



## From the Wellness Committee: Town Landing Inspires and Connects

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Living in Maine, we can't help but know how much "place" supports our general health and wellness. A variety of place-based factors influence health, including ready access to clean water, adequate nutrition, number and kind of pollutants, sanitation, safety, access to immunizations and health care facilities.<sup>[1]</sup> In Falmouth, additional nature-based resources provide residents and visitors with inspiration, commerce, recreation, refuge, and social connections. Town Landing is one such place.

Neighborhood residents have slightly different perspectives on how this community resource supports greater wellness, but there are common themes – access to nature, social connections, physical exercise, recreation, and play.

Nature serves as a refuge to inspire, reflect and heal. Being in nature has a powerful positive effect on the mind, body and spirit. Witnessing a sun rise, full moon or high tide at Town Landing can elicit awe. Or simply sit with the rhythm of the waves and a meditative mindset. From Town Landing, it's a short jaunt to Falmouth's Nature Preserve.

Walking and spending time in forests, known as *shinrin-yoku*, or *forest bathing*, is a popular form of preventive health care in Japan. Studies show that it lowers stress, blood pressure and supports the immune system. My hunch is that the benefits are similar for a healthy walk up Town Landing Road to the Preserve, or down it to walk along the shore. It's sort of like our own micro-Blue Zone.

Blue Zones<sup>[2]</sup> are regions of the world that are home to some of the oldest and healthiest people in the world. Although their lifestyles differ slightly, they mostly eat a plant-based diet, exercise regularly, drink moderate amounts of alcohol, get enough sleep and have good spiritual, family and social networks. In Blue Zones, people don't exercise by going to the gym. Instead, it is built into their daily lives through gardening, walking, cooking and other daily chores. A walk to Town Landing is part of many a resident's regular healthy ritual.

Social connections are an essential factor contributing to wellness. Town Landing has a constant flow of people walking and talking together, folks walking their pets, riding bicycles, pushing strollers, flying kites, saying hello to those passing by, and a sense that the community is supporting each other to keep moving and connecting.

All of these things help create conditions for each of us to more often choose behaviors that enhance our well-being. And while we're doing it, don't forget to smile! Seriously. Right now. Just generate a wonderful big smile. Maybe even a giggle; play with it. Feel your energy shift? There's a lot of that at Town Landing.

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[1] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2010. Understanding the Changing Planet: Strategic Directions for the Geographical Sciences. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/12860>.

[2] Buettner, D. The Blue Zones Solutions: Eating and Living Like the World's Healthiest People. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2015.

*The Community Wellness Committee defines wellness as an active process of becoming aware of - and making choices towards - a healthy and fulfilling life and community. [Explore our Wellness Resource Guide](#).*

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