



**PRESS RELEASE:**

**Six Years of Community Well-Being Improvement Efforts  
Net Beach Cities ‘Blue Zones Community’ Certification**

*Gallup-Healthways data show Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach experiencing sustained health and well-being improvements since launching Blue Zones Project in 2010*

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**REDONDO BEACH, Calif.** (May 3, 2016) – Beach Cities Health District, Healthways, Inc. and Blue Zones, LLC, today announced the Beach Cities – Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach – have been named a nationally certified Blue Zones Community®. The certification recognizes the Beach Cities’ community transformation through the successful implementation of Blue Zones Project®, an innovative population health initiative launched locally in 2010 to help make the healthy choice the easy choice for residents through permanent changes to environment, policy and social networks.

The certification announcement comes on the heels of recently released Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index® data showing measurable declines in smoking, overweight, and significant daily stress rates throughout the three cities from 2010 to 2015. Collectively, the Beach Cities earned a 2015 Well-Being Index score of 65.9, ranking them among the elite well-being communities in the U.S.

Blue Zones Project is a national well-being improvement program designed by researcher and National Geographic fellow Dan Buettner to help communities transform their environments to model healthy lifestyle behaviors exhibited by people living in “Blue Zones,” or the five areas of the world with the highest rates of centenarians: Ikaria, Greece; Loma Linda, California; Nicoya, Cost Rica; Okinawa, Japan; and Sardinia, Italy.

“Beach Cities is leading the way on many key determinants of a long, healthy life,” said Buettner. “The strategic emphasis on well-being improvement is evident across the entire community, and I applaud them for this achievement.”

“It’s not often you have the opportunity to address population health issues directly and utilize a world-class measurement tool like the Well-Being Index to chart your progress, but Blue Zones Project made that possible,” said Susan Burden, chief executive officer of Beach Cities Health District, which successfully competed with more than 50 cities across the nation for the opportunity to implement the project.

“Our success is a direct result of the unprecedented collaboration that existed among our school districts, city governments, businesses, volunteers, and residents,” Burden added. “The dramatic health outcomes validate the years of hard work and sustained commitment to health exhibited by our entire community. But, we aren’t finished yet – there’s still more to accomplish.”



In 2010, the Beach Cities became the first demonstration community in the U.S. for Blue Zones Project and, over the next six years, elected officials, community leaders, local businesses, schools and volunteers achieved the following milestones:

- The Beach Cities are the first community in California, and the largest in the U.S., to earn Blue Zones Community certification.
- Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach adopted robust public smoking bans, highlighted by Manhattan Beach's comprehensive citywide smoke-free policy and ban in multi-unit housing.
- Collectively, \$8.1 million in transportation funding has been secured and leveraged for community livability projects, including a protected bike path on North Harbor Drive in Redondo Beach; sharrows (shared lane markings) on Hermosa Avenue, Monterey Avenue and Longfellow Avenue in Hermosa Beach; and 1.3 miles of bicycle lanes on Rosecrans Avenue and Manhattan Avenue in Manhattan Beach.
- Hermosa Beach and Redondo Beach adopted Living Streets Policies to create safe places for all modes of transportation, and all three cities adopted the Beach Cities Livability Plan and South Bay Bicycle Master Plan to create people-friendly streets that encourage active transportation and physical activity.
- More than 100 local eateries achieved Blue Zones Restaurant<sup>®</sup> designation by committing to serve healthier options, offer smaller portions, reduce the use of unhealthy ingredients, and optimize adult and children's menus for nutrition, among others.
- Fourteen of the top 20 employers in the Beach Cities achieved Blue Zones Designation by implementing policies that favor health, including Skechers – which changed its mission statement to include the health and well-being of its employees' family members.
- More than 24,000 residents have taken the Blue Zones Pledge<sup>®</sup> to live longer, healthier lives. Additionally, thousands of locals have completed purpose and mindfulness workshops, joined walking and healthy potluck groups and volunteered their time to help Blue Zones Project administer community programs and services.
- Five schools completed Blue Zones Designation – impacting 2,900 students annually – and now offer more health programs and resources like campus gardens, guided mindfulness exercises, purpose workshops, healthy lunches and more.
- Thirty-seven Walking School Bus routes help students from 14 elementary schools annually walk more than 423,000 miles – enough to circle the globe nearly twice. Additionally, 25 percent of local students now walk to school – compared to 11 percent nationally. Beach Cities Health District reports the childhood obesity rate in Redondo Beach elementary schools (grades K-5) fell from 20 percent in 2007 to nine percent in 2015.



“Our school district is committed to a ‘whole child’ approach and believes student health is paramount to academic success,” said Dr. Steven Keller, Redondo Beach Unified School District superintendent. “The work of Blue Zones Project helps further our goals as a district and is a driving force behind creating a healthier school environment and delivering a complete education to each student.”

Since implementing Blue Zones Project in 2010, the Beach Cities experienced the following health outcomes from 2010 to 2015, according to the Well-Being Index.

- Overweight dropped nine points to 50.8 percent, while the national rate rose four points to 63.7 percent.
- 12.1 percent of residents are obese, compared to 23.8 percent statewide and 28.1 percent nationally.
- Significant daily stress dropped 10 percent from the 2010 baseline measurement, which was then on par with post-Katrina New Orleans and recession-ravaged Detroit.
- Smoking declined 17 percent, bringing the percentage of smokers in the Beach Cities to 8.9 percent – 9.9 points lower than the national rate (18.8%) and 4.8 points lower than the state (13.7%).
- Residents reporting they are thriving in daily life rose eight points to 72 percent.
- 65.8 percent of Beach Cities residents reported exercising at least 30 minutes, three days a week – outpacing state (57.7 percent) and national (53.2 percent) figures.

“Beach Cities was one of the first communities in the nation to take on the Blue Zones Project challenge, and the results speak for themselves,” said Katrina Worlund, Healthways senior vice president, Blue Zones Project. “Through innovation and extraordinary leadership this community has made a significant impact on the health and well-being of its citizens. It offers a powerful example for other cities throughout the country.”

Currently, the Beach Cities are one of 26 communities in seven states that have implemented Blue Zones Project and just the 16<sup>th</sup> certified Blue Zones Community.

For more information on Blue Zones Project in the Beach Cities, visit [bchd.org/bzp](http://bchd.org/bzp).

### **About Beach Cities Health District**

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) is among the largest preventive health agencies in the nation and has served the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach since 1955. As a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases in every lifespan. BCHD operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness center where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive, medically based fitness center. Visit [www.bchd.org](http://www.bchd.org) or call (310) 374-3426 for more information.



### **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 our customers, which include employers, integrated health systems, hospitals, physicians, health plans, communities and government entities. We provide highly specific and personalized support for each individual and their 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 68 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. The Blue Zones Project is based on this innovative approach. For more information, visit [www.bluezones.com](http://www.bluezones.com).

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