

# Community Background Report

## Richmond Heights

### County

Miami-Dade

### Boundaries

North: SW128th Street

South: SW152nd Street

East: US 1 (South Dixie Highway)

West: Florida Turnpike

### Community Type

Neighborhood

### History

In the late 1940s, when many returning World War II veterans were looking for homes across the United States, residential segregation made the search especially difficult for African Americans ready to rent or buy homes. In part of South Dade, Capt. Frank C. Martin, a white Pan American pilot and landowner who had served with many black soldiers, made their search a little easier. Martin founded Richmond Heights, a community that black veterans could call their own (Jonnelle Marte 2001). Frank C. Martin had high aspirations for the area. The white Pan Am pilot had flown over the area and “pegged it as an ideal place for a middle class black community” (Yearwood 1991). In 1951, Martin told a Miami News reporter he hoped Richmond Heights would be a “get in and stay in” neighborhood. Forty years later, the signs of permanence are abundant: “2,601 housing units, two schools, six churches, a hospital, three parks and residents who vow they’ll live there for the rest of their lives” (Teresa Yearwood 1991).

"I guess you could say Richmond Heights has everything a city has to offer," said James Marshall, president of the Richmond Heights Homeowner's Association. One of the neighborhood's centerpieces is Richmond Heights Park. Each year, about 10,000 neighborhood children flock there for tennis lessons, little league and football teams, said Marshall. "This is a booming community," he said, "Our economic health is excellent." Arvi Construction Company

has completed 37 homes in Richmond Heights that sell from \$86,900 to \$106,900. The company plans to build 41 more homes between 2006 and the summer of 2008. Today, many residents believe that Frank C. Martin's dream of a middle class, minority community has been fulfilled," said Larcenia Bullard, a Richmond Heights resident of 11 years.

Some residents believe unity among Richmond Heights residents is strengthened by learning and celebrating black culture. "I have learned more about my culture during the 11 years I've been living here than I ever did before," said Bullard, a Richmond Heights activist. She said opportunities to learn about black culture are numerous: there are many church services, community meetings, family get togethers.

## Community Dynamics

According to 2000 Census figures, there are 8,479 people, 2,653 households, and 2,101 families residing in Richmond Heights. The population density is 1,984.1/km<sup>2</sup> (5,124.3/mi<sup>2</sup>). There are 2,771 housing units at an average density of 648.4/km<sup>2</sup> (1,674.7/mi<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of Richmond Heights is 12.45% White, 82.83% African American, 0.22% Native American, 0.83% Asian, 0.01% Pacific Islander, 2.00% from other races, and 1.65% from two or more races. 12.47% of the population are Hispanic or Latino of any race. There are 2,653 households out of which 32.5% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 42.4% are married couples living together, 30.1% have a female householder with no husband present, and 20.8% are non-families. 17.9% of all households are made up of individuals and 8.3% have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older. The average household size is 3.16 and the average family size is 3.55. In Richmond Heights the population is spread out with 29.0% under the age of 18, 9.0% from 18 to 24, 26.3% from 25 to 44, 21.8% from 45 to 64, and 14.0% who are 65 years of age or older. The median age is 35 years. The median income for a household in Richmond Heights is \$38,191, and the median income for a family is \$44,095. Males have a median income of \$31,286 versus \$27,882 for females. The per capita income for Richmond Heights is \$15,824. 15.1% of the population and 14.0% of families are below the poverty line (US Census).

## Sources

Lori Teresa Yearwood. "A place to call Home". Miami Herald, The (FL), September 12, 1991.

Marte Jonnelle. "Richmond Heights: A place to call Home". Miami Herald, The (FL), April 24, 2001.

Larcenia Bullard. Richmond Heights Resident. Telephone interview. 6 March 2006

Arvi Construction Co. Richmond Heights Developer. Telephone interview. 6 March 2006

James Marshall. President of the Richmond Heights Homeowner's Association.

Telephone interview. 7 March 2006

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> >