

# the Advocate

richmond heights

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of

*Richmond Heights*



## SAVE THE DATE JAZZ IN THE HEIGHTS

Commissioner Kionne McGhee is announcing the highly anticipated return of **Jazz in the Heights Veteran's Day Edition**, headlined by the legendary **Keith Sweat at Zoo Miami on Saturday, November 2, 2024**. This unforgettable event is more than just a concert—it's a celebration of courage, resilience, and the remarkable contributions of those who have dedicated themselves to service. Admission to this star-studded event is absolutely free. Save the date, spread the word, and get ready to be part of something truly special at Jazz in the Heights.



Commissioner Kionne McGhee



Keith Sweat



## Richmond Heights Celebrates 75 Years: A Testament to Black Resilience and Community

The historic Richmond Heights community celebrates its 75th anniversary, a milestone that honors not just the vision of its founder but, more importantly, the enduring strength and resilience of the Black families who built this community into a thriving home.

Richmond Heights was founded in 1949 by Captain Frank C. Martin, a white Pan American World Airways pilot with a groundbreaking idea. In the post-World War II era, Captain Martin recognized the challenges faced by African American veterans returning home from the war. Despite their service, these veterans were often denied the benefits of the G.I. Bill, particularly when it came to securing housing. Segregation and systemic racism left Black veterans with few options for decent, affordable homes. Determined to address this injustice, Captain Martin purchased a large tract of land in what was then a rural area of Miami, with the intention of creating a community where Black veterans and their families could live in dignity.

While Captain Martin's initiative was visionary, the true story of Richmond Heights lies in the hands of its pioneers—those first families who moved into the neighborhood and laid its foundations. These pioneers were not only veterans but also skilled tradespeople, educators, entrepreneurs, and community leaders who took an active role in shaping the neighborhood. They built homes, organized civic groups, and established the first schools and churches in the area. The efforts of these trailblazers were crucial in creating a community that was not only physically constructed but also deeply connected through shared values, mutual support, and a collective commitment to progress. Their legacy lives on in the community institutions they founded and the strong sense of identity that continues to define Richmond Heights today.

One of the defining characteristics of Richmond Heights has always been its commitment to education. The community

placed a high value on learning, understanding that education was key to breaking the cycle of poverty and discrimination. Many of the neighborhood's early residents were among the first in their families to attend college, and they instilled this value in their children. This focus on education has produced generations of successful professionals who continue to contribute to the community and beyond.

Richmond Heights also became a center for activism, particularly during the civil rights movement. Residents were deeply involved in the struggle for equity, participating in protests, advocating for desegregation, and challenging discriminatory practices in Miami and beyond. This activism was not just about fighting for rights but also about ensuring that Richmond Heights remained a place where Black families could thrive.

As Richmond Heights celebrates its 75th anniversary, the community reflects on its remarkable journey. The neighborhood has changed over the years, but it remains a symbol of Black resilience and determination. The families who made Richmond Heights their home turned Captain Martin's vision into a reality, creating a legacy that continues to inspire.

Today, Richmond Heights faces new challenges, including gentrification and economic pressures, but the spirit of the community remains strong. The 75th anniversary is not just a time to look back but also to plan for the future, ensuring that Richmond Heights remains a place where Black families can continue to live, grow, and prosper.

In celebrating 75 years, Richmond Heights honors the generations of Black families who have made it their home, transforming it from a visionary idea into a lasting testament to the power of community, resilience, and unwavering determination.



# The Power of the Vote:

## Why 2024 Is a Year for Change in Florida?

As the 2024 presidential election approaches, Florida finds itself at a pivotal moment in its political history. Once considered a key battleground state, Florida has recently been written off by some election strategists who do not recognize the precipice that the sunshine state sits upon.

This narrative overlooks the power and potential of the vote—especially in a state as diverse and dynamic as Florida. With so much at stake in this election, it's crucial for every eligible voter to register and cast their ballot, embracing the power of their vote to shape the future.

Voting is more than just a civic duty; it is a profound expression of one's voice in a democracy. The excitement surrounding the 2024 election is palpable, particularly with the prospect of casting a ballot for a Black woman for the highest office in the land. This moment comes just a few years after the historic two-term presidency of Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, which inspired millions and broke barriers that had stood for centuries. The possibility of electing another groundbreaking leader, this time a Black woman, adds a sense of joy and urgency to this year's election.

The act of voting carries with it the power to change the course of history. When people think about the progress made in America, it's important to remember that these changes didn't happen by chance—they were the result of people coming together to vote for the leaders and policies that would shape their lives and communities. From the Civil Rights Movement to more recent advancements in social justice and economic equity, the power of the vote has always been a driving force for change.

In Florida, voting has played a crucial role in determining the state's direction. The state has a history of close elections, where every vote truly counts. The 2000 presidential election and the 2018 gubernatorial election were decided by razor-

thin margins in Florida, reminding the nation of the immense power held by voters in the state. Since then, Florida's electorate has continued to evolve, with new generations of voters stepping up to make their voices heard.

For Black and Latino voters in particular, the act of voting is a celebration of hard-won rights and a declaration of their place in the political process. Casting a ballot is a way to honor the sacrifices made by those who fought for voting rights and to continue the legacy of civic engagement. The joy of voting comes from knowing that each vote contributes to the collective voice of the community, pushing for progress and equity.

This year, there is much to be excited about on the ballot, from local issues including the expansion of light rail in Miami Dade County, to national leadership including not just the president—but members of the United States Congress and Senate. The 2024 election offers an opportunity to build on the progress made in recent years and to address the challenges that still remain. For those who have felt disillusioned or disconnected from the political process, now is the time to reengage and recognize the impact that their vote can have.

The 2024 presidential election is not just another election; it is a moment of potential transformation. The excitement of voting for a Black woman for president, the joy of participating in democracy, and the power to change the course of history all make this election one that cannot be ignored. For every eligible voter in Florida, the message is clear: register, vote, and be a part of shaping the future.





**RICHMOND HEIGHTS CDC**  
 Post Office Box 163434  
 Miami, FL 33116



# Scholarship Recipients

The Richmond Heights Community Development Corporation (RHDC) was once again privileged to grant scholarships to graduating seniors at a luncheon in June. The RHDC scholarship program, established in 2003, awarded four praiseworthy students \$1,000 each to help defray college expenses. In addition to excelling scholastically, all of the awardees volunteered after school in civic, charitable and leadership activities. The scholarship program is an integral part of the RHDC's mission which includes expanding economic development opportunities, increasing housing opportunities and promoting comprehensive neighborhood revitalization.

***Congratulations to Dajah Daniels, Donyelle Ferguson, E'Mani Lordeus, and Ronald Smith, III***



**DAJAH DANIELS** will be attending Fayetteville State University, where she plans to major in Nursing. A graduate of Coral Reef Senior High School, Dajah was actively engaged in organizations including the Black Student Union, No Place for Hate, and Key Club. Her

passion for helping others and making a difference in the community drives her ambition to become a nurse practitioner, a career goal that reflects her dedication to advancing healthcare and supporting the well-being of others.



**DONYELLE FERGUSON** plans to pursue a degree in Cardiopulmonary Science at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. She is a graduate of Coral Reef Senior High School where she was engaged in Health Occupation Students of America, the Black Student

Union, and Key Club. With a strong commitment to healthcare and community service, Donyelle's career goal is to become a physician assistant, to provide quality medical care and make a meaningful impact on patients' lives.



**E'MANI LORDEUS** has been accepted to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University where she will major in Business Management. E'Mani is a graduate of Miami Southridge Senior High School where she was actively involved in Young Ladies of Standard, the Educational Excellence

Advisory Committee, and Student Government. With a strong foundation in leadership and a passion for innovation, her career goal is to become a digital marketing executive to combine creativity and strategic thinking to drive business success.



**RONALD SMITH, III** has been accepted to Florida International University where he will major in Physical Therapy/Kinesiology. A graduate of M.A.S.T Academy, Ronald was actively involved in organizations including the NAACP South Dade Branch - Youth Council, Health Occupations

Students of America, Magnet Council, and Breakthrough Miami. With a passion for helping others and an interest in sports and rehabilitation, he aspires to work with individuals and athletes to enhance their physical abilities and performance.