

Sky High News

The Sky Lake - Highland Lakes Area Homeowners Association Newsletter

www.skyhighhomes.com | 2016

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:

1. **Communicate:** Hold gatherings and discussions open to all residents to identify issues of critical concern.
2. **Educate:** Obtain, share and disseminate accurate information to fully understand these issues and potential impact.
3. **Advocate:** Bring forward our issues to our county 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.

Our Community:

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

Stay Informed!

1. Visit our website www.skyhighhomes.com
2. Email us at Freddimark@aol.com with your name and address for periodic e-bulletins.
3. Join our real time community portal www.Nextdoor.com with nearly 1500 neighbors.

Let's Continue to Fight for Our Community!

By: Lenny Feldman, HOA President

We have always been told to "choose our battles," which is much easier said than done. The SkyLake-Highland Lakes Area HOA is pleased to advocate for the approximately 13,000 homeowners in unincorporated Northeast Dade that our HOA area covers.

The decision whether to adopt a certain position on behalf of the majority of our neighbors or play a neutral role is a complex one. Although as a community we may not always agree, we hope you feel the HOA continues to achieve results that enhance our community.

As you read through our annual newsletter you will find details about some of the HOA's accomplishments, thanks to our community's support, such as:

- procuring security technology and service improvements while minimizing county taxing district increases;
- enhancing neighborhood security awareness through crime watch and Nextdoor.com;
- obtaining new/enhanced lighting along 26th avenue and shortly along 18th avenue and the Sunswept neighborhood;
- advocating sensible FDOT intersection improvements to the Biscayne/Ives Dairy Road intersection;
- supporting zoning proposals compatible with our current residential and commercial areas;
- obtaining maintenance and enhancements to elementary and middle school parking areas and traffic flow;
- addressing numerous code enforcement issues including abandoned homes and boat/trailer storage;
- obtaining a feasibility study for a new Ives Dairy Road wall;
- establishing a fitness zone and trimming trees in the park; and
- beautifying community gateways by beginning to plant new bushes and other flora.

But our work is far from over as we continue to advocate, among other things, for infrastructure improvements, greater security as well as reasonable and sensible commercial development.

It has been a real pleasure to serve as your HOA President these past two years, particularly to have the opportunity to meet so many engaged neighbors who value our unique community and only want to make it better.

With your continued support I am confident that our HOA will successfully advocate on behalf of our entire community.

HOA board discusses viewpoints on various community issues.



FDOT presents information about proposed Biscayne Blvd and Ives Dairy intersection improvements.



Sky High News

Did You Know?

By: Bari Schanerman, HOA Past President

- 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.
- Help make our neighborhoods safe by using your outdoor house lights, path lights, and floodlights in the evening to assist pedestrians and make it difficult for a criminal to hide.
- You can get accurate information about what is happening in our community and share your ideas or get involved as a volunteer by attending the HOA meetings. Your participation as a member of the HOA is an investment in your neighborhood and home. For more information visit the website at www.skyhighhomes.com
- Some of your neighbors or friends volunteer their time and expertise to be on a committee or the Board of Directors to work on projects in your community as well as advocate for issues that may impact your quality of life.
- Public meetings have begun again to share information about the topic of Incorporation. The HOA keeps the residents informed about meeting dates as well as updates on the discussions that occur at the meetings.
- Many of your neighbors have joined the Nextdoor social media network to share or find out about things going on in their neighborhood. You are invited to join by going to www.nextdoor.com to sign up. Once you join, you will receive notifications based on the settings you designate in your profile.

Share the pride! *Did you know that Dade County's #1 rated after-school program is in Highland Lakes?!*

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SCHOOL UPDATE

DR. MICHAEL M. KROP SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

By: Principal Dr. Allison Harley

This is going to be another amazing year for Dr. Michael M. Krop Senior High (MKHS) as we continue to offer a world class education right in your back yard. Did you know that at MKHS our students have the opportunity to participate in 25 Advanced Placement courses, several dual enrollment courses, and an award winning fine and performing arts academy? Or that our students can be in the Academy of International Business and Finance or the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism? If research is more of an interest, our students can also participate in an AP Capstone Program in conjunction with the College Board. In addition to our outstanding academic offerings, our students can participate in over 40 honors, interest or service clubs. Our students play just about every sport offered by the Florida High School Athletics Association and this year we will be introducing Girls' Flag Football. Our students participate in numerous community service projects throughout the year and pride themselves on being contributing members to the community outside of the school campus.

Lenny Feldman presents HOA Community Service Award to Krop High School Recipient.



With all of this, it is easy to see why MKHS has remained an "A" school! We focus on the whole student with our philosophy of the 4 A's: 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 encourage you to come be a part of this incredible school by

volunteering, attending athletic events and art performances and joining the best PTSA in the county.

All of the necessary information and more can be found on our website at www.kropseniorhigh.org.

HIGHLAND OAKS MIDDLE SCHOOL (HOM)

By: Principal Cheryl Kushi

We had another wonderful opening of school in August and began the new District's campaign of Values Matter. Every day we focused on one initiative for the first two weeks of school and the students and staff did an outstanding job incorporating this initiative with our existing program of Manners Matter. By the end of the first few weeks of school, our clubs and sports programs were underway and quite successful. Our chess team has won several tournaments, our soccer teams both girls and boys came back with district trophies, our cross country team came back with medals, our SECME team participated in district sponsored events to promote Math and Science, and our swim team and volley ball teams did exceptionally well this season too! Our students and staff are working hard in class and at home as evident by over 275 students making the honor roll for the first nine weeks of school. We have participated in many field trips and have even visited Tampa. In addition, we have 9 students participating in the District Science Fair and look forward to seeing our students shine!

We are looking forward to an exciting 2016. We will be getting ready for testing in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies classes, and even some of our elective classes will be taking End of Course exams. Our students will be gearing up to take end of

the year trips as well to Orlando and Washington D.C. 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 over 1,000 pairs of socks for the homeless, collecting hundreds of toys for Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, and hundreds of items for the Humane Society. We are also participating in the district H.O.P.E. contest to raise awareness for the Humane Society by hosting a dog walk at the park in January 2016. We have also opened 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. We are working with Mr. Jeffrey Fogel right here in our community to raise awareness about ALS and are involved in so many other projects and activities within 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 too! From HOM, we wish the community all the best for 2016!

VIRGINIA A. BOONE HIGHLAND OAKS ELEMENTARY (VABHOE)

By: Principal Scott Saperstein

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. District Mid-Year Assessments have been administered and the data is continuously used to drive instruction and provide remediation and intervention as needed. 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.

On December 9th, thirty-five (35) staff members participated in a CPR/First Aid training, as we strive to make safety and security, along with quality teaching and learning, our number one priority.

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

By: Principal Dr. Mildred M. Mejia

Ojus Elementary School is a Kindergarten through fifth grade school whose focus is on increased academic rigor and the social development of children. 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. This year, Ojus implemented a Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) program for select second and third grade classes. In order to extend the STEAM program to students across the grade levels, we have after school Art and Robotics clubs, as well as a Science, Engineering, Communication, Mathematics, and Enrichment (SECME) club. An Extended Foreign Language (EFL) program is offered on all grade levels, and a Gifted and Talented program is offered in grades two through five.

Ojus Elementary School is a nine 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 our students, Ojus hosts a variety of after school clubs, including Safety Patrols, Youth Crime Watch, Writing Club, Chess Club, Pep Squad, and Helping Our Pets Every Day (HOPE). Additionally, Ojus hosts an annual talent show and several musical programs, such as a Hispanic Heritage Show and Winter Concert. We look forward to welcoming you into our Ojus family!

New Strides for our Community's Security

By: Marc Hurwitz, HOA Vice President, Security

SECURITY ENHANCEMENTS

2015 was a dynamic year for our area's security. Highland Lakes and Highland Gardens kicked off the year with Kent Security Services settling in to manage their guardhouses. Kent has continued the roving services started previously - they should be patrolling these areas 2-3 times a day for 45 minutes at a time. The HOA coordinated with Kent to ensure highly-visible light bars were installed on the roving vehicles to act as a deterrent.

Kent also upgraded the Highland Lakes cameras to provide higher definition. The cameras are license-plate-recognition capable as we move towards a system that will eventually generate automatic plate logs as well as integrate into the Miami-Dade Police Department. We have started discussions with the vendor that aggregates the plate information for the police.

We have been working with the county and Kent for over a year in implementing a tablet system. We believe this will produce more accurate logs and increase the speed in which the guards can record vehicle and plate information. The logs will also be searchable.

Highland Gardens also finally saw the installation of four Miami-Dade County administered cameras, which are high definition and also license-plate-recognition capable. We pushed the county to also put up signage alerting drivers of the video surveillance.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

For the "South of Ives" Special Taxing District communities, the HOA has served in a consulting capacity to ensure those communities are receiving the best security services for their value. This has included discussions on installing or upgrading camera systems and evaluating the roving. The HOA leadership also met and held follow up discussions with a group of SkyLake residents who have expressed an interest in enhancing their security.

ADDRESSING SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT INCREASES

As many in the community know, the HOA took a leadership role in pushing back against the county's plan to significantly increase the taxes for the Special Taxing Districts, due to years of mismanagement by the county. As a result of countless meetings and hundreds of emails, we were able to have these increases dramatically reduced, and we plan to serve as a watchdog over how our tax dollars are spent moving forward.

SECURITY TIPS AND COMMUNICATION

NextDoor.com has been a great tool to share information regarding suspicious behavior and criminal activity. However, posting there should always be secondary to calling the police. Their non-emergency number is 305-4-POLICE and they have reiterated that residents should not hesitate to call regarding anything out of the ordinary.

Finally, a comment about crime. We use crimemapping.com, a free web-based service, to monitor crime statistics in our area. We have seen a reduction in crime, however there have been spikes on certain weeks in certain areas. We advise all residents to consider these reminders:

- keep your house well-lit (we would love to see every house in our neighborhood with lights on every night)
- lock your car doors
- install and arm your security system when you're away and at night (make sure there's signage and window stickers alerting all to the presence of your system)
- consider installing video cameras around your house.

Sky High News



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Infrastructure, Traffic & Code Enforcement – Never a Dull Moment!

By: Bill Clayton, HOA Vice President - Infrastructure & Beautification

The HOA Infrastructure and Traffic Committee continues to pursue initiatives to benefit our community. Here are some of the highlights from this past year.

LIGHTING

After almost two years, we were able to have six light poles installed along NE 26th avenue by Beth Torah Synagogue to increase safety for all pedestrians. Also, during our inspection of neighborhood lighting we discovered that the lighting along NE 18th Ave was not included during Sky Lake area upgrades. Working with the county, this upgrade will be accomplished with in 2016. Finally, the Board of County Commissioners soon should be approving the Sunswept neighborhood lighting upgrades, now that the appropriate county offices have completed a feasibility study at the request of Commissioner Sally Heyman.

FDOT TRAFFIC INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Several HOA members along with fellow residents participated in a community advisory board this year to address proposed improvements to the Ives Dairy Road and Biscayne Blvd. intersection. While we expressed at several HOA meetings where we invited FDOT officials that we appreciate their attention to these traffic flow issues, we also voiced concerns as to the proposed design. It calls for the demolition of at least two dozen established business along West Dixie Highway. We continue to urge FDOT executives and our elected representatives in Tallahassee and in Miami-Dade to consider an alternate redesign that will not have such an impact on our community.

ZONING VARIANCES

This year the HOA held several meetings and addressed the Community Council Zoning Appeals Board to express concerns regarding proposed variance exceptions to place a synagogue on NE 18th avenue in Sky Lake. While the HOA and community largely supported our neighbors' efforts for a new house of worship in the area, many voiced security and safety concerns of the proposed location. Meanwhile, the HOA voiced support for another religious/educational facility on NE 26th avenue, which seemed to adequately address such concerns.

IVES DAIRY ROAD WALL

The HOA has confirmed that Ives Dairy Road east of 1-95 always has been and continues to be a county road. In light of that fact, the HOA requested a feasibility study concerning the building of a uniform noise buffering/safety wall along both sides of Ives Dairy Road. At Commissioner Heyman's request, the county conducted a study and found that an eleven (11) foot wall would cost approximately \$4 million to build. We continue to address the matter with both Commissioner Heyman and State Representative Barbara Watson to find funds to provide this badly needed infrastructure.

SCHOOL TRAFFIC FLOW

This year the HOA sprang into action to take steps to address traffic flow issues along NE 26th Avenue (Aventura-Waterways) and NE 207th Street (Highland Oaks Elementary). We held several meetings with Dr. Martin Karp, City of Aventura officials and our school principals. While no solutions have been finalized, Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) has been coordinating with the Department of Public Works

to address our concerns. Meanwhile, you may note that per the HOA's request, MDCPS improved the Highland Oaks Middle School round-about.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Again, the code enforcement committee received several complaints from residents about boat storage, unmaintained or abandoned homes. Working with our new code enforcement officers, who addressed the HOA this year, we were able to correct them all. We even had a derelict residence which belonged to a bank to address. It was condemned and demolished.

Please stay engaged and contact us if you have any questions or concerns on these or similar issues. The HOA is here to help achieve a great quality of life for all of our neighbors.

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Beautification and Parks – Keeping our Community Looking Good and Feeling Good

By: Trudy Lechner & Bill Clayton, HOA Beautification Co-Chairs

BEAUTIFICATION

Our committee had a very busy year and made some visible improvements in our neighborhood.

One of our biggest and most visible projects was the beautification of NE 209th Terrace (with support from local residents) and the north side of the Highland Lakes Boulevard and Ives Dairy Road intersection with Bridal Bouquet bushes. The white flowers add a softening touch to the areas.

We also added landscaping and, with donated paint, helped a needy couple brighten up the exterior of their home.

The Beautification Committee had terrific and dedicated volunteers in Bill Clayton, Leon Gomberg, Madelyn Langbaum, Shelly Iorfida, David Miller, Don Shannon, Lenny Feldman, David Promoff, Steve Parkins, Julie Lamoureux and her children Samuel and Sara Schetrit. (Please forgive me if I omitted your name.) In addition, we eagerly welcomed students from Krop High School who were terrific workers. Sara Eghtessadi and Romi Zachar worked with us in each project. The students received Community Service hours and Sara Eghtessadi is interested in forming a HOA Youth beautification committee.

Next up for this committee is painting the guard rails, that are sorely in need, and some beautification at the Highland Gardens entrance. The HOA also is calling on neighbors south of Ives Dairy Road to provide their suggestions for beautification to ensure our enhancements are enjoyed throughout the entire community.

Special thanks to all the spouses for sharing their mates and to Jaime Garmizo, owner of Garmizo's Nursery, for his valuable advice and discounted prices.

HIGHLAND OAKS PARK

Over the last year, we were able to have all the trees trimmed inside the park for safety. The park committee met with the Miami Dade parks staff and conducted a field inspection to get additional improvements for our neighborhood park.

If you use the park, you will notice that all the exercise stations now have sand at the bases. The park will also be replacing all the benches, repaving the asphalt trail, and replacing the two bridges. There will also be improvements to the park buildings.

In early 2016, the park staff will be holding a meeting with all our residents to discuss improvements to the natural areas and perhaps construction of handball courts and/or restrooms by the tot lot.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to announce that the new Fitness Zone has been completed in the park, which many residents already continue to enjoy!

We look forward to your ideas for future beautification and park projects to keep our community aesthetically pleasing and vibrant.

Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Area HOA
P.O. Box 630721
Miami, FL 33163-0721

To:

Sky High News

2016 Slate of Officers and Directors

Officers:

Marc Hurwitz	President	Highland Gardens
Mort Braverman	Vice President	Highland Lakes
William Clayton	Vice President	Highland Lakes
Lenny Feldman	Past President	Highland Ranch
Freyda Hyman	Secretary	Enchanted Lake
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Stephanie Ruiz	Vice President	Highland Gardens
Don Shannon	Vice President	Ojus
Lynn Wenguer	Treasurer	Highland Lakes

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Brenda Auerbach	Highland Gardens	Jacky Needelman	Highland Gardens
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Madeline Langbaum	Sunswept	Howard Weiner	Highland Gardens
Trudy Lechner	Highland Ranch	Robert Weisblum	Sky Lake
Max Lichy	Presidential	A.J. Yolofsky	Highland Gardens

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- Code enforcement - Bulk Pick-up - Illegal Dumping - 311
- Miami Dade Police - non-emergency 305-476-5423
- Highland Oaks Park - 305-932-2164
- Miami Dade County - www.miamidade.gov
- Homeowners Assoc. - www.skyhighhomes.com

A Message from Our Commissioner

By: Commissioner Sally A. Heyman

Dear Residents,

Now that we have finished the holiday season and celebrations ending 2015, I want to wish all of you a happy, healthy New Year. It is an honor representing you and our community in county government.

Best wishes for 2016.

Committees - Get Involved!

Beautification and Park - Work on projects to improve our common areas.

CERT - Community Emergency Response Team - Residents are trained.

Code Enforcement - Set up teams to deal with issues that impact our neighborhoods.

Crime Watch - Establishes networks of neighbors to promote safety in our neighborhoods.

Security - Security concerns within the special taxing districts and other neighborhoods without guard gates.

Infrastructure, Development & Traffic - Monitors commercial development and suggests improvements for roadways, utilities and common areas.

Please contact Freyda Hyman, freddimark@aol.com for more information.

Invoice for Annual Dues

January - December 2016

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Special Interests: _____

Committees: Beautification _____ Code Enforcement _____

Crime Watch/Security _____ Parks _____ Membership _____

CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) _____

Monitoring Development _____

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Top 5 Reasons to Join the HOA

- **Inform:** Receive current and accurate information about security, traffic, commercial development, schools and initiatives impacting you and your family.
- **Educate:** Exchange ideas to maintain and increase home value, enhance home/personal safety, and minimize homeowner costs (e.g., taxes, insurance, utilities).
- **Support:** Enable hard-working community volunteers to maintain communication through the HOA website and newsletter, hold events, and improve our neighborhoods.
- **Network:** Gain support for your business and find others with similar interests by building relationships with other engaged neighbors.
- **Advocate:** Become part of the voice that shares concerns and works to find solutions - increased membership attracts the attention of officials to address our needs.



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