NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2026

The Country Place Chronicle

A Deed Restricted Community

THE OFFICIAL *Newsletter* OF COUNTRY PLACE

3rd ANNUAL WINTERFEST!!

For the third year in a row, we are excited to bring our community together for Winterfest!
Events like these are about more than just celebrating the season;
they create opportunities to connect with our neighbors, make new friendships,
share laughter, and build a stronger sense of community.
We hope Winterfest will continue to be a cherished community tradition
for many years to come, growing along with our neighborhood and
bringing generations of residents together.

Thank you to everyone who helps make this event
possible and to all who join us in making our
community a wonderful place to call home!

If you would like to be a vendor, please reach out to
Matt Massuto at: countryplacematt@gmail.com
The deadline for vendors to sign up is November 15th



Where: Country Place Central Park



When: December 5th, 12:00 – 4:00pm

Also, Come out and meet your newest board members –
We hope to see everyone there!



This Veterans Day, we Honor and Thank all American Veterans, living and deceased, who have served our country honorably during times of war and peace.

We recognize their courage, dedication, and sacrifices in protecting the freedoms we enjoy.

Whether through a simple "thank you for your service," a handshake, or a small act of kindness, let us show our gratitude and appreciation to those who have given so much for our nation.

Thank you!

A heartfelt thank you to Lisa Crespo, Matthew Massuto, Jenn Mitchell, and Katherine Neira for organizing such an amazing **Trunk or Treat** event! We also extend our appreciation to all of the residents who contributed by decorating their trunks, assisting with setup, directing traffic, and helping with cleanup. It was the community spirit of everyone involved that made the evening such a wonderful success!

Hanukkah December 4 - 12

Wishing all who celebrate Hanukkah a joyful **Festival of Lights** filled with peace, happiness, and special moments with family and friends. Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish holiday celebrating faith, hope, and the triumph of light over darkness. Families celebrate by lighting the menorah, enjoying traditional foods, playing games, and spending time together. May this season bring light and warmth to our entire community!





LIVE AT THE CENTER

■ THINGS TO DO

(813) 922-8167 • CarrollwoodCenter.org



Jazz WITH JIM

HORNS & HALOS
November 1 • 2 pm
Cypress Creek Jazz Band & Tampa Spiritual Ensemble

THE JAZZ DIRECTIONS
November 6 • 7:30 pm

Holiday Trees
Display & Auction

A HOLIDAY TRADITION!
November 6 - December 13
During Operating Hours; Free Admission



PIANIST FRANZ MANTINI
November 14 • 7 pm
Haydn, Schubert & Liszt





'27 CLASS REGISTRATION OPENS
November 18 • 10 am
Member registration will open on Nov. 13

IMPROV SHOW
November 20 • 7 pm
with Tampa Metropolitan Improv

Have a Jolly Time!

Carrollwood Village Phases II & III present

HOLIDAY Village

Carrollwood Village

DECEMBER 5
11 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Holiday Village is a family-friendly event featuring holiday-themed crafts, activities, food trucks, music, decorations, pictures with Santa, and more!

Enjoy live entertainment with Ted and the Doo Shots, New Horizons, Music Box, the Carrollwood Winds and the Carrollwood Commiunity Chorus!

PHASES II & III

(Free Admission & Parking)

IN THE GALLERY

Student, Faculty & Member Show presented by The Gallery; Artwork by Edgar Carabio, Mahogany Kids Fine Arts Foundation, *Liberated Primate* by Mathew McCabe; *Give Thanks, Give Back: A Charity Exhibit* by Hanna Rachocka (online)

Join us for the art reception on November 13 at 5:30 p.m.!

DISCOVER

CARROLLWOOD CULTURAL CENTER

President's Message • *Matthew Banas • countryplacehoapresident@gmail.com*

A Year of Progress, A Community Moving Forward

Dear Country Place Neighbors,

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since I had the honor of becoming President of the Country Place Homeowners Association. Looking back, I'm proud of what we've accomplished together, but even more encouraged by the positive direction our community is heading.
When I took office, my priorities were simple: transparency, communication, accountability, and community.

I believed that by listening to one another, encouraging participation, and treating each other with respect, we could make meaningful changes. And together, that's exactly what we've begun to do. Over the past year, we've doubled the frequency of Board meetings, completed state-mandated Board training, strengthened financial oversight, and established four resident committees focused on Finance, Communications, Events, and Sections 3A and 6. We've also worked to improve homeowner representation and address longstanding governance challenges.

One particularly meaningful improvement has been our management relationship. By listening to residents' concerns and making a change in property management personnel, we've helped create a more positive and responsive experience. Our new property manager, Sophia, has been a wonderful addition, and I sincerely appreciate her professionalism, enthusiasm, and dedication to our community.

We've also enjoyed wonderful opportunities to reconnect through events like Winterfest, Spring Fest, and our Ice Cream Social. These gatherings remind us that Country Place is more than a collection of homes. It's a neighborhood filled with people who care about one another. I'm especially grateful to the volunteers who generously give their time and energy to make these events possible.

But perhaps our greatest accomplishment isn't something we can measure in meetings, policies, or projects. It's the renewed spirit of Country Place. More neighbors are getting involved, conversations are becoming more constructive, and trust between homeowners and their Association is growing. We won't always agree, but we can disagree respectfully while remembering that we all want the same thing**: a neighborhood we're proud to call home.**

I'm also excited to welcome our 2026 Board of Directors: Tina Cecchini Rhodes (Vice President), Matthew Massuto (Treasurer), Tania Figueredo (Secretary), and Directors Sam Hart, Donna Branch, and Sean Phelps. Thank you to everyone who participated in our election, stepped forward to serve, and contributed to our progress this past year.

As we look ahead, there's still plenty to accomplish. My commitment remains the same: to listen, communicate openly, lead with integrity, and always work toward what's best for Country Place.

The greatest progress we've made isn't just in how our Association operates, but in how we're learning to work together as neighbors again. **Thank you for making Country Place a community I'm proud to serve**.

PRESIDENT
Matthew Banas
VICE PRESIDENT
Tina Rhodes
SECRETARY
Tania Figueredo
TREASURER
Matthew Massuto
DIRECTORS
Donna Branch, Sam Hart, Sean Phelps
COMMUNITY ASSOC. MANAGER
Greenacre Properties, Inc.
Sophia Alvarez
4131 Gunn Highway
Tampa, FL 33618
ph: 813-936-4123
Salvarez@greenacre.com
Portal:
http://home.greenacre.com/login

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday of month
Time: 7:00 PM @ Greenacre

NEWSLETTER CONTENT IDEAS
CPTaniaF@gmail.com

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IN EMERGENCY DIAL 911

- TECO Power Outage: **https://outage.tecoenergy.com/**
- TECO Power Outage: **(877) 588-1010**
- TECO Street Light Out: **https://www.tampaelectric.com/forms/residential/streetlightout/**
- TECO Street Light Out: **(813) 223-0800**
- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Non-Emergency: **(813) 247-8200**
- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Main: **(813) 247-8000**
  Master Deputy J. Wolfe / ABN #227549
  District 1: Community Resource Deputy
  Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
  Work Mobile: 813-546-1555
  Office: 813-247-0600
  jwolfe@teamhcso.com



- Hillsborough County Public Utilities Department Customer Service: **(813) 307-1000**
- Frontier Communications: **877-599-1870**
- Spectrum Customer Support: **(833) 949-0036**
- Report an issue with the Common Areas/Entrances managed by the Country Place Maintenance District: **CountryPlaceSMD@gmail.com**
- HCPRC (Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center): 813-744-5660 (Injured stray dogs or cats, affordable spay/neuter)
- HSTB (Humane Society of Tampa Bay): 813-876-7138
  (homeless dogs or cats, affordable spay/neuter)
- VEG (Veterinary Emergency Group): 813-265-4043 (Injured dogs, cats, birds, squirrels…)

Country Place Maintenance District

Thank You Country Place

Your YES Vote and What Happens Next

The Country Place Special Maintenance District Trustees would like to extend a sincere THANK YOU to the homeowners who supported the increase in our annual assessment from $50 to $75 per parcel during the August 2026 election. This was an important step toward securing the future of our District, and we are grateful that residents recognized the need for additional funding. After all, the annual assessment has remained unchanged since the 1980s, while the costs of electricity, landscaping, irrigation, repairs, and general maintenance have continued to rise. We are excited about what this increase will eventually allow us to accomplish. However, we also want to explain how the process works and, more importantly, **when the additional funding will actually become available.**

Why Won't We See the Additional Funding Right Away?

Each July, the Trustees are required to prepare a budget and submit the annual assessment information to Hillsborough County, including the properties within the District and the amount to be assessed. In July 2026, we submitted our budget and assessment information based on the existing $50 per parcel. The referendum approving the increase did not take place until August 2026, after that annual submission had already been completed. As a result, when homeowners receive their property tax bills later this year, the Maintenance District assessment will remain at $50. The newly approved $75 assessment will not appear on those bills.

So, When Does the Increase Take Effect?

Before July 2027, the Trustees will publish the required newspaper notice informing District homeowners of the proposed increase to the $75 assessment approved by voters. In July 2027, the Trustees will prepare the next annual budget and submit the updated assessment information to Hillsborough County, reflecting the $75 per parcel. The District anticipates receiving much of that additional revenue as property taxes are paid in November and December 2027 and January 2028. In other words, **although the increase was approved in August 2026, the additional funding will not begin reaching the District until late 2027, with collections continuing into 2028.**

What Does This Mean for Our Community?

For now, we must continue operating within our existing budget. That means prioritizing essential maintenance and repairs while postponing other projects and improvements that our limited funding simply cannot support. We know there are areas throughout the District that could benefit from additional attention, including entrance signs, lighting, landscaping, and irrigation systems. These are all important, and we look forward to having greater financial flexibility to address them. However, the additional revenue must first be collected, and any planned improvements must be carefully considered as part of the District's budget. We cannot commit funds we have not yet received, nor can we address every need at once. The Trustees will continue evaluating priorities, balancing immediate maintenance needs with longer-term improvements, and making responsible decisions about how these additional funds are spent.

A Positive Step Toward the Future

The YES vote represents a meaningful investment in the future of Country Place. It gives the District an opportunity to move beyond years of operating with extremely limited resources and begin planning for improvements that have had to take a back seat to essential maintenance. We are genuinely excited about the opportunities ahead, but we also recognize that progress will take time. Thank you again to the homeowners of Country Place for your support, your patience, and your confidence in the Trustees. We look forward to putting these additional resources to good use as they become available.

COUNTRY PLACE Maintenance District

The Country Place Maintenance District was created and purposed to manage and maintain the common areas and property of Country Place. This includes all areas of ingress and egress to our community. Signage, landscaping, mowing, mulching and other misc. maintenance functions are overseen by this Board.

TRUSTEE Chuck Urbinek

TRUSTEE Donna Schramer

TRUSTEE Tina Rhodes

PRESIDENT Darrel Spacone

VICE PRESIDENT Matthew Banas

SECETARY Keith Colini

TREASURER Chris Rhodes

https://www.countryplace.mydistrictwebsite.com

Country Place Maintenance District
3853 Northdale Blvd, P.O.Box 282
Tampa, FL 33624

Meetings: 2nd Monday of each month
Meeting time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
Meeting location:
15546 Hooting Owls Place
countryplacesmd@gmail.com



Please Support Our Community Newsletter!

Our community newsletter is made possible by the generous support of the advertisers who help fund each publication. As we face the possibility that this may be our last issue, we encourage everyone to show their appreciation and support our newsletter. **If you own a business, please consider advertising**. Every advertisement makes a difference and helps keep our community connected and informed. In return your community will be supporting your business! Let's come together to support those who support us and help keep our newsletter going! See advertising info on left.



Country Place Park News

West Park Selected for the Hillsborough Hiking Spree! If you've visited West Park recently, you may have noticed new signs for the Hillsborough Hiking Spree! We're happy to share that West Park has been recognized for being a clean, well-maintained park and will be included in the Spree from **November 1 through March 31.** You may see more visitors, as hiking and walking enthusiasts stop by to enjoy some exercise and nature right here in our community.

We are very grateful to everyone who finds the time to participate in our quarterly park cleanups and help keep our parks looking beautiful throughout the year. This recognition is something we can all be proud of!



***For More Information:** Visit the park information boards located in the shelters at West Park and Central Park or scan the QR code provided to learn more about the Hiking Spree and other participating parks.

***Upcoming Park Cleanup Dates: (**All cleanups take place on Saturdays beginning at 8:30am and typically last 1–2 hours)

2026: November 7

2027: January 2, April 3, July 10, and October 2

Everyone is welcome! Your help makes a difference in keeping our parks clean and enjoyable for all.

***Join Our Parks Facebook Group!** For park updates and cleanup reminders contact our West Park Advocate, **Donna Schramer**, through Facebook Messenger to join our CP Parks Facebook Group.

Thank you for helping make Country Place a wonderful place to live!



November 8th – Diwali is part of a festival that spans five distinct days, each with its own specific traditions and meaning. It is the primary day of the festival and is a joyful holiday celebrated by millions of people around the world, especially in India. Known as the **Festival of Lights**, it symbolizes the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and hope over despair. Celebrations often include colorful decorations, glowing lamps, family gatherings, and sharing sweets. Diwali reminds us of the importance of kindness, togetherness, and new beginnings—values we can all appreciate in our community!



Kwanzaa is a weeklong celebration honoring African American culture, heritage, family, and community. Observed from **December 26 through January 1**, it celebrates seven principles, including unity, creativity, responsibility, and faith. It is celebrated by people from a range of African countries and their descendants. A Kwanzaa ceremony often includes performances of music and drumming, a reflection on the Pan-African colors of red, green and black, discussion of African history, and the lighting of candles. The week of celebrations ends with a feast and the exchange of gifts.

May this season bring joy, togetherness, and appreciation for the traditions that enrich our community. Wishing all who celebrate, a meaningful and happy Kwanzaa!



Expert Digestive Care for Lasting Relief

Heartburn, also known as acid reflux, can happen from time to time. But when it becomes frequent, it may be gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), a condition that can affect your esophagus, teeth, voice box and lungs.

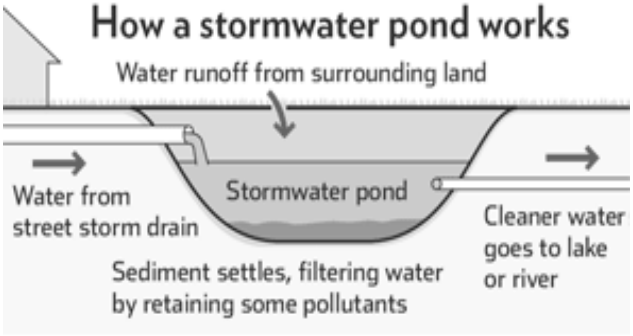
At AdventHealth, our digestive specialists use advanced diagnostics to understand what's causing your symptoms and create a personalized plan for relief — so you can get back to enjoying life's simple pleasures.

Take our free GERD assessment today.
RefluxExperts.com

AdventHealth
Carrollwood

4427758117

Stormwater Ponds • Daniel Caruso



Hello! My name is Daniel and I guess I'd say I am the resident pond expert. Let's talk about these waterways – these are actually called "stormwater ponds". A stormwater pond is an engineered basin designed to manage runoff generated by heavy rainfall, particularly from impervious surfaces like roads, roofs, and parking lots. Our ponds act as settling basins, allowing suspended sediment, trash, and heavy particulates to fall to the bottom before the water discharges. Ultimately, stormwater ponds protect surrounding infrastructure while improving the overall water quality entering local watersheds and natural water bodies – serving to protect our natural habitats for native species while also serving as a semi-urban refuge for our local wildlife. Professional maintenance is absolutely necessary to ensure stormwater function – we don't want any flooding, and we want to protect what native habitat we have left**. It's real biology, physics, and chemistry at work!** – and that is why we want to leave the task to professionals. Unlike your pool, the downstream consequences of amateur mistakes will affect much more than just your lot. They affect the whole neighborhood and every piece of the watershed connected to our ponds.

*For any general questions concerning stormwater ponds contact me, your CP neighbor Daniel Caruso at: (727)252-6994

Post Rain Recovery / Pre-Winter Checklist

With cooler weather arriving, home and landscaping tasks shift from normal maintenance to winter preparation.



-**Pressure wash** mold and algae build-up from siding and PVC fences and remove dirt and embedded debris from driveways caused by summer rain and humidity.
-**Inspect turf** for bare spots and re-seed or patch with sod.
-**Clear out summer annuals** getting ragged from heat and consider cold hardy options.
-**Clean gutters** of any leaves or organic debris dropped during late-season tropical systems.
-**Complete a deep weed-pulling sweep** through your flower beds and re-edge all concrete paths to maintain clean proper ty borders through winter.
-**Replace burnt-out bulbs** in your garage sconces and landscape lighting to keep the home well-lit.
***While Tampa winters are mild, sudden temperature drops can threaten your curb appeal.**
-**Freeze Protection:** Keep frost blankets or burlap on hand for cold snaps. Avoid leaving plastic tarps or coverings over your plants for extended periods.

Weekend Project - Driveway Maintenance



Pressure Washing driveways and adjoining sidewalks
Frequency: Clean concrete surfaces every 6 to 18 months due to heavy humidity, seasonal rain, and shade that accelerate mold and algae growth.

Surface Protection: Professional services use surface cleaner attachments and adjusted pressure to protect standard concrete or delicate paver joint sand.

For homeowners doing DIY driveway maintenance, the biggest challenges are the intense humidity, heavy summer rains, and rapid organic growth like black algae (Gloeocapsa magma) and moss.
Here is how to effectively maintain your driveway and keep it clean longer:
1. Master the Chemical Pre-Treatment
Pressure alone will not keep your driveway clean for long because it leaves micro-roots of algae alive in the concrete pores.

- Use the Right Solution: Mix a 1:1 solution of outdoor liquid chlorine bleach and water in a pump sprayer. Add a few drops of liquid dish soap to help it stick.
- Apply First: Spray the dry driveway with this solution and let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes.

Keep it Wet: Do not let the bleach dry on the concrete; mist it lightly with water if it starts evaporating too fast in the Florida sun.
2. Choose and Use the Right Equipment
Using just a spray wand can leave permanent "zebra stripes" on your concrete and take hours.

- Rent or Buy a Surface Cleaner: Attach a 12-inch to 15-inch surface cleaner to your pressure washer. It hovers over the concrete, cleaning a wide path evenly and up to four times faster.
- Match the PSI: Ensure your pressure washer outputs at least 2,500 to 3,000 PSI to adequately power a residential surface cleaner.
- Protect the Surface: Keep the nozzle or surface cleaner moving constantly to avoid etching permanent lines into the concrete.

3. Treat Specialized Stains Properly
Tampa's frequent downpours and irrigation systems create specific stain types that regular washing won't fix.

- Fertilizer & Irrigation Rust: Use a specialized oxalic acid-based cleaner (like F9 BARC or Rust-Oleum Rust Remover) to dissolve orange irrigation or fertilizer stains. Bleach will not fix rust.
- Oil & Vehicle Fluids: Treat fresh oil stains immediately with cat litter or baking soda to soak up the liquid, then scrub with a heavy-duty degreaser and a stiff nylon brush before pressure washing.
- Acorn & Leaf Tannins: Oak trees drop heavy debris in Tampa. Treat dark brown tannin stains with a concentrated bleach application after the main wash.

4. Preventative Maintenance & Timing

- Post-Treat: After washing and rinsing, spray a very light coat of your bleach-water mixture over the clean concrete and let it dry without rinsing. This kills remaining microscopic spores and keeps the driveway white longer.
- Best Time to Clean: Aim to do a deep clean in late October or November (after the heavy rainy season ends) and a light touch-up in April before the summer humidity sets in.
- Watch the Runoff: Always pre-wet surrounding lawns and landscaping with fresh water before and after applying chemicals to prevent burning your grass or plants.

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Happy November, Country Place! As a fellow resident and your local real estate expert, I don't just look at the MLS numbers—I track what they actually mean for our neighborhood's home values. If you're curious about how the market is shifting this holiday season, here's a look at what's happening right outside our front doors.

What Stands Out

When we compare the last couple of months—and look back at where we were this time last year—a clear theme emerges heading into the holidays: our market is slowing its pace, even as home values hold steady.

The headline this month is patience. Homes are taking noticeably longer to sell—now averaging 52 days, up from 44 in August and the first time all year we've crossed the 50-day mark. Even so, values are holding firm: the average sale price is essentially flat at about $459,000, price per square foot recovered to nearly $275, and the lowest sale came in at $410,000—one of the highest floor prices we've ever recorded. Thirteen homes closed, a healthy rebound from the summer's slow stretch, while inventory eased back to 11. For perspective, this time last year our average sale was nearly identical at about $461,000, but homes were selling in 41 days—so the real shift heading into the holidays isn't price, it's pace.

Country Place Market Stats

*(Data comprised from CP homes sold over the last 90 days ending on 10/12/2026. **Highlighted items** indicate a significant change since our last update).*

- **High Sale Price:** $530,000
- **Low Sale Price: $410,000** *(Up from $346,500 in August)*
- **Average Sale Price:** $458,654
- **Average Price per SqFt: $274.91** *(Up from $260.25 in August)*
- **Average Days on Market: 52** *(Up from 44 days in August)*
- **Homes Sold: 13** *(Up from 7 closed sales in August)*
- **Pending:** 10
- **Currently on the Market: 11** *(Down from 16 active listings in August)*

BONUS: In This Season of Giving

As the holidays arrive and our neighborhood lights begin to glow, I want to set the usual market talk aside for a moment. This has been a hard year for many families, and behind the cheerful decorations are neighbors quietly carrying real burdens. The best part of living in Country Place has always been that we look out for one another—so this season, I'd gently encourage all of us to find the small ways we can *make someone else's spirits bright*: check on a neighbor who lives alone, add a few items to the food-drive bin, set an extra place at your table, or simply offer a warm hello and a real 'how are you?' None of it costs much, but to the right person at the right moment it can mean everything. From my family to yours, thank you for making this neighborhood feel like home, and wishing you a warm, bright, and peaceful holiday season.

Joe Benson
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