



COUNTY OF ERIE

OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Kathy Dahlkemper, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Kristin Bowers
kbowers@eriecountypa.gov, 814-451-7440

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Community partners bringing Blue Zones Project to Corry

Erie, PA – The County of Erie, in partnership with UPMC Hamot, Highmark Health and Corry Memorial Hospital, affiliated with LECOM Health, is proud to announce a joint commitment to bringing community well-being initiative Blue Zones Project to the City of Corry.

Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper made the announcement Monday at the YMCA of Corry. Joining her were Corry Mayor David Mitchell and representatives from each of the three funding partners: Charles “Boo” Hagerty, representing UPMC Hamot; Dr. Chris Clark, representing Saint Vincent Hospital and Highmark Health; and Barbara Nichols, representing Corry Memorial Hospital, affiliated with LECOM Health.

Dahlkemper praised the community funding partners that made the project possible, thanks to generous pledges of \$1 million each.

Blue Zones Project works with communities nationwide to develop public-private partnerships and create sustainable improvements to environment, policy and social networks, thus enabling residents to live healthier, happier lives. Currently, 47 communities across 10 states participate in Blue Zones Project; Corry would be the first both in Pennsylvania and in the Northeast overall.

Community leaders determined Corry to be a good fit for Blue Zones Project, citing the city’s poverty rate as well as other factors, including challenges like mental health care, drug addiction and access to affordable healthy food. In addition, Erie County ranked 180 of 186 communities nationwide in the 2017 Gallup Sharecare Well-Being Index, a key barometer for measuring Blue Zones Project results. Other successful Blue Zones Project communities across the nation have seen their Well-Being Index rankings improve, with declines in obesity levels, smoking, stress levels and health-care costs.

The next step for the project in Corry is a four-month discovery and foundation-building phase, with the Erie County Department of Health serving as the contracting entity. The project would then formally launch, with opportunities for all residents to participate in free programming and events.

Blue Zones Project was first brought to Erie County in late 2017 through efforts from the Partnership for a Healthy Community, LECOM and the Erie Community Foundation.

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