



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BLUE ZONES PROJECT SITE ASSESSMENT RE-ENERGIZING FAYETTE COUNTY COMMUNITIES**

**Uniontown, PA** – In an effort to maximize the longevity and good health of Fayette County residents, the Fayette Living Well Coalition teamed up recently with the Blue Zones Project, inviting the Blue Zones team to conduct a community assessment at Penn State Fayette, the Eberly Campus.

The Blue Zones Project is a community wellbeing initiative named for and based on the discovery of “blue zones” – areas of the world in which people, on average, live better-quality and longer than usual lives. The project studied those areas of the globe and pinpointed nine habits, or ways of living, they have in common that would seem to promote good health and longevity.

The Blue Zones Project takes those findings into communities and conducts an in-depth study, speaking with local officials, leaders and other key members of each community, as well as interested citizens. Such studies can help project members gauge each community’s overall wellness and outline ways in which it can take steps toward improvement.

By all accounts, the community assessment in Fayette County went very well.

One ingredient to quality of living is community involvement, and Steve Redrup of the Fayette Living Well Coalition said the Fayette County assessment certainly had that.

“It was great to see all we had anticipated for this event come to fruition,” he said. “All the volunteers involved, they pulled together.”

Redrup, CEO of the Uniontown Area YMCA, said the response from the county was “solid,” despite the challenge of putting together an assessment not just for a single community, but for the county as a whole.

“When you have several different municipalities, it is a challenge,” he said.

Redrup noted that the Fayette Living Well Coalition and Blue Zones Project team worked together in coordinating the event, with Fayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director and coalition board member Muriel Nuttall and her team lending the necessary personal attention to make the event a success.

Blue Zones Director of Community Partnerships Margaret Brown said she was impressed with the involvement of local leaders, including senators and representatives, and their staffs, as well as the Fayette County Commissioners.

“We had a meeting where we had almost every, single state representative represented by their staff,” she said. “That was phenomenal. I’ve never seen that. And the commissioners participated at a very high level. That is rare.”

Brown said the assessment drew a good mix of community members from the various key groups identified by the project, including members of faith-based organizations, local school districts, agricultural organizations and the media.

“It was wonderful,” she said of the assessment’s attendance. “It was a small group, but it was also all the right people. It was really well-attended in terms of people who are interested in this project.”

Brown said she got a sense that local leaders and key community members are passionate about moving Fayette County forward. She said the experience is “always rewarding” in the sense that she gets an opportunity to interact with people who care about their communities and “are in it because their hearts are in it. It’s refreshing, and it’s a lot of fun.”

The Blue Zones Project will issue a report in 30 to 45 days, and Redrup said the Fayette Living Well Coalition anticipates the findings.

“We’re excited for them to come back and share their report,” he said.

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, 62 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](http://www.bluezonesproject.com).

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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