

# Creating a Blue Zone in Tualatin, OR

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 “Blue zone” is a term for communities that have a significantly higher rate of people living to 90 and 100 years of age in good health. Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Icaria, Greece; Nicoya, Costa Rica, and Loma Linda, CA have all been identified as containing blue zones. Dan Buettner and a team of experts associated with National Geographic have been comparing these very different cultures for common factors that create longevity. Besides all being non-smokers, four main themes come through, diet and eating habits, exercise in daily life, social connectedness and reduced stress. None of these locations has anything that cannot also be had right here in Tualatin. So why don't we make Tualatin into our very own blue zone?

People enjoying the good long life in the blue zones are not overweight nor obese. They practice conscious eating. They stop eating when they feel 80% full and wait 20 minutes for that completely full feeling to reach their brain. The Okinawans call this practice “hara hachi bu”. Blue zoners eat diets that are mostly plant material, whole grains prepared at home, greens, vegetables, and legumes. Most are home vegetable gardeners picking and eating in the same day the freshest possible produce. In Tualatin, the Friday night farmer's market that is opening this June will be our second freshest source of produce followed by the

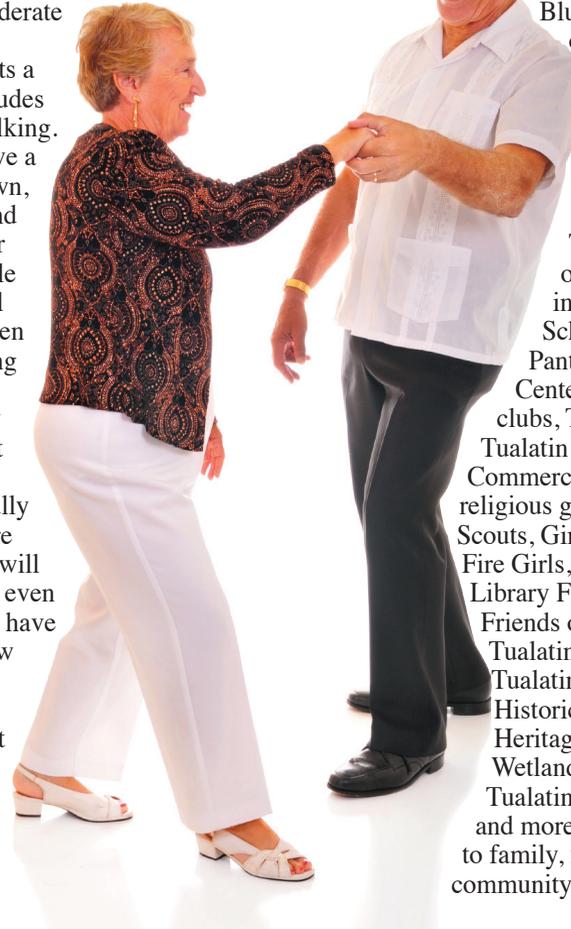
organic offerings of the local major chains. You cannot find a blue zone diet at the fast food outlet.

In a blue zone moderate exercise is not a scheduled event, its a daily life that includes gardening and walking. In Tualatin we have a walkable downtown, neighborhoods, and parks. Park the car and walk or bicycle to all of your local destinations as often as you can. Starting in June, walk and bicycle to the new farmer's market at the commons. We live in a wonderfully mild climate where many food plants will grow easily, some even year round. If you have access to dirt, grow your own organic garden for the healthiest, freshest vegetables, fresh air and exercise. Territorial Seeds of Cottage Grove, OR offers an

amazing varieties climate.

selection of heritage proven to thrive in our

Tualatin. Don't wait for life to come to you, seek it out!



Blue zoners focus on family, social organizations and community to keep themselves engaged in life and thinking about others.

There are so many opportunities to get involved: there is the Schoolhouse Food

Pantry, the Juanita Pohl Center, the VFW, service clubs, Tualatin Tomorrow, Tualatin Chamber of Commerce, Winona Grange, religious groups, PSOs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Brownies, Tualatin Library Foundation and Friends of the Library, Tualatin Farmers Market, Tualatin Dog Park, Tualatin Historical Society and Heritage Center, The Wetlands Conservancy, Tualatin Wildlife Refuge and more. Connect yourself to family, friends and community, right here in

Reduced stress is probably the most difficult key for longevity to fit into our way of life. But most of our stress is manmade, and we often take it upon ourselves by choice. Its never the wrong time to question your values and outlook on life. Ask yourself, “do you live to work, or work to live?”. We are experiencing difficult economic times right now. But if you are living inside, have clean clothes, are well fed, and amongst warm friends, take a deep breath and let it out slow, you have very much to be thankful about.

If you create your own personal blue zone you will be happier, feel better, live longer, and will not require medications to manage troublesome symptoms. Blue zoners are living the good long life. We can have a blue zone in Tualatin. All it takes is each of us choosing to live a blue zone life for ourselves and sharing that lifestyle with our families, friends and community.



**Dr. Jeff Clark** is a naturopathic physician with True Health Medicine, PC, a group practice in Tualatin serving the whole family with naturopathic primary care and acupuncture.