

City of Harlingen and Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation Launch Blue Zones Ignite Initiative

HARLINGEN, TX, UNITED STATES, July 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The City of Harlingen is proud to announce that the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation and Blue Zones, the global leader in longevity research and community well-being transformation, have launched Blue Zones Ignite™ in Harlingen.

Blue Zones uses an evidence-based approach to make healthy choices easier in all the places people spend the most time. Blue Zones will work

closely with community leaders to ensure solutions reflect the unique strengths and needs of the community. Together with City leaders, Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, and local organizations and residents, the Blue Zones team will assess readiness and build a plan for change that will help determine how to make Harlingen a healthier place to live, work, grow up, and grow older.

"Every decision we make as a city should improve the quality of life for the people who call Harlingen home," said Mayor Norma Sepulveda. "That's why I'm excited about Blue Zones Ignite. Health is the foundation of a strong community. When our children are healthy, they have a brighter future. When our families are healthy, they're able to spend more time together. When our workforce is healthy, our economy is stronger. This initiative is about bringing our community together to create an environment where healthy living becomes part of everyday life. The investments we make today in the well being of our people will benefit Harlingen for generations to come."

As part of this effort, Blue Zones Ignite is currently conducting a Gallup poll assessment with residents to gather community input and better understand local needs, priorities, and opportunities. Information collected through the assessment will help shape a long-term plan designed to improve well-being for current and future generations.



BLUE ZONES®

The Blue Zones approach focuses on one of the largest determinants of health: the environment in which people live. Rather than focusing solely on individual behavior change, Blue Zones helps communities make permanent and semi-permanent changes to policies, systems, streets, surroundings, and social networks so it becomes easier for residents to eat wisely, move naturally, and connect more with others throughout their day.

By improving the Life Radius® — the area close to home where most Americans spend 90 percent of their lives — Blue Zones transformations have helped communities make measurable progress in overall population health and well-being. Participating communities have seen double-digit drops in obesity and smoking rates, economic investment in downtown corridors, grant funding awards to support policies and programs that improve health equity, and measurable savings in healthcare costs.

“Harlingen has a deep sense of pride and connection — neighbors looking out for neighbors,” said Shelly Trumbo, Blue Zones Chief Operating Officer. “Blue Zones Ignite builds on that strength. It’s about helping the community shape their environments and a future where well-being is part of everyday life. When a community leads its own transformation, the results are lasting and uniquely its own.”

The public is invited to attend a Blue Zones Ignite Harlingen Community Keynote Event to learn more about the initiative.

When: Thursday, August 27, 2026, 4:30 PM to 6:45 PM

Where: TSTC - Harlingen, Welcome Center (2424 Boxwood Street, Harlingen, TX 78550)

Admission: Free and open to the public

[Register HERE](#)

About Blue Zones

Blue Zones employs evidence-based ways to help people live better, longer. The company's work is rooted in explorations and research done by founder and National Geographic Fellow Dan Buettner in 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*, *The Blue Zones Solution*, *The Blue Zones of Happiness*, *Thrive*, *Blue Zones Kitchen*, *Blue Zones Challenge*, *Blue Zones American Kitchen*, and *Blue Zones Secrets for Living Longer*—all published by National Geographic books. A hit docuseries, *Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones*, was released on Netflix in 2023. Using original Blue Zones research, Blue Zones works with cities and counties to make healthy choices easier through permanent and semi-permanent changes to our human-made surroundings. Participating communities have experienced double-digit drops in obesity and tobacco use and have saved millions of dollars in healthcare costs. For more information, visit www.bluezones.com.

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