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WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE NAMED FIRST COLLEGE IN HAWAII TO BECOME A BLUE ZONES PROJECT APPROVED WORKSITE

College is first of 10 University of Hawaii campuses to earn recognition

Koolaupoko (Windward Oahu), Hawaii – Located in Kaneohe, Windward Community College is dedicated to supporting community access to educational needs for all who live and work in Koolaupoko. The college is also committed to improving the well-being of its employees and is the first of ten campuses in the University of Hawaii system to earn Blue Zones Project Approved™ worksite designation. Blue Zones Project® is a community led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through sustainable changes to the places where we live, work, and play.

With the support of Chancellor Doug Dykstra, Jamie Boyd, Ph.D. and a team of select faculty and staff, Windward Community College partnered with Blue Zones Project to fulfill its mission of supporting the health and well-being of Windward Oahu residents and formalizing well-being efforts already underway at the campus.

“The campus is a very spiritual place where we take care of one another, the land, and make strides toward sustainability. Many of our efforts align perfectly with Blue Zones Project,” said Dr. Jamie Boyd, Ph.D. associate professor, health programs coordinator at Windward Community College. “With the guidance, support and proven methods of Blue Zones Project, we were able to embody the Blue Zones® ideals of living well. We are excited to align with other communities around the country that are involved in this important movement.”

The college achieved approved status by successfully completing the Blue Zones Project® Worksite Pledge. The college adopted and supports best practices for promoting well-being, including:

- Forming Walking Moai teams of five to eight people who get together weekly for 10 weeks to walk before work, during lunch or after work.
- Organizing an employee-led well-being advisory committee and providing a plant-based cooking demonstration for faculty and staff.
- Achieving Blue Zones Project Approved status for on-campus eatery, Uala Leaf Café, the first approved restaurant within the University of Hawaii system.

To celebrate, a Blue Zones Project Approval ceremony was held October 4th on campus. Faculty and staff enjoyed a healthy potluck, participated in the Wo Learning Champions Wellness Day, and enjoyed massages to help them down shift, one of nine lifestyle principles Blue Zones Project represents.

“For Windward Community College to become the first UH college campus in the state to become Blue Zones Project Approved is very significant,” said Cherie Andrade, community program manager of Blue Zones Project Koolaupoko. “It shows the college’s commitment in improving the health and well-being of the faculty and staff, and also its students who represent the college’s future.”

Koolaupoko is one of three Blue Zones Project demonstration sites in Hawaii. The other two are East Hawaii and North Hawaii on the Big Island.

To learn more about becoming a Blue Zones Project Approved worksite, contact the Blue Zones Project team in Hawaii at BlueZonesProjectHawaii@healthways.com, or visit bluezonesproject.com.

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About Windward Community College

Windward Community College is the youngest of ten campuses in the University of Hawai‘i system, located in Kāne‘ohe on the island of O‘ahu. It is primarily a two-year transfer institution accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges offering four Associate in Arts degrees plus a variety of certificates. Windward also offers noncredit career and community education and is home to Atelier Hawai‘i and creative programs at the Hawai‘i Music Institute, Palikū Theatre, Hōkūlani Imaginarium and Gallery ‘Iolani. For more information, visit windward.hawaii.edu.

About HMSA

Caring for the people of Hawaii is our promise and our privilege. Working with employers, providers, government decision makers, and consumers, we aim to reach our Māhie 2020 vision of a community health system: a system to support the many health and well-being programs and projects that are already underway in our state. We reach out to people where they live, learn, work, and play, so we can empower each and every person to take control of their own health and well-being. HMSA is the most experienced health plan in the state, covering more than half of Hawaii’s population. As a recognized leader, we have a commitment to develop reliable, affordable health plans; support members with clear, thoughtful guidance; and embrace our responsibility to strengthen the health and well-being of our community.

About Blues 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, 31 communities in eight states have joined Blue Zones Project, impacting more than 2 million Americans. The movement includes three beach cities in California; 15 cities in Iowa; Albert Lea, Minnesota; the city of Fort Worth; and communities in Hawaii, Southwest Florida, Wisconsin and Oregon. Blue Zones Project is a division of Healthways, a Sharecare company. For more information, visit www.bluezonesproject.com.