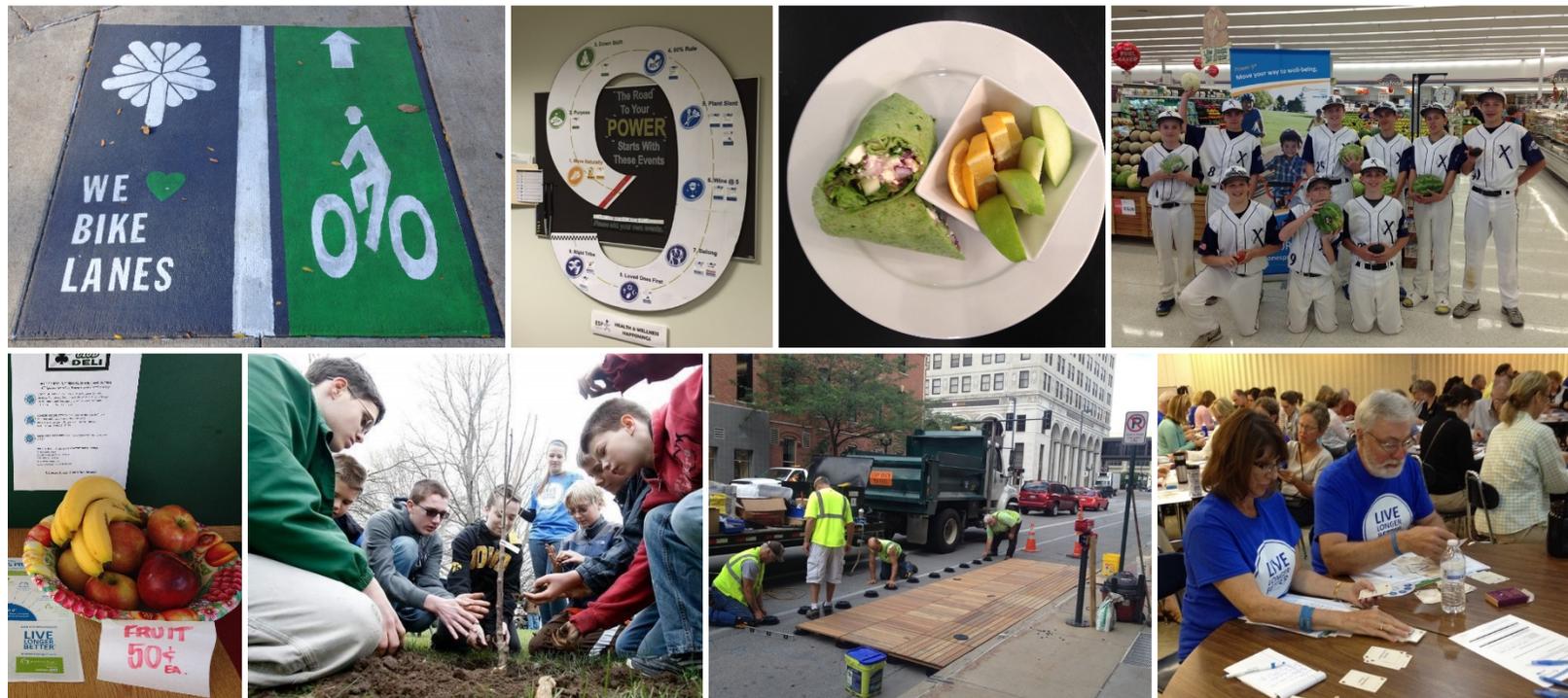


# Blue Zones Project Certification Review Summary

Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
November 2015



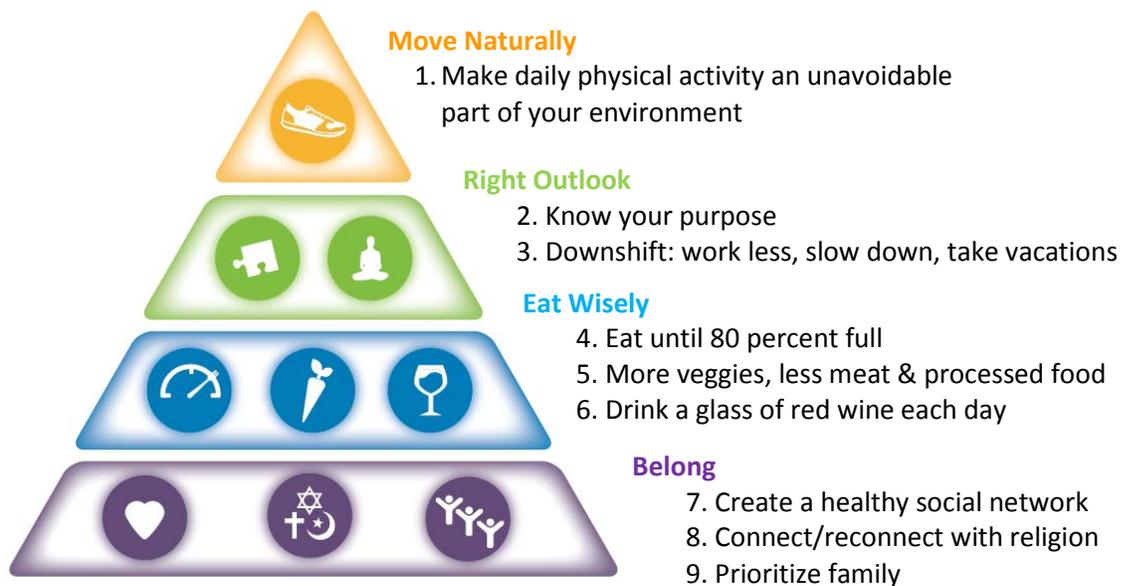
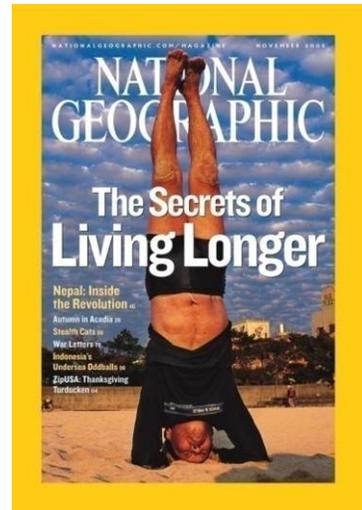
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## Model Overview

### WHAT ARE BLUE ZONES AREAS?

Blue Zones® areas are places where people live measurably longer, happier lives with lower rates of chronic disease and a higher quality of life. Scientists discovered five Blue Zones areas in different parts of the world; Dan Buettner documented those findings in his *New York Times* best-selling book, *The Blue Zones: Lessons for Living Longer from the People Who Have Lived the Longest* (2010). Physically, socially, and emotionally, these people are living longer and better lives. This research, coupled with an eight-year worldwide longevity study, has been used to develop lifestyle management tools and programs that help people live longer, healthier, and happier lives by optimizing their surroundings. Central to Blue Zones Project® are the Power 9® principles, identified as shared lifestyle traits across all five Blue Zones areas:



## Introduction

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Brought to Iowa through an innovative sponsorship by Wellmark<sup>®</sup> Blue Cross<sup>®</sup> and Blue Shield<sup>®</sup>, in collaboration with Healthways<sup>®</sup> and Blue Zones, Blue Zones Project is a community-by-community well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to environment, policy, and social networks.

Cedar Rapids has been working hard to make well-being a way of life and has made great progress towards transforming all of the environments where citizens live, work, and play so healthier behaviors are encouraged and supported.

Since January 2013, community leaders, volunteers, and organizations in Cedar Rapids have made changes to community policy and have engaged citizens, worksites, restaurants, grocery stores, schools, and other community organizations to create a place where people can live longer, better lives. Cedar Rapids has reached the following key milestones as a result of these efforts:

- 50 percent of the Top 20 identified worksites have become a designated Blue Zones Worksite<sup>®</sup>
- 25 percent of schools have become a designated Blue Zones School<sup>®</sup>
- 25 percent of restaurants have become a designated Blue Zones Restaurant<sup>®</sup>
- 25 percent of grocery stores have become a designated Blue Zones Grocery Store<sup>®</sup>
- 20 percent of citizens are engaged in Blue Zones Project across the community
- Successful completion of the Blue Zones Community Policy<sup>®</sup> bundle

By achieving these results, Cedar Rapids became eligible for certification as a Blue Zones Community<sup>®</sup>, and an onsite Community Certification Review was conducted by the Blue Zones Project team in November 2015.

## Executive Summary

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### Cedar Rapids—A Blue Zones Community

A detailed assessment and Community Certification Review was conducted November 2–3, 2015. The work that was considered, launched, and undertaken by policy leaders, schools, worksites, restaurants, healthcare providers, civic organizations, and citizens demonstrates a community that has transformed the environment to significantly enhance well-being. Still, there are challenges to be addressed, and the important work being done in Cedar Rapids will continue. We will look for a sustained standard of enhanced well-being as Blue Zones Project proceeds. However, **the overarching finding is that Cedar Rapids has completed all requirements of Blue Zones Project and has achieved certification as a Blue Zones Community.**

In each sector—Community Policy and Built Environment, Schools, Worksites, Restaurants, Grocery Stores, and Individual Engagement—there are successes and opportunities. A few highlights include:

1. Community Policy and Built Environment—Three roundtable conversations were held with city staff, elected leaders, and key stakeholders who support community policy and built environment work. Community policy encompasses active living, the food environment, and the tobacco environment in Cedar Rapids. Prior to the roundtable, city staff, including the city manager, led a walk that showcased downtown locations and recent projects.

In 2013, 11 key city staff and stakeholders attended Complete Streets training. Policy workshops (food, tobacco, built environment) were held with stakeholders to determine the policy priorities during the operating period and to generate community insights. From these workshops, key policy and built environment projects were attained. Several policies were implemented, including the following: Complete Streets, street-design guideline manual, pedestrian master plan, and a downtown parklet resolution. Food policy work included the formation of a food alliance and the adoption of an urban agriculture ordinance. Tobacco policy work focused on worksites and multi-unit housing. Numerous projects were implemented and will be detailed and celebrated in this report. Cedar Rapids residents passed a 10-year local-option sales tax, which is projected to generate \$180 million in street projects. One half-mile of linear sidewalks is being installed annually. Three-hundred and twenty-five community garden plots are in production on city-owned land. More than 25 worksite campuses have become tobacco-free and/or nicotine-free in the past two years.

2. Schools— Cedar Rapids schools are creating a culture that promotes health, well-being, and physical activity by integrating Blue Zones Project principles in district policies, student goals, curriculum, and activities. This is evident by the implementation of new wellness policies, improved nutrition education, increased physical activity, and programs that teach lifelong healthy habits. District leadership, student leadership, and staff engagement make Cedar Rapids’ overall efforts stand out. All three school districts, which consist of the Cedar Rapids Community School District (CRCSD), College Community School District, and Linn-Mar Community School District, bring a total of 44 registered schools that are actively engaged in Blue Zones Project. Of the registrants, 16 schools are now Blue Zones Schools. The CRCSD webpage links to the Blue Zones Project website, and Blue Zones Project is referenced in building handbooks, which creates a consistent message while educating on research-based pledge actions. In June of 2014, the CRCSD administration building also became a Blue Zones Worksite.

During the operating period, 18 schools started school gardens. Eight of those gardens were created or expanded using container gardens provided by Blue Zones Project. Many schools formed garden clubs or incorporated nutrition education into their curriculum through their school garden.

3. Worksites— The Blue Zones Project team visited with five Blue Zones Worksites in Cedar Rapids – ESP International, GreatAmerica Financial Services, Kirkwood Community College, Raining Rose, and Toyota Financial Services. The team also participated in a Worksite Roundtable discussion with an additional eight worksites, including ASAC, Bergan Paulsen, CarePro Health Services, Geonetric, Grant Wood AEA, Midwest Metal Products, TrueNorth Companies, and Van Meter Inc. Cedar Rapids is well served with strong well-being and Blue Zones Project leadership from the business community. Cedar Rapids worksites have implemented many best practices in the areas of leadership, purpose, habitat and physical environment, engagement, and policies and benefits. For example, 73.5 percent of GreatAmerica Financial Services employees signed the Blue Zones Personal Pledge and identified one or more actions to work on. Blue Zones Project information is included in the onboarding process for new employees. Kirkwood Community College co-sponsored a Purpose Workshop and invited other Cedar Rapids worksites to attend. Thirty employees participated and found the experience helpful in determining ways to find meaning in their daily lives. Toyota Financial Services started Walking Moais and encouraged team members to walk with employees they did not work with in an effort to make new social connections. Walkers were given a “walking card” and they got their card stamped as they completed walks. After completing 15 walks, a person can submit their card for a variety of prizes, including FitBits, walking weights, and resistance bands. An ESP International wellness

committee member started a weekly Super Food tasting day where he brought in foods like blueberries, avocados, and dark chocolate for employees to try, and he shared information about the health benefits of these types of foods. Raining Rose began a monthly “Chat & Chew” series for employees during lunchtime. Topics and guest speakers focused on addressing physical, financial, and emotional well-being. Kirkwood Community College collaborated with their campus Hospitality Arts Program to offer two healthy cooking classes with over 80 people in attendance. There is an opportunity to use Blue Zones Project as a convening force to share best practices across more Cedar Rapids employers, allowing them to identify and tailor activities to enhance the well-being of their workforces. This good work should be measured, embraced, shared, and expanded across the community. The Cedar Rapids 2015–2016 annual Blueprint Update addresses avenues to share these best practices among local employers.

4. Restaurants—Cedar Rapids has 36 Blue Zones Restaurants that make healthy choices easier for the community. Whether it’s grabbing breakfast at a coffee shop or enjoying a fine-dining experience, consumers can find healthy options at all times of day across a spectrum of cuisines. Restaurants have customized and improved their menus to nudge consumers toward healthier choices. Nutritional improvements include fresh fruit, whole-grain breads, and the use of local produce when seasonally available. Environments are also primed for healthy dining through the use of 10-inch plates, to-go boxes, availability of water, and absence of salt from tables. Combined with avid community promotion, these features contribute to a healthier eating environment in Cedar Rapids.
  
5. Grocery Stores— Hy-Vee designated all seven of its Cedar Rapids stores during the operating period, and three of these were visited during the Certification Review. Success was observed in broad areas, including the: promotion of healthier beverages, education and programs, and the overall environment. For example, Hy-Vee promotes its “Cooking with a Cardiologist” classes in partnership with Unity Point Health System at its Cedar Rapids stores. This complimentary program is offered monthly and promotes heart-health education and healthy cooking to an average of 35 attendees who learn how to prepare healthy entrees. Hy-Vee’s Oakland Road store underwent a renovation at the beginning of the operating period and its healthy produce section expanded 50 percent, while its overall footprint grew by one-third. Additionally, beverage labeling (both in aisle and checkout coolers), water placement and availability, healthy alternative signage, dietician availability, grab and go, and healthy recipe distribution all serve to support higher well-being in the stores. Tobacco sales in the Cedar Rapids stores have declined by 5 percent in the most recent fiscal year (October 2014–September 2015). These examples demonstrate how the grocery environment, by

making fresh produce convenient, tobacco products inconvenient, and offering healthy options in a prominent store location, helps make the healthy choice the easy choice for Cedar Rapids residents.

6. **Individual Engagement**— Cedar Rapids is the largest Blue Zones Project demonstration community in Iowa, and the efforts of the local team and volunteers are impressive. More than 21,650 people have completed an action on the Blue Zones Personal Pledge, with 30,000 total signed up in support of the Project. Blue Zones Project representatives have shared the Blue Zones story with more than 100 audiences with 4,500 participants. Community members embraced Blue Zones Project activities with 1,160 cooking class attendees, 1,500 Walking Moai members, 180 Potluck Moai members, 630 Purpose Workshop attendees, and 135 Purpose Moai members. More than 55 organizations have completed the Blue Zones Project Organization Checklist. Deep bonds and partnerships have been built with key organizations and event in the community, boosting Blue Zones Project awareness and laying the foundation for strong sustainability.

As Cedar Rapids proceeds with Blue Zones Project, it will be necessary to annually measure, track, and communicate global metrics and sector measurements to show the results of the work. This data will help the citizens of Cedar Rapids celebrate successes, analyze what interventions have had the most impact, and share best practices with other communities that want to learn and receive mentoring from Cedar Rapids. Some of the metrics may include: unemployment rate, housing stats, property values, emergency room visits, traffic counts, number of motor vehicle accidents, crime numbers, new jobs, and economic investment. It will be important to study this data over time and analyze it against communities that do not have Blue Zones Project to determine the impact of Blue Zones Project.

**Congratulations to Cedar Rapids and its Power 9, Leadership Team, committees, volunteers, and citizens for becoming a certified Blue Zones Community.** You took a bold step in beginning your journey to enhanced well-being, and you are well on your way.

## Sector Summary

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Blue Zones Project focuses on six sectors that impact the well-being of community members throughout a typical day. For each sector, a list of research-supported actions is available from which an individual or organization can select the most appropriate goals for improving well-being. This section summarizes, by sector, the work that has been done in Cedar Rapids to date and also identifies opportunities for continued improvement.

### Sector: Community Policy and Built Environment

#### Summary

Policies have been adopted that encourage active transportation, use of public spaces, nicotine-free environments, and healthy food options, and these are supported by city staff, elected leaders, and citizen advocated. These policies support successful built environment projects that are embraced and utilized by residents. Additionally, they help make the healthy choice the easy choice in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The community policy team shared that many of its decisions are reinforced by Blue Zones Project pledges, tools, and resources.

#### Successes

The following successes were noted in the Community Policy and Built Environment sector:

1. *Community Policy*
  - a. Complete Streets—Following Complete Streets training by nine attendees in April 2013, Cedar Rapids adopted and implemented its comprehensive policy in July 2014. This policy guides the community to ensure all users are considered in future street projects. These projects will increase active transportation and resident well-being. Evidence of projects this policy supports are abundant in Cedar Rapids, including 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW at Prairie School, Third Street SE, First Avenue SE to Eighth Avenue SE, and Boyson Road SE, among others.
  - b. Street Design Guideline Manual—Modeled from Iowa’s Statewide Urban Design and Specification manual (SUDAS) and customized for Cedar Rapids, this manual will ensure Cedar Rapids adheres to common urban standards for public improvements. Examples include: street trees, sidewalks, utilities, and signalization. These standards provide instruction for city staff and contractors while ensuring cost reduction, uniformity, understanding, and acceptance.

- c. Envision CR—Cedar Rapids adopted its Comprehensive Plan in January 2015. Themes for sustainability, health, placemaking, and efficiency underpin the plan. The transportation component of the plan, Connect CR, sets a goal to provide transportation choices for all users, giving consideration to pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and automobiles. Public transit ridership, for example, increased 9 percent last year. Bikeways have grown from one in 2009 to 18 in 2015 and are forecast to grow to 30 by 2017. Trail mileage during the same timeframe has grown from 25 to 32 miles (2009-2015) and forecasts to grow to 35 miles by 2017. Trail counts continue to increase year after year, and are documented by Linn County at <http://linncountytrails.org/map/trail-usage/>.
- d. Food Alliance—Blue Zones Project hosted a Food Policy Workshop in September 2013 led by Mark Winne and Dan Buettner. The Food Alliance, a coalition of organizations dedicated to the Cedar Rapids food system, originated from this workshop and started in November 2013. The alliance prioritized five projects to enhance food access, visibility, and learning opportunities. The projects are: Noelridge Park Urban Orchard, Horizons Hoop House, Urban Farm Network (Feed Iowa First), Public Edible Landscape (Coe College), and Community Kitchens (Horizons). The city updated its urban agriculture zoning ordinance to allow food production as a primary or secondary use of land (all zones). Community gardens are one component of this. In 2015, all 325 garden plots were leased on three primary sites (Ellis, Squaw Creek and Beverly Park). This is an increase from 314 plots in 2014. Blue Zones Project sparked the use of 17 acres of food production on Rockwell Collins land, an increase from five acres in 2012. Feed Iowa First manages this acreage, from which 9,000 pounds of sweet corn were harvested. New Disciples Church was inspired by Blue Zones Project and launched its garden which works with African immigrants (a population that generally lives in apartments and has a desire to garden). From this site, over 100 pounds of squash were harvested. Horizons' impressive work led to distribution of 600,000 meals. Their work is supported by Feed Iowa First's future goal to grow food on 500 acres and provide healthy produce to the community's underserved population.
- e. Healthy Mobile Markets—Feed Iowa First, a Food Alliance core member, secured an old school bus, retrofitted it to carry fresh vegetables to food pantry locations and food deserts, and provided free vegetables to underserved Cedar Rapids families.
- f. Tobacco-Free Worksite Campuses—The tobacco committee has focused on worksites. Over 25 businesses have become tobacco-free and/or nicotine-free campuses over the past two years.

## 2. *Built-Environment Projects*

- a. **Paving for Progress**—Cedar Rapids’ 10-year program to repair and reconstruct public streets is expected to infuse \$180 million in city street projects, adhering to its complete streets policy and its adopted design guideline standards. This is funded by the local-option sales tax (2015-2024).
- b. **Sidewalk Infill**—The city established a goal to install 2,600 linear feet (approximately one-half mile) of new sidewalk per year. Further, the city requires sidewalks on all new roads.
- c. **Concrete Connections**—Inspired by Dan Burden’s visit in September 2013, the city identified Third Street for walkability and placemaking. The street offers a variety of arts, cultural, and entertainment opportunities, including the following: a full-service hotel, the community theatre, a year-round market with a teaching kitchen, restaurants, and boutique shops. Power 9-themed intersections were painted at each intersection from First Avenue SE to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. This two-mile loop encourages residents to walk or bike the street.
- d. **Noelridge Park Urban Orchard**—Iowa BIG students partnered with Trees Forever, Cedar Rapids Parks and Recreation department, ISU Community Design Lab, and Hughes Nursery to create and plant an urban orchard in the park. Twenty-four fruit trees (apple, pear, plum, and cherry) were planted. Students from Harding Middle School supported the planting on Arbor Day 2015. The trees are scheduled to produce fruit in the next two to three years.
- e. **Fresh Revolution Food Donation**—This Food Alliance member planted 20 acres, and harvested and distributed 30,000 pounds of food to local food pantries in 2014. This food is valued at \$52,000 dollars.
- f. **Farmers Market “So You Think You Can Cook” event**—The downtown farmers market hosted a cooking competition in 2015. Community recruited teams prepared Blue Zones inspired dishes, which were judged by local celebrities. The purpose of this project was to inspire learning and the purchase of produce at the farmers market to create plant-based meals.

### *Future Opportunities*

The city of Cedar Rapids is positioned to leverage its recent success in these identified areas:

1. *Increase Active Transportation.* Review the parking master plan, trails master plan, sidewalk master plan, parks and recreation master plan, and the comprehensive plan. Identify priority projects for next year that enhance active transportation.
2. *APA Grant.* Review and identify projects from the American Planning Association grant recommendations for implementation in Cedar Rapids.
3. *Bike-route Wayfinding.* Adding wayfinding signs along bicycle routes to help bicyclists navigate safely and quickly is encouraged. Wayfinding not only helps bicyclists get where they're going, it serves as a visible reminder that non-motorized transportation is a viable form of transportation in Cedar Rapids. It increases utilization of the bicycle network by both residents and visitors, directing bicyclists to key Cedar Rapids locales like the Downtown District.
4. *Measuring Success.* The city of Cedar Rapids should arrange to have before-and-after studies of traffic, sidewalk, and public safety to demonstrate Paving for Progress' impact. Examples include: traffic counts around schools or the downtown historic district, increase in walking and biking near downtown, and reduction in traffic accidents (both car and pedestrian). This evidence will support funding decisions for additional projects. Additional data elements should be identified in collaboration with community partners (worksites, schools, and advocates).
5. *Nicotine-Free Parks Ordinance and Voluntary Nicotine-Free Community Celebrations.* In an effort to create healthy public environments, Cedar Rapids is uniquely positioned to implement two progressive approaches for the community. First, following a comprehensive public input process, consider an ordinance to establish nicotine-free parks in the community. Partner with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to determine which events to work together on. As an initial step, the city could consider passing a voluntary policy to create nicotine-free outdoor dining environments, as well as providing community sponsors the opportunity to host nicotine-free events. Examples include community events for families or one day of a multi-day festival. Utilize education and signage to support events. Celebrate success and build on this approach annually.

6. *Expand Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing.* There are over 1,900 rental units in the community, and at this time 300 of these are tobacco free. The community is encouraged to establish a goal and work with constituents (property owners, tenants, etc.) to build on this success. Begin with properties that accept housing assistance vouchers. ASAC has developed a benefits package that includes how much it costs to clean an apartment where someone has smoked, insurance, etc. This is to show the return on investment in building smoke-free housing.
7. *Increase SNAP and WIC usage at the Farmers Market by 25 percent.* Partner with Marion, Iowa City, and other Iowa communities to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to streamline this process for farmers market vendors and increase usage.
8. *Implement Awareness Campaign for Tobacco Cessation Support Resources.* There are a number of free or low-cost resources available in Cedar Rapids to support individuals who are working to stop using these products. On average, it takes six to seven attempts for an individual to achieve success. A campaign to generate awareness of these support resources will give individuals the tools they need to succeed and pair with the many nicotine-free environments in the community to further reduce smoking rates in Cedar Rapids.
9. *Expand Community Gardens.* Build on the success of the current 300 or more gardens, expand the program for 2016 (ample land is available), and identify public land in other underserved Cedar Rapids locations so residents have the opportunity to grow and consume healthy produce. Set a goal for the 2016 season, map out potential locales, and begin planning by early 2016.

## Sector: Schools

### Summary

Cedar Rapids schools have adopted policies and programs from the Blue Zones Project School Pledge in an effort to create the healthiest possible environment in which children can learn. The following 16 buildings have achieved designation as Blue Zones Schools: Arthur, Bowman Woods, Truman, Cleveland, Erskine, Garfield, Grant, Harrison, Hiawatha, Johnson, Kenwood, Nixon, Prairie Ridge, Taylor, Viola Gibson Elementary, and Jefferson High School. Each school

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earned this achievement by implementing wellness practices that promote well-being, good nutrition, and regular physical activity. Leadership, staff, parents, and students from Garfield, Grant, Johnson, Prairie Ridge, and Viola Gibson Elementary Schools participated in the Certification Review. Onsite visits were conducted at all five of these schools.

### Successes

The following successes were noted in the Schools sector:

1. *District Policy.* A district wellness council, formed by CRCSD in 2013, developed and strengthened policies to align with the Blue Zones Project School Pledge—supporting individual buildings in implementing best practices to improve student well-being. With a strong tobacco-free policy for all school properties and a policy prohibiting unhealthy food and beverage advertising, newly developed district wellness goals were supported by wellness operating procedures and approved by the board of education. District staff and representatives from each school building later implemented these wellness goals. Implementation of the following policies began in 2014:
  - Require that students are physically active during the majority of time in physical education class.
  - Ensure physical activity is not used for or withheld as punishment.
  - Ensure all snacks meet District Nutritional Guidelines for foods and beverages for schools, including vending, a la carte, snack lines, school stores, celebrations and fundraisers.
  - Discontinue use of unhealthy foods for fundraisers.
  - Celebrate birthdays and other events involving food once per month.
  - Discontinue using food/food coupons as rewards or incentives.
  - Implement elementary health education curriculum that includes nutrition.

It was evident at all four CRCSD schools that Blue Zones Project principles are being integrated into school culture and academics. Cedar Rapids schools are creating a culture that promotes health, well-being, and physical activity. At Garfield Elementary School, the school mission is “We’re going to college,” and part of that is healthy living and making good choices about having a healthy lifestyle. Principal Long explained that the district policies drove the change and the framework of the pledge helped make things visible with staff and parents. Sara Hamilton, a nurse at Johnson Elementary

School, stated that parents' mindsets have begun to change. They now ask what foods are healthy and utilize the healthy snack guidelines for monthly celebrations.

At Prairie Ridge Elementary School, they made progress by implementing district-wide policies like enforcing a tobacco-free campus, not using foods as rewards, ensuring students are physically active during the majority of physical education class, and not removing physical activity as punishment. Prairie Ridge Elementary established a Heart-to-Health building health and wellness council that meets regularly and focuses on providing leadership for physical, mental, and spiritual wellness. The nursing staff at Viola Gibson has noted a decrease in student visits.

2. *Engagement and Partnerships.* The work and progress observed in Cedar Rapids elementary schools is the result of committed and passionate leaders, staff, and volunteers. Implementation of Blue Zones Project School Pledge actions was driven by principals, physical education and classroom faculty, school-based wellness councils, and volunteers. The schools have leveraged community partners and programs to maximize the impact of Blue Zones Project, such as:
  - Hy-Vee provided support for establishing school gardens and offering nutrition education across the district. Hy-Vee awarded Garfield Elementary School a OneStep garden grant, provided nutrition education lessons and taste tests in the classroom and in the garden, and supplied apples so the school could participate in the National Food Day Apple Crunch this year.
  - Through a grant with New-Pi Food Coop, Viola Gibson Elementary School built three raised garden beds in March of 2014. Five Season's Child Care helps maintain the garden during the summer months.
  - Blue Zones Project provided a mobile garden unit to the fifth grade classroom at Grant Elementary School. This led to a collaboration between the Kids on Course program, Matthew 25, New-Pi Food Coop, and Grant Elementary staff who built three raised beds for a permanent school garden. An after-school garden club is now offered and run by the Kids on Course program. Another great program that exists at Grant is the backpack buddies program. A partnership with HACAP and Gloria Dei Lutheran Church volunteers provide healthy weekend food for any child in need. Blue Zones Project helped raise awareness of the importance/benefits that good nutrition plays in our overall well-being. Last year the program served 10 to 15 students, and raised awareness led to 150 students being provided healthy weekend food this year.

- The Food Environment Alliance supplies a FoodCorp staff to Garfield and Johnson Elementary schools to offer nutrition education for students once per month for 30 minutes. Students are also exposed to a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables through the USDA Pick-a-Better Snack program three times per week.
3. *Policies and Programs that Promote Healthy Eating.* Cedar Rapids schools implemented many policies and programs that promote healthy eating. Notable among these is a policy to promote recess before lunch at Garfield, Grant, Viola Gibson, and Johnson Elementary schools. At Johnson Elementary, the school nurse has seen a decrease in the number of nurse visits for stomachaches and attributes this to recess being before lunch. At Grant Elementary, a 45 percent decrease in office referrals from the same time period last year has been attributed to the school's focus on a healthier school environment. Teachers say students come back to class quietly and are ready to learn in the afternoon, and that students are eating better and drinking more water.

Schools have also redesigned the lunchrooms to nudge students towards healthy choices by making simple changes such as serving fruits and vegetable first and offering choices to students. As a result, several schools reported that even students who bring lunch from home are packing much healthier. At Viola Gibson, teachers have noticed that students have an increase awareness of healthy habits and see student mindset changing. At Grant, the food line was decorated with pictures, vibrant colors, and using the Dragon Wall of Fame to recognize students who embody Blue Zones Project ideals and make healthy lifestyle choices.

Cedar Rapids schools limit unhealthy food marketing, encourage healthy birthday celebrations, and ensure healthy options are provided for snacks. All five schools are demonstrating that district policies are enforced to promote a healthier school environment and are working hard to send a consistent message to students and parents. Students at Grant Elementary School created a lotus diagram at home with their families at the start of the school year. This provided students the chance to pick six or seven non-food options to select for their birthday celebrations or rewards throughout the year. Prairie Ridge shared that while the birthday treat policy did not change, parties are celebrated with more activity and less food. Garfield chose to align staff birthdays to the policy and adhere to the healthy snack guidelines, too. Viola Gibson shared that the faculty and staff have made a significant decrease in the number of unhealthy treats being brought into the teachers' lounge. They have moved toward a

walk-a-thon fundraiser called Gator Gallup. One hundred percent of students participated in this activity which earned \$14,000 in its first year and \$12,000 in its second year.

4. *Increased Physical Activity.* Cedar Rapids schools have integrated physical activity into the school day to create a culture of movement, promote concentration, and improve academic performance. Schools offer brain breaks during classroom transitions and at the start of class. Teachers use a variety of tools, including videos, music, stretches, and movements that are simple, quick, and fun.

Several Cedar Rapids schools have implemented walking and running programs to increase opportunities for daily physical activity. Prairie Ridge started a running club in 2015. This program is open to students in first through fourth grade. During the five week program, 150 students participated and 29 staff members volunteered their time. At the end of the program a two mile fun run was offered. Seventy-two families signed up and participated with their students. Over 200 people finished the race.

Prairie Ridge also offers a Bus-to-Walk program. Due to the campus geography, 75 percent of students ride the bus. Each student who rides the bus walks the 0.2-mile bus path each day regardless of the weather. This has dramatically improved the flow of traffic. Twelve Cedar Rapids schools started a Walking School Bus during the demonstration period. Over 700 students participated during the 2013–2014 school year, walking an average of a half mile route to school at least one day per week. More than 500 hours of volunteer time has been contributed to the Walking School Bus program each year. Grant Elementary PTO funded a paved walking track which is located around the school playground. At the beginning of recess, students walk two laps, which is the equivalent of one-fourth of a mile. The track is also used for school running clubs led by the Kids on Course program. At Viola Gibson, a program called Trailblazers encourages students to get more steps in their day. Students can purchase a pedometer for one dollar. Students work together to walk around the world blazing a trail for good health. The program is open to students in second through fifth grade. This year 150 kids participated. Students are encouraged to keep a log of their step activity and turn it in for a non-food reward.

5. *Programs to Promote Mindfulness.* All five schools visited are offering a program to promote mindfulness skills. At Garfield and Grant, Zones of Regulation is used in each

classroom and is taught by the guidance counselor and classroom teachers. Both programs are in their third year. Teachers see the difference in how students respond, use relaxation techniques, and how they are more accountable for their actions. Prairie Ridge and Johnson Elementary Schools use Second Step curriculum. This program is taught by the school guidance counselor once per week, and classroom teachers reinforce the language in the classroom. At Prairie Ridge the program is implemented building wide, and at Johnson it's taught to second through fifth graders. Viola Gibson implemented MindUp™ to the fourth-grade classroom, which has reinforced positive behavior, created a calmer classroom, and makes it easier to refocus when students get frustrated.

### *Future Opportunities*

The school districts are well positioned to build on their successes, and suggestions include:

1. *Expand on Health-and-Wellness Council.* Broaden the council to include parents, PTO, students, and other partners so the work is balanced throughout the district structure. This collaboration improves the advocacy and sustainability of the work. The council should convene regularly for collaboration and sharing of best practices district-wide. Developing a recurring meeting schedule, keeping minutes, and communicating progress and successes related to student health and well-being to parents and the community will build support and generate momentum for continuing and expanding the visions, goals, and work identified in the Cedar Rapids Blueprint.
2. *Expand the MindUp Program.* The commitment to offer mindfulness skills to students is impressive. Build on the momentum and success and broaden your offering to include all grade levels. Consider hosting a district-wide training to further your commitment and expand the benefits of this program to all teaching staff. Additional information related to district-wide implementation can be found at <http://thehawnfoundation.org/mindup/mindup-training-forums/>
3. *Expand nutrition education offerings at every grade level.* Nutrition education is important in teaching healthy eating habits and reinforcing the healthy changes made in schools. Research validates that behavioral change correlates positively with the amount of nutrition instruction received. However, the median hours per year of nutrition education offered in schools is estimated to be five for elementary schools, four for middle schools, and five for high schools. Studies at the elementary level found school-based interventions that integrated nutrition education into other subjects were associated with significant shifts in body mass index to a healthy range, better academic

achievement, and improved nutrition-related knowledge. Work with your health and wellness councils to incorporate nutrition lessons into the required courses for every student in every grade level. Examples of ways to integrate nutrition education into subjects outside of health education include the following: math lessons using use information from nutrition labels to teach multiplication, language arts lessons analyzing food advertisements, science lessons classifying foods and nutrients, or history lessons comparing the diet of the early pioneers with the average American diet today. Explore expanding programs such as “Don’t Yuck my Yum” offered by Hy-Vee as well as Americorps programs because these programs laying the foundation to increased nutritional education during the school day.

4. *Joint-use Agreement.* Formalize an agreement between the city and the three school districts to enable shared use of public properties and facilities when school is not in session. Better access to recreational facilities increases physical activity for children and adolescents living near the school. Here is a link to model policy language to consider: <http://www.nplanonline.org/childhood-obesity/products/nplan-joint-use-agreements>.
5. *Continue School Designations.* Schools play a key role in Blue Zones Project by creating an environment that teaches healthy lifestyle choices today and for years to come. School leaders are in a powerful position to dramatically improve students’ well-being. Across the three school districts, 44 schools have registered and taken the first step. We encourage the community to continue Blue Zones School designations by re-engaging the 28 schools that have registered but are not designated and supporting them in the effort to become a Blue Zones School.
6. *Measure Success and Create Opportunities for Collaboration.* An opportunity exists to formalize data collection associated with the work of Blue Zones Project in each school building. Once the data are in hand, sharing the information with key stakeholders and the community will illustrate the progress, value, and outcomes of the work. Suggested data for ongoing measurement of progress includes: number of designated schools, number of Walking School Bus routes and student participants, pounds of produce harvested or donated from school gardens, Walking School Bus and school garden volunteer hours, success stories from healthy school celebrations, decrease in office referrals, increase in parent involvement, and participation in before- or after-school enrichment activities. What is currently measured is compelling and more data will further support the positive impact Cedar Rapids schools are having in the community.

## Sector: Worksites

### Summary

The Community Certification Review team performed reviews on all 10 of the validations for Blue Zones Worksites and conducted on-site visits with five Blue Zones Worksites in Cedar Rapids. Employers visited in person were:

- ESP International;
- GreatAmerica Financial Services;
- Kirkwood Community College;
- Raining Rose; and
- Toyota Financial Services.

While this report recognizes the successes of worksites visited, other Blue Zones Worksites in Cedar Rapids also had notable successes.

### Successes

The following successes were noted in the Worksites sector:

1. *Leadership.*
  - a. Wellness committees—Involving employees and leaders in developing and implementing well-being initiatives is a good way to ensure high levels of employee participation and engagement. Wellness or well-being committees are one way to achieve this, and having a corporate policy mandating a wellness committee is a best practice. Cedar Rapids has several leaders in this regard. GreatAmerica Financial Services leadership staff completed the “Leading for Well-Being” modules and added them to their new employee training schedule. Toyota Financial Services created their LiveWell wellness committee with a mission to “help enrich lives, one healthy decision at a time.” All of the worksites had wellness committees in place, but acknowledged that Blue Zones Project helped to refocus their wellness efforts. Working on pledge actions provided the framework and energy they needed to promote wellness and engage employees. Worksite wellness committee members came from various departments with a goal to find fun ways to engage employees and promote healthy lifestyle ideas to employees and families. All of the wellness committees planned and promoted wellness activities that encourage healthy eating and moving naturally. Kirkwood Community College’s wellness committee collaborated with the school’s Hospitality Art Program to offer two healthy cooking classes that attracted 86 participants. Toyota Financial Services implemented “Wellness Wednesday” to remind and encourage team members to take advantage

of the various monthly wellness-themed initiatives offered. A wellness committee member at ESP International introduced a weekly Super Food sampling. He selects foods such as blueberries, avocados, and almonds and encourages employees to try them while he shares information on their health benefits. Raining Rose has created a monthly “Chat & Chew” meeting which is designed to address total well-being topics including physical health, financial security and emotional health. Raining Rose has highlighted its Blue Zones Project Worksite Pledge successes in a recruiting tool for new employees that showcases the benefits of being a Raining Rose employee. All of the worksites identified that the most impactful result of their Blue Zones Project work was the increased social connections between employees.

- b. **Leading by example**—There are many instances where organizations and their leaders led by example in their promotion of well-being. Cedar Rapids is well served with strong Blue Zones Project leadership from the business community. Many worksites use biometric screening and health risk assessment results to support their wellness activity planning. ESP International offers biometric screenings and monthly health coaching to all full-time employees and their spouses. It also encourages employees to take the health risk assessment and shares aggregate well-being results with employees. It uses the information to coordinate meaningful worksite wellness activities. GreatAmerica Financial Services promotes biometric screening and a health risk assessment to employees and shares the aggregate report with employees. Information shared includes the number of employees who participated in the biometric screening and health risk assessment and the aggregate results, health claims analysis, and future disease risk. This information is used in planning meaningful onsite wellness activities for employees. Raining Rose offers incentives through its Wellness Widget Program. It has created an online store with a selection of wellness items that can be purchased with Wellness Widgets. Activities that earn Wellness Widgets include volunteering, working out 10 times per month at the onsite fitness center, completing the biometric screening and/or health risk assessment, getting an annual flu shot, completing smoking cessation classes, completing a financial support program called Core Financial Wellness, or using a full week of PTO. All of the worksites that were visited offered some sort of incentives to employees to engage in walking groups, lunch-and-learns, healthy cooking classes and other wellness activities. All of the worksites recognize that these efforts make good business sense, increase employee productivity, and are the right thing to do to support employees and their families.

2. **Purpose.** Research suggests that people with a strong sense of purpose live longer. Support of purpose was seen in many different ways in Cedar Rapids workplaces, from

prominently displayed company vision and mission statements to encouraging volunteering as part of an employee's work. In many worksites, volunteerism is supported by a company promoting ways for employees to help others in the community. Kirkwood Community College adopted an employee volunteer policy that allows and encourages employees to volunteer during business hours in an effort to give back to the community the college serves. With this new policy, they are starting to track volunteer hours to measure the impact of volunteer activities on employees and the community. They also partnered with TransAmerica to sponsor a Purpose Workshop with a total of 60 employees in attendance. Toyota Financial Services also created a formal volunteer policy as part of their Blue Zones Project work. Team IMPACT (Integrating Meaningful Partnerships Across Communities & Toyota) is a local Toyota Financial Services team that promotes volunteering in Cedar Rapids. Team members are incentivized to participate in volunteer events and to log hours into the company volunteer tracking software. In 2013, 3,056 volunteer hours were logged. In 2014, volunteer hours totaled 4,408 hours. In 2015, January through September volunteer hours total 3,414 hours. Raining Rose created a formal volunteer policy and promote local volunteer opportunities to employees. All of the worksites visited shared their mission statement with employees via posted signs, intranet, and at company meetings. They also promoted community Purpose Workshops and encouraged employee participation. Employees who were able to attend found the experience to be helpful and a fun way to learn more about their interests and talents.

3. *Habitat/Physical Environment.* Worksites across Cedar Rapids are working to enhance well-being in physical workspaces, including making a lactation room available for nursing mothers to providing a variety of opportunities for quiet time and moving naturally. Raining Rose created a private space with three areas for employees to express milk. They currently have five women who use the space and they appreciate the awareness and access available to them. Listed below are a few other key areas of emphasis that relate to the physical environment in workplaces.
  - a. On-site fitness—Encouraging employees to participate in fitness activities in the workplace can offer increased flexibility to sneak exercise into otherwise busy schedules. Not only does this make the healthy choice the easy choice but it also encourages camaraderie and can reduce stress. All of the worksites that were visited have established onsite walking routes with groups regularly walking together. They also either provide onsite fitness centers or discounts to local health clubs. Toyota Financial Services formed Walking Moais and encouraged team members who did not know each other to walk together. Walkers are given a “walking card” and as walks are completed, they stop by the security desk and get their cards stamped. After completing 15 Moai walks, walking cards are added to the Walking Moai Prize

Box to win prizes including FitBits, walking weights, and resistance bands. Winter 2014 Walking Moai teams included 51 employees who completed 313 walking cards. Spring 2015 saw 71 employees engage in Walking Moais with 611 walking cards completed. Summer 2015 Walking Moai groups are still walking, and participation has increased to 105 employees. ESP International employees encourage each other to walk daily. They have indoor and outdoor routes and use the time to walk with people they know and coworkers they don't interact with on a regular basis. Kirkwood Community College's fitness center is available to all full-time employees at no cost. They have increased the number of fitness classes and added innovative programs like a lunchtime chair yoga class that has been increasingly popular with employees. Spouses and children can use the fitness center for \$50 per year. On the first Saturday of each month, the college hosts a family fitness morning that includes games and activities for employees and families. Raining Rose employees formed a Moai with 10 employees who walk together every workday at break times. The Moai group and other employees walk regularly on a course inside their warehouse or walk laps around the 120,000 square foot building. The Wellness Widget incentive program incentivizes employees to exercise in their onsite fitness center and earn wellness points. GreatAmerica Financial Services employees have formed several walking groups that take part in Tennis Shoe Tuesdays, a 10 week walking challenge. All of the worksites created environments that included healthy competitions and wellness activities and incentives that made employees want to participate.

- b. Vending/Cafeteria—Many people consume at least one meal and multiple beverages while at work. Several worksites have worked proactively with their cafeteria or vending machine suppliers to provide healthy food options to employees. ESP International investigated ways to increase healthy vending options for employees. There have been challenges in making healthy options available, but they continue to work on it. In the meantime, the company has created a Wellness Fridge that offers healthy snacks like fresh fruit and string cheese. Healthy items are made available at a low cost and all proceeds go to the company's charitable foundation. The company also started a container tomato garden that employees tend to and snack on. Employees enjoyed the process and plan to expand their container gardens to include other vegetables. Raining Rose added healthier choices like nuts and granola bars to vending machines. It found a partner in its vendor, which worked closely with them to make these changes. The vending machine has red, yellow, and green stickers next to items to indicate which items are healthy choices. Raining Rose is also planning to change their longstanding tradition of decorating sugar cookies for the holidays and is opting to decorate ornaments instead. Toyota Financial Services successfully worked with its on-site cafeteria to

- implement healthier lunch and snack options, including infused water, hummus, and fresh veggies. Kirkwood Community College is investigating options to add more healthy dishes to its cafeteria and to increase healthy vending options across the campus. Water stations are present at most worksites and employees appreciate the reminder to drink water and the ease of filling water bottles throughout the day.
- c. Ergonomics/Work Environment—Awareness and education of proper ergonomic practices can improve comfort and productivity and positively impact employee health and well-being. Most of the worksites visited review ergonomics on a regular basis. Kirkwood Community College has several stand/sit workstations in various departments on campus. Stretching and movement breaks are encouraged in all campus correspondence and prompts are posted across the campus. GreatAmerica Financial Services offers stand/sit workstations, as well desk cycles and exercise balls that are used a chairs. ESP International actively promotes walking and standing meetings. Toyota Financial Services and Raining Rose offer stand/sit workstations and employees appreciate this option. All worksites actively promote stretch break ideas on bulletin boards and at employee workstations.
4. *Engagement/Creation of Social Networks.* Blue Zones Project pledge and action numbers throughout the worksites visited were good, and workers were engaged in many different ways.
- a. Communication—Effective consumer advertising campaigns deliver their messages through various media outlets and in different mediums to enhance impact. Worksite well-being communications are no different. Many Cedar Rapids employers “brand” their workplace wellness communications so they are easily identifiable. Raining Rose adopted the brand “ASPIRE – Attitude, Safety, Passion, Integrity, Relationship, Evolve” which represents the core values of the company. The ASPIRE brand is visible to employees and is intended to motivate them to be healthy, happy and productive. Toyota Financial Services convened a wellness committee as part of its Blue Zones Project work. The company branded the committee and their wellness program as “LiveWell” with a mission to “help enrich lives, one healthy decision at a time.” One of the first efforts was “Wellness Wednesdays,” which encourages team members to take advantage of the various wellness initiatives presented by the LiveWell team. Some of the activities included a Hoops Event held to align with March Madness that encouraged employees to shoot basketball hoops, participate in a Wii basketball shootout event, and engage in a hula hoop or jump rope competition during breaks and lunch. One hundred forty employees participated, and each received a healthy snack. ESP International’s “ESP Wellness” brand is included on all wellness promotional information. GreatAmerica

- Financial Services' wellness brand, "Living Each Day the Healthy Way," is included in wellness updates, as well as a part of health benefit enrollment information. At each worksite different forms of media and venues were used, including signs, pictures, lunch-and-learns, bulletin board announcements, new employee orientations, large group meetings, and newsletters. Each worksite communicates well-being resources, programming, and outcomes.
- b. Engagement activities—Many activities that engage employees and their families were either created or branded with Blue Zones Project to enhance participation. Most of the worksites visited have an annual or bi-annual engagement plan and/or calendar of events. GreatAmerica Financial Services achieved over 73 percent employee engagement. The company credit its leadership and the wellness committee as reasons for the engagement results. They utilize a wellness intranet SharePoint page to promote wellness initiatives, upcoming events, and a mechanism to sign up for wellness activities. Wellness challenges are held quarterly and include walking and running groups, weight loss challenges, and lunch-and-learn participation. In July, the wellness committee hosted a "Just for the Health of It" challenge with 39 employees participating. Eleven employees earned 25+ points for completing fitness activities, eating healthily, and participating in Power 9 inspired events. A FitBit was awarded to the overall winner, with smaller fitness related prizes awarded throughout the contest. Kirkwood Community College hosted a healthy cooking classes in the fall of 2014 with 30 people in attendance. The spring 2015 healthy cooking class drew 52 employees. Kirkwood Community College's "Just for the Health of It" program includes a 13-week wellness activity designed to help participants stay interested and involved in a regular exercise program. Participants form teams of two to five members for the purpose of social support and healthy competition. They choose the activities they are interested in, exercise at their own pace, and complete a weekly log to record their fitness activities. Prizes are given to the team with the highest total average of activity time. ESP International provided a FitBit Charge HR to all full-time employees and sponsored lunch-and-learns to teach them about the various tracking functions of a FitBit. All of the worksites offered lunch-and-learns on topics such as relaxation techniques, meditation, and chair yoga. Employees appreciate and take advantage of these opportunities and routinely share ideas on other wellness activities of interest. Toyota Financial Services conducted a Wellness Checkpoint as it implemented various wellness activities. The number of employees spending 30 minutes per day doing physical activity increased 18.9 percent. Employees who reported doing no weekly exercise decreased by 42.5 percent. Employees who reported drinking eight eight-ounce glasses of water per day increased by 73 percent. Most worksites are working on

engagement plans that include increased participation in wellness activities. Workplace-sponsored events are numerous and varied and include things like walking groups, wellness-focused lunch-and-learns, family-oriented wellness activities, and competitions.

5. *Policies and Benefits.* The impact of educating employees about their health profile and linking activities that enhance well-being to incentives for participation, including cash rewards, gift cards, and reduced insurance premiums, are powerful motivators. Communicating transparently about the impact of health and well-being decisions on premium and business costs is also a best practice for encouraging employees to take more control of health behaviors and costs.
  - a. Health screenings, activities, incentives, and communication—Four out of five of the worksites visited provide biometric screening, health risk assessments, and aggregate well-being reports for employees. Some of the incentives to participate include cash rewards, gift cards, and/or reductions to health plan premiums. Aggregate well-being reports offer important information on wellness activities that can be deployed to address health and wellness issues. Grant Wood AEA reported medical and pharmacy claims increases of \$2,000 – \$3,000 per year per employee for four years. In the past year, they have noted a 10 percent decrease (\$370,000) in paid claims. Midwest Metal Products experienced a drop in paid medical claims from \$7,348 to \$5,207 per covered member.
  - b. Tobacco-free campuses—Prevention efforts are important for employees to maintain proper health and productivity. Limiting the opportunity to participate in behaviors that are not healthy, such as smoking, is a key preventive measure. In the past two years, more than 25 worksite campuses across Cedar Rapids have become tobacco free and/or nicotine free. Kirkwood Community College, GreatAmerica Financial Services, ESP International, and Raining Rose are among the tobacco-free worksites. They also offer tobacco cessation classes and nicotine replacement therapy through their health plan benefits and local resources. Grant Wood AEA instituted a tobacco policy as part of their five year plan and saw a 10 percent decrease in tobacco use. Midwest Metal Products has been tobacco free since 2009 and does not hire people who use tobacco. Long-time employees pay 30 percent more in health plan premiums if they use tobacco products. Smoking cessation classes are provided as a support tool for users who are trying to quit. Toyota Financial Services does not have a tobacco-free worksite as policy decisions are made at the corporate level. The company has seen a 25.5 percent decrease in tobacco use from January 2014 to October 2015 and credits education and tobacco-cessation support with contributing to this decrease.

6. *Unified Messaging Provided by Blue Zones Project.* All worksites said that Blue Zones Project reinforced their efforts at improving well-being while unifying and raising the bar on their well-being work. Blue Zones Project raised the knowledge, positive impacts, and credibility of their work toward creating better well-being for employees. The Blue Zones Project brand helped employees identify when an activity or event was designed to enhance their well-being and provided reinforcement outside of the workplace as individuals saw the brand in the media, at restaurants and grocery stores, in the public sector, and at schools. Cedar Rapids worksites have successfully partnered with other organizations to offer plant-based cooking classes and nutrition education at work. Classes on stress reduction, financial literacy, healthy foods and cooking, and physical activity have offered great benefits to employees. All worksites have noted that creating social networks within the workplace has been a source of pride and a welcome change to their work environment. Employees are taking the lead in their own well-being by serving on worksite wellness committees, requesting options like standing desks, and suggesting varied wellness activities to keep employees motivated.

### *Future Opportunities*

The following opportunities were noted in the Worksites sector:

1. *Sharing Best Practices among Worksites.* There are great lessons from worksites in Cedar Rapids that merit sharing broadly so others can benefit. There are opportunities to broaden worksites' ability to share best practices, including: continue to utilize the worksite committee to promote the benefits of being a Blue Zones Worksite and continue to educate the community and businesses on the successes and accomplishments of Blue Zones Project. We also recommend maintaining bi-monthly worksite roundtable discussions consisting of leaders from designated worksites that meet to help other local businesses pursue designation and/or provide insight into how to better engage their worksite. There is value in coordinating best practice forums to share information on how to establish healthy snack programs, how to work with vending machine suppliers to encourage them to offer more healthy options, how to create worksite gardens, and how to encourage stretch breaks.
2. *Measuring Success.* A large opportunity exists in enhanced identification and collection of rich data and well-being metrics. This includes employee productivity information, presenteeism/absenteeism information, insurance costs, BMI, smoking, worksite food environment cafeteria offerings, worksite vending options, and biometric and health risk assessment data trends. Reporting the business case back to the community will help inspire other worksites to link benefits to incentives and measure progress. Sharing

metrics will also help ensure greater progress toward enhanced well-being for Cedar Rapids citizens and highlight the work of the community and Blue Zones Project year over year. Likewise, at the employer level, providing covered individuals with the opportunity to have good information about their health, and coupling that with activities aimed at enhancing well-being, can be a powerful motivator to make healthy choices. Spreading information about those worksites already communicating aggregate outcomes to covered employees and dependents will help make the business case for why action is important.

3. *Engagement of Employees.* Effective engagement promotes and reinforces well-being participation and behavior change. The worksite committee should agree to re-commit to employee engagement. There is an opportunity for ongoing and enhanced employee engagement through Moais, Purpose Workshops, and large group presentations with pledge-action requests. Creating a goal to launch a 10-week Moai challenge in worksites via the worksite roundtable will be one way to reinvigorate employee engagement. Toyota Financial Services put effort into forming and growing their Walking Moai groups. They should share valuable Moai formation strategies with other worksites to help them see similar success. Employers can also encourage social engagement in activities that are provided by the community. Continuing to refresh and update engagement strategies will keep employees interested in offerings.
4. *Tobacco-free Campuses.* A number of employers have created tobacco-free work environments. Some employers still have designated smoking areas or are only smoke-free and not tobacco-free. There is an opportunity for more employers to become completely tobacco free. Leadership from worksites that have established tobacco-free campuses can assist other worksites to go tobacco free.
5. *Engaging New Worksites.* Continue to encourage additional worksites to take the Blue Zones Project Worksite Pledge and work toward becoming a Blue Zones Worksite. The annual Blueprint Update should be aggressive to get additional worksites registered and designated in the next year. Fifty percent of the Top 100 registered worksites registered as of January 2015 should designate as a Blue Zones Worksite. This effort will help keep the community focused on continuing the well-being journey.

## Sector: Restaurants

### Summary

Cedar Rapids identified 125 locally owned restaurants. At the time of the Community Certification Review, 36 had achieved designation as Blue Zones Restaurants. These restaurants serve a variety of cuisines, including American, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, and Mexican fares. Ten restaurants—Bistro on the River, Blue Strawberry Coffee Company, Brewhemia, Coffee Emporium, The Class Act, Club Deli, Coffee Smiths, Early Bird Café, Great Harvest Bread Co., and Lava Fusion—were evaluated during the Community Certification Review, and meetings were held with their management.

### Successes

The following successes were noted in the Restaurants sector:

1. *Nutrition improvements.* In Cedar Rapids, customers are asking for healthier options, and restaurants are working hard to meet this demand. Brewhemia is selling more sourdough, wheat bread, and spinach wraps than any other options. Coffeesmiths has seen sales of fresh fruit and vegetables increase from 900 in 2014 to 1,000 items for the same time period in 2015. Coffee Emporium added fresh fruit cups to the menu and has sold 845 of them so far in 2015. The Early Bird Café now only offers whole-grain bread. It also removed American cheese from the menu and got rid of the fountain soda machine. Instead of soda, it now offers tea and smoothies. With this change, sales of both are up with smoothie sales dramatically increasing by 75 percent. The owner credits “Blue Zones Project as the added motivation to make many of these changes.” Great Harvest Bread Co. revived its three-seed hummus sandwich in October 2015. Two years ago the sandwich was selling only three times per month. Now it is selling at a rate of 12 per week. Lava Fusion was skeptical about defaulting fruit as the side for its sandwich options. This change has been well received by consumers and management believes customers actually appreciate fruit more than other options.
2. *Eating Environment.* Restaurants have made meaningful changes to their eating environments that nudge customers into healthy choices. Smaller plates and glasses are being widely used, water has been made easily available to patrons, and to-go boxes are encouraged. Salt shakers are often not on the tables, which makes customers have to think twice about salting their food. At Club Deli and the Early Bird Café, fruit is placed at the store entrance so customers notice it upon arrival. Other choices are still available but not as easily or quickly noticed. Bike racks can be found near most of the restaurants visited. This encourages natural movement, not only for consumers but

often for restaurant staff, too. These modifications contribute to a healthier eating environment in Cedar Rapids.

3. *Menu Improvements.* Cedar Rapids restaurants draw customer attention to healthy options through Blue Zones Inspired menus. These menus often are stand-alone and adorned the counters of several restaurants. They used descriptive words, enticing descriptions, and symbols. Examples include the smoothie menu at Early Bird Café and menus at Blue Strawberry Coffee Company, Club Deli, and Coffee Emporium. Coffeesmiths has a “Lighter.Healthier.Happier” menu on the counter that is also handed to customers who might drive through rather than dine-in. This is a great solution for seasonal highlights or for restaurants that have menu boards that cannot be easily or frequently updated. Most of these establishments plan to incorporate Blue Zones items into the menu boards when they are updated. Bistro on the River incorporated Blue Zones items directly into its menus and denotes them with a symbol. The Brewhemia website has a Blue Zones tab that lists all of the healthy options that meet the guidelines. This makes online ordering of healthy options easy.
4. *Promotion and Support of Blue Zones Restaurants.* Blue Zones Project aims for restaurants to experience benefits as a result of their participation. Many restaurants said they do not engage in regular advertising or promotion because it is cost prohibitive. During the month of October, Blue Zones Project—Cedar Rapids promoted all Blue Zones Restaurants through radio advertisements and social media posts. Restaurant owners and managers acknowledged that consumers were hearing the ads, thus drawing in new clientele and adding value to their businesses. Outside of this time, regular radio, print advertisements, and social media posts helped raise awareness about the healthy options available at each restaurant.
5. *Collaboration with Blue Zones Worksites.* Partnerships between Blue Zones Worksites and Restaurants is encouraged, and this cross-sector collaboration is notable in Cedar Rapids. Club Deli actually acknowledges that Rockwell Collins was a major factor in the decision to become a Blue Zones Restaurant. Others like Bistro on the River, Coffeesmiths, and Early Bird Café also credit affiliation as a Blue Zones Restaurant with an uptick in their catering orders.
6. *Use of Local Produce.* Many restaurants source fruits, vegetables, and breads locally when in season. During winter months, vendors secure these items for restaurants or menus are updated to reflect seasonal produce. The Class Act partners with the on-campus horticulture program to grow produce that can be showcased on its menu, which allows patrons to know exactly where their food came from.

### Future Opportunities

The following opportunities were noted in the Restaurants sector:

1. *Engage Additional Restaurants and Expand the Reach of Restaurant Work.* The restaurant work in Cedar Rapids has great momentum. The community should continue to promote existing restaurants and leverage their successes to engage additional restaurants. Many restaurants have registered and been assessed but have not completed work. Engaging these restaurants will impact an even greater number of citizens in Cedar Rapids. Restaurants and worksites should continue to connect and provide catering opportunities when available. Best practices should also be shared among Blue Zones Restaurants or through a restaurant summit that brings aspiring restaurateurs together to learn about the process and begin work.
2. *Measure Success.* Measurement is an important component of documenting success and outcomes of the efforts of Blue Zones Restaurants. While most restaurants have estimated metrics, collecting and documenting these systemically is important. It is recommended that Cedar Rapids restaurants work to track catering, waste, inventory changes, and customer and staff feedback in concert with promotion of these items to continue to refine their healthy offerings. Now is an excellent time to gather baseline metrics where POS systems exist. These metrics should provide value to the restaurant in measuring the results of changes implemented since designation.
3. *Promote Plant-based Entrees that Meet the Blue Zones Guidelines for Healthy Dishes.* In Blue Zones areas, meals include an abundance of vegetables, and beans and legumes are the main sources of protein. Blue Zones Project committees and restaurants are encouraged to continue this work by promoting fruits, vegetables, and plant-based entrees on menus. Blue Strawberry has plans to offer a weekly special that is Blue Zones Approved in the future. Coffeesmiths plans to promote Blue Zones items with a New Year's theme because New Year's is a time when health is on the forefront of peoples' minds. Lava Fusion also expressed interest in maintaining Blue Zones Inspired items as its menu changes seasonally. As metrics are collected, sales of entrees inspired by Blue Zones Project should be considered, because menus are recreated seasonally. Continue to maintain and add new entrees that meet the Blue Zones Food Guidelines as work in Cedar Rapids is sustained. Restaurants should utilize the current Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge to incorporate new best practices and menu items for customers.
4. *Train Staff Regularly about Blue Zones Project.* Many restaurants have trained and have posted signage about Blue Zones Project in their back rooms. Two models are Bistro on the River, which trains its staff about Blue Zones Project on their first day of work, and Great Harvest Bread Co. which regularly mentions Blue Zones Project at staff meetings.

With the challenge of high employee turnover, continue to integrate Blue Zones Project principles into training materials so staff are aware of its value to consumers and the community as a whole is critical. Committees can help deliver presentations to the restaurant staff to help them understand the Power 9, general concepts of Blue Zones Project, and the Blue Zones Project Restaurant Pledge. This not only boosts the health of customers, but it can help the restaurants' bottom lines.

## Sector: Grocery Stores

### Summary

Hy-Vee offers an inviting environment that promotes fresh, local, and healthy choices. An extensive array of fresh produce greets customers as they enter the store. Great signage is in place. Hy-Vee leadership engages youth in nutrition education via store tours, and each store has a partnership with a local public school that is supported by the Hy-Vee registered dietician who brings nutrition education to the school. Public transit is conveniently scheduled, which allows customers who may not have other forms of transportation to access the store. The stores began offering *Aisles on Line* in 2015 as a no to low-cost grocery delivery service, which is a convenience to patrons and an opportunity to reach underserved areas of Cedar Rapids. Hy-Vee's registered dietician plays a vital role in well-being for Cedar Rapids residents, supporting nutrition education from pharmacy referrals, delivering biometric screenings, and supporting its Health Market patrons. Produce sales (revenue) has increased by 12 percent (revenue) and 25 percent (volume) between 2009 and 2014. Water sales increased 52 percent while soda sales decreased 5 percent during same timeframe.

### Successes

The following successes were noted in the Grocery Stores sector:

1. *Environment.* The stores have embraced Blue Zones checkout lanes. These lanes prominently position fresh fruit, granola bars, and healthy beverage alternatives. The stores have dedicated an increased amount of space to display select fruits and vegetables, and now an inviting array of fresh produce greets customers upon store entry. Sales of healthy Blue Zones Foods were tracked at Hy-Vee Edgewood Road and sales increased 43 percent between 2014 and 2015. Lastly, Hy-Vee Cedar Rapids stores are increasingly featuring local growers in their produce departments. For example the Oakland Road store featured nine local growers in 2015, and Wilson Orchard apples are currently being featured on end-cap displays.

2. *Education and Promotion.* Hy-Vee continues to educate customers on healthy food options via access to dieticians, taste tests, healthy recipes, and cooking demonstrations. Hy-Vee's in-store registered dietician delivers store tours and works with clients referred from the pharmacy and customers seeking nutritional support to make healthy choices. Additionally, the stores partner with local public schools to educate students on nutrition, to plant school gardens, to work with teachers, and to provide discounts on purchases for classroom education. Hy-Vee's Fuel Saver program is effectively used to promote healthy options like water, produce, and more. Hy-Vee supports healthy school fundraisers by providing coupon book for sale in lieu of unhealthy food options. Schools sell these books and retain 80 percent of the profit. Last year, 29,000 books were sold. Due to the success of this program, Hy-Vee is planning to order 35,000 books this year. Hy-Vee is also very philanthropic. In 2015 it donated \$3.1 million to Cedar Rapids initiatives, up from \$2.5 million in community contributions in 2014.
3. *Promoting Healthy Beverages.* The store labels healthy beverages in coolers and on shelves. Shelf space for water and tea products is increasing. For example, Hy-Vee measured water and soda sales and discovered that water sales increased an average of 15 percent across its seven stores while soda sales increased only 2 percent during that same timeframe (between 2014 and 2015). Water is featured using Hy-Vee's Fuel Saver program and is located in the beverage coolers at end-cap locations.

### **Future Opportunities**

The following opportunities were noted in the Grocery Stores sector:

1. *Develop a Healthy Catering Menu and Expand other Menu Items.* As Cedar Rapids worksites and organizations increasingly seek healthy catering options, Hy-Vee is well positioned to develop and promote a healthy catering menu. University Avenue Hy-Vee in Cedar Falls has instituted a menu that might serve as a helpful to model.
2. *Deepen Pledge Understanding and Impact.* Work with currently designated stores to review the current pledge and share best practices with other stores. Deepening understanding of the implemented pledge items and their value will further sustain the effort and work established by Hy-Vee.
3. *Join Forces with the Cedar Rapids Food Alliance.* Work with the Food Alliance and its partners to support the planned Community Food Environment Summit. Hy-Vee's

expertise and market presence is well positioned to advance the work of the Food Alliance.

4. *Measurement.* Continue to collect metrics to inform planning and to document and promote the impact healthy foods have on Cedar Rapids citizens' well-being.

## Sector: Individual Engagement

### Summary

Blue Zones Project representatives met with members of the engagement committee, organizations that have implemented Blue Zones Project principles, Moai members, and churches that completed the Blue Zones Project Organization Checklist.

Outstanding success stories include the Walking Moais, with nearly 1,500 people participating in 240 Walking Moais. Many of the groups have stayed together more than two years and have built strong friendships. The engagement team has built strong partnerships with key organizations and events in the community, with Blue Zones Project having a presence (and in many cases being *the* key component) at nearly every community event.

### Successes

The following successes were noted in the Individual Engagement sector:

1. *Strong Partnerships Drive Awareness.* Engagement leaders in Cedar Rapids developed strong and strategic partnerships with established groups and events across the community to expand awareness of Blue Zones Project. This strategy was effective in providing awareness of the Project in places where people were used to gathering while collaborating on outreach and promotion that benefitted both Blue Zones Project and partner organizations. Examples include partnering with “Meet Me at the Market” at NewBo Market to host regular Walking Moai launches and cooking classes, and to create opportunities for people to get active with their “right tribe.” The regular Thursday evening gathering drew in around 250 people per week for 20 weeks, offering cooking demonstrations along with the group walks, bike rides, and yoga classes. Further, the new downtown library has been a positive resource and partner, hosting meetings as well as skywalk Walking Moai launches which have become popular during cold winter months. It serves as a regular place for Moais to meet and walk together in the skywalk system during colder months. The various YMCA branches have also helped

promote Blue Zones Project and hosted events to boost awareness. The farmers market has been a great partner for healthy cooking demonstrations, such as the “So You Think You Can Cook” competition, where teams recruited from the community prepared Blue Zones-inspired dishes that were judged by local celebrities. Seasonal festivals and events such as the Freedom Festival, Tanager Place Summer Fest, and the Cedar Rapids Kernels baseball team were also great outlets for reaching the community and have become strong partners with Blue Zones Project.

It’s clear that Blue Zones Project has been heavily involved in every major event in Cedar Rapids for the last few years and has played a key role in broadening active and healthy activities throughout the community.

2. *Successful Engagement in Largest City.* The engagement committee can be proud of engaging the most citizens yet with the Blue Zones Project Personal Pledge. Cedar Rapids is the largest Blue Zones Project demonstration community in Iowa with a population of more than 125,000 people and a goal to have at least 21,000 people complete the Blue Zones Personal Pledge and one healthy well-being action. This goal that once seemed daunting was successfully reached after a little more than two years. In total, the community has engaged more than 30,000 people and 21,677 that have completed an action on the Blue Zones Personal Pledge. This accomplishment comes due to the other items highlighted in this section along with personal contact with individuals through large employers, schools, fairs, and through engagement at local Hy-Vee grocery stores. Large employers, such as Rockwell Collins, served as a catalyst for employees to hear about and participate in Blue Zones Project. Further, schools embraced the Project and held competitions and events for students to get involved and take charge of their own personal well-being. Hy-Vee was a key partner in allowing Blue Zones Project representatives to host tables inside the grocery store to engage shoppers with resources like the Blue Zones Food List and various recipes while encouraging them to participate and complete the Blue Zones Personal Pledge. Finally, the engagement team implemented successful strategies at various fairs and events by securing Blue Zones Project or Power 9 themes throughout the whole event and integrating fully in the communications. A Power 9 Passport was popular at events and required attendees to stop at various booths to learn more in order to collect stamps and be entered for prizes. The team credited this promotion with the swing in better awareness and engagement at these events. Having Blue Zones Project as a central, integrated theme and experience helped deliver a message of well-being and engage attendees more successfully than simply hosting a booth..

3. *Blue Zones Project Activities Reach a Broad Base.* In addition to the broad engagement in the Blue Zones Personal Pledge, the engagement team can be proud of the large reach other Blue Zones Project activities had. Purpose Workshops, Purpose Moais, cooking classes, Potluck Moais, and volunteering are all thriving. The team has spoken about Blue Zones Project to more than 100 audiences with 4,500 participants. The community has held 65 Blue Zones Project cooking classes with more than 1,160 participants. Hy-Vee serves as a key partner for cooking classes. Their “Eat Green with Shrek” classes (held during the time the musical was featured at Theater Cedar Rapids) exposed more than 50 kids to healthy cooking with green vegetables. In all, these cooking classes were put on with the help of more than 600 volunteer hours. Further, 27 Potluck Moai groups have been formed with 180 participants.

Purpose Workshops were held throughout the community with audiences old and young. Twelve total workshops with 630 participants were held. More than 135 residents explored their purpose more deeply as part of one of the 15 Purpose Moais formed.

Finally, all of these efforts could not have been possible without a strong base of dedicated volunteers. Throughout the Project, over 600 Blue Zones Project volunteers have dedicated more than 9,000 hours to making these transformations possible. The team was also proud to celebrate two key Blue Zones Project volunteers in Cedar Rapids who were awarded the Governor’s “Faces of Volunteerism” award: Lynn Stansbery and Jackie Fetter.

4. *Walking Moais Building Bonds.* The community found success among the nearly 250 Walking Moai groups of nearly 1,500 participants. Two specific Moais shared their stories about building new friendships and bonds with people they had not known before. The groups were launched and have stayed together for nearly two years. One group highlighted their experiences walking to various attractions in the community, following their children’s travel adventures vicariously together, and celebrating life’s milestones together. Another group built similarly strong bonds and noted the physical effects, in addition to the friendships built. Multiple members of the group have experienced weight loss that they credit to being more active with the Moai. Over the past three years, this Moai has held family dinner nights, gone camping together, and taken family vacations together. Both groups have embodied the true concept of the Moai, lasting bonds with individuals who serve as a personal board of directors, a safety net, and a second family to share both challenges and successes with. In addition to the Moais that shared their story, many others of the nearly 250 groups have seen the benefits of making new friends and deepening personal relationships.

5. *Organization Checklist Improves Environmental Well-Being.* Cedar Rapids fully embraced the Blue Zones Project Organization Checklist to improve well-being beyond Blue Zones Worksite efforts. The checklist offers churches, civic groups, and those worksites that are unable to complete the Blue Zones Project Worksite Pledge an opportunity to implement well-being principles and participate in the Project. To date, 57 organizations across Cedar Rapids have complete the Blue Zones Project Organization Checklist, which also required them to engage a certain percent of their members. The review group met with two churches that completed the checklist and heard about the various ways it impacted their members. Lovely Lane United Methodist Church has switched to smaller plates and is diligent about including healthy food options after services and at events. Gloria Dei Lutheran has embraced Blue Zones Project in a variety of ways, most notably with their committee hosting a community-wide wellness fair as part of the checklist. The event was held at the church and was open to the entire community. It featured several vendors and Blue Zones Project was the key theme for the event. Other activities included puppets putting on Blue Zones Project-themed skits and healthy cooking demonstrations. Both churches held sign-up events after services and celebrated completing the checklist with a Blue Zones Project-themed weekend, including a blue ribbon cutting. This work continues and the organizations that have participating are meeting in a quarterly roundtable to share their best practices for success.

### *Future Opportunities*

The following opportunities were noted in the Individual Engagement sector:

1. *Sharing among Walking Moais.* A key learning during this visit was the pride among Walking Moais in the community and their desire to both share their stories and hear of others' success stories. The group recommended an opportunity for Walking Moais to gather regularly to share and celebrate progress. This could also be used as an opportunity to reinvigorate current Moais, recruit new members, and launch Moais.
2. *Expand Church Outreach and Continue Sharing.* While churches are engaged and proud of their progress, those we spoke with were still early in their journey and interested in implementing more Blue Zones Project activities and principles. It will be important to continue to support these organizations in their well-being efforts through things like Purpose Moais, Walking Moais, and other activities. Curriculum from the Purpose Moais or Potluck Moais tend to be very popular in churches and provides another way for the congregation to deepen their fellowship. Further, many noted that there are other

congregations that may want to get involved. In such a large community, the committee should continue to engage new churches each quarter. The engagement team saw a positive response to its first quarterly roundtable to share best practices and should continue this successful event.

3. *Purpose Expansion.* Many expressed an interest in hosting or attending Purpose Workshops and in expanding Purpose Moais. The committee would benefit from planning regular Purpose Workshop opportunities. To complement the larger workshops that may not be able to be held as often, the committee should promote the Purpose Moai curriculum as a way to encourage more residents to consider their purpose. The group heard from a worksite leader that this was very impactful among his team. Sharing this success and testimonial with other worksites and groups could help garner further interest.
4. *Deepen Partnerships.* With so many positive partnerships formed already, the Blue Zones Project team will need to make sure these relationships are maintained and deepened. The strategy to integrate with other events and align with like-minded groups has led to the success of the Project in Cedar Rapids and the team will want to make sure this is not lost as time goes on. Key partnerships mentioned above, such as NewBo Market, the Farmers Market, YMCA, Library, Parks and Recreation, Hy-Vee, Theater Cedar Rapids, and large employers are critical to the continued success of Blue Zones Project in Cedar Rapids. Likewise, the success of Blue Zones Project would not have been possible without the hundred of volunteers. The Project saw over 9,000 volunteer hours logged over the past three years. These individuals and the organizations they represent will continue to be a key partnership moving forward.
5. *Personal Success Stories.* The community will benefit from continuing to track and gather personal success stories of citizens who have embraced Blue Zones Project to improve their well-being. Lynn Stansbery's touching personal story of her journey has supported many others and become the face of Blue Zones Project transformations. Sharing these stories publicly will help re-engage those who may not know about all of the great things happening in Cedar Rapids and thus boost excitement about Blue Zones Project for the future. Media and other local outlets should be engaged to continue to share these stories and the positive outcomes of Blue Zones Project.

## Measurement

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### COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index<sup>®</sup> (WBI) is the measurement tool utilized to determine well-being improvement over the duration of Blue Zones Project, both for Iowa and for Cedar Rapids.

Statewide WBI data are collected annually, and oversampling data are also collected annually for Cedar Rapids. These data provide a unique opportunity to showcase the impact of the work associated with Blue Zones Project on Cedar Rapids's well-being.

What follows is the 2015 data for Cedar Rapids—both the overall score and scores by element and question. Cedar Rapids overall well-being score is noteworthy, along with its strong scores in the Financial Well-Being element when compared to Iowa and the US.

Well-Being Index tracking will continue through the course of the Project, and numbers will be updated annually. Blue Zones Project is a long-term investment, and well-being improvements will take time. These annual updates will provide an opportunity for the community leadership to assess year-over-year progress and plan activities and Blueprint updates to identify appropriate areas to address in the community.

## State of Cedar Rapids Well-Being

### Oversample Results

Survey Conducted February 23rd - March 9th, 2015

	<b>Cedar Rapids 2015</b>	<b>Cedar Rapids 2014</b>	<b>Variance Years 1 to 2</b>	<b>Iowa Rank</b>	<b>Iowa Results</b>	<b>Nation Results</b>
Well-Being Overall	60.3	62.1	(1.8)	16	62.2	61.6
Purpose	5.8	6.1	(0.3)	17	6.1	6.0
Social	5.8	6.0	(0.2)	40	6.0	6.1
Financial	6.3	6.4	(0.1)	9	6.2	6.0
Community	6.1	6.2	(0.1)	9	6.4	6.1
Physical	6.0	6.2	(0.2)	36	6.0	6.1



## Cedar Rapids Scores by Question

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2
<b>Overall</b>			
Life evaluation (% Thriving)	51.0	54.3	(3.3)
<b>Purpose Well-Being Score</b>			
There is a leader in your life who makes you enthusiastic about the future.	53.4	57.2	(3.8)
In the past 12 months, you have reached most of your goals.	52.3	55.5	(3.2)
You get to use your strengths to do what you do best every day.	67.1	72.1	(5.0)
You learn or do something interesting every day.	61.5	69.3	(7.8)
<b>Social Well-Being Score</b>			
Your friends and family give you positive energy every day.	72.9	76.0	(3.1)
Someone in your life always encourages you to be healthy.	65.8	70.0	(4.2)
<b>Community Well-Being Score</b>			
The city or area you live is a perfect place for you.	60.7	63.9	(3.2)
You are proud of your community (or the area where you live).	66.1	62.9	3.2
You always feel safe and secure.	77.8	81.2	(3.4)
In the last 12 months, you have received recognition for helping to improve the city or area where you live.	17.3	19.4	(2.1)
<b>Physical Well-Being Score</b>			
% with high blood pressure (lifetime)	27.0	28.0	(1.0)
% with high cholesterol (lifetime)	21.7	22.8	(1.1)
In the last seven days, you have felt active and productive every day.	67.8	71.2	(3.4)
You always feel good about your physical appearance.	54.6	53.2	1.4
% who smoke	22.0	16.1	5.9
% who exercised for 30+ minutes 3+ days in last week	49.0	48.4	0.6
% who had 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables 4+ days in last week	54.8	56.3	(1.5)
% Obese	32.8	27.1	5.7
% Normal Weight	30.5	37.9	(7.4)

## Purpose

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Thriving	27.2	36.1	(8.9)	37.3	36.7
% Suffering	17.1	13.3	3.8	14.1	15.4
% Agree There is a leader in your life who makes you enthusiastic about the future.	53.4	57.2	(3.8)	60.3	60.5
% Agree You like what you do every day.	75.9	80.7	(4.8)	79.7	76.1
% Agree In the past 12 months, you have reached most of your goals.	52.3	55.5	(3.2)	55.8	53.0
% Agree You get to use your strengths to do what you do best every day.	67.1	72.1	(5.0)	70.2	67.9
% Agree You learn or do something interesting every day.	61.5	69.3	(7.8)	65.6	65.3

## Social

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Thriving	29.9	37.9	(8.0)	38.6	40.5
% Suffering	20.5	16.1	4.4	16.6	16.2
% Agree Your relationship with your spouse, partner, or closest friend is stronger than ever.	75.4	79.0	(3.6)	78.3	76.4
% Agree Your friends and family give you positive energy every day.	72.9	76.0	(3.1)	76.8	76.2
% Agree You always make time for regular trips or vacations with friends and family.	49.5	47.1	2.4	51.1	49.3
% Agree Someone in your life always encourages you to be healthy.	65.8	70.0	(4.2)	72.2	75.5

## Financial

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Thriving	40.1	45.9	(5.8)	43.1	39.1
% Suffering	16.6	15.8	0.8	20.3	23.1
% Agree Not enough money to buy food.	9.2	7.8	1.4	14.5	17.2
% Agree Not enough money for healthcare.	12.4	9.1	3.3	14.1	17.1
% Agree You have enough money to do everything you want to do.	46.9	47.7	(0.8)	46.0	40.4
% Agree In the last seven days, you have worried about money.	29.4	30.9	(1.5)	34.7	36.3
% Agree Compared to the people you spend time with, you are satisfied with your standard of living.	77.1	78.5	(1.4)	77.5	74.7

## Community

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Thriving	30.4	35.6	(5.2)	42.2	38.0
% Suffering	12.2	13.6	(1.4)	10.8	15.3
% Agree					
You can't imagine living in a better community than the one you live in today.	48.3	49.0	(0.7)	57.6	51.6
The city or area you live is a perfect place for you.	60.7	63.9	(3.2)	67.9	63.1
You are proud of your community (or the area where you live).	66.1	62.9	3.2	70.4	63.5
You always feel safe and secure.	77.8	81.2	(3.4)	83.8	76.5
The house or apartment that you live in is ideal for you and your family.	76.7	77.3	(0.6)	74.9	72.6
In the last 12 months, you have received recognition for helping to improve the city or area where you live.	17.3	19.4	(2.1)	19.7	19.1
Satisfied with the city or area where you live.	86.8	84.2	2.6	88.9	84.7

## Physical (Disease Burden and Obesity)

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Thriving	32.4	34.6	(2.2)	31.8	32.7
% Suffering	12.3	9.7	2.6	13.5	11.4
% Agree					
Physical pain	22.5	18.9	3.6	23.5	24.7
High Blood Pressure (Lifetime)	27.0	28.0	(1.0)	26.3	29.2
High Cholesterol (Lifetime)	21.7	22.8	(1.1)	25.6	24.2
Diabetes (Lifetime)	10.1	10.6	(0.5)	10.0	11.4
Depression (Lifetime)	18.7	13.8	4.9	17.2	17.5
Heart Attack (Lifetime)	2.4	3.6	(1.2)	3.9	3.9
Asthma (Lifetime)	9.9	12.5	(2.6)	10.8	11.9
Cancer (Lifetime)	5.5	7.0	(1.5)	6.6	7.1
Obese	32.8	27.1	5.7	31.1	27.7
Overweight	34.9	34.8	0.1	34.8	35.2

## Physical (Behaviors and Choices)

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Agree					
% Exercise 30+ Minutes, 3+ days per week	49.0	48.4	0.6	50.0	51.9
% 5+ servings of Fruits and Vegetables, 4+ days per week	54.8	56.3	(1.5)	53.6	57.6
% Ate healthy any given day	61.0	62.3	(1.3)	63.1	64.3
Do you smoke?	22.0	16.1	5.9	21.5	19.4
How often do you use drugs or medication (including prescription drugs) which affect your mood or help you relax? (Daily)	21.6	17.4	4.2	19.4	18.9
How often do you use drugs or medication (including prescription drugs) which affect your mood or help you relax? (Never)	60.2	68.2	(8.0)	63.1	62.2
Average number of alcoholic drinks people have in a typical week.	2.4	2.6	(0.2)	2.8	2.4
% of people who have 7+ alcoholic drinks in a typical week.	13.5	13.4	0.1	14.9	12.0

## Physical (Self Assessment)

	Cedar Rapids 2015	Cedar Rapids 2014	Variance Years 1 to 2	Iowa Results	Nation Results
% Agree					
Little interest or pleasure in doing things (Not At All)	66.8	73.6	(6.8)	67.1	64.3
Little interest or pleasure in doing things (Everyday)	9.4	7.1	2.3	9.6	10.5
2+ Days of poor health keeping you from usual activities	28.2	24.5	3.7	24.7	26.4
Your physical health is near-perfect.	49.7	56.3	(6.6)	58.3	58.0
In the last seven days, you have felt active and productive every day.	67.8	71.2	(3.4)	68.8	67.9
A doctor would say that you do a great job of managing your health.	63.6	63.6	0.0	63.7	63.9
You always feel good about your physical appearance.	54.6	53.2	1.4	57.5	58.4

In addition, the following metrics have been chosen by Cedar Rapids as selected metrics and impact measures to be tracked over time to assist in evaluation of Blue Zones Project.

Sector	Selected Metrics	Annual Community Data*					
		Year 1 (2010)	Year 2 (2011)	Year 3 (2012)	Year 4 (2013)	Year 5 (2014)	Year 6 (2015)
Community Policy	Completed Built Environment Projects (Complete Streets, Urban Greening – Right of Way (ROW) /Parkway Trees), Placemaking, etc.)	ROW Trees Planted: 766	ROW Trees Planted: 1013	ROW Trees Planted: 890	ROW Trees Planted: 1224  Bicycle Master Plan: green bike lanes	ROW Trees Planted: 974  Complete Streets: (3 Street/4 Ave SE; Bever Ave SE – Memorial Drive to 34 <sup>th</sup> St), Safe Routes to School (76 <sup>th</sup> Ave SW – Kirkwood Blvd to Prairie Crest)	ROW Trees Planted: 772  Urban Orchard at Noelridge Park Complete Streets: (Boyson Rd Bike Lanes)
	Pledge Policies Passed or Upgraded	Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Strategic Parking Master Plan	Comprehensive Trails Plan	Urban Agriculture Ordinance (updated)	Complete Streets (street design guidelines), Sidewalk Master Plan	EnvisionCR (city comprehensive plan)
	New miles of trail (calendar year)	31.7	35.6	41.7	44.4	46.6	
	Cyclist/pedestrian PM counts (areas targeted for trail development)					<b>3 Ave/3 St SW:</b> April – 55, July - 626 <b>Edgewood/Ellis NW:</b> 8 <b>Bever/Memorial SE:</b> 65 <b>4 Ave/3 St SW:</b> 336 <b>Wilson Ave/ Wiley Blvd SW:</b> 43 <b>Edgewood Rd/42<sup>nd</sup> St:</b> 10 <b>Boyson Rd / Bowman Elementary:</b> 45	

	Public Transportation Users (Jan –Dec)	1,071,568	1,124,108	1,202,677	1,225,199	1,255,853	
	Number community garden plots (City plot rentals + urban ag permits)	Garden plots rented: 306	Garden plots rented: 327	Garden plots rented: 327	Garden plots rented: 322	Garden plots rented: 317	Garden plots rented: 325
	Total number new tobacco-free housing buildings in calendar year		6 buildings	38 buildings	9 buildings	7 buildings	12 buildings (data through May)
Worksites (sample of designated)	Employee Wellness Program Participation						Average of 89 percent participation
	Employee tobacco use						Average of 94 percent non-users
	Average health care cost per employee						\$4,743
	Employees with fasting blood sugar <100 mg/dL						66 percent <100ml/DL
	Annual Turnover (measure of productivity)						12 percent
	Total bicycle-friendly worksites or universities			1 Rockwell Collins (BRONZE)	2 Northtowne Cycling and Fitness (SILVER)	0	4 City of CR water pollution control (BRONZE) Hall Bicycle (GOLD)
Schools	Participation in WSB Program (# students, # routes)				<b>Participants:</b> 66 <b>Routes:</b> 6	<b>Participants:</b> 87 <b>Routes:</b> 8	
	Student BMI (CRCS D)	2010: <b>Kindergarten BMI:</b>	2011: <b>Kindergarten BMI:</b>	2012: <b>Kindergarten BMI:</b>	2013: <b>Kindergarten BMI:</b>	2014: <b>Kindergarten</b>	

	Data collected at beginning of school year.	Overweight- 16.7% Obese -15.7% <b>5 Grade BMI:</b> Overweight- 17.1% Obese- 20.0%	Overweight- 16.8% Obese - 13.8% <b>5 Grade BMI:</b> Overweight- 14.3% Obese- 21.9%	Overweight- 18.1% Obese- 12.6% <b>5 Grade BMI:</b> Overweight- 16.1% Obese- 21.1%	Overweight- 20.1% Obese- 15.1% <b>5 Grade BMI:</b> Overweight- 17.2% Obese -23.6%	<b>BMI: Overweight</b> – 20.0% Obese – 14.7% <b>5 Grade BMI:</b> Overweight – 17.4% Obese - 21.6%	
	Total number of school gardens – Spring of Calendar Year (*indicates garden started with assistance from Blue Zones Project) New garden locations are listed	0	0	0	6 Garfield* Harrison Hiawatha McKinley Roosevelt Taylor	7 Viola Gibson	18 Cleveland Erskine Grant* Hoover* Jackson* Jefferson HS Johnson* Kenwood Truman* Polk Alt.* Xavier HS*
	Percentage of locally-sourced food served (beginning of school year)	Cedar Rapids: 0 College Community: 0	Cedar Rapids: 0 College Community: 0	Cedar Rapids: 0 College Community: 0	Cedar Rapids: 0 College Community: 0	Cedar Rapids: 0 College Community: 0	
Grocery Stores (designated)	Sales from Blue Zones checkout lanes	n/a	n/a	n/a	<b>Edgewood Road (Jan-Jun 2013):</b> Items: 2,202 Water: 23,464 Soda: 25,138 Blue Zones Project Foods: 78,907 <b>Johnson Ave (Jan-May 2013):</b> Items: 2,202 Water: 4,008 Soda: 21,858 Blue Zones Project foods: 74,818	<b>Edgewood Road (Jan-June 2014):</b> Items: 2,911 Water: 26,052 Soda: 24,992 Blue Zones Project Foods: 112,786 <b>Johnson Ave (Jan-May 2014):</b> Items: 1,431 Water: 3,290 Soda: 25,287 Blue Zones Project foods: 77,044	<b>Edgewood Road:</b>
	Produce Sales				<b>1 Avenue Hy-Vee May 2013:</b> Produce dept sales- \$316,815	<b>1 Avenue Hy-Vee May 2014:</b> Produce dept sales- \$329,571	<b>No change</b> in average sales across 7 stores from previous year Q2. One store was

							remodeling produce department.
	Water Sales				1 Avenue Hy-Vee May 2013: Water sales-\$4,110	1 Avenue Hy-Vee May 2014: Water sales-\$5,477	Average of <b>15 percent increase</b> across 7 stores.
	Sugar-sweetened beverage Sales				1st Avenue Hy-Vee May 2013: Sugar-Pop Sales- \$31,118	1st Avenue Hy-Vee May 2014: Sugar-Pop Sales-\$29,186	Average of <b>2 percent increase</b> across 7 stores.
	Percentage of locally sourced food						
Restaurants (designated)	Fruit/Vegetable Procurement (\$)						
	Percent of locally sourced vegetables (of total vegetable procurement)						
	Sale of Blue Zones/plant based menu items						
Citizen Engagement	Number of new organizations involved with Blue Zones Project				0	4	12 (as of May 2015)
	Number of volunteers active through Leaders in Volunteerism (annual)					9,352	
	Volunteers 55+ involved in Retired Senior Volunteer Program (annual)					471	
	Free, family-friendly community programming	Downtown FM: 78,774	Downtown FM: 102,592	Downtown FM: 105,000	Downtown FM: 111,052 MMM: 1,488	Downtown FM: 102,961 (two bad weather days) MMM: 1,590	

	participation (farmers markets - Noelridge and downtown, Meet Me at the Market)						
	Earned media coverage (# exposures)		2011: 2	2012: 7	2013: 31	2014 (through May): 12	

## Next Steps

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### PLANNING FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

In the 2015 Blueprint Update, the Power 9 team has shown a commitment to the ongoing work of Blue Zones Project and has identified the key leaders and ongoing drivers of the Project. The update also laid out goals and plans for the coming year that will deepen the impact of the Project and continue to improve well-being. As part of that update, the community laid out goals for 2015 and beyond:

- Continue implementation of strategies and activities to measurably improve well-being.
- Advance the changes in sector environments so healthy choices become easy choices for individuals.
- Consider new pledge items added annually for adoption to maintain and advance sector designations.
- Keep residents and organizations engaged and informed through media and marketing.
- Support a community-led leadership team and sector committees to sustain the effort.
- Complete an annual Blueprint update.

### ONGOING COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

- Demonstrate commitment to sustained efforts and progress toward well-being improvement through completed and approved annual Blueprint updates through 2016 to maintain certification.
- Identify resources needed to achieve community goals for sustainability and to implement the Blueprint.
- Continue to collaborate on identifying data, resources, and information specific to metrics and outcomes that help the community measure the impact of Blue Zones Project and share them in annual Blueprint updates (examples of which have been shared throughout the report).
- In conjunction with the certification period, adhere to Blue Zones Project brand guidelines and licensure requirements and expectations.
- Use citizen and organization data in accordance with Blue Zones Project Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

Ongoing Blue Zones Community Certification through August 2017 is dependent upon fulfilling the above items.

## Conclusion

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The Cedar Rapids community has made tremendous progress towards enhanced well-being for all of its citizens. Cedar Rapids' leadership is embracing this initiative, and Cedar Rapids is an innovative leader in how communities approach well-being. This will make Cedar Rapids and the state of Iowa a better place to live for future generations.

A special thank you to the individuals on the Power 9 team, Leadership Team, committees, and all of the volunteers for their dedication to Blue Zones Project in Cedar Rapids. Congratulations on the accomplishment of becoming a Blue Zones Community.

## Blue Zones Project Partners

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### About Wellmark

Wellmark, Inc. ([www.wellmark.com](http://www.wellmark.com)) does business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. Wellmark and its subsidiaries and affiliated companies, including Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota and Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc., insure or pay health benefit claims for more than two million members in Iowa and South Dakota. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of South Dakota, and Wellmark Health Plan of Iowa, Inc. are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

### About Healthways

Healthways (NASDAQ: HWAY) is the largest independent global provider of well-being improvement solutions. Dedicated to creating a healthier world one person at a time, the company uses the science of behavior change to produce and measure positive change in well-being for its customers, which include employers, integrated health systems, hospitals, physicians, health plans, communities, and government entities. It provides highly specific and personalized support for each individual and a team of experts to optimize each participant's health and productivity and to reduce health-related costs. Results are achieved by addressing longitudinal health risks and care needs of everyone in a given population. The company has scaled its proprietary technology infrastructure and delivery capabilities developed over 30 years and now serves approximately 45 million people on four continents. Learn more at [www.healthways.com](http://www.healthways.com).

### About Blue Zones

Blue Zones employs evidence-based ways to help people live longer, better. The company's work is rooted in the *New York Times* best-selling books *The Blue Zones Solution: Eating and Living Like the World's Healthiest People*, *The Blue Zones*, and *Thrive*—all published by National Geographic books. Since 2009, Blue Zones has applied the tenets of the books to communities and corporations across the U.S. and has successfully raised life expectancy and lowered health care costs while bringing down smoking and obesity rates. Blue Zones takes a systematic, environmental approach to well-being, which focuses on optimizing policy, building design, social networks, and the built environment. Blue Zones Project is based on this innovative approach. For more information, visit [www.bluezones.com](http://www.bluezones.com).