

Village Manager Pinecrest, FL

(population 19,400)

THE COMMUNITY

Once you arrive in Pinecrest and leave the main roads, you would never know you are only twelve miles south of downtown Miami. Developed in the 1950s and 1960s, the community is extensively residential and the landscaping tends to be lush. It is in many ways an oasis in urban Miami-Dade County.

Covering eight square miles, Pinecrest's population is homogeneous, affluent, highly successful and very well educated. Its residents are also engaged and have very high expectations for their community and its government. The schools are outstanding and crime is low. The community has been well run since its incorporation, has solid reserves and a Triple A Bond rating. More importantly, Pinecrest is a family oriented city. It values its parks and its amenities and it has many. The only negative is that housing can be costly.

But if Pinecrest is not enough, the bright lights, shopping, cultural activities and sporting venues of Miami are nearby. If you prefer outdoor recreation, then Pinecrest is ideally located. Some of the best fishing and scuba diving in the world are within an hour's drive and a short boat ride. Biscayne National Park is to the south, Everglades National Park to the west and the Florida Keys are an hour to the south. If you like auto racing, the NASCAR's Ford 400 which is the last leg of NASCAR's Chase for the Sprint Cup can be found twenty miles south in Homestead. Travel? Miami International Airport, the gateway to Central and South America, is only 30 minutes north.

HISTORY

During the early 1900s, Miami pioneer and railroad tycoon Henry Flagler used the property at U.S. 1 and Southwest 102 Street (now on the western boundary in the northern part of Pinecrest) as a staging area during the construction of the Overseas Railroad to the Florida Keys.

As time progressed, the area grew and the community began to evolve around one of the first tourist attractions in Miami-Dade County – Parrot Jungle and Gardens. The attraction was developed by Fanz and Louise Scherr in 1936 on a property located at Red Road and Southwest 111 Street. Over the years, it became a world famous tourist attraction whose visitors included well-known people such as Sir Winston Churchill. The idea was to build an attraction where birds would “fly free” in a botanical garden. To bring their vision to life, the Scherrs rented 20 acres of hammock land for an annual fee of \$25. The facility was built as a winding nature

trail dug through the coral rock and hammock land that characterizes the area. All the natural plants were left undisturbed. The entrance was built on Red Road. The attraction opened on December 20, 1936, to about 100 visitors. Each paid 25 cents admission to see and hear Scherr talk about his birds, trees and flowers.

During the 1950s and 1960s the area flourished with the development and construction of ranch style homes, each on lots of approximately one acre. Later developments used smaller lots but overall effect is to create an oasis in urban Miami-Dade County.

In the early 1990s residents began to consider incorporation. County services were lacking – police and parks in particular - and local planning and zoning decisions were being made by County Commissioners, none of whom lived in the community. Incorporation also offered access to state revenue sharing monies, grants and other funds that the area did not receive as an unincorporated section of Miami-Dade County. Being an incorporated village also offered the community a seat at the table when decisions were being made. The argument that community residents should control their own destiny was compelling and voters improved incorporation 66% to 34% in 1996.

The Village of Pinecrest was officially incorporated on March 12, 1996. Since then the Village has started its own police department, added parks, built a village hall and become well-regarded for its municipal services (police, parks, and recreation, building and planning services, and public works). In 2002, the Village purchased Parrot Jungle and renamed it Pinecrest Gardens. In March 2003, it re-opened to the public and became the crown jewel of the Village's park system. It has largely maintained its botanical garden ambience but has an amphitheater that is used for community events and concerts and a community center has been added.

COMMERCE

Pinecrest is recognized for its residential character and has a limited amount of commercial property. In fact commercial properties compose only 13% of the Village's tax base. Virtually all the Village's commercial properties lie on the east side of Pinecrest Parkway (U.S. 1) which also constitutes the Village's western boundary. That corridor is primarily strip shopping centers but does provide a home to some 700 businesses – primarily restaurants and retail stores.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Village's official population according to the 2010 Census is 18,200. It is 90% white, 5% Asian and 2% Black with the remainder being either some other race or more than one race. Hispanics of all races make up 41% of the population. Further information comes from 2009 Census estimates. In terms of age, 16% of the population was under 10 years old, 21% was between 10 and 20, 25% between 20 and 45, 27% between 45 and 65 and the remaining 11% are over 65. Almost 30% of the population was born outside the United States, primarily in Latin America. The population is extremely well educated. Of those over 25 years old, only 3% do not have a high school degree. 24% have a high school diploma and /or some college. 6% have

