sioux City Journal

07.17.13



MANY TIMES PEOPLE FEEL THAT COOKING SOMETHING GOOD FOR YOU HAS TO BE BORING OR TAKES TOO MUCH TIME. THE PLANT-BASED COOKING CLASSES ARE A FUN WAY TO TRY NEW AND SIMPLE IDEAS TO GET PARTICIPANTS TO INCLUDE MORE FRUITS, VEGGIES, AND PLANT-POWERED PROTEINS. WE DO ALL OF THIS WHILE STRESSING HOW EASY IT CAN BE TO GET EVERYONE IN THE FAMILY INVOLVED IN THE KITCHEN.

Korie Lown
Former Dietitian
Hamilton Hy-Vee

More than 600 Sioux City residents built strong relationships with new friends and neighbors while exploring the community in Walking Moai groups.

The world's longest-lived people in Blue Zones areas have always understood the power of social connectedness and putting their families first.

In Okinawa, “Moais” — groups of about five people who commit to each other for their whole lives — provide social connection and emotional and sometimes financial support in times of need. Moai members have the security of knowing there is always someone there for them.

Putting family first and investing time with loved ones can add up to six years to your life.³⁰ Having a sense of belonging is an important part of enjoying a long and healthy life. It doesn't matter which faith you belong to, **studies have shown that people who belong to a place of worship and attend four times a month live four to fourteen years longer than those who don't.**³¹



WHY CONNECTION MATTERS

Our connections to friends, family, and those around us are very powerful.

They have the ability to shape our lives in more ways than we realize. Research shows that even your friends' friends' friends — people you don't even know — have the ability to affect your health, happiness, and behaviors.³²

How Connectedness Impacts our Community

Spending time with people who positively influence one another is crucial. In Sioux City, we embraced the power of social connections to bring citizens together through groups, clubs, and faith-based organizations. Sioux City also encourages social connections throughout the community with our new community gardens and along new trails.

In June 2015, Sioux City introduced a pilot program to increase the vibrancy of downtown. The outdoor 'parklet' decks fit into the size of a parking spot and promote an active streetscape, economic and social vitality, and pedestrian- and retail-friendly activity. The program was repeated in 2016 to continue to promote meaningful interactions and experiences within our community.

More than 600 people have joined 60 Walking Moais throughout the community, building long-lasting friendships while exploring our community on foot.



IT WASN'T LONG AFTER THE DEATH OF MY WIFE THAT BLUE ZONES PROJECT LAUNCHED IN SIOUX CITY. I BECAME A WALKING MOAI LEADER. THIS PROVIDED EXERCISE AND COMPANIONSHIP DURING A TIME OF HEALING. THIS VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY MOVED MY MIND AND BODY INTO A BETTER FRAME.

Tom Schoening
Community Volunteer



BY THE NUMBERS

72

Actions taken by organizations to build strong connections.

11,820

Actions taken by individuals to connect, like implementing regular family dinner nights, joining a Moai, or volunteering.

60

Walking Moais with more than 600 participants

8

Purpose Moais with 47 participants

16

Plant-Based Potluck Moais with 209 participants

ORGANIZATIONS CONNECTING

There are many ways to promote connections in organizations throughout the community.

By providing these opportunities, everyone in the community feels like a part of something bigger.

Worksites

The digitalization of the work day 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 socialization among coworkers and peers.

Our community saw 86 worksites complete actions to help employees connect with one another, including things like "lunch with a co-worker" programs, flexible work schedules, offering strengths assessments, and implementing Moais.



In the News

Project brings mini green spaces, bike lane to downtown

Sioux City Now
06.25.15

Sioux City parking stalls to be transformed into creative spaces

KTIV
07.8.16



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,³⁴ and inversely, you are 20 percent more likely to succeed at new behaviors if you do them with a buddy.³⁵



GOOD FRIENDS AND FAMILY MAKE EVERYTHING BETTER



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.³⁷



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!³⁶



DON'T GO 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.³⁸ 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.³⁹



CONGRATS, SIOUX CITY!

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 Sioux City one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living better, together.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX Designated Organizations

Blue Zones Grocery Stores

- Fareway
- Fareway Indian Hills
- Fareway Sergeant Road
- Gordon Drive Hy-Vee
- Hamilton Hy-Vee
- Southern Hills Hy-Vee

Blue Zones Restaurants

- Clyde's Grill & Pub
- Daily Grind Market & Bakery
- FUEL
- Gordon Drive Hy-Vee
- Hamilton Hy-Vee
- Jitters
- Mainstreet Grill
- McCarthy & Bailey's Irish Pub
- Pickerman's
- Pierce Street Coffee Works
- Rebos
- Shahi Palace
- Southern Hills Hy-Vee
- SweetWater Cafe

Blue Zones Schools

- Bryant Elementary
- Clark Elementary
- Hunt Elementary
- Irving Elementary
- Mater Dei
- Riverside Elementary
- Spalding Park Elementary

Blue Zones Worksites

- American Pop Corn Co.
- Briar Cliff University
- Central Bank
- City of Sioux City
- CNOS, PC
- Diocese of Sioux City
- Goosmann Law Firm, PLC
- Health Inc.
- Hirschbach Motor Lines
- Innovative Business Consultants
- Jackson Recovery Centers
- J&L Enterprises
- Lilly Family Dentistry
- Mercy Medical Center — Sioux City
- Mid-Step Services
- Northwest Area Education Agency

- Palmer Candy Company
- Robert W. Baird
- Sioux City Community School District
- Sioux City Foundry Co.
- Siouxland Community Health Center
- Siouxland District Health Department
- Sunrise Retirement
- Tec-Corp
- Touchstone Living Center
- United Real Estate Solutions
- UnityPoint Health — St.Luke's
- Van Meter — Sioux City
- Wellmark Sioux City
- Western Iowa Tech Community College
- 185th Air Refueling Wing

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