

For Immediate Release

GREATER YAKIMA

Chamber of Commerce



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Editorial comment;

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Yakima, WA takes the next steps to become Washington State's first Blue Zone®

The community coalition at the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce prepares for the site visit by the Blue Zones team April 30th – May 2nd, 2018.

(Yakima, WA) Dr. Yami Lancaster and Kate Gottlieb had a vision of making Yakima a healthier place by bringing wellbeing leaders together for one common goal, "Make Yakima the Healthiest County in the Nation!" The Yakima Health and Wellbeing Coalition started in April of 2016 and soon after, became a committee of the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce. The Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings data shows that Yakima is 38 of 39 for poorest health factors. The coalition wants to improve that ranking and why not Blue Zone Yakima to achieve that?

The Blue Zones Project® leverages best practices and tenets from the original Blue Zones®- places where people live the longest- coupled with other research-supported interventions. The Project takes a unique, systematic approach to improving well-being by focusing on the people, places, and policies within our "life radius." By making permanent and semi-permanent changes in the environments where we routinely spend our time, we make healthy choices easier—and people naturally adopt healthier behaviors together as a community.

Blue Zones Project® is a community-led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to a community's environment, policy, and social networks. Established in 2010, Blue Zones Project is inspired by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and New York Times best-selling author who identified five regions of the world—or Blue Zones®—with the highest concentration of people living to 100 years or older. Blue Zones Project incorporates Buettner's findings and works with cities to implement policies and programs that will move a community toward optimal health and well-being. Currently, 42 communities in nine states have joined Blue Zones Project.

Through the Yakima Health and Wellbeing Coalition at the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce we are preparing for the Blue Zones Project team to visit Yakima April 30 – May 2 for a Site Visit to assess the motivation, leadership and readiness of our community to take on this transformational effort. The visit will include a presentation from Blue Zones that we encourage anyone to attend, sector-specific focus groups, and a Wine at 5 social event. The goal of the visit is for the Blue Zones Project team to get to know our community and assess our

ability to become a Blue Zones Project community and for our leadership to determine if the program is right for us.

Coalition leaders added, “As we move forward, we’ll be looking for funding and entities interested in helping create fundamental change for the future of health, economic prosperity and happiness in the Yakima Valley”.

For more information on “Blue Zones” and to register for the Yakima community events on May 1st visit;

<http://go.bluezonesproject.com/yakima>

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Mission: The mission of the Yakima Wellbeing Coalition is to bring together Yakima’s largest employers, businesses, city stakeholders, and interested citizens with the common goal of bringing the Blue Zones Project® to Yakima.

Vision: To become the healthiest city in America

About Blue Zones Project

Blue Zones Project® is a community-led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to a city’s environment, policy, and social networks. Established in 2010, Blue Zones Project is inspired by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and New York Times best-selling author who identified five regions of the world—or Blue Zones®—with the highest concentration of people living to 100 years or older. Blue Zones Project incorporates Buettner’s findings and works with cities to implement policies and programs that will move a community toward optimal health and well-being. Currently, 42 communities in nine states have joined Blue Zones Project, impacting more than 3 million Americans nationwide. The movement includes three beach cities in California; 15 cities in Iowa; Albert Lea, Minnesota; the city of Fort Worth; and communities in Southwest Florida, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.bluezonesproject.com

