

# SKY HIGH NEWS

The Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association Newsletter

## 2018

[www.skyhighhomes.com](http://www.skyhighhomes.com)

### OUR MISSION

To serve as the collective voice for the Sky Lake - Highland Lakes area neighborhoods and to promote an exceptional quality of life for our community through advocacy and involvement.

### OUR VISION & OBJECTIVE

Through an engaged, interactive and vibrant community, we intend to enhance security, safety, infrastructure, commercial development, traffic, schools, beautification and other areas with a three-step process:

- Communicate: Hold gatherings and discussions open to all residents to identify issues of critical concern.
- Educate: Obtain, share and disseminate accurate information to fully understand these issues and potential impact.
- Advocate: Bring forward our issues to our county and state officials for action.

Please contact us if you are interested in attending or hosting an informal gathering in your neighborhood to discuss how we can best address these issues, at [skylakehighlandlakeshoa@gmail.com](mailto:skylakehighlandlakeshoa@gmail.com)

### OUR COMMUNITY

We represent residents who live between North Miami Beach (including Sky Lake) to the South, Hallandale Beach to the North, Aventura to the East and I-95 to the West.

## President's Message

WHAT A YEAR!

By Marc Hurwitz, President

Neighbors, it is with great humility and honor that I continue to serve as your HOA President.

I think "HOA" is a misnomer when we consider the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association. A true HOA has mandatory fees and makes you cut your grass. Our HOA, on the other hand, is more like a civic organization funded by voluntary dues and led by a 30-person Board of Directors who work to improve the quality of life of over 13,000 residents.

Being in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, our "HOA" serves as our community's de facto representative to our county and state politicians and government entities. If you didn't know, everyone within our boundaries is a member! Your voluntary \$30 dues payment affords you voting privileges at our annual elections.

Of course, the main headline this year was Hurricane Irma.

The HOA's accomplishments before and after the storm are too long to list here, but I wanted to provide some examples:

- Prior to the storm, we worked with code enforcement to ensure trash dumpsters were covered and construction materials stowed.
- After the storm, we made contact and coordinated with FPL and Comcast to ensure



- our area was getting proper attention.
- We worked very closely with County Commissioner Sally Heyman and State Representative Barbara Watson and their staffs on many issues.
- The HOA Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) documented problem areas for county offices.
- The HOA paid for roving security for both sides of Ives Dairy while the power was out.
- We served as an information conduit for various government offices to get information out to residents.

And, of course, the HOA arranged for a food truck night with free ice cream to provide relief during the power outage and bring together a sense of community in the days following the storm. It was a magical night, one that we plan to repeat quarterly, including one we had in December and will have again on March 18.

This is going to be an important year regarding incorporation. In fact, this may be the year we finally get to vote on our future. To date, the HOA's position has been to support a democratic vote. This includes working to dispel rumors and

## President's Message *continued*

make sure residents who favor either side have the facts. Although this is a hot topic, let's work hard together to treat everyone with respect. Let's not take anyone's view as a personal slight. When all is said and done, we will still be neighbors and a community.

One of the most important issues for our community is safety, which can be broken down into security and traffic.

On the security front, our community goes through spikes of crime, mainly vehicle break-ins. According to crimemapping.com, gated areas have a lower incidence of crime than ungated areas. Please remember, and please remind your neighbors, to keep your homes well-lighted and your cars locked. If you see ANY suspicious behavior, call it in to 305-4-POLICE or via the Community on Patrol app. Every time suspicious activity is called in, we get extra patrolling by the police. Unfortunately, because we share our police with a gigantic area that goes down to close to Miami Shores, we are far more likely to see police reacting to a call than proactively patrolling our streets.

Regarding traffic, we have ongoing problems not only with schools and cut-through traffic, but with reckless and fast driving by non-residents and residents. We have met with county officials several times and despite being told "No!" to many of our ideas, I am sensing more flexibility coming in being open to out-of-the-box ideas. These may include new traffic patterns at Highland Oaks Middle, and a keen focus on Northeast 26th Avenue near the Waterways K-8 school. It's true I tend to be optimistic, but all we can do is to keep being the squeaky wheel in the county's ears to try to get some relief.

On trains, we have some good news and some good news. First, we understand that now the track upgrades have been completed. Once Brightline commences their routes, we will no longer hear train horns from any train, except in emergencies. Additionally, the proposed Ives Dairy overpass, which would have caused many more problems than it would have solved, has been postponed indefinitely, in no small part due to the HOA's advocacy.



Our membership committee has been active this year. This includes the Welcome Committee initiative which works to identify new residents to provide them with a welcome basket, and our new membership card discount program.

I'd like to mention three more quality-of-life improvements spearheaded by the HOA. First Bill Clayton continued Marvin Krutchik's initiative by seeing through the new sidewalks over the canals on Northeast 209th Terrace and Northeast 214th Street.

Also, the HOA was able to get the Miami Herald to stop delivering the Herald Value Coupon packages onto our driveways and instead had them delivered in mailboxes, making our community a little prettier. Finally, by the time of this printing, I'm hoping that new signs will have been installed at the entrances of Highland Lakes, Highland Gardens, Enchanted Lake, and Oak Forest. The old signs were quite deteriorated and we worked with the county to get nice new signs installed to improve the look and feel of our community.

Our Board of Directors is composed of 30 outstanding individuals. Each helps in his or her own way. I worry about naming anyone for fear of excluding anyone. But I thank them for a tremendous year and for all their help and dedication and time. And now to contradict myself, I would like to thank Stephanie Ruiz and David Miller for their tireless efforts to get this newsletter out. It is no easy task, and they have done a fantastic job!

The Board would love to see more residents get involved. The next time you're ready to post a concern on Next Door, consider suggesting a solution or offering to help find one. We are all volunteers and the limits to the HOA's abilities are defined by how many people are helping. All are welcome to our Board meetings (our calendar is on our website) and to volunteer on committees. We look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming General Members Meeting and Annual Elections on February 7!

Warm wishes,  
Marc Hurwitz



## HELPING OTHERS

by Trudy Lechner

Our neighbors, although also hit by a hurricane, reached into their pockets and hearts to help those hit much harder.

Trudy Lechner, a longtime officer of the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association, coordinated efforts this year to collect and ship relief supplies to those in need in Puerto Rico, the Florida Keys, and Houston, areas devastated by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Partnering with Wings of Hope, an aviation non-profit that delivers humanitarian aid to those in need around the world, the HOA was able to send help to Puerto Rico privately and without frustrating bureaucratic delays.

The HOA also conducted a successful holiday toy drive this past year for the children in Puerto Rico. Our community's generosity really made a difference and enabled many children to have a happy holiday that otherwise would not have happened.

Our neighbors have been so very generous week after week to help Puerto Rico. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Collections for Puerto Rico will continue as long as wonderful neighbors like you continue to donate or until they no longer need our help.

If you would like to donate supplies to Puerto Rico, please contact Ms. Lechner at 305-931-7593 or [mammatrudes@aol.com](mailto:mammatrudes@aol.com).

# Infrastructure and Parks

Traffic is the issue that never goes away and it continued to dominate the discussion this year from Ojus to the county line.

The most important traffic event of the year was the one that did not happen: The Florida Department of Transportation put on hold its plans to build a westbound overpass at the intersection of Biscayne Boulevard and Ives Dairy Road in anticipation of dramatically increased train traffic at the tracks there.

Communities up and down the length of the Florida East Coast Railway tracks have been told to prepare for the gates to come down at track crossings dozens of times a day when All Aboard Florida starts running at planned capacities in a few years. That means that many backups every day at choke points on 163rd Street, Miami Gardens Drive – and Ives Dairy Road.

FDOT developed a number of alternative plans, but the clear favorite was the so-called “jug handle.” This would create a long overpass on Ives Dairy looping north toward Northeast 209th Street and coming to earth along Northeast 26th Avenue, eliminating businesses along the way.

The neighborhoods, led by the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association, mounted a vocal and persistent opposition due to the projected negative impact on our community, such as the removal of local businesses, increased noise, and aesthetics. Late in the year, it was announced that the plan was on what appeared to be indefinite hold. There is still no solution for the grade-crossing problem, but it looks like the jug handle is out of the picture for now.

The Association also addressed traffic issues generated around local schools. Morning and afternoon backups on two-lane Northeast 26th Avenue have been an issue since Aventura Waterways K-8 Center opened. The problem is worsened because the school and its traffic are located at one of only two access points to the Highland Lakes neighborhood.

Association representatives met at the school recently with officials from the Miami-Dade Public Schools, Waterways, and county and schools police departments. County Commissioner Sally Heyman’s office also attended. The Association proposed creating a drop-off lane northbound on Northeast 26th Avenue beginning opposite the entrance into Highland Lakes. While the plan seemed well-received, no action has yet occurred.

Other infrastructure related issues included:

- Improving pickup/drop-off traffic at Highland Oaks Middle School. Proposals include fencing in the median and along the sidewalks on Ives Dairy Road to prevent dropping cars from stopping in the traffic lanes to drop children who then may cross in the middle traffic.
- Planning for improvements at the intersection of Northeast 207th Street and Northeast 23rd Avenue to alleviate pickup/drop-off backups at Virginia A. Boone-Highland Oaks Elementary



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VALERIE ZAFRANY

School. Planning is more than half complete, but funding has not been approved.

- Mitigation of damage to Highland Oaks Park from Hurricane Irma is proceeding slowly. Damage to the county park system was widespread, slowing response. Pre-hurricane proposals to extend the jogging trail to loop around the soccer fields and to replace fencing along the northeast border of the park have not been scheduled.
- New signage for neighborhoods with special taxing districts has been approved. The new signs will be larger, at three feet by four feet, and standardized in style.
- Guardhouses in Highland Lakes and Highland Gardens are being repainted. The inward-facing sides of walls erected to block streets in Highland Lakes were pressure-cleaned and repainted.

# CERT

By Trudy Lechner

The winds of Hurricane Irma had barely died down when our Community Emergency Response Team was on duty and on the streets, surveying the damage to report to the county authorities.

Compared to what could have happened and what, for a while, we all feared would happen, we were relatively lucky. It only took two CERT squads to assess our entire area that is home to more than 2,500 families.

CERT members, in our community and county-wide, are the eyes and ears of the Fire and Police Departments right after a disaster event like a hurricane. Because the members live in their areas, they know the streets, they know the needs, and they know their neighbors. Very often, CERT squads will observe and report issues long before the Police or Fire Departments or any other first responder could.

Fortunately, the damage from Hurricane Irma was much less than it might have been and not nearly so serious as feared. Most streets were passable. There were downed trees and debris. Power outages were widespread.

In our community, CERT is organized through the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association. Like all work of the HOA, CERT is strictly volunteer. Team members meet only after the event - in this case, the storm - is over and when their own homes and families are safe. No one is asked to leave their own family in need. The CERT leaders will make assignments when they know who is available. The CERT squads report back to the leaders, who then make a general report to the County Command Center for an appropriate response.

The CERT program leaders for our area are Trudy Lechner and Bill

Clayton. More help is always needed. If you are willing to help your neighbors after a disaster by being a CERT volunteer, either as a leader or a recorder, please contact Ms. Lechner at 305-931-7593 or [mammatrudes@aol.com](mailto:mammatrudes@aol.com).

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# SCHOOL UPDATE

## Virginia A. Boone Highland Oaks Elementary (VABHOE)

By Mr. Julio Fong, Principal

Every day, the staff at Virginia A. Boone Highland Oaks Elementary work hard to provide our students with the finest educational experience. Our instructional staff takes great pride in their work and continuously hones their craft through effective planning, sharing best practices and attending professional development workshops. Mathematics Topic assessments and iReady diagnostic tests are

being administered and the data collected is continuously used to drive instruction and provide remediation and intervention as needed. In addition, through our Parent Teacher Association's (PTA) fundraising efforts, we have been able to hire hourly teachers to support our instructional program. To supplement instruction, we encourage all of our students to read 30 minutes daily and commit 60

minutes per week to complete iReady lessons in Reading and Math.

If you would like to learn more about our wonderful school, please visit our new website at [vabhoe.org](http://vabhoe.org). We thank the Home Owner's Association for being such an active partner in our quest to provide all students within our community with the best educational experience.

## Ojus Elementary School

Ojus Elementary School is a Kindergarten through fifth grade school whose focus is on increased academic rigor and the social development of children. Last school year, after a rigorous application process, Ojus was awarded a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) School Designation by the district. Ojus employs full-time reading and math coaches, as well as a part-time science coach, in order to ensure that state standards and district curriculum are implemented with fidelity. Ojus believes in challenging students,

and participates in the Miami Herald Spelling Bee, as well as the school district's Battle of the Books. In fact, their students won last year's Battle of the Books competition! They also offer after school tutoring and a before school conversation club for their English Learners. An Extended Foreign Language (EFL) program is offered on all grade levels, and a Gifted and Talented program is offered in grades one through five.

Ojus Elementary School is a ten-time recipient of the Governor's Five Star Award, proving the school's

commitment to parental involvement and community service. In an effort to promote social development and enhance the educational experience of their students, Ojus hosts a variety of after school clubs, including Art Club, Safety Patrol, Gardening Club, Science Club, Robotics, Chess Club, Future Educators of America, Pep Squad, Youth Crime Watch, and a writing club for Kindergarten and first grade students. Additionally, Ojus hosts an annual talent show and several musical programs, such as a Winter Concert.

## Aventura Waterways K-8 Center

At Aventura Waterways K-8 Center, their driving force is to provide students with the very best education, coupled with broad and diverse experiences. They believe that a strong foundation accompanied with project based, hands-on learning is essential in producing adaptable, globally

prepared, articulate students who will be successful as they encounter future academic and social challenges. Their hope is to instill in each student the drive and passion to search for new academic opportunities that will optimize their educational experiences.

Aventura Waterways K-8 is located at 21101 NORTHEAST 26TH AVENUE. For more information please visit the school's website at [aventurawaterwaysk8.dadeschools.net](http://aventurawaterwaysk8.dadeschools.net).

# Highland Oaks Middle School

By Principal Cheryl Kushi

2017 has started off strong, with a great opening of school and a little hurricane named Irma, HOM has been busy day and night. With over 750 people and over 300 pets, HOM was a shelter through Irma. Afterwards, we cleaned up and started off to school once again. Our clubs and sports are in full swing with soccer, volleyball, and cross country teams competing and winning trophies, our kids are hands down some of the best middle school athletes in Miami-Dade County. This year our school has been awarded the PTSA School of Excellence and we also received the District's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Music) designation award in

Bronze. This year we hope our hard work give us the STEAM designation award of either silver or gold.

Our students will be getting excited about going on some upcoming field trips and this year our big trips will be to Orlando and Boston. In addition to the numerous activities and events, our school has participated in giving back to those in need in our community such as collecting donations and items for Houston, Key West, and Puerto Rico. Our school, with the support of our PTSA, has a food pantry that is stocked with canned goods, dry goods, and refrigerated goods for those who are in need in our community. We take

donations daily to keep this initiative going. In addition, we are collecting gently used jackets and sweaters for the winter months and we partner with Lauren's Kids as we collect clothing for those children in great need in our community.

At Highland Oaks Middle School, we are diligently striving to not only reach and teach students in academics but also grow their hearts. This year our theme is "No Excuses! Make It Happen!" We love to partner with our families and communities so please stop by or write us an email to see how we can make our students and community a wonderful place to be!

## Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School

By Dr. Allison Harley, Principal

This year (2016-2017) is going to be another amazing year for Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High School (MKHS) as we continue to offer a world class education right in your back yard. At Krop High School our students have the opportunity to participate in 25 Advanced Placement courses, several dual enrollment classes, and an award winning fine performing arts academy. Our students can also choose to part of our Academy of International Business and Finance or the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism. Other choices available to students include the AP Capstone Program in conjunction with the College Board.

In addition to our outstanding academic offerings students can participate in over 40 honors,



interest and service clubs. Our students play in just about every sport offered by the Florida High School Athletics Association. We are most proud of our students' participation in numerous school and community service projects including helping Veterans in the Miami Veterans Hospital and feeding the

disadvantaged in the Feeding South Florida (FSF) project.

We focus on the whole student with our philosophy of the 4As: Academics, Athletics, Arts and Activities. This philosophy has contributed to a 90% graduation rate with 97% of our graduates going on to two or four year colleges and universities. We are looking forward to the opening of an iPrep Academy on our campus in the school year 2018-2019. This academy will provide students with a technology-rich environment and opportunities for internships and community-based projects. We encourage you to come be part of this incredible school by volunteering, attending athletic events and art performances and joining the best PTSA in the county.

### STAY INFORMED

1. Visit our website [www.skyhighhomes.com](http://www.skyhighhomes.com)
2. Email us at [Freddimark@aol.com](mailto:Freddimark@aol.com) with your name and address for periodic e-bulletins.
3. Join the real-time community portal [www.Nextdoor.com](http://www.Nextdoor.com) with nearly 1500 neighbors.

### COST OF MEMBERSHIP

Sky Lake - Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association.  
Become a member or renew your membership for only \$30 per year. You can pay online via [www.skyhighhomes.com](http://www.skyhighhomes.com) or mail a check to SLHL HOA, P.O. Box 630721, Miami, FL 33163-0721.

# PROPOSED SLATE FOR 2018 HOA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### PRESIDENT:

Marc Hurwitz *Highland Gardens*

### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:

Lenny Feldman *Highland Ranch*

### TREASURER:

Lynn Wenguer *Highland Lakes*

### SECRETARY:

Freyda Hyman *Enchanted Lakes*

### VICE PRESIDENTS:

Isaac Bendrao *Oak Forest*  
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 Bill Clayton *Highland Lakes*  
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 David Promoff *Enchanted Lakes*  
 Stephanie Ruiz *Highland Gardens*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Aileen Lavin *Highland Lakes*  
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 Jon Morton *Highland Ranch*  
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# A Tale of Two Cities: What Could it Look Like, Who Will Lead It and What Should We Consider Before Voting

By Lenny Feldman, HOA Immediate Past President

Throughout the years, Miami-Dade county has supported our community in some very critical ways when it comes to our safety, security and welfare (consider police and park services). Unfortunately, over time some also have witnessed the county's mismanagement of its finances, planning, and infrastructure (consider school traffic and special taxing districts).

The thirty four (34) municipalities within the county are no different – we can all point to some that have functioned in an exemplary manner and others riddled with corruption. In either case the success of any governing body really comes down to one component: leadership!

Our community likely will face its most important decision ever in 2018 – whether to incorporate as its own municipality or not. We are the only remaining unincorporated area among the thirteen (13) neighboring municipalities in our county district. Accordingly, we should fully vet and consider the pros and cons of incorporation.

As can be expected particularly in today's politically volatile atmosphere, those on the opposing sides of incorporation tend to spin the facts and issues to suit their views. I now have spent several years studying the issues, partly due to my appointment to the county-wide 2013 incorporation task force designed to consider and advise the county on the incorporation process. As a result, I have concluded that as residents we need to consider what “more” could we achieve and receive as a city than we do now and would those benefits outweigh the costs.

Here are some pros and cons to consider, which I will try to present in a neutral way:

<b>Cons</b>	<b>Pros</b>
<p>1. The county requires mitigation payments from the new city (based on negotiations) to account for surplus funds it no longer will receive upon incorporation.</p>	<p>1. The city annually would gain about \$2.5 million in franchise fees/utility taxes and keep \$1.5 million of our tax money, now used in other unincorporated areas (outside of our community).</p>
<p>2. The county's unincorporated area tax rate of 1.9 mills is lower than nearly all incorporated cities. The average city tax rate is about 5.0 mills. At this increase, most residents</p>	<p>2. The more recently formed, comparable-sized cities in the county average 2.3 mills, which is .4 mills greater than the county's unincorporated rate. At this increase, most residents would pay</p>
	<p>would pay between \$240 and \$1,200 more annually than they do now based on home value. Seniors and low income residents enjoy additional tax exemptions.</p>
	<p>3. Cities pay for salaries, benefits and pensions for elected officials and employees. They incur costs for new facilities such as constructing a new city hall.</p>
	<p>4. Cities incur costs for police and other infrastructure.</p>
	<p>5. Cities can assess special assessments and increase storm water fees.</p>
	<p>6. The city would only have 19,000 residents and a small commercial area. The majority of its property would be non-taxable (parks, roads, waterways, non-profits).</p>
	<p>between \$40 to \$200 more annually than they do now based on home value. The city charter also can provide for exemptions.</p>
	<p>3. The city charter can limit officials' salaries and benefits. The city can outsource (not hire) most staff to limit costs, including pensions. Many cities have modest facilities using existing infrastructure to conduct business.</p>
	<p>4. The city would have its own police force for its 19,000 residents and not share its police with 50,000 total residents across north Miami-Dade as it does now. The city would be eligible for some public/private grants to defray costs.</p>
	<p>5. Majority vote of residents is required for assessments, and all other utilities are under county or state control.</p>
	<p>6. The city population would be greater than half of the current cities. It would include the Ojus corridor and Sky Lake Mall area, currently accounting for over 15% of property taxes and growing.</p>

The HOA looks forward to working with all residents to ensure you receive the accurate information and facts on incorporation. As residents, we each need to conclude whether the foreseeable benefits outweigh the costs of incorporation and whether we have the potential leadership in our community to create and execute a successful city. Then, each of us will be ready to vote yes or no on incorporation.

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## Food Trucks

It's hard to find a silver lining to being slapped by Hurricane Irma. Sure, it could have been worse – and we all thought it would be – but we still lost power, lost trees, lost money, and, let's admit it, lost patience.

But there was a silver lining and one that may become a tradition of our community, thanks to Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Homeowners Area Association President Marc Hurwitz and his wife, Claudia.



If ever there was a time for the community to come together, this was it. Marc knew the Association had some money available and he wondered aloud to Claudia what might be done to help people out or at least lift their spirits.

Marc and Claudia live in Highland Gardens. On the fifth day after the hurricane, they were still without power. Claudia was hungry and she said what popped into her head: “Food trucks.”

Marc consulted the Association’s Board, which authorized the expenditure and, by the next night, on September 14, there was an all-but-impromptu neighborhood party going full swing.

With no idea where or how to obtain a visit from food trucks, Marc turned to social media. What do you know – Vicky Goldman, of Miami Food Truck Events, is a neighbor in Oak Forest. Within hours, it was on.

Those without power to cook could grab a hot meal. Those who had crying kids or just wanted something cool in the swelter could get free ice cream, courtesy of the HOA. Commissioner Sally Heyman’s office contributed free water. Sponsors Uri Nathanson of A&D Mortgage and Judy “Luck” Jordan of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Realty made contributions to offset costs.

Papa Mix Venezuelan Arepas, Red Zeppelin Lobster, Potato Corner, Roasted Corn, and Acai Bowl Ice Cream and Lemonade Stand were on hand with the food. The HOA paid for tents, tables, chairs, a light tower, and even a DJ.

The word went out through social media, email, and word of mouth. Neighbors from throughout the HOA’s area, from Ojus to the county line, attended.

“It was a moment of neighbors coming together,” Marc said. “Everybody helped. I saw lots of new faces.”

The event was so enthusiastically received that the HOA is going to try to make it a regular event, with the next being March 18.

*See page 11 for our next Food Truck event*

# *A Picture is Worth A Thousand Words!*

## *A glimpse of what happens with our HOA*

Far Right: HOA honors Bill Clayton for his endless dedication to our community

Right: Commissioner Heyman and State Rep. Watson addressing our community at HOA meetings

Middle left - HOA honors Elaine Krutchik for her husband's (Marvin) work on getting a sidewalk over the canal on 219th Terrace

Middle right - Madeline and Jacci, of the Membership committee attend HOM open house

Bottom left: HOA Board Members meeting with county traffic officials

Bottom right - HOA Board gives back to VABHOE for every new member signed up at their annual carnival



# Food Trucks Bring People Together →

**NEXT FOOD TRUCK DATE:  
MARCH 18, 2018**



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# BE IN THE KNOW

- If you really want to be in the know...join one of our eight committees. There's no better way of meeting new neighbors or finding out the latest news and how it affects our neighborhood than staying involved.
- The police depend on each one of us to report anything that is suspicious in the area, and burglaries, robberies or any other crime that has occurred to your property. Call 911 for an emergency or 305-476-5423 (or 305-4-POLICE) to help keep all of our neighborhoods safe.
- If you notice a specific problem in the community that needs attention (trash piles, abandoned property or cars, etc.) please report it to the county hot line at 311.
- Many of your neighbors have joined the Nextdoor social media platform to share or find out about things going on in their neighborhood. You are invited to join by going to [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) to sign up. Once you join, you will receive notifications based on the settings you designate in your profile. This has become a very important means of communicating to the community by the HOA President and Board. Please join to stay in the know!
- The HOA has a volunteer program with different committee projects throughout the year. If your son or daughter is in need of community service hours, the HOA works closely with the local schools to meet all requirements. Please contact us via the website.
- The HOA recognizes outstanding students in our neighborhood for their scholastic achievement, community service and extracurricular involvement. This past year's recipients of the HOA Outstanding Service Award were Caroline Masia of Krop Senior High School and Sophie Rier and Benjamin Holcman of Highland Oaks Middle School.

## Roving Security

It was dark at night after Hurricane Irma. Very dark.

Power was out all over the area served by the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association. Trees were in the streets. The police were overburdened. There was concern about security.

HOA President Marc Hurwitz, who was himself without power for six days, was struck by the darkness in our usually well-lighted area and he heard the concerns of his neighbors. He reached out to the companies that are under contract to provide security to the Special Taxing Districts north and south of Ives Dairy - Kent Security and U.S. Security Associates, respectively.

The companies were able to offer continuous vehicular patrols through the affected areas. Mr. Hurwitz negotiated a price the HOA could afford and the Board approved.

Each day, Mr. Hurwitz prepared a map of blackout areas where the patrols would roam. He based it on reports from neighbors and his own middle-of-the-night reconnaissance. Thankfully, the areas grew smaller day by day.

The patrolling cars carried bright yellow flash bars. In the blackness, they were highly visible and provided deterrence and a feeling of security.

Mr. Hurwitz received numerous calls of thanks to him and the HOA. He said he never got a report of any crime occurring during the power outage.

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Name (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(Please include zip code)

Email\* \_\_\_\_\_

*\* Only used for HOA communications. Please print clearly.*

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

### Committees:

Beautification and Parks \_\_\_\_\_

CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) \_\_\_\_\_

Code Enforcement \_\_\_\_\_

Crime Watch \_\_\_\_\_

Education Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Infrastructure, Development & Traffic \_\_\_\_\_

Security \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome Committee \_\_\_\_\_

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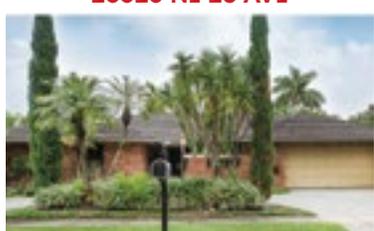
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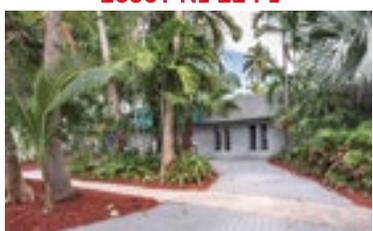
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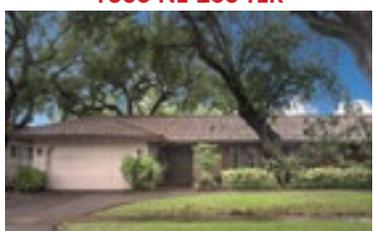
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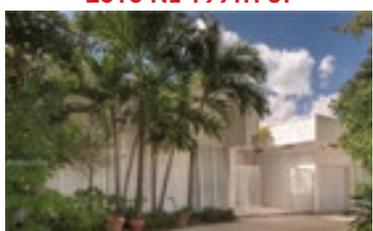
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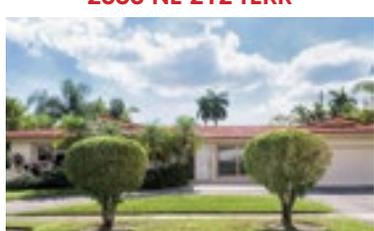
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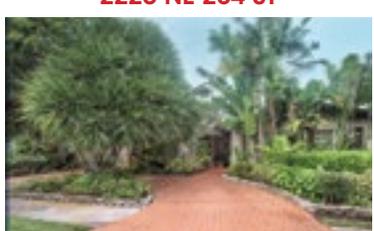
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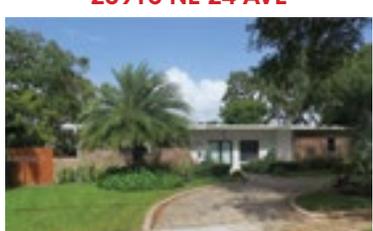
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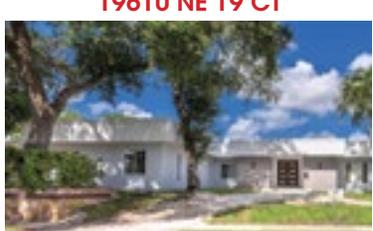
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To:

# SKY HIGH NEWS

The Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association Newsletter

The Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area  
Homeowners Association

MEETING  
FEBRUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>

7:00 p.m.  
Highland Oak Park  
Community Building

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS

As we celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of another, let us use these days as a time of hope, reflection, and renewal. While 2017 proved difficult for many Floridians, we must look back on this year with understanding that better days are ahead of us. Our challenges may be great, but so are our aspirations. *As long as each of us has the determination to rise and fulfill them, we will continue to make Florida the greatest state in our nation.*

Happy New Year,

*State Representative Barbara Watson*

Dear Residents: Hope you had a joyous, safe 2017 holiday season and have a happy, healthy New Year. It has been my honor and pleasure to work with and for you.

*Commissioner Sally Heyman*

Dear Fellow Residents: The 2017-2018 school year is well underway and a number of new initiatives have already been implemented throughout the school district. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office should you wish to speak about any issue related to the public schools in our community. My staff and I are available to assist you and can be reached at 305-995-1369 or at [martinkarp@dadeschools.net](mailto:martinkarp@dadeschools.net).

*Dr. Martin Karp, Miami-Dade School Board member*

