



# WOODBINE A PROUD BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

The 13th certified Blue Zones Community® in the nation invests in well-being for a more livable, vibrant, and healthy future.



Sponsored by







CONGRATS, WOODBINE,  
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 saw two-thirds of elementary school students move naturally to school with a Walking School Bus, while student fruit and vegetable consumption increased by 50 percent.** Our community's resurgence, anchored in putting the well-being of our residents first, is happening.

Woodbine 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 Woodbine one of the healthiest places in the nation, where residents are living better, together.

# 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.

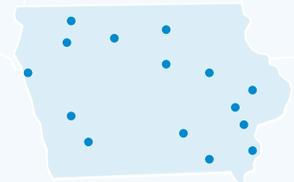
Wellmark knew that doing so would introduce an innovative approach that moves beyond diet and exercise regimens and applies the principles of behavioral economics to make healthier choices easier choices. The projected outcomes? Improved health and well-being for Iowans.

## 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 achieve 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.

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**.



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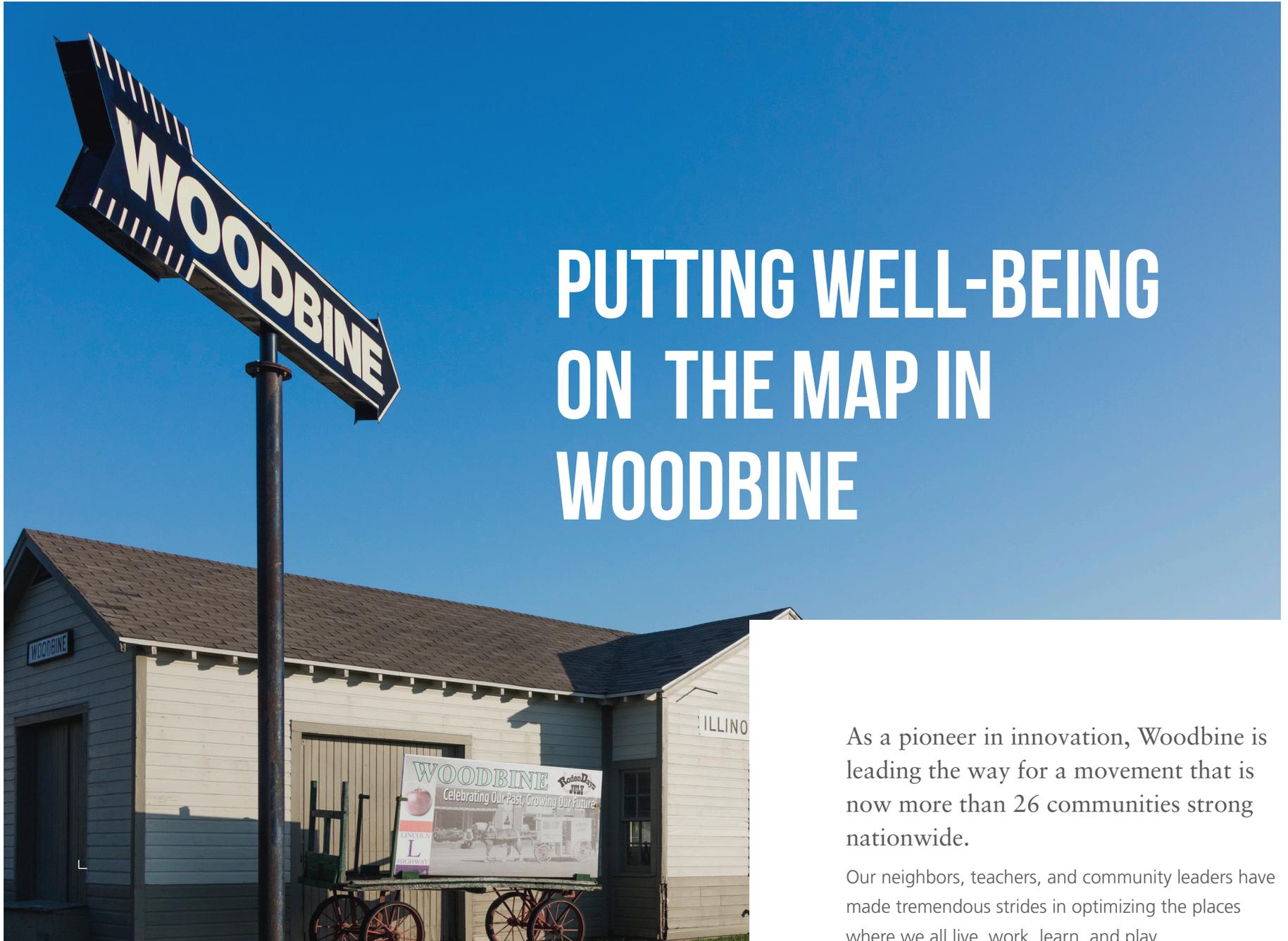
WOODBINE HAS EMBRACED TRANSFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE THROUGH BLUE ZONES PROJECT, AND THE OUTCOMES HAVE BEEN EXCITING. WOODBINE'S EFFORTS ARE TO BE COMMENDED, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING CONTINUED MOMENTUM WITH WELL-BEING IMPROVEMENT.

Dan Buettner

*New York Times* best-selling author

National Geographic Fellow

Blue Zones founder



# PUTTING WELL-BEING ON THE MAP IN WOODBINE

As a pioneer in innovation, Woodbine 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.

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WE ARE HONORED TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A CERTIFIED BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY. I HAVE WITNESSED SO MUCH POSITIVE PROGRESS ON THE JOURNEY TO IMPROVING WELL-BEING IN OUR COMMUNITY. THE IDEAS AND PASSION OUR RESIDENTS HAVE BROUGHT TO THE TABLE THROUGH BLUE ZONES PROJECT ARE IMPRESSIVE.

Rick Gau  
Mayor  
Woodbine

## The Future is Healthy and Bright in Woodbine

Woodbine is a small-town community designed for a high quality of life.

When it comes to in-town travel, we think beyond automobiles, as evidenced by a newly completed sidewalk at Park Circle, which helps complete the streets for cyclists and pedestrians. **Our streets are lined with trees that provide shade and comfort while reducing noise and pollution,** and our historic Main Street boasts native Iowa plants and local art.

Students in Woodbine enjoy walking to and from school with volunteers. **This program, called the Walking School Bus, allows 65 percent of elementary school students to move naturally, socialize, and arrive at school ready to learn.** At lunch, healthy options are abundant.

A new lunchroom layout has led to **increased consumption of fruits and vegetables (by 50 percent) and reduced plate waste (by 25 percent).** Lunch typically features locally grown produce, like apples from the local orchard. School curriculum allows kids to venture outdoors and learn about the life cycles of plants and how to grow their own food. Through all these initiatives and more, our kids are learning healthy habits that will develop into healthy lifestyles at our Blue Zones School®.

One thing is certain, when you explore this Blue Zones Community, you'll find a place built to enhance well-being.



## A Community-wide Commitment to Blue Zones Project



1,459

Lives impacted

1,308

Individuals pledged to support well-being

1,175

Well-being actions taken by individuals

1,012

Changes made by organizations to support living longer better

13

Organizations completing the pledge

10

Woodbine worksites that are Blue Zones Worksites®

1

Locally owned restaurant in Woodbine that is a Blue Zones Restaurant®

1

Woodbine public school that is a Blue Zones School

1

Woodbine grocery store that is a Blue Zones Grocery Stores®



## SEE IT IN ACTION

### Blue Zones Project Highlight: Woodbine

Woodbine 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:

[explore.bluezonesproject.com/Woodbine](https://explore.bluezonesproject.com/Woodbine)

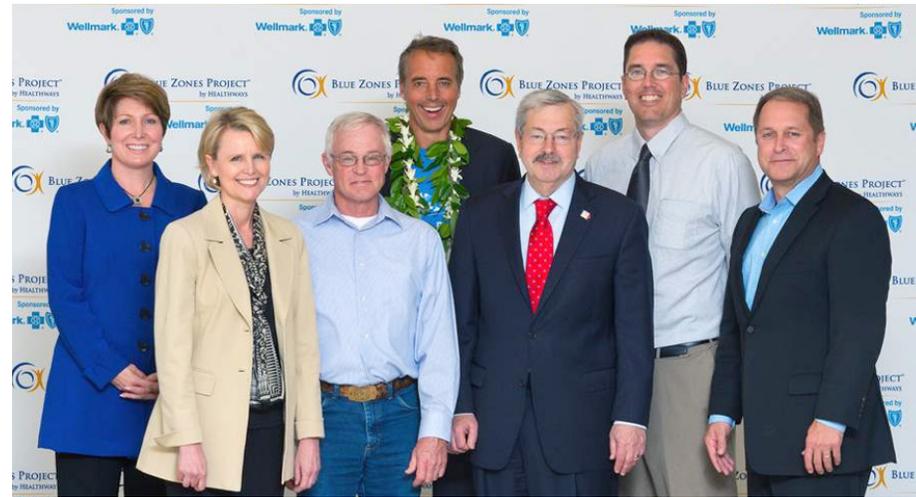


## Media Coverage Places Woodbine on National Stage

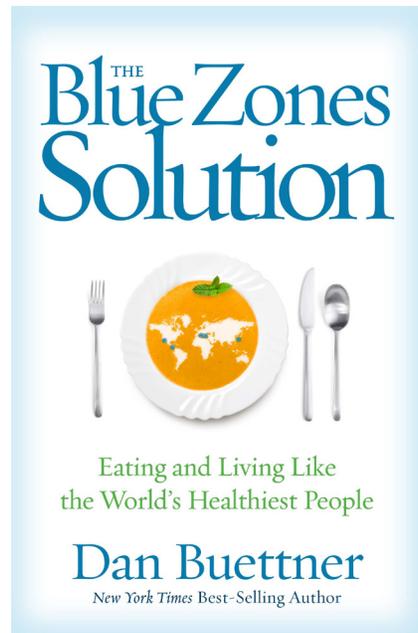
Blue Zones Project in Iowa has attracted local and national recognition, with more than 1,600 media stories to date.

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



Woodbine Blue Zones Project leaders meet with Governor Branstad, May 2015



In addition to great media stories covering our efforts, the Blue Zones Project Iowa 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.18

### Move Naturally

 Make daily physical activity an unavoidable part of your environment.

P.25

### Right Outlook

 Know your purpose.

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

P.28

### Eat Wisely

 Eat until 80 percent full.

 More veggies, less meat and processed food.

 Drink a glass of red wine each day.

P.35

### Connect

 Create a healthy social network.

 Connect or reconnect with religion.

 Prioritize family.



## EAT WISELY

**WELL-BEING IS GROWING IN WOODBINE WITH A 50 PERCENT INCREASE IN STUDENT FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION THAT IS THE RESULT OF A NEW LUNCHROOM LAYOUT.**



## MOVE NATURALLY

**TOGETHER, WOODBINE RESIDENTS ARE MOVING MORE, NATURALLY. SINCE LAUNCHING BLUE ZONES PROJECT, TWO-THIRDS OF ALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS MOVE NATURALLY, SOCIALIZE, AND ARRIVE AT SCHOOL READY TO LEARN BECAUSE OF THE NEW WALKING SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM.**

# WOODBINE OUTCOMES



## RIGHT OUTLOOK

**VOLUNTEERS IN WOODBINE ARE ACTIVELY GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY.**



## CONNECT

**NEW PUBLIC ART ON MAIN STREET ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO CONNECT TO THEIR COMMUNITY WHILE LINGERING AND SOCIALIZING WITH NEIGHBORS.**

# MOVING NATURALLY

Together, Woodbine residents are moving more, and more naturally. Since launching Blue Zones Project, two-thirds of all elementary school students move naturally, socialize, and arrive at school ready to learn because of the new Walking School Bus program.

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 to move naturally. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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 Woodbine residents move naturally. Our community has emerged as a leader for street and community design that nudges people to healthier daily habits. Here is a big reason why:

4

Walking School Bus routes

85

Approximate number of students that participated in a Walking School Bus each week



## TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENTS

A community resurgence, anchored in putting the well-being of residents first, is happening in Woodbine. Our community of nearly 1,500 is investing in infrastructure that supports healthier lifestyles.

In 2014, the Woodbine 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 that encourage residents to move naturally. By designing a community where it's easy to move, Woodbine is supporting well-being as a way of life.

**A \$175,000 investment in sidewalks.** The city allocated \$175,000 to add a sidewalk at Park Circle around Woodbine City Park as part of its Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Because of this project, a total of 752 feet of new sidewalk was added to Park circle.

**A crosswalk improvement project saw 16 crosswalks repainted throughout the city,** with priority given to areas near the school so students could move naturally and safely to school.

**More than 77 trees were planted** along the pedestrian trail to reduce noise and enhance public safety as people move naturally through the community.

A joint use agreement between the City of Woodbine and the Woodbine School District was approved by the Woodbine City Council and the Woodbine School Board in August 2015. The agreement formalized the public's ability to use the school's outdoor recreation facilities when not in use by the school.



BLUE ZONES CONCEPTS LIKE COMPLETE STREETS ARE USED TO MAKE SURE THERE'S A PLACE FOR TRAILS AND BICYCLISTS AND PEOPLE TO DO THINGS BESIDES GET IN A VEHICLE AND DRIVE SOMEWHERE. WITH THE ADDITION OF THE PARK CIRCLE PROJECT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE TRACK THAT WAS RECENTLY PUT IN, IT'S MAKING A LOT OF FOLKS IN TOWN MORE MOBILE. IT'S BEEN A WONDERFUL THING. IT'S RESOURCES WELL SPENT.

Kelly Hasner  
City of Woodbine

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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





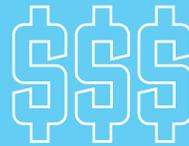
### LOCAL BUSINESS

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 invest in local businesses and create job growth. <sup>4</sup>

60%

Sales increase at shops in San Francisco's Mission District after the area became more friendly to pedestrian and bicycle activity. <sup>4</sup>



## 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. <sup>5</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 7 jobs per \$1 million spent. <sup>6</sup>



### WALKABLE COMMUNITIES THRIVE

55%

of Americans would rather drive less and walk more. <sup>7</sup>

73%

currently feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do. <sup>7</sup>

66%

of Americans want more transportation options so they have the freedom to choose how they get where they need to go. <sup>7</sup>

## ORGANIZATIONS MOVING NATURALLY

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

Organizations across Woodbine 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 50 years, the percentage of jobs requiring moderate physical activity has fallen from 50 percent in 1960 to 20 percent today.<sup>8</sup>

**This means four out of five 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 health care costs and \$153 billion in lost productivity, annually.<sup>2</sup>

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

For example, after becoming a Blue Zones Worksite, Tommy Gate saw an uptick in people moving naturally to work. Of about 150 employees, about six people now walk to work and two people ride a bicycle to work. Further, 31 employees participated in their “Park Farther, Live Longer” program, which incentivized employees for intentionally parking in the furthest locations from the building entrance.





#### 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>9,10</sup> A Walking School

Bus allows a group of children to walk to school under the supervision of two or more adults.

## 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.<sup>11</sup>

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

### Woodbine Community School District completed actions to get students moving,

including adding four Walking School Buses, brain breaks, and additional recess and physical education time.

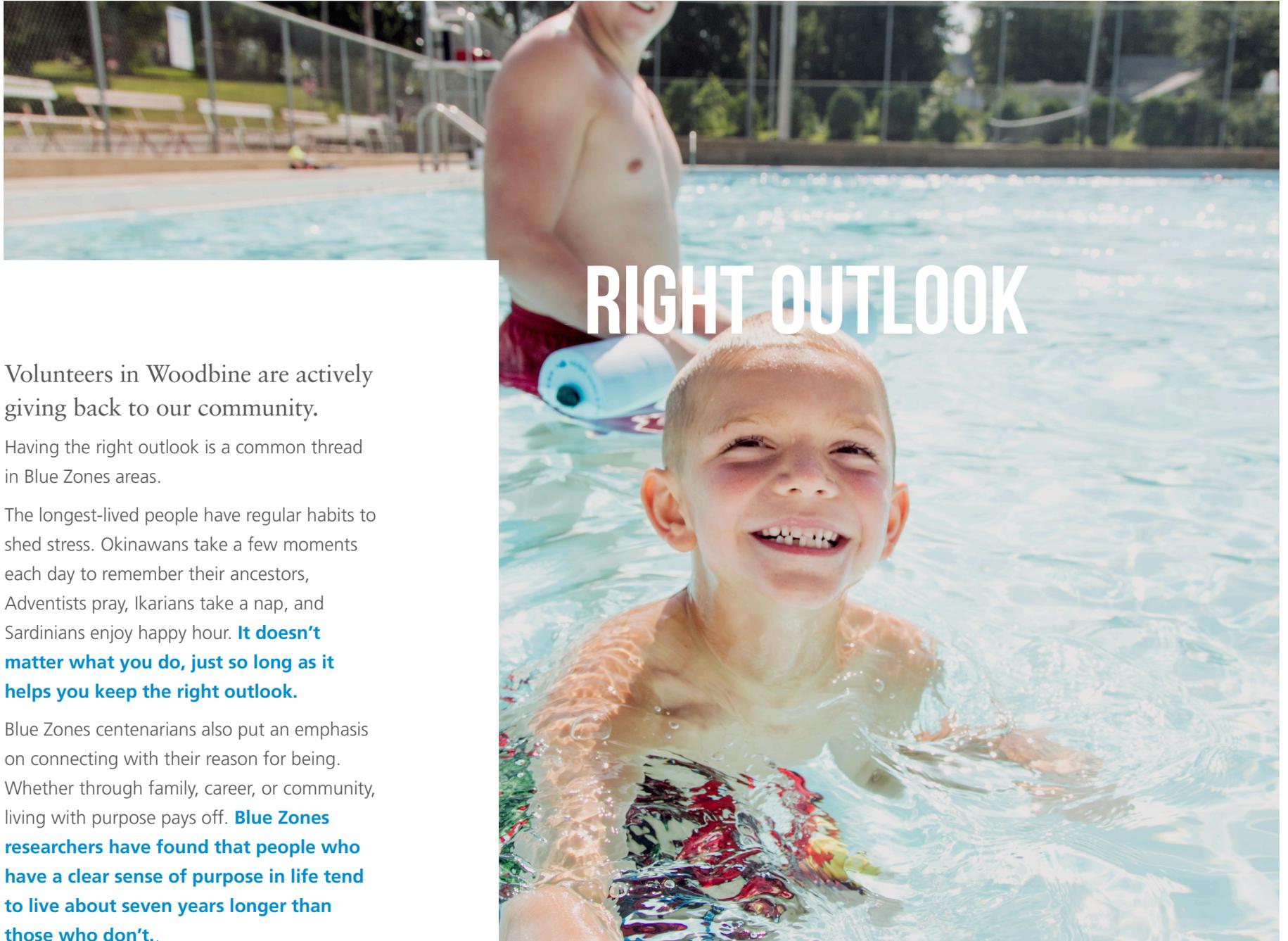
Third graders completed the Blue Zones Challenge, logging activity, screen time and healthy eating. The two classrooms used their journal entries as discussion over the month-long activity. Children in grades K-4 are now enjoying daily brain breaks throughout the school year.

A whopping **65 percent** of elementary school students participated in the Walking School Bus program.

In 2015, the school weight room was remodeled and the updated facility was promoted to the community for their use. Prior to the remodel, only one non-staff adult was using the facility. Shortly after the remodeling and promotion was completed, 15 community members completed the orientation training with the Activities Director. Now, a jiu jitsu class also uses the weight room three times a week.

## Restaurants and Grocery Stores

Grocery stores in Woodbine remind shoppers that parking further away is one way to easily add more activity into their day. Small efforts like these make moving naturally easier than ever before in Woodbine.



# RIGHT OUTLOOK

Volunteers in Woodbine are actively giving back to our community.

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.**

## 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.**

Research shows that those who connect with a sense of purpose and wake up to live with it each day outlive those who don't. In fact, those with a sense of purpose had a 15 percent lower rate of death than those without.<sup>12</sup>

## How Right Outlook Impacts Our Community

Through volunteering, Woodbine encourages individuals to 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.

## OUTCOMES

**More than 75 volunteers donated 710 hours** to improve White's Floral Garden. Included in this project were pedestrian and wheelchair-accessibility upgrades. Students and teachers were active in leading this project, which provides a beautiful park for the Rose Vista Retirement campus.

**More than 60 volunteers** work on community and downtown development, logging an average of 200–300 hours each month.

Volunteering is a key part of the School Staff Wellness Engagement Plan. The Woodbine School Wellness Council organizes an all-staff Habitat for Humanity Build Day during the summer. Staff members regularly volunteer at the local Floral Garden alongside student groups and other community members.

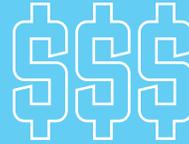
## ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE RIGHT OUTLOOK

### Worksites

Organizations across Woodbine 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.

Fewer than 50 percent of Americans find meaning at work. Employers who invest in making work meaningful for their employees are more likely to see production rise and turnover decrease.<sup>13</sup>

**Our community saw 10 worksites complete actions to help improve outlook and purpose among employees,** including creating designated quiet spaces, posting the company mission or vision and encouraging volunteering. In just one year after implementing a policy that encourages volunteerism, the three employees at Thomsen Chiropractic logged 300 hours of volunteer time. Employees at Tommy Gate logged 220 volunteer hours in just one month.



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## WELL-BEING SAVES EVERYONE MONEY



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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.



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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.



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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.

Well-being is growing in Woodbine with a 50 percent increase in student fruit and vegetable consumption that is the result of a new lunchroom layout.

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.**



**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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup>

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.**<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> Blue Zones Project helps people choose wisely. Woodbine 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.

**2** healthy food taste-testing sessions were held with 35 staff members from Woodbine Community School District. Staff had the opportunity to sample "green smoothies" and low-fat yogurt and granola.

**A community apple orchard** allows students to learn about produce in the classroom and enjoy it on their lunch trays.



### BY THE NUMBERS

Since the early 1900s plate sizes have grown from

9.5 INCHES  
TO  
12.5 INCHES,<sup>17</sup>

We've increased how much we eat by

27%<sup>17</sup>



## Community Gardens

Our Blue Zones School is taking part, too, with students playing an active role at the community apple orchard. Apples are used in nutrition education and many make their way into the lunchroom. Both the 5th and 6th grade classes worked to design signage for the apple orchard. The signs detail different varieties of apples using a QR code with a “greenlight” sign at the end of rows to indicate which are ready to be picked. A new Community Orchard sign will also be installed to welcome citizens and visitors to the orchard.

”

OUR KIDS  
COME OUT  
AND PICK  
APPLES, AND  
IT GOES  
STRAIGHT TO  
THE SCHOOL.  
THEY GET THAT  
FARM-TO-TABLE  
EXPERIENCE,  
RIGHT OFF THE  
TREE.

Kyle Bartels  
Woodbine School District



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## COMMUNITY GARDENS



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### 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.<sup>18</sup>



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### 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.<sup>19</sup>



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### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Schools are taking part, too, with gardens at our Blue Zones Schools tended by students. The produce is being used in nutrition education and some is even making its way onto plates in the lunchroom as salads, sides, and entrees.

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.<sup>20</sup>

## 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

**Our community saw one restaurant complete actions to make healthy food choices easier** — things like offering half-size portions, creating new healthy entrees for adults and children, and serving healthier sides as the default option.

For example, Roux's places an emphasis on locally sourced foods. Most of the produce they serve is sourced from farms within a 50-mile radius and they serve at least 11 different types of locally-grown produce on their daily menu.



#### BY THE NUMBERS

**1,000 CALORIES**

in a typical American entree in a restaurant.<sup>.21</sup>

**2 EXTRA POUNDS**

gained a year by eating one meal away from home a week.<sup>.22</sup>

**5.5% INCREASE**

in same-store sales at restaurants that increased their better-for-you/low-calorie servings between 2006 and 2011.<sup>.22</sup>

**5.5% DECREASE**

in sales at restaurants that did not increase their better-for-you/low-calorie servings.<sup>.22</sup>



## 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.<sup>23</sup> Our community is taking the lead in taking the grocery store back.

**Our community saw one grocery store complete actions to make healthy food choices easier** — things like sharing healthy recipes, ensuring water is available in checkout lanes, offering healthy foods on end caps and in special displays, and offering free samples and taste-tests of healthy foods.

60%

of the food we purchase is highly processed, fatty, salty or sugary.<sup>24</sup>



For example, Food Land has seen sales of bottled water triple since adding a beverage cooler and water end-cap display. People purchase and drink whatever is available to them when they are thirsty; stocking coolers with healthy options ensures that shoppers have an easy, healthy choice if they want a beverage.

High school students from the Family and Consumer Science class regularly prepare healthy recipes and conduct a demonstration and taste testing for customers at Food Land.

## Worksites

Seventy percent of Americans eat at their desks several times a week, which can lead to distracted, disengaged, and mindless overeating.<sup>25</sup>

**In Woodbine, 10 worksites completed actions to make healthy food choices easier** — things like starting worksite gardens and improving cafeteria vending options.

Tommy Gate cleared space for garden plots on their property in the spring of 2016 for use by employees and their families.

”

I'VE ONLY ONCE TRIED TO GROW A GARDEN. IT ENDED IN TOTAL DISASTER WITH MORE WEEDS AND WORK THAN I WANTED TO DEAL WITH. THE BLUE ZONES PROJECT GARDEN TEAMS AT OUR COMMUNITY GARDEN MAKE THIS CHORE TRULY EASIER. WE HAVE FOUR PEOPLE ON OUR TEAM AND WE HELP EACH OTHER OUT TAKING TURNS WEEDING AND WATERING. I CAN'T WAIT UNTIL THE PRODUCE IS READY TO PICK. I AM ALSO GETTING TIPS ON GARDENING FROM OTHERS.

Tommy Gate Employee



WE'VE GONE AWAY FROM BIRTHDAY TREATS IN THE CLASSROOM. EACH CLASSROOM SELECTS ONE DAY A MONTH TO OBSERVE BIRTHDAYS, AND THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS HAVE CHOSEN EXTRA RECESS AS THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH. THE KIDS LOVE IT.

Kathy Waite  
Woodbine School District

## Schools

**With childhood obesity at 17 percent, there's never been a more important time to examine what students are eating at school.**<sup>26</sup> The place they go to learn about history and science should be the place they go to learn about eating wisely as well.

Woodbine Community School District completed actions to make healthy food choices easier for students — things like supporting the apple orchard, offering pitchers of ice water in the lunch room, redesigning lunchrooms to nudge students toward healthier foods, and implementing new policies for celebrations and fundraising with food.

A new lunchroom layout at the Woodbine Community School led to an increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables by 50 percent and a reduction in plate waste by 25 percent. Locally grown produce is served in the cafeteria, and pitchers of ice water are available as a healthy drink choice during lunch.

The latchkey after school program now offers healthy snacks, inspired by the Blue Zones School designation. Prior to Blue Zones Project, Latchkey snacks consisted of leftovers from school lunches, or packaged items from the à la carte wagon.

The program director now works closely with the head cook to offer more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Students who attend schools that sell foods with low nutrient density and sugar-sweetened beverages have a lower intake of fruits, vegetables, and milk at lunch and higher daily percentages of calories from total fat and saturated fat.<sup>27</sup>

Redesigning the school lunchroom is a simple and cost-effective way to nudge students into eating healthier without creating strict policies. Research by Brian Wansink of Cornell University found that **simple changes to lunchroom design tripled salad sales, doubled fruit sales, doubled sales of healthy sandwiches, and reduced the purchase of ice cream.**<sup>17</sup> By optimizing the school environment, students are nudged towards healthier choices.

### 50 LBS. OF CUCUMBERS

sourced every two weeks (August and first half of September)

### 4 BUSHELS OF APPLES

from the Community Orchard used in lunches (September to October)



# CONNECT

New public art on Main Street encourages residents to connect to their community while lingering and socializing with neighbors.

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.**<sup>28</sup> 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 14 years longer than those who don't.**<sup>29</sup>

## 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.<sup>30</sup>

### How Connectedness Impacts our Community

Spending time with people who positively influence one another is crucial. In Woodbine, we embrace the power of social connections to bring citizens together through groups, clubs, and faith-based organizations. We encourage social connections throughout the community with our new community garden, at outdoor dining locales, and along walking trails.

In February 2015, Woodbine introduced an outdoor dining ordinance to increase the vibrancy of the community. Outdoor dining promotes an active streetscape, economic and social vitality, and pedestrian- and retail-friendly activity.

**Our community invested \$8,000** in public art on Main Street to support social well-being and community pride.



## 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 10 worksites complete actions to help employees boost social connections,** including things like “lunch with a co-worker” programs, flexible work schedules, and strengths assessments.

### Schools

Students will tell you that they’re connected with their classmates, but, they mean that they’re connected by their cell phones, which children receive at the age of six, on average.<sup>31</sup>

To bolster real, human interaction, Woodbine got students to plug in differently. Schools embraced connecting students to the world around them by establishing the **Legacy Project**, a program that encourages students to interact with and share stories with older adults.

”

I BELIEVE THAT BY BRINGING THE SUPER SENIORS IN, IT GIVES THE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO REALIZE THAT IF YOU HAVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, YOU CAN CONTINUE TO BE AS ACTIVE AS YOU WANT REGARDLESS OF HOW OLD YOU ARE.

Kathy Waite  
Woodbine School District



#### 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,<sup>32</sup> and inversely, you are 20 percent more likely to succeed at new behaviors if you do them with a buddy.<sup>33</sup>



## 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.<sup>35</sup>



#### 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!<sup>34</sup>



#### 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.<sup>36</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>37</sup>

# CONGRATS, WOODBINE!

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 Woodbine one of the healthiest cities in the nation, where residents are living better, together.**



## APPENDIX

### Designated Organizations

#### Blue Zones Grocery Store

Food Land

#### Blue Zones School

Woodbine Community School District

#### Blue Zones Restaurant

Roux's

#### Blue Zones Worksites

Arch Icon

Catholic Health Initiatives Health Clinic

E4 Crop Intelligence

Farmer's Trust and Savings Bank

NuStyle Development Corporation

Rose Vista

Thomsen Chiropractic

Tommy Gate

Woodbine Community School District

Woodbine Twiner

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