



Lake Heather Oaks

Community Newsletter

Quarter 3 – 2023

A Message from our President

Summer is flying by, and I am looking forward to some great community events we have coming up this fall. It's a great opportunity to get to know your new neighbors and catch up with old friends.

The Board has been continuing our work to make improvements to our neighborhood. Recently the entrances received a facelift, and now we are turning our attention toward the park. Robert Barnes Park is a unique aspect of our neighborhood that provides a private community space for gathering, playing, walking, fishing, and watching sunsets.

At our next few monthly meetings, we will explore options to upgrade some of the deteriorating playground equipment and plan a park clean-up day. In addition to community enhancements, the Board has been working hard to encourage individual home and yard improvements. Maintaining the homes and our neighborhood are what will keep the community valuable for years to come. Please consider attending a monthly Board meeting to stay informed and make your opinion heard. Meetings occur on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Northdale Rec Center.

- Sarah Riordan

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Save the Date!

Mark your calendars for two of LHO's most popular events - both promise to be loads of fun!

Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 27, 2023 from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm for our annual **Back to School Bash!** at Robert Barnes Park. Kids, wear your swim suits and experience the giant water slide and Florida Foam Machine, enjoy snow cones, pizza, and other snacks.

And, of course, our annual **Fall Festival** is jam packed with lots of fun and festivities! Come out on Saturday, October 14 and enjoy rocking music played by the DJ while your kids take part in everything from the multiple inflatables, to dodge ball, to face painting and more!

Boxed lunches will be available at noon for up to 185 guests. Bring a dessert to share with your neighbors.

Questions? Call Leigh Dawson at 813-245-5069.



LHO Yard of the Quarter Awarded



Congratulations to the Sparks Family – recipients of the Lake Heather Oaks **Yard of the Quarter** award! You can't help but notice their freshly painted house when you drive past 3144 Lakestone Drive. The Sparks will receive a \$50 gift card from Home Depot.

LHO Board of Directors

- Sarah Riordan, President
- Vince Cesario, Jr., Vice President
- Kevin Wilkins, Treasurer
- Mardee Powers, Co-Secretary and ARC Chair
- Leigh Dawson, Social Committee Chair
- Sherrie Elgar, Landscape & Maintenance Committee Chair
- Charlene Ponce, Communications Committee Chair
- Justin Ramedia, Park Committee Chair
- Maurna Williams, Co-Secretary and Nominating Committee Chair

Contact us!

For general information, Email us at lakeheatheroakshoa@gmail.com

If you have ARC Questions: lakeheatheroaksacc@gmail.com

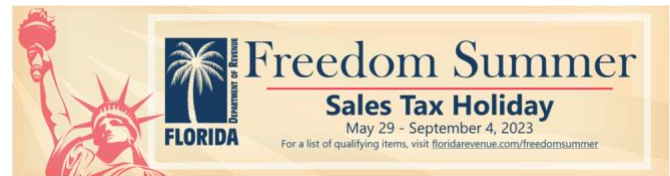


Lake Heather Oaks

The next LHO Board meeting is Wednesday, July 26.
Join us at the Northdale Rec Center at 7:00 p.m.
15550 Spring Pine Drive

Check out these Tax-free Holidays

According to the Florida Department of Revenue website, there are a number of tax-free holidays coming up for you to take advantage of.



- **Freedom Summer** – May 29 – Sept. 4
Purchase qualifying recreation and outdoor items and admissions to entertainment and cultural events. Including but not limited to fishing, camping, pool and general outdoor supplies, children's toys and outdoor athletic supplies, boating and water supplies, and admissions.
- **Disaster Preparedness** – Aug. 26 – Sept. 8
Purchase qualifying disaster preparedness supplies like flashlights, batteries, generators and coolers.
- **Back to School** – July 24 – Aug. 6/Jan. 1-14, 2024
Purchase qualifying back-to-school supplies. Save on clothing, shoes, school supplies – including backpacks and computers.
- **Tool Time** – Sept. 2-8
Purchase qualifying tools and equipment such as hand tools, power tools and safety items.
- **Energy Star Appliances** – now thru June 30, 2024
Purchase Energy Star appliances tax-free.
- **Home Hardening** – now thru June 30, 2024
This includes work that makes your house safer from hurricanes, like installing impact-resistant windows and doors.

For more information, visit:

floridarevenue.com/Pages/SalesTaxHolidays.aspx



Volunteer Opportunities Available

Can you spend some time helping the volunteers on the Board of Directors with some of the work they do to keep LHO an amazing place to live and raise our families? Help is needed to maintain the park, the landscaping and maintenance of the common areas, meeting with vendors, participating in a subcommittee to discuss revising guidelines for the architectural review committee, setting policy for a Fining Committee as allowed within Florida Statute 720, advocating on behalf of our lakes and ponds, and more.

Please check out available volunteer opportunities here: bit.ly/HelpLHO or scan the QR code from your phone.

LHO Neighbor Spotlight

When Tom and Roni Gillingham moved to the house on Valley Drive in the early nineties, Chelsea and her older brother, Scotty, were just wee toddlers. It's the only family home Chelsea remembers.

Growing up in Lake Heather Oaks during the nineties was anything but boring. There were lots of other kids in the neighborhood, so there was always someone to play with. And the trees! The trees were more abundant back then, forming spectacular tunnel-like canopies that expanded down and across the streets, sunlight sparkling through the boughs. To a little girl, riding her bike down the street felt like riding through an enchanted woodland.

Chelsea recently recalled one childhood summer when the lake at Barnes Park dried up almost completely, exposing its cracked, parched floor and the years of trash and debris that had accumulated at the bottom. True to form, the community organized a cleanup. It was a huge neighborhood effort, and to Chelsea, it was a thrill and a wonder to run across the lakebed, somehow defying nature.

She's always loved Lake Heather Oaks – for lots of reasons – and she often told her parents that she wanted to buy the house from them some day.

When it was time to go off to college, Chelsea left for Ft. Meyers to attend Florida Gulf Coast University. At the time, her mother was the caregiver for a close friend who was fighting cancer, so Chelsea came home every weekend to help take care of the house. Not long after college, she bought a place in Brigadoon – in many ways, it was like she never left home.

Enter Sean Thomas. They met on a dating app. She a Marketing maven and he an Airforce pilot. By 2020 Chelsea and Sean were engaged and looking for a home of their own. That's when her father approached her about her longtime dream of buying the family home.

"It was perfect timing," she said.

Today, Chelsea and Sean live with their blended family in the house on Valley Drive. There are fewer kids than she remembers as a child, but still, her own kids have made lots of friends in the neighborhood.

As a parent, Chelsea looks forward to the LHO community events, in part because they create a safe space for her kids to interact with other children, but also because she can share with her family the same experiences she loved as a child.

"It's cool as an adult to live in a community where you've known some of your neighbors for decades whose children you grew up with, and to also have created new, lasting friendships with other families who've moved here," said Chelsea.

Chelsea and her family enjoy spending time at the beach – or at the pool for that matter. They also share a love of exploring new places and learning new things.



Chelsea Thomas and her father, Tom Gillingham.



Above: Chelsea and Sean Thomas with their children
Below: Chelsea and Sean Thomas



Robert H. Barnes Park

Reminders:

- To reserve the park pavilion for birthday parties or family celebrations, please email lakeheatheroakshoa@gmail.com with your event date and time.
- There is no cost to reserve the park, but a \$150 clean-up fee will be imposed if not cleaned up after use.
- Parking MUST stay in the parking area/lot.
- The basketball court is NEVER to be used for parking as vehicle weight could cause cracks.
- It's a safety hazard to have cars parked in the grass and children running between and around them.
- The bathroom water is NOT to be used for drinking.



Living in a Deed Restricted Community

Since January, 2023, four houses in Lake Heather Oaks have sold for an average price of \$600,000+. This is great news for our home values and it's a testament to our overall commitment to maintaining this level of gains by adhering to the standards set forth in our deed restrictions. It takes continuous work and communication by us all, but it's why Lake Heather Oaks remains a highly sought after community. Our goal is to keep it that way by avoiding what many refer to as "the broken window effect" – the concept that each problem that goes unattended in a given environment affects people's attitude toward that environment and leads to more problems. So, if the neighborhood is the environment, for example, not maintaining a property can lead to more serious issues like falling home values, increased crime, or a complete change in the makeup of the community.

With that in mind, earlier this year, the ARC re-established a process for evaluating the neighborhood and conducted a complete walkthrough. Everyone received a letter detailing the status of their property. A very small number of homes had issues of non-compliance, half of which communicated to the LHO Board their plans for corrective action. A good many homeowners, while there were no issues of noncompliance, received suggested improvements.

Thank you to the many of you who took these suggestions in the spirit in which they were intended. As you walk around the neighborhood, the pride of ownership is evident by the number of homeowners who acted on the feedback they received. Overall, the neighborhood is looking great. Homes have been painted, sidewalks and driveways pressure washed, landscaping replaced or refreshed, roofs replaced, fences repaired, and items have been moved out of view.

As we celebrate this collective effort and what it means for our community as a whole, there is still work to be done.

Here is a list of current concerns:

- Trailers/boats parked within view
- Incomplete work/exterior improvements
- Overgrown landscaping
- Dead grass
- Vehicles parked on lawns or in the wrong direction on the street
- Inoperable vehicles in the driveway/street, up on lifts or covered with tarps
- Sidewalks not edged or inaccessible due to overgrowth or other obstructions

The ARC remains in contact with these homeowners in efforts to bring them into compliance. In addition, the Board is working with Legal Counsel to develop a plan of action, including the implementation of a Fining Structure and Fining Committee, per Florida Statutes. We have also reached out to comparable HOAs in our area to obtain their protocols and procedures, and requests for community input are coming soon. In the meantime, if you have suggestions or concerns about this process or other ARC issues, please email lakeheatheroaksacc@gmail.com

We all chose to live in a deed restricted community, and complying with these restrictions is what allows us to maintain property values, support the investments we have made in our homes, and ensure that the community continues to thrive and that it remains appealing to both current and prospective homeowners.

Let's work together to make a difference!

Exterior Home Improvement Requests

Please use this QR Code to access the form to fill out BEFORE you begin any exterior home improvements.

Or visit:

tinyurl.com/LHOexteriorimprovements.



Top 10 Fertilizer Tips from Hillsborough County Extension Service

Hillsborough County has an ordinance that limits fertilizer use during the rainy season from June 1 through September 30. The ban includes the application of fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus in unincorporated Hillsborough County. The goal of the new ordinance is to continue the County's mission of keeping contaminants out of local waters.

Here are some tips on how to choose the right fertilizer:

- The fertilizer ordinance applies to any product that contains nitrogen and/or phosphorus in the guaranteed analysis or on the label. Check labels for things to avoid, such as systemic insecticides, fungicides, and some preemergent weed killers.
- Check labels to determine the source of slow-release nitrogen or insoluble nitrogen, which must be at least 50 percent.
- Choose a fertilizer with a 2:1 or 1:1 ratio of nitrogen (first number on the bag) and potassium (third number on the bag). Potassium is a key nutrient in keeping turfgrass healthy.
- Choose a fertilizer with zero phosphorous (the second number on the bag) unless a soil test shows deficiency. Adding more phosphorous when there's enough in the soil can result in runoff, leaching, and wasted product.
- Micronutrients such as manganese may be helpful. A soil fertility test plus micronutrients can provide information about the nutrient makeup of soil.



How to safely apply fertilizer:

- Don't apply fertilizer before it rains. Most fertilizers only need to be watered in about ¼ to ½ inch, so putting it down before it rains can result in runoff and wasted product.
- Don't apply fertilizer when turf is dormant in the winter, which can stress turf the following spring when it greens up.
- Fertilize with long-term controlled-release product at the end of May, ahead of the rainy season. The grass will receive low doses of nitrogen over a period of three to four months, depending on the product used.
- When the rainy season is over, fertilize again with a product that has a more soluble nitrogen component, such as sulfur-coated urea. This will reduce the potential for the fertilizer to release nitrogen during the winter months when the ability to take up the nutrients is reduced.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn or blow them back into the landscape because they can add nutrients and replace a fertilizer application. Do not blow or direct them into roads, storm drains, or ditches, and keep a 10-foot fertilizer-free zone near water bodies.

For questions regarding fertilizer use, visit HCFLGov.net/Extension or call 813-744-5519. Residents are also invited to attend Extension Service's lawn and landscape classes.

County services

- **Permit Services** – 813-272-5600 or visit: hillsboroughcounty.org/en/government/departments/development/hillsgovhub
- **Sidewalks/Roadways** - 813-635-5400 – hillsboroughcounty.org/en/residents/property-owners-and-renters/roads-and-sidewalks
- **Animal Services** – 813-744-5660 – AnimalControl@HCFLGov.net
- **Reporting Dead Animals** (in roadways or public rights-of-way) - 813-272-5900
- **Mosquito Control** – 813-635-5400 or report online: service.hillsboroughcounty.org/311/mosquito



Join us on Facebook!
"Friend us" at Lake Heather Oaks

Need to contact the Board about neighborhood matters?
Email lakeheatheroakshoa@gmail.com

Community classified ads



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Home-based business in the neighborhood. 5-10 hrs/week. Flexible hours - \$18/hr. Attention to detail required.

If interested, please contact Jill MacAlister 813-389-0925



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SPORTS FUN!

Not sure how to celebrate your kid's big day? Sports Fun Events can help! If your child is between 3-13, Sports Fun Events will supply a coach to meet you at the park and entertain your party guests. Activities include games, relay races, tug of war, dodge ball, and much more. Each birthday party is specifically designed to fit your child's sports interests.

Visit Sports Fun Events at www.sports-fun.com or call Leigh Dawson at 813-245-5069.

Daddy Daughter Dog Walkers

Is your dog at home alone all day?

Are you busy working from home?

Are you going on vacation?

We are your dog walking neighbors (Mark & Emma) on Valley Dr and we're here to help you keep your pet happy and healthy!

Please call (813) 359-9329 to schedule or for more information.

\$10 for a 15 minute walk

\$15 for a 30 minute walk/play session

\$5 extra for each additional dog

Other pet care services available upon request

Big or small we'll walk them all!



Do you have an ad you'd like to place in the Lake Heather Oaks Community Newsletter? Send your request and pertinent information to Charlene_Ponce@Yahoo.com

