

Investing Locally To Create A Healthier Massachusetts

Blue Cross's commitment to healthy communities is cited in new national report

Invests \$10 million in Massachusetts non-profits; 3,200 employees volunteer at 230 community projects

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BOSTON, June 29, 2016 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts](#) (Blue Cross) is again demonstrating its commitment to building healthy communities through two local events with [The Trustees](#), Massachusetts' largest non-profit conservation and preservation organization.

On Thursday, June 30, Blue Cross will break ground on its newest employee garden at its Quincy office. The garden -- built in partnership with The Trustees -- will provide over 100 Blue Cross associates the opportunity to plant, harvest and bring home organic produce grown at the workplace. Also proceeds raised from monthly, internal farmers markets will be donated to a local Quincy nonprofit. On Friday, July 1, Blue Cross will host members of the Jordan Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea's Hiking Club on a field trip to Ravenswood Park, in Gloucester. Blue Cross is the leading sponsor of The Trustees' [Hike 125](#) Challenge and also supports the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston's health and wellness programs, including their Hiking Club with an annual \$25,000 grant.

"We are dedicated to investing time and resources toward helping communities live healthier, happier and more productive lives," said Jay McQuaide, Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications and Citizenship. "This commitment was illustrated in 2015 as we refreshed our corporate citizenship strategy to focus on [Healthy Living](#), including healthy eating, healthy active lifestyles and healthy environments, as they are major influences on an individual's health and wellness."

In 2015, 3,200 employees, or nearly 90 percent of the company, volunteered at over 230 projects. This is in addition to the \$10 million the company and its Foundation invests in over 500 non-profits throughout the state. The findings were released this week by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, as part of its eighth annual [Investing in America's Health \(IAH\) report](#).

[The report](#) highlights the 36 Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies' commitment to improving the health of all Americans in 2015, an effort that contributed nearly 400,000 volunteer hours and approximately \$350 million in communities across America. Employees of Blue Cross companies also donated nearly \$10 million to community health initiatives in 2015.

"The commitment of Blue Cross companies and their employees to improving the health and wellness of the people they serve cannot be understated," said Scott P. Serota, president and CEO for the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. "As America's health care leaders, Blue Cross companies take great pride in building on our 87-year legacy as true healthcare pioneers and trusted partners to the communities we serve."

The report's local focus features the thriving partnership between Blue Cross and [The Trustees](#) that works to foster the connection between people, food and the environment. This Healthy Living approach involves three levers of change: strategic investments, civic engagement, and sustainable practices. In 2015, Blue Cross became The Trustees' Health & Wellness partner for the teaching KITCHEN at Boston Public Market, more than 160 Blue Cross associates performed over 730 hours of service at The Trustees' Weir River Farm in Hingham, and the company also partnered with The Trustees to build its first 3,500 square foot garden at their Hingham office which in its first year produced over 4,000 pounds of organic vegetables.

"Blue Cross has been a generous, and dedicated partner on so many levels," says Barbara Erickson, Trustees President and CEO. "Our missions are aligned in our desire to inspire more people to lead healthy, active lives and form deeper connections to their community and to each other."

To learn more about how Blue Cross companies are improving the health and wellness of members and their communities, view the full association report at www.bcbs.com/investingincommunities. For more information on Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts' work in the community, view their 2015 Corporate Citizenship report at <http://annual-report-2015.bluecrossma.com/corporate-citizenship-infographics/>.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (www.bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are the trusted health plan for more than 31,500 Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About The Trustees

The Trustees preserves and cares for some of Massachusetts' most treasured natural, scenic, and historic sites for public use and enjoyment. Founded in 1891 and celebrating our 125th Anniversary this year, we are the world's first land preservation nonprofit and the Commonwealth's largest conservation and preservation organization. We believe in protecting the irreplaceable for everyone, forever. Our passion is to connect more people to outdoor recreation, culture, agriculture, and healthy, active living by using our 116 diverse properties, community spaces, and over 4,100 annual programs as a powerful and compelling platform. Located within minutes of every resident and visited by 1.6 million people in 2015, our properties span more than 26,000 acres across the state - from working farms, landscaped and urban gardens, and community parks, to barrier beaches, forests, campgrounds, inns and historic sites, many of which are National Historic Landmarks. In addition to our properties, we are also an active leader and partner in land conservation, holding more conservation restrictions than any other entity in the state. In 2014 we became a founding partner of the Boston Public Market, the first all locally-sourced indoor market of its kind in the nation where we operate our Appleton Farms vendor booth and serve as the educational programming partner for the Market's demonstration KITCHEN. Funded by our nearly 125,000 members and many generous donors and supporters, we invite you to get out, get inspired, and find magic in the moment at a Trustees property near you: www.thetrustees.org.

Video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPN_zpBK8uI

Photo - <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20160629/384955>

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