

'Tropical Oasis' come to life on Villagers' Garden Tour



BY KAREN BAUCHSBAUM

The 31st Villagers' Garden Tour will be from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 2, in the Coral Gables and High Pines area.

The "Tropical Oasis" theme will be vividly on display in each specially curated garden. Villagers and garden experts will be on hand to explain the special features and plantings at each location.

Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased from Villagers' members or through Eventbrite <https://thevillagersinc.org/gardentour/>. Throughout February, tickets will also be for sale at The Villagers' booth at Pinecrest Gardens Farmer's Market on Sunday the 4th and 11th from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. and at Coral Gables Farmer's Market on Saturday the 17th and 24th. The day of the tour, tickets will be available for \$55 at two Coral Gables check-in locations: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 5692 N Kendall Drive, and one of the gardens at 1230 Catalonia Avenue.

A gift boutique at St. Thomas will feature unique artisans, vintage jewelry, garden-related gift items, and plants. The boutique will be available from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., an hour after the tour ends. A Rita Tennyson pop-up café will also be on-site, offering food for purchase.

This is a no-smoking event and venues cannot accommodate wheelchairs, walkers, or strollers. Commercial photography is not allowed. Carpooling and comfortable, flat walking shoes are encouraged. Ticket holders drive their own vehicles between the properties and will receive a map to guide them as well as detailed information about landscaping highlights. There are no refunds and no rain dates.

Proceeds support The Villagers' historic preservation projects and university scholarships for students studying historic preservation.

ABOUT THE VILLAGERS

Since 1966, *The Villagers* have awarded close to 250 grants to more than 80 organizations and 200+ university scholarships to advance historic preservation. Through educating, advocating, fundraising, restoration, and documentation *The Villagers* work to preserve the cultural and architectural heritage of local historic sites and neighborhoods. For more details about the Garden Tour, projects funded, scholarships, membership opportunities, and the full scope of *The Villagers'* legacy, visit www.thevillagersinc.org.

CommunityNewspapers.com

Call Lori Nussbaum
for all your advertising needs



786-200-9907
Lori@cnews.net

MIAMI'S
COMMUNITY NEWS

Pinecrest 2023 State of the Village

In Pinecrest all of us, together, have made 2023 a consequential year. We have taken giant strides forward and the Village has again proven its extraordinary strength, unity, and resilience.

Our main goals in Pinecrest, since incorporation, have been to protect our character while enhancing our quality of life.

It may be a paradox, but we have managed to achieve those goals by constantly evolving. That evolution has always been in a thoughtful, controlled, and managed way. A way that invites all of us to continue to participate if we are going to continue to be as successful as we have been.

It was the spring of 1996 when Pinecrest was incorporated. The population of Miami-Dade County was less than two million people. The Palmetto Expressway had two lanes in each direction. There were two cities in South Dade - the largest of which had 20,000 people. Homes in the area were typified by smaller homes on acre lots with an average cost of about \$300,000.

At that time Pinecrest showed a tremendous amount of leadership and vision by breaking the status quo and evolving so we could preserve our unique community character and enhance our quality of life.

After the incorporation, we naturally looked inward to accomplish our goals. We focused primarily on our police, our parks, our schools, our land use and the administration of government. We were, and still are, a monument to small, efficient government.

Since 1996 Miami-Dade County has changed. Our neighborhoods have constantly been evolving, from the moment those first pioneers cut down that first pine tree to make way for that first mango grove until today.

The county is now approaching three million people. The Palmetto Expressway has six lanes in each direction. There are five cities in South Dade, the largest of which now has 80,000 people. Homes in the Village can be larger than 25,000 square feet and cost over \$12 million.

Today, we can't hide from the problems that were only just emerging in the early days.

The unprecedented, unrelenting growth of our county (one of the fastest-growing places in the fastest-growing state in America) has created undeniable problems with traffic, housing, the environment and the economy. These topics are complicated and can't be solved by the state, the county or one city alone. These need to be considered and solved collectively by everyone, and we must participate in that process.

Lots of the community conversations we've had in the past year have stemmed from these topics. In the future, many more of our conversations will also stem from them.

To add to that, we are being preempted with great frequency by other levels of government as they attempt to address the issues. If we don't continue to engage, we will have no say about how we are impacted.

We must continue to engage because if we want to maintain mobility and safety,



Mayor Joseph M. Corradino

we need to build sidewalks, bike lanes and traffic circles. If we want to cut traffic in our neighborhoods, we need transit. If we want to have our kids and parents nearby, some housing must be affordable. And if we decide we don't consider how to do these things, someone will do them for us, and we will not recognize the essence of our community in a few years.

Over the past two years, we have been asked, why? Why do we need to do this? Why don't we just say no? It is a natural question because the world seems great if you live in Pinecrest.

- Our crime rate is at historic lows.
- Our property values are at historic highs.
- Our tax rate is flat.
- Our reserves are plentiful.
- Our streets are lush, green and canopied.
- Our infrastructure is being built at a rapid pace.
- Our parks are refurbished and meet the needs of all ages.
- Our schools are top-rated.
- Our houses of worship are supported and protected.
- Our staff is the best in the business and provides a concierge level of service.

Even our peacocks get individual attention to keep them the quaint curiosity they are and not evolve into an utter nuisance.

None of this could be said before we were Pinecrest. None of this happened because we decided not to participate or not to evolve. All of this happened because we worked hard for it. Because we fought for it.

Going forward as we work to protect our character and quality of life, Pinecrest will continue to take a leadership role so that the ultimate solutions impact Pinecrest in the best way possible.

The State of the Village is strong, unified, and ready.

As always, I'm available to discuss any issue you have. My cell phone number is 305-606-2364. My email address is jcorradino@pinecrest-fl.gov <<mailto:jcorradino@pinecrest-fl.gov>>.