

Big Night in The Garden By Lynn Wille Fichman

The time is drawing near, and the plans are moving into high gear. Many of them have been working together for several years, and some of them are new to the game, but all the volunteers are pushing to make this the best event yet.

The Community Garden Charitable Fund's fourth annual Soiree in the Garden is set for February 26, 2010, and every aspect of the yearly fundraiser is being carefully planned and executed. Committees have been formed, sponsors are lining up, the menu has been finalized, Grammy award winning artist Nestor Torres is scheduled to perform, and the setting will once again be in the meadow at beautiful Pinecrest Gardens.

It takes an organized and dedicated team to put on an event such as the Soiree, and from promotion to clean-up many committees are needed to ensure that a flawless evening is the result of their efforts. This is a team that is moving forward with the precision of a military operation.

The Garden Fund has been in existence for only three years, but in that time they have gathered a troupe of active community leaders whose common goal is the enhancement of horticulture at Pinecrest Gardens. They appreciate the rare and unique nature of the place that is at the heart of Pinecrest; a diverse piece of property with a vast array of terrains housing natural environs that don't exist together anywhere else on earth, from the Cypress slough to the rare hardwood hammocks to the waterways to the meandering pathways through vast tunnels of tropical greenery. This group has worked tirelessly to raise funds to ensure its continued enhancement, and thus far they have made significant progress.

They have received enthusiastic support from the Village of Pinecrest citizens, as well as from the Mayor and Village Council members, and several projects have been completed in the Garden with funds that the group has raised. Thanks to their efforts there are now hundreds of orchids residing in the tree canopy, a renovated and replanted colonnade area adjacent to the Garden's meadow, Royal Poinciana trees growing near the Community Center, and the recently completed hidden garden that is now open to the public. In it a beautiful new pathway and landscaping northeast of the main entrance leads into the Garden's rare hardwood hammock section and opens onto a quiet seating area amidst very old structures designed by nature hundreds of years ago. This project was a labor of love for the members of the Garden Fund's board of directors, and with the help of the Garden's horticulturist, the support of the Village government, and the approval of Miami's Historical Review Board, this large undertaking has yielded an exceptional result. This latest addition to the Garden has received extremely positive feedback across the board.

Now that there are only weeks remaining before the big night, the word is getting out that the time to purchase tickets has arrived. The Soiree is a greatly anticipated and rare nighttime event at Pinecrest Gardens, and seating is extremely limited. For the purchase price of \$125, guests will be treated to an

open bar, silent auction, dinner catered by We're Having a Party, an extensive dessert bar, and a private concert by Nestor Torres and his band. Tables of ten are also available, and organizers say that they will be assigned on a first come first served basis. All proceeds from the event will go toward further projects in Pinecrest Gardens. For information about the Garden Fund or to purchase tickets go to www.gardenfund.org, or call 305-669-1028.