

Community Background Report

Olympia Heights

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: S.W. 56th Street

South: S.W. 40th Street

West: S.W. 102nd Avenue

East: S.W. 87th Avenue

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

Miami's heritage is rich in the distinctive variety of its neighborhoods, and one of them is Olympia Heights. In comparison with metropolitan areas to its east and north, the neighborhood of Olympia Heights is a relative newcomer. All of its development has taken place in the twentieth century with the housing shortage created by the end of World War II (Immanez). During the 1950's a westward migration of residents created a considerable increase in population density in the area around Olympia Heights, providing the footing of the current neighborhood (Immanez). In an effort to control growth, neighborhood organizations were formed as early as 1958. These improvement associations also pushed for improvements in traffic circulation, lighting, recreation facilities and general physical betterment of the area (Immanez). Olympia Heights, was predestined to become one of the Metropolitan Miami's finest residential areas due to its surrounding lakes. The Reverend Oliver Taylor, pastor of the church at 3801 SW 97th Avenue, said his parishioners support the wide variety of visitors who come through the neighborhood. Since 1985, United Methodist Church has enjoyed a full choir with four of the main musical instrument represented, setting a precedent for a community of the size of Olympia Heights (Garriga 1985).

Today the Olympia Heights neighborhood continues to negotiate issues with private developments and is united in its approach as a community. Neighbors in the Olympia Heights area have been complaining about a development that had brought negative attention to the

neighborhood since late 1993. Residents placed the property at the center of issues related to abandonment and misuse of private property (Immanez). Area neighbors united and went to the courts many times seeking to have the County condemn the property. This property was seized by the County and is now up for sale. The Miami-Dade Police Department has been in direct connection with community leaders of Olympia Heights, to make sure that the needs of the neighborhood are not overlooked. “During the summer there is a big focus on trying to curb juvenile crime” said Sgt. Carmen Pichardo, who helps fighting the crime in Olympia Heights. “We focus on curfew violation, especially rave parties, which include several known illegal drugs” (Weinberg 2000).

Crime is down 11% in the community for the past 5 years since 2000 (Census 2000) , and today Olympia Heights residents can feel secure walking down the neighborhood (Immanez).

Community Dynamics

The neighborhood of Olympia Heights boasts a population of 13, 452 people, 4,157 households, and 3,487 families residing in Olympia Heights. In Olympia Heights the population was spread out with 20.0% under the age of 18, 7.7% from 18 to 24, 26.7% from 25 to 44, 26.1% from 45 to 64, and 19.6% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 42 years.

The neighborhood of Olympia Heights has a higher income, \$50,720, then that of the County, \$35,966, and a higher family income, \$54,533, compared to \$40,260 for the County. The per capita income for Olympia Heights was \$18,198. 6.9% of the population and 5.4% of families were below the poverty line. The racial makeup of Olympia Heights was 93.50% White, 0.83% African American. 76.33% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Sources

Sandy Immanez. Interview. April 25, 2006. Olympia Heights, Community Religion and Spirituality.

Weinberg, Adam. List of Disputes Plagued Property. Miami Herald, The (FL). August 17,2000. Section: Neighbors Page 2W.

Garriga, Pat. Musical Missionaries take wing to work with American Samoan Youth. Miami Herald, The (FL). July 4, 1985. Section: Neighbors. Page 18.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. (2000). Statistical File 3, P31 and P32 for Census Tracts 0103.00 and 0112.01. <http://www.census.gov>