

# Community Background Report

## Bunche Park

### County

Miami-Dade

### Boundaries

North: SR 826 Expressway (Palmetto Expressway)

South: NW 155th Street

East: NW 16th Court

West: NW 48th Avenue

### Community Type

Neighborhood

### History

Bunche Park is a census-designated place (CDP) in Miami-Dade County, Florida, United States. The population was 3,972 at the 2000 census. In 2003, Bunche Park was incorporated into the city of Miami Gardens.

Bunche Park is a neighborhood with portions located in the City of Opa-Locka and the City of Miami Garden. It is located northwest of Golden Glades and roughly bounded by Opa-Locka Boulevard. Bunche Park is mainly a residential neighborhood. Once primarily a way station for Jewish families on their way to the suburbs and a community for black veterans of World War II, Bunche Park is now a very diverse community with many African American and South American residents. It now has a distinguishable and fast-growing Haitian community as well. Economic activity is mostly confined to small restaurants, delis, markets, and other small businesses.

The neighborhood is named after Dr. Ralph Bunche, diplomat and winner of the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Bunche was the first deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and eventually became a household word among all educated Americans, particularly black Americans in the era between the 1940s and 1960s. He was besieged with requests to lecture, was awarded the Spingarn Prize by the NAACP in 1949, was given over thirty honorary degrees in the next three years, and the Nobel Peace Prize for 1950 (Nobelprize.org: Dr. Ralph Bunche).

The lack of major landmarks in the neighborhood coupled with its small size have caused Bunche Park to remain relatively unknown; many lifetime-residents of Miami- Dade County have never heard of the park but one citizen has vowed to promote Bunche Park and has recently awarded for her efforts.

Corrine Dunn, a 76 year old proud resident of Bunche Park has her name on street signs next to Bunche Park. Corrine Dunn Street runs along 151st Street between Northwest 17th and 27th avenues. County and Opa-Locka city officials voted to rename the street after Dunn. Dunn is a community activist credited for persuading County leaders in the 1970s to construct a neighborhood health center near her Bunche Park community. She was also instrumental in pushing for the construction of sidewalks, street lights and a park beginning in the early 1950s, when the community was constructed. She helped form a community credit union and rallied for the needy through her work with the Community Action Agency. Later she became a member of the board of directors of Legal Services of South Florida and a member of the Health Systems Agency of South Florida (Walters 1995).

After years of false starts, Bunche Park began to see rapid gentrification in the late 1980s. This was driven by changing County policies, including an increase in infrastructure funding. The number of housing units in Bunche Park increased by 6 percent between 1990 and 2000 and the rate of increase has been much more rapid in recent years. Property values in Bunche Park increased nearly 30 percent during the 1990s. Even empty shells of buildings in the neighborhood were, as of 2005, routinely selling for nearly \$200,000 each (Census.gov).

Over the years, the neighborhood of Bunche Park has had many improvement programs dedicated toward its infrastructure and sidewalks, in hope to keep its residents and pedestrians safe. In 1985, County officials had said it would cost \$1.1 million to build sidewalks throughout Bunche Park. For the owner of a house with 75 feet of frontage, that would of have translated to a \$1,800 tax. Today, sidewalks improvement allow resident to safely walk, even after heavy rains (Frank 1985).

## Community Dynamics

As of the census of 2000, there were 3,972 people, 1,350 households, and 981 families residing in Bunche Park. The racial distribution of Bunche Park was 1.36% White, 96.45% African American, 0.08% Native American, 0.13% Asian, 0.63% from other races, and 1.36% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 3.05% of the population.

There were 1,350 households out of which 25.4% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 29.7% were married couples living together, 34.4% had a female householder with no husband present, and 27.3% were non-families. 24.1% of all households were made up of individuals and 13.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.93 and the average family size was 3.45.

In Bunche Park the population is aging. The median age was 38 years, compared to the County's at 36 years. The median income for a household in Bunche Park was \$25,898, and the median income for a family was \$28,645. The per capita income for Bunche Park was \$11,438. About 22.5% of families and 27.0% of the population were below the poverty line, including 38.4% of those under age 18 and 20.2% of those age 65 or over.

## Sources

U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2000). Statistical File 3, P31 and P32 for Census Tracts 4.02, 4.03. <http://www.census.gov>

Bunche, Ralph J., «Human Relations and World Peace», in Gustavus Adolphus College *Bulletin*, 17 (1950). An address given at Gustavus Adolphus College (St. Peter, Minn.) Commencement and Bernadotte Memorial Dedication, June 4, 1950.

Walters, Sabrina. Saluting her fight for Bunche Park Roadway to be Named for Activist. *Miami Herald, The (FL)*. April 6, 1995. Edition: FINAL. Section: NEIGHBORS NW. Page: 2.

Frank, Casey. Neighbors Fight For Sidewalks in Bunche Park. *Miami Herald, The (FL)*. October 3, 1985. Edition: FINAL, Section: NEIGHBORS NC. Page: 3.

Thompson M. Dion. Scheinre Vows Improvements in Bunche Park. *Miami Herald, The (FL)*. March 16, 1986. Edition: FINAL, Section: NEIGHBORS NC. Page: 3.