Parks Foundation
of Miami-Dade

2024 Annual Report

Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

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Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade

Message from the President

Dear Friends:

For 95 years, Miami-Dade County Parks have been part of the life of our community—places where children learn and play, families and neighbors come together, people of all ages can be active and enjoy the outdoors, and residents connect with the natural environment and with one another. As Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said in celebrating the 95th anniversary of our parks system, "parks are essential to our community's wellness, happiness, and resilience."

I was honored to be elected President of the Parks Foundation Board of Directors in April 2024, after nearly four years of serving on the Board. In this role, I remain committed to strengthening the Foundation's partnership with Miami-Dade County Parks and our support for the programs, places and experiences that enhance quality of life throughout this community.

In 2024, the Foundation contributed or facilitated more than $650,000 in support of Parks programs and initiatives. Those resources helped 500 children gain potentially lifesaving swimming skills; supported Parks programs that empower young people through sports, mentorship and skill-building; engaged thousands of volunteers in caring for our parks and natural areas; supported tree planting in neighborhoods with the greatest need; and advanced sea turtle conservation.

Our parks also demonstrated their enduring role as places where community happens. During the past year, the Foundation supported county traditions such as the Independence Day celebration at Tropical Park and In the Company of Women Awards, as well as Girls Got Game, which encourages girls to lead active, healthy lives through sports. From recreational and cultural experiences to conservation activities and community celebrations, these programs and events reflect the remarkable variety of ways our parks bring people together.

This year, our Board also began looking ahead at how the Foundation can continue to expand its advocacy and partnership with Miami-Dade Parks. We took preliminary steps to expand and further engage our Board, strengthen fundraising and partnerships, and deepen our understanding of the needs and opportunities throughout our park system.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my sincere thanks to Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners and other elected leaders for being park champions. I also want to thank the leadership and dedicated public servants of Miami-Dade County Parks, whose work serves our community every day; and the donors, sponsors, community partners and volunteers whose generosity and commitment help make the Foundation's work possible. Most importantly, I thank the people of Miami-Dade County who use, enjoy, care for and believe in our parks.

As we celebrate 95 years of Miami-Dade County Parks, we also look ahead. The needs of our community will continue to change and grow, but the importance of accessible, welcoming and vibrant public parks will endure. The Parks Foundation is proud to be part of that future and committed to helping ensure that our parks continue enriching lives for this and future generations.

Caroline O'Connor
President
Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade

Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade Inc. Board Members 2024

Caroline O'Connor, President: COO, Miami Marlins
Jose Felix Diaz, Vice President: Partner, Ballard and Associates
Danlys Hernandez, **Secretary:** CEO, Oak Construction Officer
Maira Diaz-Giusti: Senior Vice President, Oak Grove Bank and Trust
Loren Parra: Director, Miami-Dade Environmental Resources Management
Dwight Stephenson: Owner, D. Stephenson Construction
Maria I. Nardi: Director, Miami-Dade Parks Recreation and Open Spaces

Miami-Dade County Housing, Recreation, Culture & Community Development Committee

Chairwoman: Commissioner Marleine Bastien
Vice Chairwoman: Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Members: Senator René Garcia
Commissioner Robert J. Gonzalez
Commissioner Kionne L. McGhee

Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Oliver G. Gilbert, III
Chairman

Anthony Rodriguez
Vice Chairman

Oliver G. Gilbert, III
District 1

Marleine Bastien
District 2

Keon Hardemon
District 3

Micky Steinberg
District 4

Eileen Higgins
District 5

Kevin Marino Cabrera
District 6

Raquel A. Regalado
District 7

Danielle Cohen Higgins
District 8

Kionne L. McGhee
District 9

Anthony Rodriguez
District 10

Roberto J. Gonzalez
District 11

Juan Carlos Bermudez
District 12

Senator René García
District 13

Juan Fernandez-Barquin
Clerk of the Court and Comptroller

Pedro J. Garcia
Property Appraiser

Geri Bonzon-Keenan
County Attorney

Parks Foundation
of Miami-Dade

The Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade was created in 2004 in support of the Building Better Communities Bond Issue when visionary community leaders acknowledged that additional private and public sector support is essential to maintain, expand, and sustain the needs of the rapidly growing community that relies on Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department for quality of life. Today, Miami-Dade Parks is one of the nation's largest and most diverse park systems and stewards **307** heritage, regional and neighborhood parks, **74** recreation centers**, 21** pools, **6** marinas, **17** miles of beaches, **5** golf courses, **3** campgrounds, and approximately **40,000** acres of parklands, natural area, and environmentally endangered lands.

The Parks Foundation remains committed to working closely with Miami-Dade County to foster a healthier, more livable and sustainable Miami-Dade by providing year-round support for park facilities and equitable access to parks programs for our community's residents, with a focus on children, special needs groups, and active older adults. Through corporate and community partnerships, fundraising initiatives, and fiscal sponsorships, we support scholarships for children to participate in park programs, including swimming lessons, afterschool and summer camps, conservation and environmental education projects, including volunteer cleanups, and other parks activities.

Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade

Executive Summary

The Board of Directors of the Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade is pleased to share our annual report for 2024. This report provides a snapshot of outstanding parks projects and programs we were privileged to support during the 2024 calendar year. The partnership between the Parks Foundation and Miami-Dade County advances a shared goal: to improve the health and overall quality of life for everyone through parks!

- In 2024, the Parks Foundation contributed **$27,095** and facilitated **$612,260** in its role as fiscal sponsor, for a total of **$659,361** that supported projects and programming implemented by Miami-Dade County Parks in the community.

- The Parks Foundation allocated **$15,000** in Learn2Swim scholarships in 2024 to ensure access to swim lessons across 11 county pools. Miami-Dade Parks continues to be the largest public swimming education program in South Florida.

- The Foundation contributed **$1,000** to support the 3rd annual Girls Got Game, partnering with Miami-Dade Parks and local sports organizations to inspire girls ages 6–17 to lead active, healthy lives through sports, mentorship and hands-on athletic experiences.

- The Parks Foundation provided fiscal sponsorship of **$17,000** in community partner grant support for Parks Volunteer Programs that facilitated **146** cleanup events that engaged **9,000** volunteers who installed **8,500** native plants, collected **29,000** lbs of marine debris & litter, and completed 35 **natural** area restorations.

- The Parks Foundation contributed **$5,715** to Miami-Dade County Parks' Sea Turtle Conservation Program, supporting public education, conservation outreach, and field readiness during the 2024 nesting season through Batchelor Foundation funding.

- The Foundation served as fiscal sponsor for **$161,500** in sponsorship funds for the 35th Annual In The Company of Women Awards, which recognized 15 outstanding women leaders, with the support of presenting sponsor Amerant Bank and other generous corporate, community, and public sector sponsors. Proceeds advance the Foundation's mission to support sports development programs for girls.

- The Foundation provided fiscal sponsorship to the Neat Streets Miami/Million Trees Miami initiative, which received **$171,450** in funding that increased tree canopy, and facilitated the planting/giveaway of **5,100** trees and plants, with **95%** planted in areas with less than 20% tree canopy coverage.

These accomplishments advanced the mission of the foundation to mobilize dollars and advocacy in continued support Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces, and in this way, help improve and sustain the community's recreational, health, educational, environmental, and cultural life.

Parks Foundation
of Miami-Dade

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Health & Fitness: 2024 Highlights

Drowning Prevention: Learn2Swim

- In 2024, the Parks Foundation provided Learn2Swim scholarships, at a total value of **$15,000**, to **500** children at **11** pools across the Miami-Dade Parks system: Palm Springs North, North Pointe, Oak Grove, Marva Bannerman, A.D. Barnes, Rockway, Tamiami, Tropical Estates, West Perrine, South Dade and Goulds.

- Miami-Dade Parks' Learn2Swim program continues to be the largest public swimming education program in South Florida, through which children build confidence in and around the water while learning critical skills and safe water practices. Swimming lessons and water safety education are demonstrated successful strategies for reducing preventable drowning incidents.

- The Parks Foundation supported Miami-Dade Cou Parks' partnership with Nicklaus Children's Hospital, American Red Cross Greater Miami and the Keys, the Miami Dade Drowning Prevention Coalition, and other community organizations to expand access to swimming instruction and promote water safety throughout Miami-Dade County. In Florida, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death among children ages 1-4. In Miami-Dade County, drowning is the leading cause of death among children ages 1-9, underscoring the importance of ensuring that every child has an opportunity to learn to swim.

Health & Fitness: 2024 Highlights

Girls Got Game

- In 2024, the Parks Foundation contributed **$1,000** to support the 3rd Annual Miami-Dade Parks Girls Got Game celebration on February 10, 2024, at Tropical Park Stadium. The Parks Foundation and Miami-Dade County Parks partnered with community partners, including local sports franchises and athletic organizations, to create an inclusive sports experience for girls ages 6–17.

- Held in recognition of National Girls and Women in Sports Day, the free event introduced participants to basketball, flag football, soccer, volleyball and track through hands-on instruction from local athletes and coaches. Girls also heard from motivational speakers and received encouragement to remain active and involved in sports throughout their lives. Participants received complimentary event t-shirts and commemorative medals.

- Event partners included the Miami Marlins Foundation, Miami Dolphins, Twelfth Miami, Hoop Dreams of America, Barry University Track, Miami Dade College Volleyball and Volley-ON.

Conservation & Stewardship: 2024 Highlights

Sea Turtle Conservation Program

- The Parks Foundation supported Miami-Dade County Parks' Sea Turtle Conservation Program through **$5,715** in Batchelor Foundation grant funds, helping advance public education, field readiness and conservation outreach during the 2024 sea turtle nesting season.
- In 2024, Batchelor Foundation funding supported the purchase of a Sea Turtle-Friendly Lighting Exhibit from Coastal Connections. Located at the Crandon Park Nature Center, the exhibit is used for educational programming with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, nonprofit organizations and park visitors. The portable exhibit traveled to community events throughout the tri-county area, engaging more than **2,000** participants in 2024.
- The exhibit was also featured at Miami-Dade Parks' 2nd Annual World Sea Turtle Day event on June 16, 2024, at Crandon Park, helping raise awareness of sea turtle conservation and the important role sea turtles play, as their numbers are considered indicators of the health of the world's oceans.
- For over **40** years, Miami-Dade Parks' Sea Turtle Conservation Program has been charged with sea turtle conservation along **19** miles of Miami-Dade County beaches, which are maintained by Miami-Dade County Parks, including the County's Crandon Park and Haulover Park, and beaches within five municipalities. The team responds to sea turtle rescue and stranding year-round. During the 2024 nesting season, the team identified and marked **684** nests, responded to **33** strandings and rescues, and supported **50** nest adoptions. The team's **39** community events engaged over **6,000** participants; these included **15** sea turtle hatchling releases, **3** public nest excavations and **12** coastal cleanup events.

Conservation & Stewardship: 2024 Highlights

Growing Parks Stewards Through Volunteer Programs

• Miami-Dade Parks' Volunteers Program connects people and parks through volunteer service. The Program partners with the Parks Foundation by connecting with community partners such as Wells Fargo, Santander and Publix Stores. These partners provided a total of **$17,000** in grant support to the Foundation that funded volunteer programming and conservation initiatives at Miami-Dade Parks.

• Throughout 2024, with Foundation support, the Volunteers Program helped lead and/or facilitate **146** community volunteer events (coastal cleanups, community action days, and signature service days) and **129** private group events (garden installations, invasive plant removals, sand dune restorations, and trail enhancements). The program engaged over **9,000** volunteers, who collectively installed **8,500** native plants, picked up **29,000** lbs. of marine debris and litter, and participated in **35** natural areas restorations.

•In April 2024, Miami-Dade Parks, in partnership with the Parks Foundation, spearheaded a celebration of Earth Day/Arbor Day at Larry & Penny Thompson Park, in collaboration with community partners. Over **200** volunteers participated in this natural area restoration project, installed over **70** trees and **150** plants to preserve and enhance the pine rockland habitat located within the park's natural areas. Volunteers also learned about the important of trash removal to local habitats and through the service day collected over **330** lbs. of debris.

Placemaking: 2024 Highlights

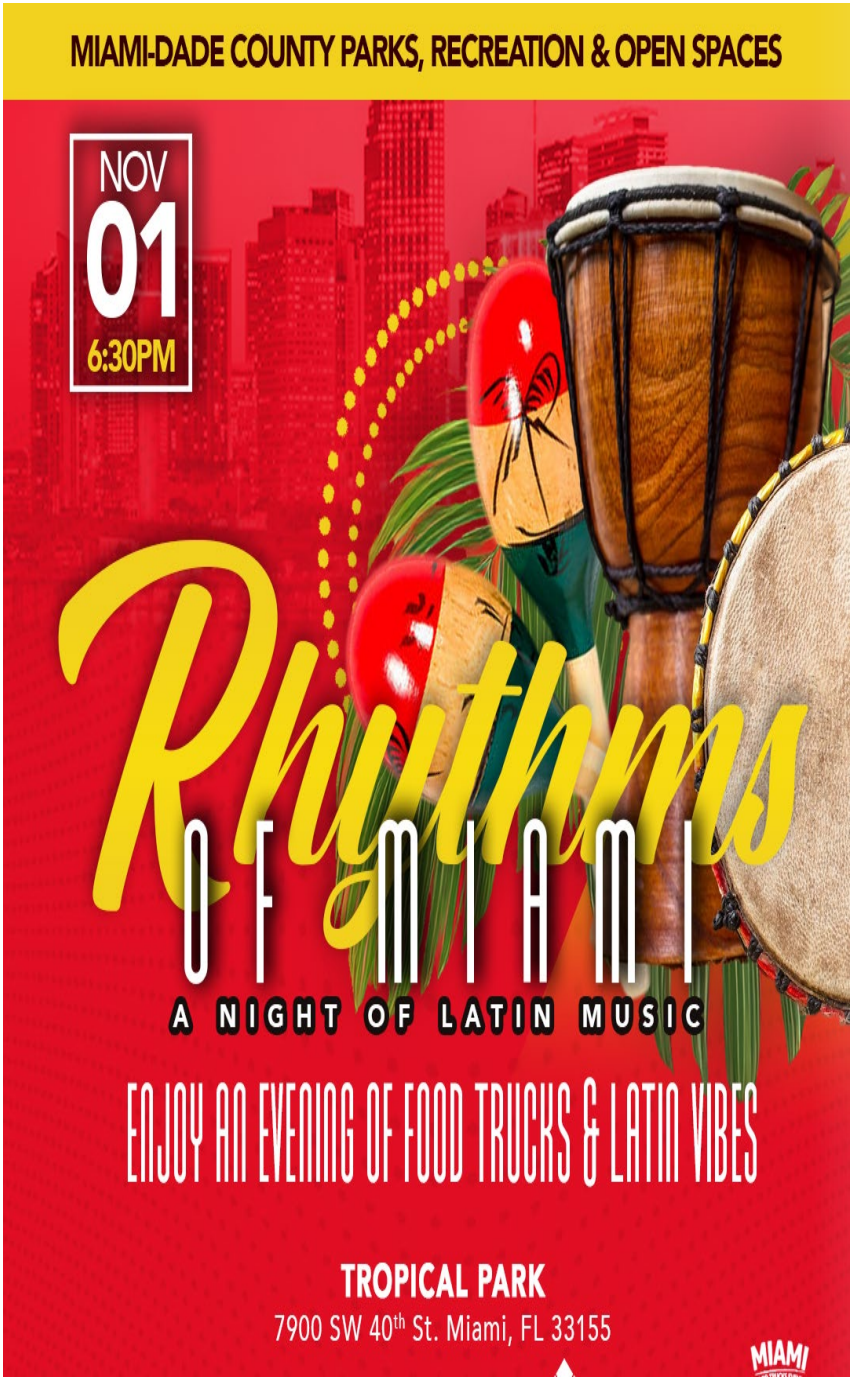
Increasing Tree Canopy

- In 2024, the Parks Foundation partnered with Neat Streets Miami-Dade County/Million Trees Miami-Dade County by serving as fiscal sponsor of **$171,450** awarded to the initiative. These grants helped increase tree canopy throughout Miami-Dade County with focus on low tree canopy neighborhoods.
- The Community Forestry and Beautification division partnered with the Parks Foundation to lead community volunteer projects and other initiatives that planted over **583 new trees** in Miami-Dade County, plus gave away over **737 trees** and **over 3,780 plants** (including orchids) to residents.
- These trees improve climate resilience and help attract businesses to Miami-Dade County. It has been established that improving a community's tree canopy produces numerous benefits, from addressing the rising heat index to improving air quality to strengthening social ties among neighbors.
- Trees increase property values and job performance and satisfaction, while reducing energy costs. Research has shown the presence of trees can help reduce crime in a neighborhood.
- Canopy trees enhance a community's resiliency by beautifying and greening resident commutes, pollution absorption, wind protection, noise pollution reduction and storm water retention.

Parks Events: 2024 Highlights

In The Company of Women Awards

- In 2024, the Parks Foundation served as fiscal sponsor for **$161,500** in sponsorship funds for the 35th Annual In The Company of Women Awards gala, held on March 6, 2024, at the iconic Rusty Pelican Restaurant.
- The Parks Foundation partners annually with Miami-Dade Parks and the Miami-Dade Commission for Women to plan and execute this signature awards ceremony, a time-honored community tradition which commemorates national Women's History Month and International Women's Day by honoring women leaders across professional fields who demonstrate vision, leadership, and service to Miami-Dade County.
- Event proceeds advance the Foundation's mission to support county recreational programs, including the Girls Empowerment and Mentoring (G.E.M.) Summer Arts Camp.
- The 2024 ceremony recognized **15** inspiring award winners and was presented by Amerant Bank, with generous support from corporate, community and public-sector sponsors whose contributions helped make the event possible.



Parks Events: 2024 Highlights

Rhythms of Miami

- The Parks Foundation supported Miami-Dade Parks in bringing the community together for *Rhythms of Miami – A Night of Latin Music and Food Trucks*, a free evening of live music and community celebration held November 1, 2024, at Tropical Park. The Foundation contributed **$4,000** to support a performance by Cortadito, a Miami-based ensemble known for its traditional Cuban music, helping make live cultural programming accessible to the community at no cost.

- Rhythms of Miami added a special evening of live performances to Tropical Park's popular weekly food truck gathering, creating another opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the park as a place for culture, recreation and community. Presented in partnership with the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau as Miami-Dade County prepared to welcome the 25th Annual Latin GRAMMY Awards® back to Miami, the event celebrated the County's vibrant Latin music culture while expanding access to cultural arts programming in a public park setting.

- Events such as *Rhythms of Miami* demonstrate the important role parks play as gathering places where neighbors, families and visitors can come together and share experiences that strengthen a sense of community. By making high-quality cultural programming available in a welcoming public setting and at no cost to attendees, Miami-Dade Parks helps connect residents to both their parks and the diverse cultural traditions that define Miami-Dade County.

- In addition to the support of the Parks Foundation, Miami-Dade County's *Rhythms of Miami* was made possible through the support and collaboration of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Miami-Dade Water & Sewer Department, Miami-Dade Animal Services and Moty Food Trucks.

Parks Events: 2024 Highlights

Independence Day and & National Park and Recreation Month Celebration

- In 2024, the Parks Foundation contributed **$5,380** in direct support of Miami-Dade Parks' annual 4th of July celebration at Tropical Park, helping bring **20,000+** community residents together for one of the County's signature public park events.
- The Foundation facilitated **$65,688.55** in related expenses that supported event production needs and helped deliver a welcoming, family-friendly celebration to the community.
- The Foundation also served as fiscal sponsor for **$4,500** in total donations from community partners Soccer 5 and the Florida Blue Foundation to support the event.
- Univision, the event's longtime media partner, provided significant in-kind support**,** including pre-event promotional coverage, live musical entertainment featuring popular artists and groups, and on-site emcee and stage entertainment throughout the event.
- Held at Tropical Park, the event annually celebrates American Independence Day with live music presented by longstanding media partner Univision, food trucks, family fun zones, open lawn space for picnicking, a firework and, in 2024, a drone light show finale.
- The celebration also launches National Park and Recreation Month, celebrated every July to recognize the essential role parks and recreation plays in connecting residents to parks, programs and public spaces that serve everyone.

Parks Events: 2024 Highlights

District 11 Tree Lighting Ceremony

- The Parks Foundation partnered with Miami-Dade County Commission District 11 and the Miami-Dade Public Library System to support the District 11 Tree Lighting Ceremony, held on November 15, 2024, at the Kendale Lakes Branch Library. The free, family-friendly celebration brought residents together to kick off the holiday season with festive activities for children and families.

- Through the generosity of a community partner, the Parks Foundation facilitated **$2,000** in support for the event, helping provide holiday activities and experiences that foster community connection and bring families together.

Sugar 4 Kids Holiday Toy Giveaway

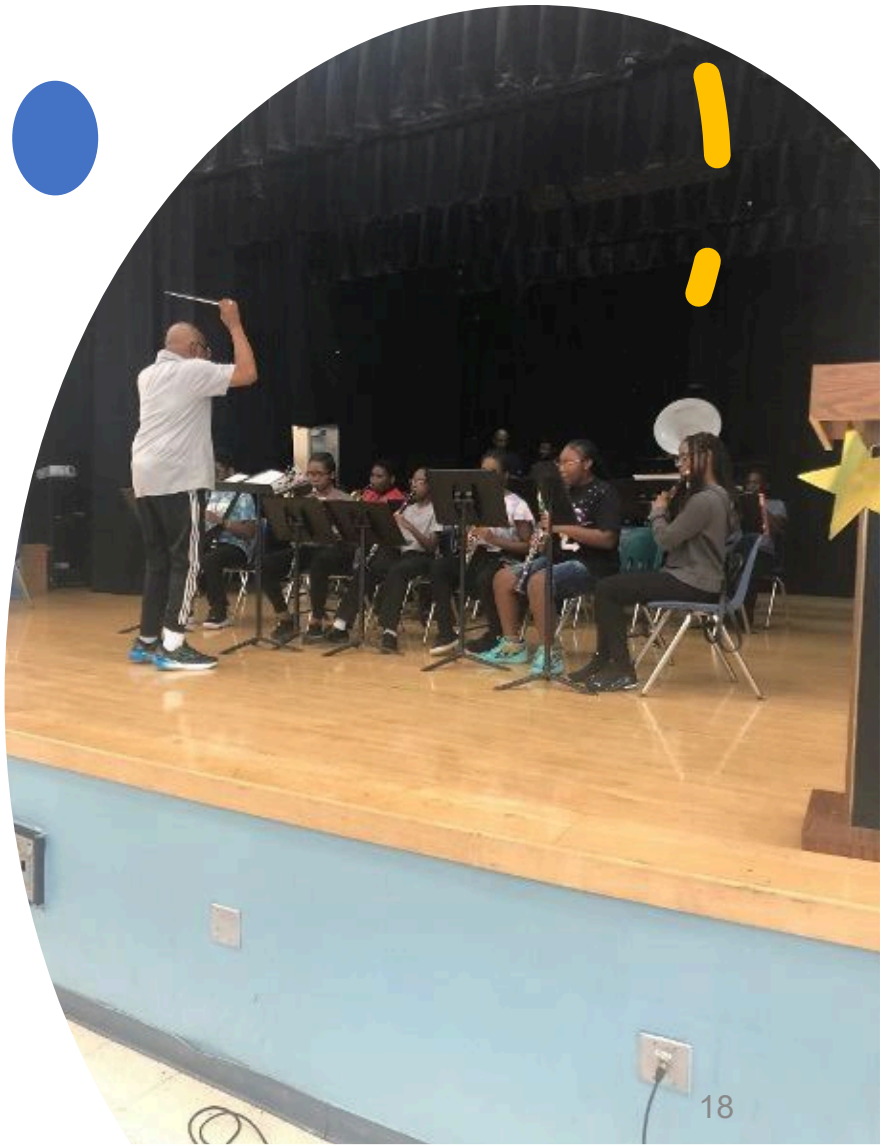
- The Parks Foundation partnered with the Sugar 4 Kids Foundation to support its 9th Annual Holiday Toy Drive and community celebration, held on December 14, 2024, at Miami-Dade County's Wilbur B. Bell Park.

- The Parks Foundation facilitated **$4,357** in donor-supported funding for purchase of sports equipment distributed to children during the annual holiday toy giveaway, helping bring holiday cheer and recreational opportunities to local youth and families.

Parks Events:
2024 Highlights

South Dade Summer Youth Band Camp

- In the summer of 2024,the Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade once again served as fiscal sponsor of South Dade Summer Youth Band Camp with a total value of **$94,144.50.**
- The 5-week program, was led by renowned retired FAMU Band Director Dr. Julian White.
- Marching bands represent a natural element of football programs, many of which are in communities struggling with gun violence and other high-risk behaviors in youth. Since 2016, the Summer Youth Band Camp has taken hundreds of young people off the streets and provided them with a positive environment to learn not only marching and music, but self- worth and useful life skills.



Foundation Financials

Through the generosity of community residents, partner nonprofits, corporate partners, and its Board of Directors the Parks Foundation advances its mission to create a healthier, more livable and sustainable Miami-Dade community by providing support for park facilities and for equitable and accessible recreation programs for all, with a focus on children, active older adults and people with disabilities.

ASSETS		
Cash	$	496,747
Accounts Receivable	$	111,235
Prepaid Expenses	$	36,165
Investments	$	911,188
Total Assets	$	1,555,335
LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	$	49,283
Fiscal Sponsorship Funds	$	138,833
Deferred Revenue	$	-
Total Liabilities	$	188,116
NET ASSETS		
Total Net Assets	$	1,367,219
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	$	1,555,335

REVENUE		
Donations	$	24,103
Grants	$	-
Sponsorships & Admin Fees	$	19,554
Event Revenue (net)	$	100,917
Investment Income (Loss)	$	139,322
Total Revenue	$	283,896
EXPENSES		
Program Services	$	53,715
General Support	$	45,880
Total Expenses	$	99,595
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		
Increase in Net Assets	$	184,301

*** Amounts per audited financial statements at 12-31-24**

Consistent with national fundraising standards referred to in Section 4(a) of the amended and restated agreement between Miami-Dade County and the Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade, Inc. approved by Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners Resolution No. R-573-15, and the requirements of Chapter 496 of the Florida Statues, the Foundation provides the Parks Director an annual report that includes audited financial statements complying with OMB Circular A-133; Form 990 including all attachments as filed with the Internal Revenue Service; and a financial report form as filed with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, pursuant to the requirements of Florida Statues Section 496.407.