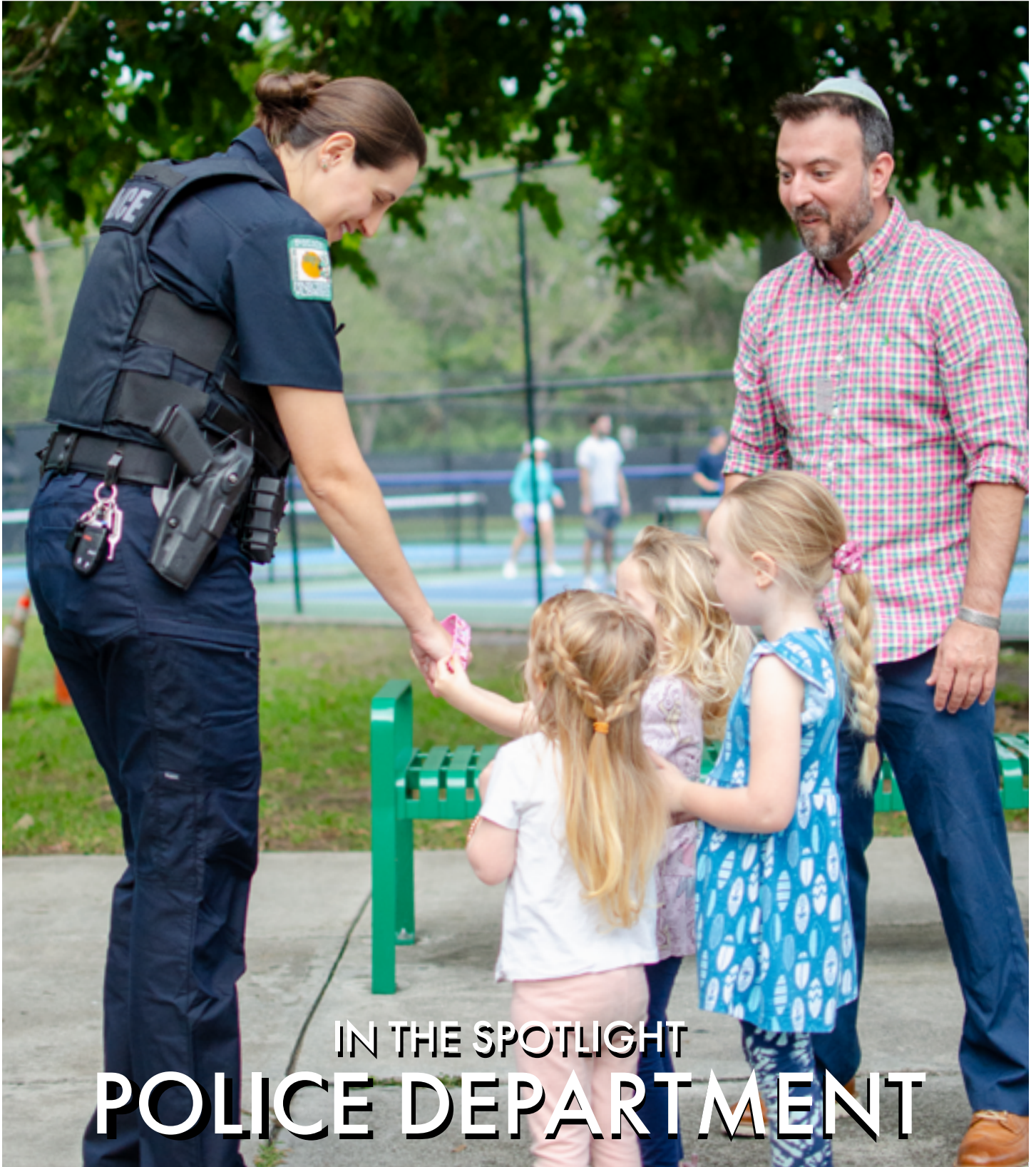


MARCH 2024

# PINECREST

THE NEWSLETTER OF YOUR VILLAGE GOVERNMENT



IN THE SPOTLIGHT  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**



# A MESSAGE TO THE VILLAGE

## FROM THE MAYOR

The Village is committed to having a green space within one mile or a 10-to-15-minute walk of every resident. The Village’s latest acquisition is a 5-acre property located at 11855 SW 60th Avenue. It is the future site of Aleyda Mas Park. It is a special property because of its historical significance - being the original home of the Montgomery family, who were widely known as the founders of Fairchild Gardens.

Before the Mas property purchase, the Village acquired Gary Matzner Park – a 3.76-acre two-parcel site (formerly known as the Palermo Property) located on the southeast corner of Kendall Drive between 67 Avenue and 65 Court. The property’s size and location near the more densely populated multi-family district in northwest Pinecrest make it an ideal site for additional green space.

In addition to these two parks, the Village touts eight more parks: Evelyn Greer Park, Coral Pine Park, Suniland Park, Flagler Grove Park, Red Road Liner Park, Veterans Wayside Park, Pinecrest Gardens, and the Village Green. I invite you to come out and spend time in the Village green spaces.

## FROM THE MANAGER

I invite you to use the MyPinecrest App. It is an easy way to send a service request directly to staff and track the request’s progress via the app. You can even send a photo along with your request.

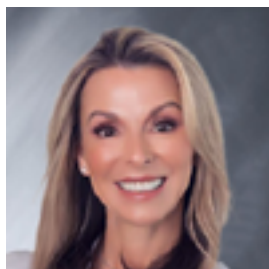
Examples of service requests include reporting graffiti, potholes, and code compliance violations. Other app capabilities include watching Village Council meetings, reporting non-emergency issues, and viewing inspection updates.

Download the MyPinecrest App via the app store on Apple and Android devices. You can also visit [www.pinecrest-fl.gov/app](http://www.pinecrest-fl.gov/app) to use the desktop version to report Village-related issues.

# VILLAGE OFFICIALS



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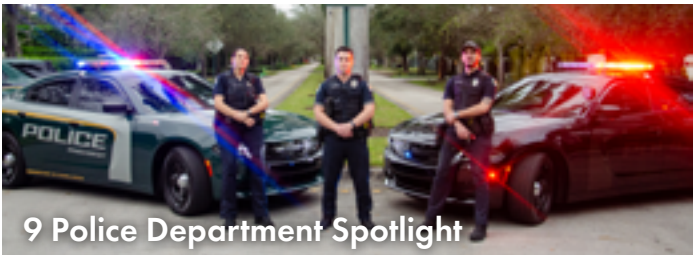
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## POLICE DEPARTMENT TOP COP TIP

Lock your cars and bring your key fob inside your home. One hundred car-related crimes in 2023 were to vehicles that were either unlocked or unlocked with the key fob left inside. Had these cars been locked crime statistics would have been 38 percent lower in residential areas.



PINECREST

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12645 Pinecrest Parkway  
Pinecrest, FL 33156  
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# ALEYDA MAS PARK



The Village finalized the purchase of a 5-acre property located at 11855 SW 60th Avenue. The closing of the sale was January 24. The Village Council approved the purchase of the property during the 2023 November Council Meeting after discussing the possibility of acquiring it to use as a passive park during seven Council meetings, with the first being during the 2023 April Council meeting.

The property is located at the south end of the Village and will help fulfill the Village Council’s commitment to having a green space within one mile or a 10-to-15-minute walk of every resident.

The property has exotic trees and plants, trails, a lagoon, and a large resort-like house. The Village plans to create a passive green space and indoor facility with its new acquisition.

The property was purchased for \$10M, which is \$2.5 M less than the average of two appraisals. The balance of the cost is a donation by the property owner in exchange for the property being named after Aleyda Mas, who is the wife of Jorge Mas, owner of MasTec, a construction and engineering company.

The property is horticulturally significant because it was originally owned by the Montgomery family, who are popularly known as the founders of Fairchild Gardens.

The Village will hire a consultant to commence the master planning process sometime between April and June.

Master planning is a process that engages residents to inform the design and use of the park. There will be a workshop where the master planning consultant will propose ideas for a passive park, with the goal being a resident-informed design.

# RESTORING PINECREST’S NATURAL LEGACY

Pinecrest continues the initiative that started over ten years ago, Bringing Pines Back to Pinecrest, to restore the magnificence of the Dade Splash Pine and rejuvenate the Village’s ecological landscape. This ambitious project seeks not only to revive the unique splendor of the Dade Slash Pine but also to cultivate a deeper sense of environmental stewardship within the community.

## THE DADE SPLASH PINE: A UNIQUE FLORIDIAN TREASURE

Central to this endeavor is the preservation of the Dade Splash Pine (*Pinus elliottii* var. *densa*), an extraordinary pine species that thrives in the sandy soils and coastal plains of the region. With its captivating bark pattern resembling an artist’s masterpiece and its slender needle-like foliage, the Dade Slash Pine stands as an emblem of resilience and natural beauty within Pinecrest. Despite facing challenges from habitat fragmentation and human encroachment, dedicated conservationists and environmental groups in Florida are working tirelessly to protect its native habitat and ensure its continued survival for future generations to appreciate and admire.

## A NEW PINELAND PRESERVE AT HIDDEN PINE PATH

As part of the Bringing Pines Back to Pinecrest initiative, the Village established the Hidden Pine Path, which meanders through a designated pineland preserve dedicated to safeguarding the Dade Slash Pine and other indigenous flora and fauna. Displaying small pine trees will provide a unique opportunity to walk in a pine forest and promote an understanding of the vital role played by the Dade Slash Pine in maintaining the delicate ecological balance of the local environment. The Hidden Pine Path not only underscores the Village’s commitment to ecological preservation but also fosters a deeper connection between the community and its natural heritage.

## PINECREST PARKWAY BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT: EMBRACING THE DADE PINES

In a concerted effort to integrate the essence of the Dade Splash Pine into the fabric of Pinecrest, the upcoming Pinecrest Parkway Beautification Project will introduce the majestic Dade Pines to the commercial corridor, symbolizing a warm welcome to all who enter the Village. This endeavor, designed to enhance the visual appeal of the area and instill a sense of pride in the community, highlights Pinecrest’s commitment to sustainable development and the conservation of its natural resources.

## LOOKING AHEAD: A SHARED COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

As the Bringing Pines Back to Pinecrest initiative continues to expand throughout the community, it stands as a testament to the Village’s dedication to preserving its natural legacy and fostering an environmentally conscious community. By nurturing a deeper appreciation for the Dade Splash Pine and implementing sustainable practices, Pinecrest is poised to maintain its rich ecological heritage and serve as a model for communities dedicated to the preservation of natural treasures.





# REFLECTIONS FROM A SENIOR: HOW YAC HELPED SHAPE MY HIGH SCHOOL CAREER

By Luiz Gandelman

I was sitting on my bed when my dad ran into my room with an ear-to-ear smile. He showed me a post on Instagram promoting a program I never heard of called the Youth Advisory Council (YAC.) While not fully clear on what it was, I immediately researched the program and applied.

The more I researched and toiled away at my application, the more I learned how incredible the program is. I am passionate about teen leadership and government, so the idea of those two things tied together, all while emphasizing giving back to my community, was a no-brainer. I will never forget the call from Councilwoman Katie Abbott informing me of my acceptance into YAC. Little did 15-year-old me know what was in store.

Although initially via Zoom, YAC immediately created a community and a sense of friendship among members. Our first in-person meeting felt more like a reunion despite meeting only twice on Zoom. That year, I made friends, learned about the inner workings of local government, and felt empowered to engage in meaningful leadership throughout Pinecrest. From meeting Batman and handing out candy for three years during Track or Treat to touring the police station and getting ice cream after meetings with friends, YAC created unforgettable memories and experiences. Many of my older friends from YAC, who are in college, serve as mentors and helped me with college applications. Now, I get to do the same for younger members.

For me, every single YAC meeting has been incredible. Each encounter taught me something new. Seeing others volunteering in our community motivated me to do more. From being an official police liaison to working with park staff and the Village Council, YAC has allowed me to meet inspiring adult mentors and role models. This type of experience isn't readily available elsewhere.

One of my favorite initiatives with YAC is the YOUth Series presentations. Ranging from college interviews to the consequences of impaired driving, the benefits of fitness, and everything in between. These presentations help educate the youth in the community on a variety of issues. These talks are just one example of how YAC gets involved, alongside attending council meetings and volunteering at Village events.

YAC unites some of the best and most diverse members of our community under the common goals of education, empowerment, and community service. More than anything, YAC showed me my place in the community. It gave me the confidence to speak at council meetings and an understanding of how police and parks and recreation keep our Village vibrant and a beautiful place to live. It's hard to imagine my high school career without YAC. Trust me when I tell you not to miss out on a life-changing program like this one.



## TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINEE

Congratulations to our 2025 Francisco R. Walker Teacher of the Year nominee Ms. Jenna Juan of Palmetto Elementary School (PES). Each year Miami-Dade County Public Schools looks for educators who stand out and make a difference in the daily lives of their students and co-workers and Ms. Juan is the perfect candidate. Ms. Juan has enjoyed teaching at Palmetto Elementary for the past 15 years and currently teaches fifth grade and coaches our PES Cheerleaders. It should come as no surprise that Ms. Juan was up for Teacher of the Year as she always sets a positive example for her students, cheerleaders, and colleagues and is always ready to lend a helping hand or give a reassuring smile.





# CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

## POTABLE WATER LATERAL CONNECTION INSTALLATION PROJECT

This project will provide lateral connections from the potable water mains to new meter boxes for about 150 homes. The local utility, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department (WASD) will perform the work of tapping the main lines and installing the laterals and meter boxes. The Village will provide any needed restoration to the pavement, swale, and sidewalks. Each connection will require a permitted design and the Village has contracted with a professional engineering firm to provide those services. The final necessary studies and approvals are in progress and construction is expected to begin late spring 2024. The Public Works office notifies affected residents once the work is completed and provides step-by-step instructions on how to obtain potable water from WASD and plumbing permits from the Pinecrest Building Department.

## STORMWATER

The Village commissioned a Stormwater Master Plan (SMP) in 2014 and adopted the plan in 2015. The adoption of a SMP is needed to obtain funding for projects from all levels of government agencies - county, state, and federal. The SMP analyzed the Village's drainage needs and provided a priority list of 15 basins (one being the highest priority). The Palmetto Island Drainage Project (Phase I) began in January of 2023 and was completed on July 3, 2023. The Village also has the five highest priority basins under design. The Village successfully obtained funding from the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and continues to seek additional funding from different agencies to offset construction and construction engineering inspection costs. The projects will be constructed according to their priority in the SMP.

## SHARED-USE PATHS

As one of the adopted projects of the Village's Transportation Master Plan approved in 2018, the Kendall Drive Shared Use Path (SUP) project will connect Ludlam Road to Red Road. The project consists of removing the existing five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk and constructing an 8-foot-wide asphalt path designed to accommodate two-way pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The path will be on the south side of Kendall Drive, with graded and sodded swales and additional street trees to beautify and add to the canopy. This project will enhance the SUP network in Pinecrest by adding connectivity to existing and future facilities. Miami-Dade County is considering a SUP along the north bank of the C-2 canal between US 1 and Ludlam Road, providing another point of connection to this network. The Village Council authorized the design of the Ludlam Road SUP and the Florida Department of Transportation granted \$1M for its construction. This project will provide a SUP on Ludlum Road from Howard Drive to the C-2 canal. The Village will advertise to acquire engineering design services, with design expected to begin in the first quarter of 2024. Design and permitting are anticipated to take up to twelve months.

## CORAL PINE PARK PHASE 2

In 2014, the Village Council adopted the Coral Pine Park Master Plan and divided the construction of the approved improvements into two phases. Phase 1 was completed in 2016 with the construction of the tennis center. Phase 2 includes a new multi-purpose room, an updated restroom facility, a walking path, and an exercise station. This project is expected to be complete in 2025.



## GARY MATZNER PARK

The final design for Gary Matzner Park, as adopted by the Village Council, includes vast open spaces, natural play areas, a covered playground, a walking path, a restroom shelter, parking, preservation of numerous specimen trees, and a park gateway that welcomes residents and guests to the northern entrance of the Village. The park landscape will include all native species and create a canopy and backdrop for families and friends to gather and be surrounded by nature as they enjoy the park's beauty and amenities. The Village has delegated Keith Associates with the task of completing construction documents based on the approved conceptual design for this facility. Once construction documents are complete, a bid will be advertised for the construction work to begin. Construction for this project should take approximately twelve months.

## SUNILAND PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Suniland Park has received several updates to its lighting infrastructure. LED lights are installed throughout the park and the parking lot, all athletic fields, the basketball courts and batting cages, the gazebo and main building, and the walking path. The basketball courts have been resurfaced and offer both basketball and pickleball lines to accommodate both sports. The parking lot landscape beautification project is underway and expected to be complete by March.

## PINECREST GARDENS LAKEVIEW TERRACE & RAMP RENOVATION

The investigative phase conducted by an architecture firm specializing in historical properties is complete. They are currently working on the construction documents and an invitation to bid for the construction will be advertised in the first quarter of 2024.

## PINECREST GARDENS CYPRESS HALL DECK

A new deck will be constructed outside of Cypress Hall in Pinecrest Gardens. The construction of the 835-square-foot deck is underway and is anticipated construction will be complete by March 2024.





# YOUR PINECREST POLICE SAFETY TIPS & EVENTS



### SPOTLIGHT: POLICE CHIEF JASON COHEN

Police Chief Jason Cohen, Pinecrest’s fourth chief, has a career deeply rooted in the community he serves. Starting as a patrol officer in 1998, he is the first chief to ascend through the ranks of the Pinecrest Police Department. His passion for law enforcement sparked during a college internship with the local sheriff’s office, leading him to a fulfilling 26-year journey serving the Pinecrest community. A dedicated Star Wars fan, Chief Cohen’s office is adorned with memorabilia, including two 4-foot lightsaber lamps, showcasing his personal interests alongside his professional dedication. Under his leadership, the department, established in response to the community’s need for improved police services, remains committed to understanding and addressing every resident’s concern, no matter how small, ensuring a safe and responsive environment for all.

### ACHIEVEMENTS: ENHANCING SAFETY IN PINECREST

- In 2023, our department proudly received the double Excelsior award, signifying six consecutive reaccreditation awards, a testament to our commitment to excellence since 2004.
- Pinecrest is one of the first municipalities to approve school zone speed detection cameras.
- Officer Pete Panagakos was honored as Pinecrest’s Officer of the Year this past December for his decisive action in a domestic-related shooting.
- Officer Jeanette Cobo founded H.E.A.R.T. (Homeless Encounter Assistance Reach Team) within the Pinecrest Police Department. Since 2016, her innovative efforts and collaborative spirit have significantly enhanced support for the homeless community in Pinecrest and beyond.

### THE 9 PM ROUTINE: A DAILY SAFETY CHECK

The 9 PM Routine serves as a nightly reminder for residents to perform a quick safety check before going to bed. This involves ensuring that all vehicles are securely locked and keys are removed. This simple action reduces the risk of vehicle theft, which in the Village, accounts for over 80% of such incidents. Regularly performing this check not only protects your property but also upholds our shared commitment to maintaining a safer Pinecrest.



1. Take your valuables



2. Lock doors and windows



3. Take your keys

### MAINTAINING A LOW CRIME RATE: OUR ONGOING MISSION

Crime rates in Pinecrest are currently among the lowest since the Village’s incorporation, which is a testament to the effectiveness of our strategies and community engagement. The challenges we face in Pinecrest often mirror those in surrounding areas; therefore, we’ve made collaboration with neighboring police departments in Coral Gables and South Miami an important part of our approach. This cooperative effort not only strengthens our communities but also ensures that successful actions in one area can lead to positive outcomes across all connected jurisdictions.



# PINECREST BICYCLISTS

## SAFETY TIPS

Pinecrest's quiet, tree-lined streets attract bicyclists from around Miami-Dade County. We've all exercised patience and deep breathing while trailing a sizable group of cyclists occupying multiple traffic lanes while asking ourselves, can they do that?

During weekends, the risk of bicycle crashes sharply escalates, mirroring the daunting ascent of Mont Ventoux in the Tour de France. With this in mind, this article highlights some key points of Florida's bicycle laws to promote safer interactions between cyclists and motorists.

Let's face it: Pinecrest is a popular destination for anyone who wants a quick escape from Miami to enjoy the outdoors.

Unfortunately, Pinecrest Police responded to 12 cyclist-related crashes on our roadways in the past two years. To reduce bicycle-related accidents, the police department leverages community-police partnerships to educate residents about cycling safety.

It's essential to recognize that bicycles are legally considered vehicles in Florida. This means cyclists have the same rights and duties as car drivers, with some specific regulations. Fla. Stat. § 316.02065 lists rules designed to protect cyclists and promote general traffic safety. We encourage everyone to familiarize themselves with local bicycle laws. While all bicycle laws are significant, the following are critical for safe cycling:

Firstly, cyclists are expected to ride with vehicular traffic. Riding against traffic increases the risk of accidents, as drivers entering and exiting roadways do not expect bicycle traffic from the opposite direction.

Another critical aspect of road safety is understanding lane usage. Cyclists traveling slower than other traffic should ride in the rightmost through lane, except to pass, make a left turn, or avoid hazards. This positioning enhances predictability and visibility. However, cyclists may use the entire lane when the lane is too narrow for a bicycle and a car to travel side by side.

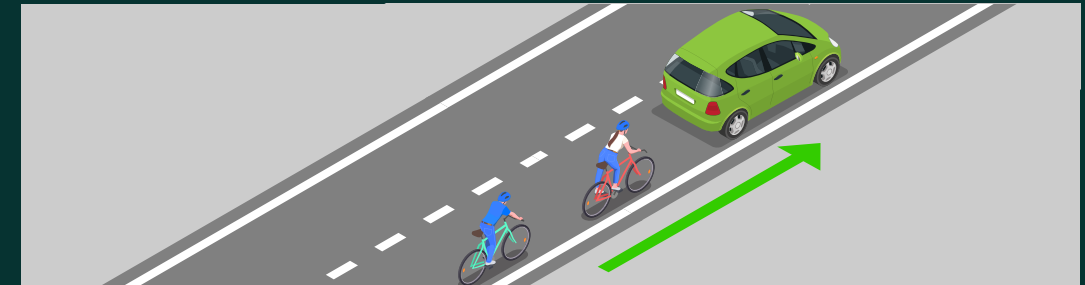
Secondly, cyclists have the same responsibilities as motorists regarding traffic signals and stop signs. Cyclists and drivers must yield the right of way appropriately and obey all traffic control devices.

For sidewalk riders, cyclists have the rights and duties of pedestrians. They should yield to pedestrians and give an audible signal before passing them.

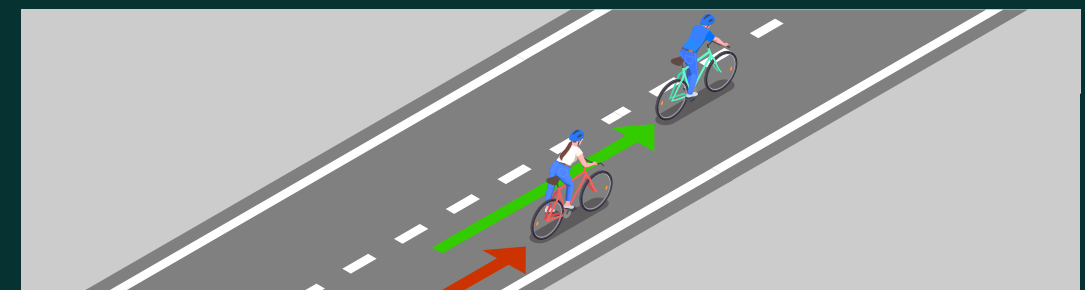
Bicycle equipment is important. Bicycles must have proper lighting after sunset. A front white and rear red light is mandatory for visibility and safety during non-daylight hours.

Notably, about 60 percent of fatal bicycle crashes in Florida occur during these hours.

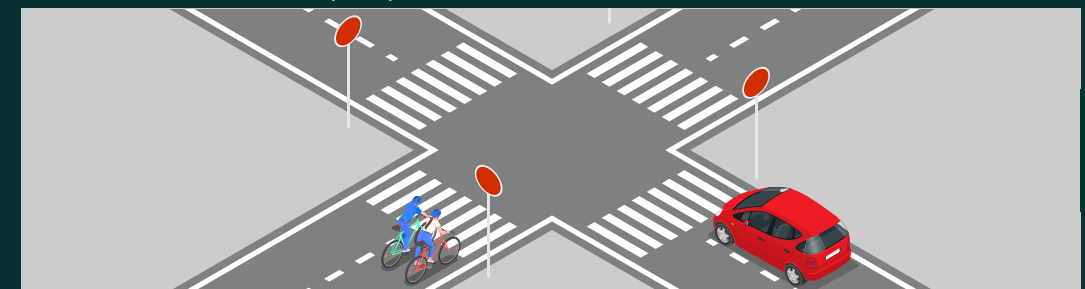
Additionally, all cyclists under 16 years of age must wear a helmet that meets federal safety standards. Understanding and respecting these laws can significantly reduce accidents. Let's work together to keep our streets safe and enjoyable for everyone, whether on two wheels or four.



Cyclists are expected to ride with vehicular traffic



Cyclists traveling slower than other traffic should ride in the rightmost through lane, except to pass, make a left turn, or avoid hazard.



Cyclists have the same responsibilities as motorists regarding traffic signals and stop signs.



Yield to pedestrians and give an audible signal before passing them.



Bicycles must have proper lighting after sunset.



# SUMMER CAMPS THE BEGINNING OF A JOURNEY WITH ENRICHING EXPERIENCES

Summer camp registration is now open, providing an exciting opportunity for children to grow, learn, and have fun. Summer camps help shape the next generation's character, skills, and perspective.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF SUMMER CAMPS?

Summer camps provide diverse activities, from arts and crafts to sports and outdoor adventures. These activities help children develop new skills, fostering a sense of accomplishment and boosting their confidence. Camps create a supportive and inclusive environment where kids build friendships and learn to work as a team. These social interactions contribute to developing social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and empathy. Children learn to navigate unfamiliar situations, make decisions, and overcome obstacles, fostering a sense of self-reliance.

Many summer camps are held in natural settings, allowing children to connect with the outdoors. Spending time in nature is linked to improved mental well-being, increased creativity, and a greater appreciation for the environment. In today's digital age, summer camps offer a break from screens and electronic devices.

## WHAT IMPACT DO SUMMER CAMPS HAVE ON CHILDREN'S LIVES?

The challenges and successes experienced at summer camp contribute to a significant boost in self-confidence. Whether it's conquering a fear, mastering a new skill, or making friends, these achievements build a foundation for future success. Camps create lasting memories that children cherish for a lifetime.

Interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds and participating in various activities expose kids to new ideas and perspectives. This broadens their understanding of the world and fosters cultural awareness.

## READY TO BEGIN PLANNING FOR SUMMERTIME ADVENTURES?

Registration is active for the 2024 Summer Camp season. This summer, the Parks and Recreation Department has eight different camps, so there is something for everyone and every ability. More information is available at [www.pinecrest-fl.gov/parks](https://www.pinecrest-fl.gov/parks) or call **305.284.0900**.



## COMMUNITY EVENT THE PINECREST CAR SHOW

The Pinecrest Car Show is an event that celebrates the rich legacy of muscle, classic, and antique cars. Come and enjoy over 100 cars on display. Enthusiasts can get up close to see the engineering marvels that defined an era of American automotive dominance. Enjoy the day as music fills the air and indulge in delicious offerings from food trucks.

Join us on **Saturday, March 2, from 11 am to 3 pm** at Evelyn Greer Park for a FREE day filled with powerful engines, timeless beauty, and the joy of experiencing the evolution of automotive excellence.



## TECHNOLOGY FOR ACTIVE ADULTS



Technology is exciting, scary, and continuously advancing. Youth today are accustomed to the fast-paced changes taking place regularly, but what about those who did not grow up in the digital age? More than ever, seniors need to know how to navigate technology to stay informed and connected in our communities.

Technology enables multiple generations to stay connected with friends, family, and the world. Learning to use devices like smartphones or computers allows them to communicate through emails, video calls, and social media, which fosters connections and builds upon relationships no matter the distance. Being tech-savvy also gives seniors the empowerment and independence necessary to manage many aspects of their lives, whether scheduling appointments, managing finances, or accessing resources.

Engaging with technology challenges the brain and promotes mental agility. Learning new skills and navigating apps can help seniors maintain cognitive function and mental acuity. Learning technology is a continuous process and one that is beneficial for healthy aging.

At the Pinecrest Community Center, we offer **Techie Tuesdays**, a course specifically designed for seniors who want to learn how to navigate technology in a friendly and easy-to-understand environment. Currently, programs include an iPhone class and a computer class taught by volunteer instructor Cynthia Huynh. The course is offered on the second Tuesday of every month, and registration is required. For more information, contact **305.284.0900** or Gloria Vazquez Zoghbi at [gzoghbi@pinecrest-fl.gov](mailto:gzoghbi@pinecrest-fl.gov).

## UNLOCKING YOUR POTENTIAL WITH PERSONAL TRAINERS

Understanding that personalized guidance can make a significant difference in achieving fitness objectives, the Pinecrest Community Center Gym offers the expertise of dedicated personal trainers. These professionals can provide tailored workout plans, guidance on proper technique, and motivation to help members reach their fitness aspirations. The personal trainers are committed to creating a supportive environment that empowers individuals to maximize their potential and celebrate their fitness achievements.

In a world where information on health and fitness is abundant but often overwhelming, personal trainers act as navigators, helping individuals sift through the noise and focus on what truly matters. They educate clients on the principles of exercise, nutrition, and overall wellness, empowering them with the knowledge to make informed and sustainable lifestyle choices.

### EXPERT TIPS

#### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LEAD A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE?

*"As a health and fitness expert, it is important to practice what I preach. I want to be a prime example for my clients. I know the direct correlation between a healthy and fit lifestyle and health, well-being, and longevity. For me, there is no other option than to live what I believe in."*

– Unni Greene B.A., C.M.T, C.S.N.S

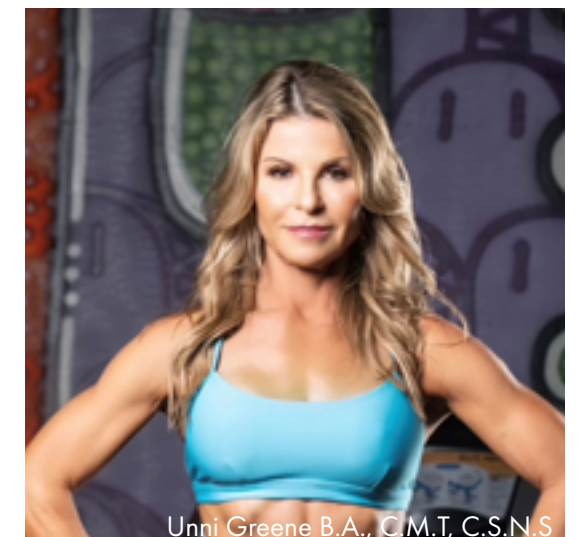
#### WHAT MADE YOU GET INTO PERSONAL TRAINING, & WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT IT?

*"I've always loved the challenge of training for myself. I made it a career because I love teaching people how to build and take care of a strong and healthy body, no matter what their level of fitness is."* – Samantha Durso, CPT

To sustain a vibrant fitness routine the Pinecrest Community Center Gym offers a diverse range of daily fitness classes. We offer classes such as Zumba, Spinning, Yoga, and Total Body Burn for all fitness levels. The group setting fosters community and motivation, encouraging members to push their limits and derive enjoyment from their fitness journey. Visit [www.pinecrest-fl.gov/fitness](http://www.pinecrest-fl.gov/fitness) for more information.



Samantha Durso, CPT



Unni Greene B.A., C.M.T, C.S.N.S



# PUBLIC GARDENS AS MUSEUMS

## THE CROTON COLLECTION



*“A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for education, study and enjoyment.”*

- International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 2022

Public gardens have many functions: as beautiful spaces and places for sensory enrichment and tranquility, to provide environments that are supportive of psychological and physical well-being, as resources for horticultural and biological education, as settings for art, culture, and social events, and as repositories of historical landscapes and plants.

Whether intentionally designed or randomly assembled, gardens contain plants that are usually categorized by their genetic relationships, cultivation requirements, places of origin, uses, or display qualities. Public gardens are museums that conserve and exhibit living plants. Pinecrest Gardens staff identify and curate collections and are involved in their protection and preservation.

Education and public outreach also play large roles. A public garden can gain national accreditation and recognition as a museum by the American Alliance of Museums and join the ranks of the organization’s many well-known institutional members. The rigorous application process involves significant planning and commitment.

At Pinecrest Gardens, plants are comprehensively identified and inventoried. Additional information, such as whether a species is threatened or endangered, its country of origin, and its garden history is recorded in a botanical database. The data is useful for Pinecrest Gardens educational programming, for visitors, and the horticultural staff. Some of the plants are easily sorted into collections. Palms or succulents are examples, or perhaps the fine old-growth Bald cypresses in the lower gardens. One plant species that has been a part of the Pinecrest Gardens landscape for many years and is recognizable to visitors is the Garden Croton, *Codiaeum variegatum*.

Colorful crotons became extremely popular in South Florida landscaping during the nineteen twenties and thirties. Plant breeders developed dozens of varieties around the same time as the creation of Parrot Jungle in 1936. Pinecrest Gardens still displays many fine crotons, where two spectacular varieties, Milky Way and Fire Breath originated. Like many other gardening fads, the popularity of crotons has waxed and waned over the years. Some varieties that fell out of commercial production are preserved in the gardens and nurseries of dedicated hobbyists and occasionally can be found as survivors on older residential properties.

Pinecrest Gardens is planning to identify, inventory, and expand its fine croton plantings to develop a nationally recognized collection. This is but one step on the lengthy path towards museum accreditation. Pinecrest Gardens now has a full-time collections specialist who will substantially assist with defining what we have, composing a Croton collections plan, and creating a collections management strategy, all as part of raising the Pinecrest Gardens landscape and horticultural status.

With generous funding support provided by The Abbott Family, and Stan Smith Foundation, in 2022 Pinecrest Gardens invested in the tools necessary to build a collections development program. And in 2023 with a donation from the Pinecrest Garden Club, the Pinecrest Gardens team consulted with experts to help identify many croton varieties. Additional club and private donor funding will help in the acquisition of plants to expand the Pinecrest Gardens display collection.





# THE BANYAN BOWL



The venue itself adds a layer of magic to the Tropical Nights Live and Jazz at Pinecrest Garden series. The Banyan Bowl is not just an open-air amphitheater, it is a unique stage where nature and culture converge under the tropical night sky. Attendees can expect an immersive experience, surrounded by the beauty of Pinecrest Gardens and the enchanting melodies echoing through the air.

A limited number of tickets are also available for the upcoming Jazz at Pinecrest Gardens Season:

- March 16 – **BILL CHARLAP TRIP**
- April 13 – **DEE DEE BRIDGWATER QUARTET**
- Reserve tickets at [WWW.PINECRESTGARDENS.ORG/JAZZ](http://WWW.PINECRESTGARDENS.ORG/JAZZ)

*The success of Tropical Nights and Jazz at Pinecrest Gardens wouldn't be possible without the support of our sponsors: Steinway & Sons, Panter Panter & Sampedro, Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs, State of Florida Arts & Cultural, National Endowment for the Arts, WDNA, and WRLN. A heartfelt thank you goes out to each sponsor for contributing to the realization of this unique cultural experience.*

## VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

Pinecrest Gardens is a haven for arts enthusiasts and nature lovers alike, providing a space where creativity and the environment coalesce. The combination of art exhibitions and performing arts programming creates a multi-dimensional experience that encourages reflection, appreciation, and a deeper connection to the world around us. Whether you find inspiration in the towering bamboo birds, the local public art scene, live music, or listening to short plays, Pinecrest Gardens invites you to embark on a journey that celebrates the intricate dance between art and nature. Visit [www.pinecrestgardens.org](http://www.pinecrestgardens.org) to view the full calendar of arts programming.



### ART IN THE GARDENS GALLERY CRAWL: OPENING MARCH 16, 5 PM

This spring, Pinecrest Gardens is abuzz with creativity as it welcomes distinctive art exhibitions, short play readings, and music concerts that seamlessly blend with the natural beauty of the surroundings. From monumental bamboo-crafted bird sculptures to a celebration of local artists and an exploration of the surreal landscapes of Florida and sustainable elevation sculptures, each exhibit offers a unique perspective on the intersection of art and nature.

### OOLITE ARTS AT THE GARDENS

With the mission of connecting Miami's art community while promoting local artists, this exhibition shows the artworks of Oolite Arts Organization's resident artists. Oolite Arts is Miami's largest artist support organization. This exhibition is curated by Hartvest Project in partnership with Oolite Arts' curators.

### CURRENTS BY MICHAEL GRAY

Currents is a collection of works loosely following the artist's family history while referencing natural disasters, allegorical mythologies, and natural systems set in the surreal landscape of Florida. The artist draws upon myth, history, augury, anomaly, and salvaged photographs to attempt to reconstruct a complex pastiche identity that crosses between naturalist, outsider, father, son, Miamian, and swamp-dweller.

### ELEVATION MARKERS

This exhibit focuses on sustainable concrete elevation sculptures created for all 287 parks in Miami-Dade County. This exhibition is in collaboration with the Cortada Foundation, the Miami-Dade County Mayor's Office, the Miami-Dade County Parks Department, and the University of Miami College of Engineering.

Indoor gallery exhibitions are on view through May 31.

### AVIAN OASIS: THE MYTHICAL FLIGHT OF BAMBOO BIRDS

The monumental art exhibition, AVIAN OASIS, crafted by The Myth Makers, Donna Dodson, and Andy Moerlein features six towering, 20-foot-tall bamboo-crafted bird sculptures that swoop in and overtake the garden. These larger-than-life avian creations not only showcase the skill of the artists but also invite visitors to engage with nature in a novel way. The intricate details of each sculpture and their strategic placement within the garden create a harmonious blend of art and the world of nature.

Avian Oasis is on view through May 19.

### BEETHOVEN IN THE BOWL - FRIDAY, MARCH 15, 8 PM

Featuring special guest soloist, Orchestra Miami's Principal Cellist Aaron Merritt who will perform the exciting Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto N. 1 in A Minor, Op. 33. Also, on the program is the dramatic Overture to Don Giovanni by Mozart and the joyous Italian Symphony N. 4 in A Major by Mendelssohn. And of course, we have Beethoven's the Overture to the Ballet, the Creatures of Prometheus Op. 43. The 42 musicians of the Orchestra will be led by Artistic Director Elaine Rinaldi.

### SIPS & SHORTS WITH CITY THEATRE – THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 6:30 PM

Join us on Thursday, April 11 at 6:30 PM for happy hour and a program of Shorts - fast, furious, and 10-minute plays of theatrical fun. Brought to you by the producers of Summer Shorts Festivals, this hour-long lineup features four exciting works by playwrights performed by professional actors.



# EDUCATION IN THE GARDENS

## GUIDED GARDEN TOURS

Unravel the secrets of Pinecrest Gardens firsthand with our esteemed horticulture and education team. On select Saturdays, we lead educational tours focused on diverse themes and hidden treasures. Dive into the intricate dance of pollinators and native plants, discover the tapestry of tropical or dry gardens, or unravel the history woven into the Pinecrest Gardens landscape. These tours, offered through May (or by private appointment), cater to every curiosity, leaving you with a newfound appreciation for the botanical and historical wonders of Pinecrest Gardens.

## HOMESCHOOL CO-SCHOOL

Unleash Your Child's Inner Explorer: A weekly adventure at the Paper Tree House Homeschool Co-Op. Every Wednesday, from 9 am to 2 pm, Pinecrest Gardens transforms into a vibrant hub of learning and laughter at the Paper Tree House Homeschool Co-Op. This enriching program is designed for homeschoolers aged 5+. Homeschoolers will participate in logic games that spark critical thinking, science adventures fueled by curiosity, where animal encounters ignite imaginations, physical activities that get hearts pumping and bodies moving, from playful games to Taekwondo, and more. A new session begins March 2. Don't miss out.

## PARENTS NIGHT OUT

Unleash your junior scientist's inner explorer with Parents Night Out at Pinecrest Gardens on Saturday, May 11. For an evening of thrilling discovery, drop off your 4-9-year-olds while you enjoy a well-deserved night out. Scientists will go on flashlight treks, learn about bioluminescence, create night-inspired art, and learn about nocturnal animals. From playful experiments to engaging activities, kids will discover the wonders of science, technology, engineering, art, and math.

## CURIOUS GARDENER WORKSHOPS

For adult learners, our monthly workshop series highlights hands-on learning in the garden. Workshop themes in the coming months include topics on Intro to Bonsai, Macramé Plant Hanging, and a bird-themed workshop in celebration of our Avian Oasis exhibition. Each third Thursday of the month, expect a complimentary beverage, and an evening of learning with a botanical twist. All materials are included in the workshop registration.



# TWO FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS

Get ready for two incredible events that promise to spice up your calendar and fill your weekends with joy. Pinecrest Gardens is thrilled to announce its 9th Annual Chili Cook-Off and the second annual Family Garden Day, offering a unique blend of flavors and family-friendly fun.

## 9TH ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF: MARCH 2

Pinecrest Gardens is heating things up on the first weekend of March with the 9th Annual Chili Cook-Off, presented by Ed Morse Automotive Group. Taking place on Saturday, March 2, from noon to 5 pm, this year's cook-off introduces the exciting "Home Cook" challenge. Amateur chefs are invited to showcase their best homemade chili recipes for a chance to win a cash prize.

The event will continue to feature chili flavors from top cooks affiliated with the International Chili Society (ICS). Attendees can expect a delightful array of tastes, aromas, and culinary surprises. Entertainment includes live country music, line dancing, a mechanical bull, a classic car display, eating contests, and various family-friendly activities.

Whether you're a chili connoisseur or just looking for a day of fun, the Chili Cook-Off promises a vibrant celebration of community, flavor, and entertainment.

## FAMILY GARDEN DAY: APRIL 6

Mark your calendars for a day of inclusion, diversity, and family fun as Pinecrest Gardens presents its second annual Family Garden Day on Saturday, April 6 from 10 am to 2 pm.

This special celebration welcomes all families to make memories together. Families can participate in a day of exciting garden activities, animal talks, garden art, tours, and more. The event caters to seasoned gardeners and curious explorers alike. There are ADA-accessible activities, indoor art galleries, and guided tours along the historic garden featuring native forested wetlands, tropical hardwood hammocks, and cypress slough.

With an emphasis on inclusivity, neuro-divergent and cognitive-sensitive families are invited to enjoy Sensory Hour from 9:30 to 10:30 am, offering early access to Pinecrest Gardens ADA-accessible mini-zoo, splash-n-play area, and new playground with pre-registration.







**Village of Pinecrest**  
12645 Pinecrest Parkway  
Pinecrest, FL 33156

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# MyPinecrest App

*The Village's official service request app*

Improve your community. Report an issue. Send service requests directly to staff. Examples of service requests include reporting graffiti, potholes and code compliance violations. Other app capabilities include watching Village Council meetings, reporting non-emergency issues, and viewing inspection updates.

Download the MyPinecrest App via the app store on Apple and Android devices. You can use the desktop version at [www.pinecrest-fl.gov/app](http://www.pinecrest-fl.gov/app).

