

BLUE ZONES IGNITE OUTER BANKS



WHY?

We know that about 20% of our health and longevity is tied to our genetics. The other 80% is tied to where and how we live. This means the ability to live long and healthy lives is largely in our control.

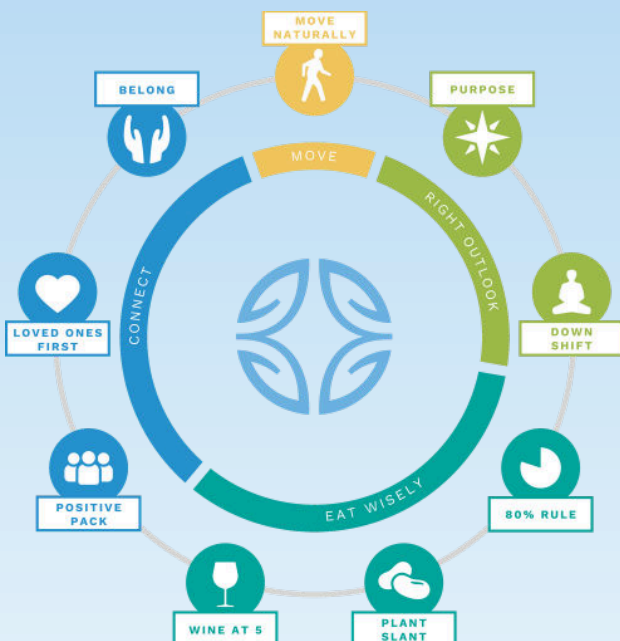
Although we will never have all of the accessibility of a metropolitan area, we have been building access to healthcare services for Outer Banks residents and visitors. We would be remiss not to begin this journey, knowing that there are proven ways we can help people live better, longer lives, in addition to continuing to increase access to healthcare services.

Last, we all know that the Outer Banks is a special place. We already have so many of the attributes of a place and a culture where people thrive. It just makes sense to grow these inherent strengths for ourselves, our children, and generations to come.

WHAT IS BLUE ZONES?

Blue Zones is rooted in explorations and research done by National Geographic Fellow Dan Buettner in the original blue zones regions around the world, where people live extraordinarily long and/or happy lives. The original research and findings were released in Buettner's bestselling books *The Blue Zones*, *Thrive*, *The Blue Zones Solution*, *The Blue Zones of Happiness*, *The Blue Zones Kitchen*, *The Blue Zones Challenge*, *The Blue Zones American Kitchen*, and *The Blue Zones Secrets for Living Longer*—all published by National Geographic books. If you are looking for something new to watch on Netflix, give the Emmy-winning "Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones" documentary a try.

Blue Zones research identified 9 things that the original blue zones communities have in common. They call these the Power 9®—the lifestyle habits of the world's healthiest, longest-lived people.



POWER 9 PRINCIPLES

MOVE NATURALLY - People in the blue zones constantly move without thinking about it; gardening, yard work, walking, or biking for transportation.

PURPOSE - They know why they wake up in the morning; having a purpose is worth up to 7 years of extra life expectancy.

DOWNSHIFT - They have routines that shed stress – pray, take naps, enjoy a happy hour.

80% RULE - They stop eating when they are 80% full.

PLANT SLANT - Beans and other plant-based foods are the foundation of their diet; small servings of meat are consumed only occasionally and in moderation.

WINE @ 5 - People in all blue zones (except Adventists) drink alcohol moderately, a small amount with food and friends. The social connection of food and friends seems to be the important factor here.

POSITIVE PACK - You are who you spend time with; the longest-lived humans maintain social circles that support health.

LOVED ONES FIRST - Having a life partner, close proximity of aging parents/grandparents, and investing in children with time demonstrate the power of putting family first.

BELONG - Belonging to a faith-based community (denomination does not matter) and attending services add 4-14 years of life.



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WHAT IS BLUE ZONES IGNITE OUTER BANKS?

While we are not on a path to be listed as an official blue zones region, we are on a journey with Blue Zones experts to “paint the Outer Banks blue!”

By “painting the Outer Banks blue”, we mean that we are working to make it easier for people who live and work here to enjoy the benefits of living in an environment that is supported by the Power 9.

HOW?

The first way is to create awareness. We will tell anyone who will listen how to increase longevity and well-being. And provide resources too!

Next, we have invited Blue Zones to complete an assessment of the Outer Banks. They are going to love our community and the things that make us such a great place to live. We know they will feel how connected and supportive our community is. The multitude of opportunities to move naturally. Our food resources, strong faith communities, and our ability to downshift!

The Blue Zones Assessment is being funded by proceeds from the Outer Banks Health Development Council Gala held in March of this year.

WHEN?

The Blue Zones Ignite Outer Banks assessment began in July and will be complete by December 31. In September, Blue Zones experts will be here to meet with key informants and take windshield tours throughout the county. We will also host a community event while they are here.

After the Assessment, we will receive some ideas from Blue Zones regarding how we can make it even easier for us to create an environment that will make the healthy choice the easy choice and apply characteristics of the Power 9—the 80% of what influences our well-being and longevity—to our community. We are also excited to see what ideas local residents will have to support the Power 9!

We expect the Blue Zones Ignite Outer Banks effort will last 3-5 years.

