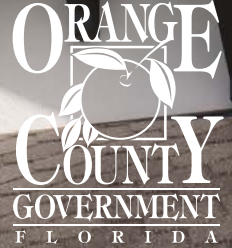


WINTER 2024 NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR



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Greetings!

It is my pleasure to bring you the 2024 winter edition of the *Neighbor to Neighbor* magazine.



This issue contains a variety of topics that keep neighbors informed and engaged. The magazine's winter edition focuses on "Help for Your Neighborhood," which provides the latest information

about the Community Outreach team and how they positively impact Orange County neighborhoods. We also have our Yard of the Quarter Program, which encourages residents to take pride in their property's appearance in a fun and easy way, sparking excitement and motivation. In addition, the "Educational Opportunities" section provides an update on Vision 2050.

Orange County is proud of the many programs provided by the Neighborhood Services Division, all designed to promote community engagement. I hope you enjoy this issue and everything we have to share about our incredible neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Demings
Orange County Mayor



Hello Neighbors,

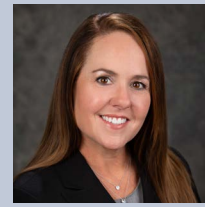
In November 2024, we successfully hosted another Orange County Community Conference. Although the conference was rescheduled from the original date because of Hurricane Milton, there was still noticeable energy in the Orange County Multicultural Center among the neighborhood and community leaders. It was truly an honor to bring such an amazing event to the Pine Hills community. An emphatic thank you

to Mayor Demings for taking part in the Chat with the Mayor workshop. I was in awe of Mayor Demings' knowledge and vulnerability during the workshop as attendees and I asked him questions. Additionally, I thank the team who planned the Community Conference for their creativity and willingness to experiment with new ideas. The team's hard work and diligence is why the conference was successful. I'm blessed to work alongside such a dedicated group of professionals endeavoring to engage and strengthen neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Jason Reynolds, AICP
Manager, Neighborhood Services Division

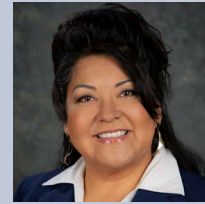
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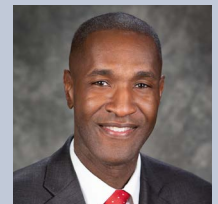
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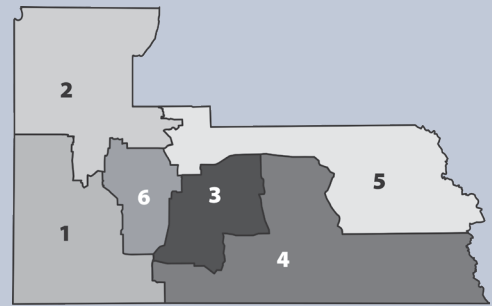
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On the Cover:
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Model



HELP FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Community Outreach Section: Engaging and Strengthening Our Neighborhoods

By **Alina Rivera Campo**, Program Supervisor, Neighborhood Services Division- Community Outreach

In the Neighborhood Services Community Outreach section, we aim to foster connections, empower residents, and enhance the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Our team works closely with community leaders, neighborhood groups, and local volunteers to implement programs that inspire positive change across the county. A great aspect of our programs is that they complement each other, so if you participate in one, you might as well explore them all! Plus, these programs are available to all Orange County residents and are completely free!

One of our great programs encompasses two engaging workshop series, both coordinated by one of our program coordinators, Teaire Lenard. The Community Connections workshop series, in partnership with the City of Orlando, covers a range of topics, including neighborhood leadership and volunteer management. Meanwhile, the Citizen Planner Academy workshop series provides education on planning for a sustainable community, the land development process, and other special topics within the planning field.

Another program worth highlighting is our Community

Cleanup program, which I am currently overseeing. This program provides a fantastic opportunity for residents to come together and address the challenge of cleaning and revitalizing public spaces. Whether you're interested in organizing and hosting a large-scale cleanup or small-scale event, we try to provide groups with all the support and materials they need to make a meaningful difference in their neighborhoods.

After cleaning up your neighborhood, what better way to keep the momentum going than by nominating a neighbor through our Yard of the Month (YOM) program, led by our program coordinator, Lauren Prekop. This exciting initiative celebrates homeowners who take pride in maintaining and enhancing their properties. Through YOM, we inspire community pride and encourage everyone to contribute to a more beautiful and welcoming environment.

This is just a glimpse of what we offer here at the Outreach section in the Neighborhood Services Division. Stay tuned for more details on upcoming initiatives designed to further enhance our community and provide even more opportunities for involvement!





National Night Out: “Meet, Connect, Unite”

By **Alvin Cruz**, *Planner III, Neighborhood Services Division*

What is National Night Out?

National Night Out is a night out against crime and is typically scheduled the first Tuesday in October. This past year’s theme was, “Meet, Connect, Unite” and helped to raise crime prevention awareness by promoting how citizens and law enforcement can work together to reduce crime. Citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations, and local officials from communities across the United States, military bases, and Canada are encouraged to meet, connect, and unite to fight crime.

The Orange County Sheriff’s Office (OCSO) and the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division (NSD) have a long-standing partnership with communities designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; generate support for, and participation in, local anticrime programs; and strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships. The intent is to send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.



How Can My Community Get Involved?

While each neighborhood is unique and has its own personality, residents typically undertake events and activities which encourage getting to know your neighbors and law enforcement officials. Some of those events or activities include displays of outdoor lights to improve visibility, front porch vigils, block parties, cookouts, parades, exhibits, flashlight walks, contests, and youth programs. Additional ways to get involved may also include beautifying a common area, planning a neighborhood clean-up, or a longer-term approach of starting a Crime Watch program. Each registered participating community receives a visit from local police and Sheriff departments who are available to share information on how to start a Crime Watch program and perform safety demonstrations.

How Can I Sign Up?

For 2025, if you are interested in registering for National Night Out, you can go to: www.ocso.com/en-us/nationalnightout. **For more information, contact Alvin Cruz at Alvin.Cruz@ocfl.net or 407-836-5895.**



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Building Stronger Communities Together: The Community Connections Workshop Series

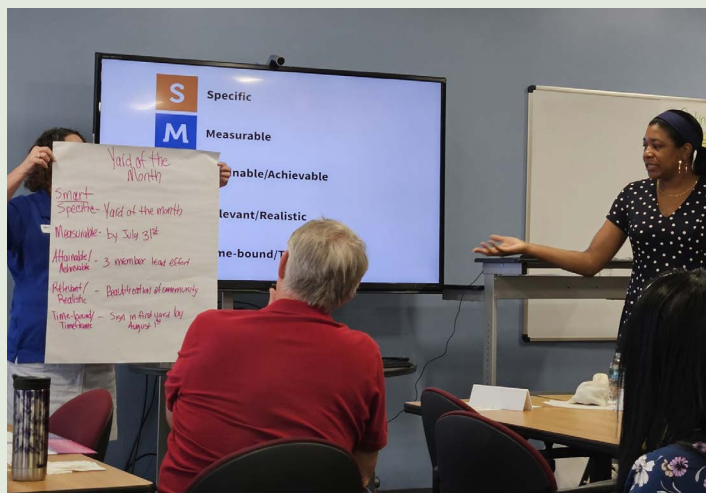
By **Teaire Lenard**, Program Coordinator, Neighborhood Services Division - Community Outreach



At Orange County Neighborhood Services, we are committed to fostering strong, engaged, and informed communities. One of the most impactful ways we achieve this is through our partnership with the City of Orlando for the Community Connections Workshop Series. This initiative reflects our shared goal of providing Orlando's residents with valuable resources, information, and tools to enhance their neighborhoods and quality of life.

The Community Connections Workshop Series, which has grown in popularity and influence over the years, offers citizens a platform to learn about topics such as neighborhood organization, leadership development, and navigating local government resources. Whether you're a resident looking to improve your neighborhood's safety or a homeowner's association seeking best practices, these workshops provide practical insights and solutions that residents can apply in their communities. The workshops also serve as a networking opportunity where residents can meet with local leaders, learn from experts, and engage with their peers to exchange ideas and success stories. This collaborative environment helps build stronger connections not only between residents but also between residents and the local government.

As we begin planning for the 2025 series, our focus remains on creating workshops that meet the needs of Orlando's growing and diverse population. With each new series, we aim to equip citizens with tools that empower them to play an active role in shaping the future of their neighborhoods. Through the ongoing partnership between Orange County and the City of Orlando, we continue to support an engaged citizenry and help build vibrant communities where residents thrive. For more information, stay connected by visiting www.ocfl.net/CommunityConnections.





Building an ADU in Orange County Now Easier Than Ever

By **Dustin Wyatt**, *Public Information Officer & Outreach Coordinator, Planning, Environmental and Development Services Department*

**READY SET
ORANGE**

ORANGE COUNTY, FL



Looking to build a Mother-in-Law suite in your backyard for an aging family member? Or maybe you want to put a long-term rental unit behind your house for an extra source of income?

A new Orange County program called Ready Set Orange is here to make it easier than ever to construct an Accessory Dwelling Unit on your property.

As part of the County's ongoing effort to address the housing affordability crisis, Ready Set Orange allows homeowners in unincorporated Orange County to choose from four pre-designed ADU floorplan models. Customers are provided with step-by-step instructions on how to



receive the floorplans free of charge and how to obtain final construction permits.

The program is designed to help homeowners save time and money.

Orange County’s Chief Planner Carter Gresham said there has been tremendous interest and momentum behind ADUs since the County began allowing them in 2019. However, since they are a fairly new concept, there has also been confusion surrounding how they work.

“There have been a lot of questions regarding where to start, how the process of building one begins” Gresham said. “Ready Set Orange is here to really kick this process into high gear.”

An ADU is a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone, detached single-family home. ADUs provide living space for family members of homeowners or can be rented out by tenants for a period of more than 180 days.

However, the program is not just for ADUs. The program

also offers four pre-designed floorplans for small single-family homes, perfect for newlywed couples looking to build a starter home.

Orange County needs more housing products like these.

“The intent of this program is to provide greater attainable housing opportunities for residents by eliminating barriers in the process,” said Olan Hill, assistant manager of the County’s Planning Division. “Our current residential market is heavy on the single-family detached, and heavy on multi-family attached, with very little supply of everything in between.”

Four of the “Ready Set Orange” floorplans available are for ADUs, ranging in size from 531 square feet to 708 square feet. The other four floorplans are for single-family homes, ranging in size from 1,150 square feet to 1,483 square feet

For more information about Ready Set Orange, visit Ready Set Orange (ocfl.net).



Planning for the future with Vision 2050

By **Dustin Wyatt**, Public Information Officer & Outreach Coordinator, Planning, Environmental and Development Services Department

As Orange County prepares for the next 30 years, it must change the way it manages growth. This strategy for the future is laid out in the County's new long-term comprehensive plan called Vision 2050.

Vision 2050 aims to build a better Orange County by focusing on five key P's.

It will:

Preserve Established Neighborhoods

Protect Natural Places and Rural Spaces

Promote Walkability

Prioritize Affordable Housing

Practice Smart, Sustainable, and Responsible Growth

Stuck in the 1950s?

Since the 1950s, Orange County has managed development based on how land is used. This outdated practice kept things like homes, shops, offices, and restaurants separate from each other. It's why we have such sprawling communities, and it's why it feels like you can't do anything without a car! Hello, traffic jams.

For Vision 2050 to be successful, the County must change its antiquated zoning rules to something a little more modern. These new development rules are called Orange Code. Orange Code is focusing more on the look, shape and architecture of buildings instead of how the buildings are used. This will create more walkable destinations where people can live, work, play and learn. **Think of Vision 2050 as the end destination and Orange Code as the road map to get us there.**

What about my neighborhood?

A key element of Vision 2050 is to direct growth to the right places. That means preserving established suburban neighborhoods, rural places and natural spaces. It also means steering most new development to the urban sector, which is where 44% of the future population growth in Orange County is expected to go. These "targeted sectors" include high population centers in unincorporated Orange County, such as areas around the I-Drive tourism corridor, near UCF, along Semoran Boulevard and near downtown Orlando.



What about the other areas?

The Vision 2050 development framework includes a Sector Map that identifies six (6) distinct areas defined by their existing characteristics and development potential. These sectors address new development, where development should be limited, and areas that should be protected or preserved.

A guiding principle in the Vision 2050 plan is to protect and strengthen existing neighborhoods while creating healthy and sustainable new communities.

When will this be voted on?

Vision 2050 is tentatively scheduled to go before the Board of County Commissioners for final adoption consideration in the spring of 2025

Learn more by visiting [Vision 2050 - Orange County's Comprehensive Plan \(ocfl.net\)](http://Vision2050-OrangeCounty.com).



GET INVOLVED



Neighborhood Goodness: Taking a Break to Appreciate

By **Lauren Prekop, MS**, Program Coordinator, Neighborhood Services Division – Community Outreach

Picture this: It’s a gorgeous, sunny day, and the streets are lined with majestic oak trees. A group of neighbors stroll over to a nearby home for a delightful celebration. There’s laughter, a delicious lunch, and lots of photos being snapped. They talk amongst each other, reminiscing about their long-lasting friendships in the community—with some having been neighbors for over 20 years!

What’s the occasion, you wonder? Their neighbor and friend had won “Yard of the Quarter”! That afternoon, while the Orange County program coordinator was there to present her with the sign and certificate, many neighbors expressed their appreciation for the program. They said they really like the program because it helps them maintain their community’s appearance. They’ve seen their community blossom and grow through the years, and they want to ensure it stays as beautiful as when they first moved in.

If you want to do the same, your community’s leadership can request a brief presentation and get the ball rolling. There are two options, varying in frequency: Yard of the Month and Yard of the Quarter. You’ll have a fun and simple way to recognize residents who take pride in their property and have standout yards...and you can choose to further celebrate them however you’d like. The main premise is to take a moment to appreciate the members of your community who make it even more beautiful. Let’s highlight the goodness together!

Please contact ocneighborhoods@ocfl.net or 407-836-4200 if you’d like to get more information.





Apply Today!

WHAT CAN YOUR COMMUNITY DO WITH

\$15,000?



WHAT CAN YOUR COMMUNITY DO WITH \$15,000?

WALL REPAIR

Has your community wall been damaged by an accident? Is it in need of a facelift?

Our grant can help!



ENTRYWAY SIGNAGE

Our grant helps your community create and maintain your neighborhood identity through improved entryway signage!



SOLAR LIGHTING

Our grant provides funding for installation of solar lighting at your entry. Lighting is a great tool to create a safe, warm and welcoming feel to your community!



APPLY TODAY!



Orange County Government
Neighborhood Services Division

"Engaging and Strengthening Neighborhoods"

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neighborhoodgrants@ocfl.net



Orange County Community Organization Award Winners

By **Tiana Davis**, *Public Relations Information Officer, Neighborhood Services Division*

In 2002, the Citizen of the Year and Community Awards were introduced to recognize residents who have given their time, energy, and resources to make Orange County one of the greatest places to live. There have been over 200 individuals who have been award recipients since the awards portion was created. This is a testament to the phenomenal leaders and individuals we have in our community. The awards continue to be one of the main events at the conference.

Additionally, Mayor Demings and Orange County's six Board of County Commissioners recognize a citizen in their district as Citizen of the Year:

Distinguished Citizen of the Year – Muriel Jones Banks is an effective advocate for her son of 33 years with a co-occurring diagnosis. When she relocated to Florida, she didn't imagine there would be an opportunity to use her experience to serve as the executive director of a family-run, family support organization in Florida. She has shared her journey with the hope of helping others who may feel they are alone.

Muriel describes her journey as "Same book, different chapter." Her journey has been uphill and surreal. Unless you have walked in her shoes, you cannot imagine what difficult decisions are made over the years, sleepless nights, being a prisoner in her own home and crying a river of tears grieving for a child that is alive. However, it has made her stronger and fearless. She helps other parents/caregivers to remind them they are not alone.

When you advocate for a loved one with a complex mental health disorder – there is no smooth road. It is rocky, with detours and roadblocks. This journey pushes you to your limits, and you must have something to fall back on. She leans on her faith, a strong support system, and unconditional love for her son to never give up.

District 1 – Hope Massey founded Hope Along the Way, a nonprofit organization that continues the charitable work of her late father, Rev. Frankie L. Massey. Under her leadership, the organization has provided food for over 1,000 residents, health fairs for 200 residents, and a variety of community services including hygiene products, job interview clothing, resume services, mental health referrals, and scholarships. Her initiatives have supported the well-being of countless residents through community feedings, health screenings, and forums addressing heart health, mental health, and grief counseling.

District 2 – Pastor Mike & Diane Bardwell have been fixtures in the Lockhart community for several decades. In addition to raising six children and taking care of residents' spiritual needs, Mike has been an active, champion of cleaning up corridors in town.

District 3 – Mildred Crespo has made significant contributions by organizing and managing a program that

provides nutritious meals to seniors, ensuring they have access to lunch on a regular basis. This initiative addresses a critical need among the elderly population, offering them not only sustenance but also a sense of community and care. Additionally, the nominee plays a vital role in connecting individuals with essential services such as medical care and legal assistance. By facilitating these connections, the nominee helps to bridge gaps in access to resources.

District 4 – Hector Bertrand has been a dedicated Traffic Engineer in Orange County for over 20 years, where he's made a lasting impact on community safety. By listening to residents' concerns and implementing thoughtful traffic solutions, Hector has helped make neighborhoods safer and more connected. His commitment to the well-being of the community has fostered trust and ensured that everyone feels heard and valued.

Hector's work contributes to a safer, more connected community where residents feel their voices are heard. The traffic solutions he has helped implement will continue to make everyday travel safer and more reliable for families, children, and commuters alike. His commitment to addressing community concerns has strengthened trust between residents and local government, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of District 4.

District 5 – The Wedgefield Action Alliance was created out of a need to help the residents of Wedgefield.

District 6 – Mr. Nicholas Solomon is the Founder & Executive Director of the King Solomon Foundation. He has contributed countless hours over the past 16 years into mentoring, developing, and motivating at-risk youth in Orange County through several programs he implemented. Nicholas Solomon community service is also prevalent in multiple organizations that impact various causes locally.

Nicholas Solomon's accomplishments have already created a long-term impact on many of the youth in Orange County who have now become productive and responsible citizens of our community. His foundations Men of Royalty Program & Owning the Future Program is now starting to impact next generations of residents he serves.

There were also winners in four other community award categories this year:

- **Monica Harris Spire Excellence in Leadership** – Kourtney Dinkins-Ackah
- **Excellence in Community Building Projects** – Lake Opal Estates/Jarette Schofield
- **Excellence in Neighborly Service** – Spring Isle HOA Social Committee
- **Clean & Attractive Neighborhood (CAN) of the Year** – Pine Hills Community Council



Orange County Government
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"Engaging and Strengthening Neighborhoods"

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