

Miami Shores Optimist Park has been cautious about change



Optimist International is a volunteer service organization with members worldwide. Its mission is to help kids become the best they can be “by providing hope and positive vision.” Since 1911, Optimist Clubs have sponsored youth-oriented activities in their communities.

The Miami Shores Optimist Club was founded in 1939 and early on went to work on building and equipping a boys’ clubhouse in the Pinewood Park neighborhood of Miami at NW 95th Street and NW 6th Court.

By the early 1970s, according to Jerry Lance, owner of Dart Maintenance (a *BT* advertiser) and president of the Miami Shores Optimist Club from 1981-2005, the chapter wanted to do something specifically for its hometown. So it encouraged Miami Shores Village, which did not want another park to manage at the time, to turn a Village-acquired piece of property located downtown at 204 NE 94th Street into a park. The Optimists donated money to the Village and in 1973 established Optimist Park.

The chapter erected the masonry park signage and the founding stone with its bronze plaque, poured concrete walkways and perimeter sidewalks, placed seating benches throughout, and planted trees. In the early years, the chapter also maintained the park by mowing grass, trimming foliage, and doing whatever else needed to be done.

Quaint, Quiet, and Shady

Written by Janet Goodman, BT Contributor
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to sunsets