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Modello

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Community Background Report

Modello

County

Miami-Dade

Boundaries

North: Waldin Drive (Southwest 280th Street)

East: Kingman Road (Southwest 152nd Avenue)

South: Southwest 288th Street

West: South Dixie Highway/US 1

Community Type

Neighborhood

History

Modello is a neighborhood in Leisure City, a census-designated place in south Miami-Dade County. Modello began over 30 years ago when low income housing was built, with most of these homes being built between 1970 and 1979. These low income housing projects make up the majority of the housing in the neighborhood with a trailer park and a couple single family homes filling in the rest. The Modello Complex is a public housing site located at 15314 SW 284th Street. The complex was built in 1972 and has 120 units with two to five bedrooms. In the 1980s the Modello complex was infamous for its poverty, drug dealing and high crime rates. Together with Homestead Gardens, Modello began a revitalization project in 1987. Residents of the housing project organized their own PTA groups and began meeting with the area school superintendent and school administrators, they reorganized a moribund tenant council and began working with the police department on community policing initiatives and crime watch programs. Modello also received support for after-school recreation and youth tutoring programs. The Modello approach to revitalization was replicated in other communities, including South Bronx, New York and Oakland, California. Lack of funding prevented the continuation of many programs. The Modello public housing complex closed in 2010.

Community Dynamics

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Modello neighborhood has 1,962 residents. The population is 57.2% Hispanic (all races), 37.4% Black alone, non-Hispanic, 3.0% White alone, non-Hispanic and 2.5% Asian alone, non-Hispanic. The median age is 27.2 and there are currently 470 family households in the area. The total number of housing units in Modello is 971 with 704 being occupied and 267 vacant. Only 130 are owner-occupied and 841 are renter-occupied. The majority of area residents are in the low and very low income categories and the homeownership rate is at approximately 13 percent. In 2009 the median household income for the neighborhood was \$29,684. More than a third of residents are below poverty level.

Modello has no K-12 schools and children are bused out of the neighborhood either to the Leisure City K-8 Center or to South Dade Senior High School. According to The Children's Trust, Modello is one of 15 communities with a very high teen violence rate. To curb youth violence, the Children's Trust is funding the Elijah Network on a Youth Violence Prevention project in Modello and other neighborhoods in the area.

There are two parks in the neighborhood - Modello Park and the Coral Castle Museum. Modello Park offers 2 tennis courts, an afterschool program, as well as summer, winter, and spring camp for children 6-14 years of age.

Coral Castle is a major tourist attraction in the area. The museum is a stone structure created by the Latvian-American Edward Leedskalnin at the intersection of South Dixie Highway (U.S. 1) and SW 157th Avenue. From 1923 to 1951, Ed single-handedly and secretly carved over 1,100 tons of coral rock. The museum was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

Modello may benefit from ongoing revitalization efforts. Modello is within the boundaries of the Naranja Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) formed in 2002. The neighborhood is also part of the Leisure City Community Urban Center (LCCUC). These centers are designated by the county's Comprehensive Plan to develop over time into multi-use districts characterized by high quality urban design.

In June 2012 the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners approved a resolution for the development of a park on the eastern side of Modello. The 26-acre Royal Colonial Park will be located between SW 147th and SW 149th avenues on the south side of SW 280th Street. Planned amenities include a community center, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds and athletic fields. The park area adjoins the state-of-the-art Naranja Branch Library which opened in July 2009. The 15,000 square foot facility offers 32 PCs and 20 laptops in a WiFi environment.

Business Landscape:

The Modello neighborhood has only a few businesses in its boundaries. It is home to mostly small businesses including Shiver's BBQ, Pizza Hut, Subway, various auto shops, a military surplus store, Countryside Early Learning Center, Latin American International Grill, and the Dade County Farmworker Training Center.

Sources

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