



City of Arts & Innovation

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City of Riverside Celebrates Being a Blue Zones Project Approved Worksite

City recognized for investing in health and well-being of employees

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside on Wednesday (3/4) celebrated being named Riverside’s first Blue Zone Project Approved Worksite by unveiling a new “downshift space” where employees can take their breaks in an aesthetically pleasing and relaxing environment that helps reduce stress and boost productivity.

The worksite designation recognizes the City for investing in the health and well-being of its employees through a variety of measures that make it easier for employees to make healthy choices. Research shows that employers that make such changes have healthier employees, less absenteeism and higher morale, which leads to less turnover.

“Well-being should be accessible to everybody,” said Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson, who noted that the City has embraced Blue Zones principles for nearly a year.

The most recent change at City Hall includes the creation of the “downshift space” on the walkway between the second floor of City Hall and the parking garage. The space, which previously was vacant, has been spruced up with comfortable furniture, plants and healthy snacks on the tables as a refuge from what otherwise can be a stressful environment.

“Focusing on employee well-being actually improves worksite outcomes,” City Manager Mike Futrell said. “Healthy employees are excited to come to work. Excitement fuels more creativity and collaboration. We live in stressful times so there is no better time to unveil this.”

Previous worksite changes inspired by Blue Zones included sprucing up stairwells at City Hall with new paint and inspirational slogans to encourage walking instead of taking the elevator; and installing screen savers on all City computers that promote “box breathing” -- inhaling, holding, exhaling, and holding again – to reduce stress and increase focus.

Rikki Hubbard, Lead of Organization and Wellbeing for Blue Zones Project Riverside, thanked the City's Human Resources Director, Rene Goldman, for embracing the Blue Zones effort to reduce stress and improve the health and wellbeing of City employees.

"It has been a true honor to walk this approval journey with you," Hubbard said.