

July 2018

COMMUNITY MOMENTS

A REALMANAGE PUBLICATION



Mark Burell
Community Association Manager
RealManage Dallas

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

First, I would like to take this moment to express my deepest gratitude that you have chosen RealManage as your management provider. Managing an association is a big task, which we do not take lightly and have endeavored to do our utmost to provide you with the best service possible and help the board and community achieve their goals.

We are past the halfway mark of 2018 and in the thick of the busiest part of the year for most community associations. Amenity programming, repairs and planning for 2019 budgets are in full swing. At this juncture in the year, it is the optimal time for community managers and board members to sit down and have a conversation about how the community is progressing with the goals set for 2018, what changes could be implemented for next year, and outlining the best route forward.

As always, we welcome your feedback regarding the service you are being provided. Please feel free to send your comments to clientsatisfaction@realmanage.com. Have a wonderful July!



Chris Ayoub
President, RealManage

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Editor: Amanda Causey | Design: Avereé Chaloupka
Contributors: Daneen Reinke & Holly Bunch
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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Mark Burell

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGER - DALLAS

We are proud to announce the newest Community Association Manager to our Dallas/Ft. Worth team, Mark Burell. From day one, Mark has been eager to learn our system and processes in order to dive into his challenging portfolio with the determination of delivering the best level of service to our clients.

Mark brings with him three years experience in the community association management industry. In addition, he has worked in real estate, sales and property management for the past 25 years as well as 30 years of software development. Mark has also served on various community boards for 30 years in the California area.

So far he says he appreciates the support from other associates as he continues to learn the CiraNet system, and hopes to provide excellent service to our clients and represent the RealManage brand in a positive way!



Written by *Kevin McDonald*
Director of Community Association Management



It is an honor to shine a spotlight on Catherine Bennett, a board member in the RealManage - Tampa market board member, in our Community Moments magazine. Having only taken over as president of the Lakewood Ridge Estates Homeowners Association, Inc. in the last six months, Catherine has been instrumental in helping to turn around the image of her community. Hillsborough County rewarded her efforts recently with the 2018 Neighborhood Improvement Award in May.

Catherine moved into the community in Brandon, Florida, in May of 2017. She quickly noticed that the community was in a state of need, having issues with juvenile vandalism from neighboring areas, a vacant lot adjacent to the community that was in dire need of attention, and a perceived lack of action on behalf of the board coupled with poor homeowner attendance meetings. Catherine is no stranger to the work needed to run a community, having held numerous positions in community association management over the last six years and rose from an assistant concierge staffer to a general manager. With her knowledge and experience, Catherine ran for the board, was elected, and was ultimately chosen to be the board president.

The first step towards progress is having a plan that addresses the issues faced by the community. Catherine, over the course of three months, worked daily with her Community Association Manager, Valarie Sharrow, to move forward on projects. With the board giving clear guidance on what they would like to see, everyone moved forward together with fencing off the vacant lot, repairing and cleaning the damaged walls and fencing surrounding the community, and cleaning up the signs. To safeguard their work, they had a handyman screw in the fence slats to ensure they couldn't be easily dislodged again while simultaneously having the local Sheriff's department patrol the area to dissuade any juveniles from returning to damage the fence again. To cap it off, they sought out a better landscaping vendor that would keep the community better maintained to their standards. When asked about the work they accomplished, Valarie said, "It's easy to move forward with vendors on projects when you have a president that is as motivated as Catherine and a board that is decisive and works well together towards a common goal."

The results of the board and management team's effort have yielded immediate benefits. Not only does the community have a better curb appeal now, but homeowners are participating with greater attendance

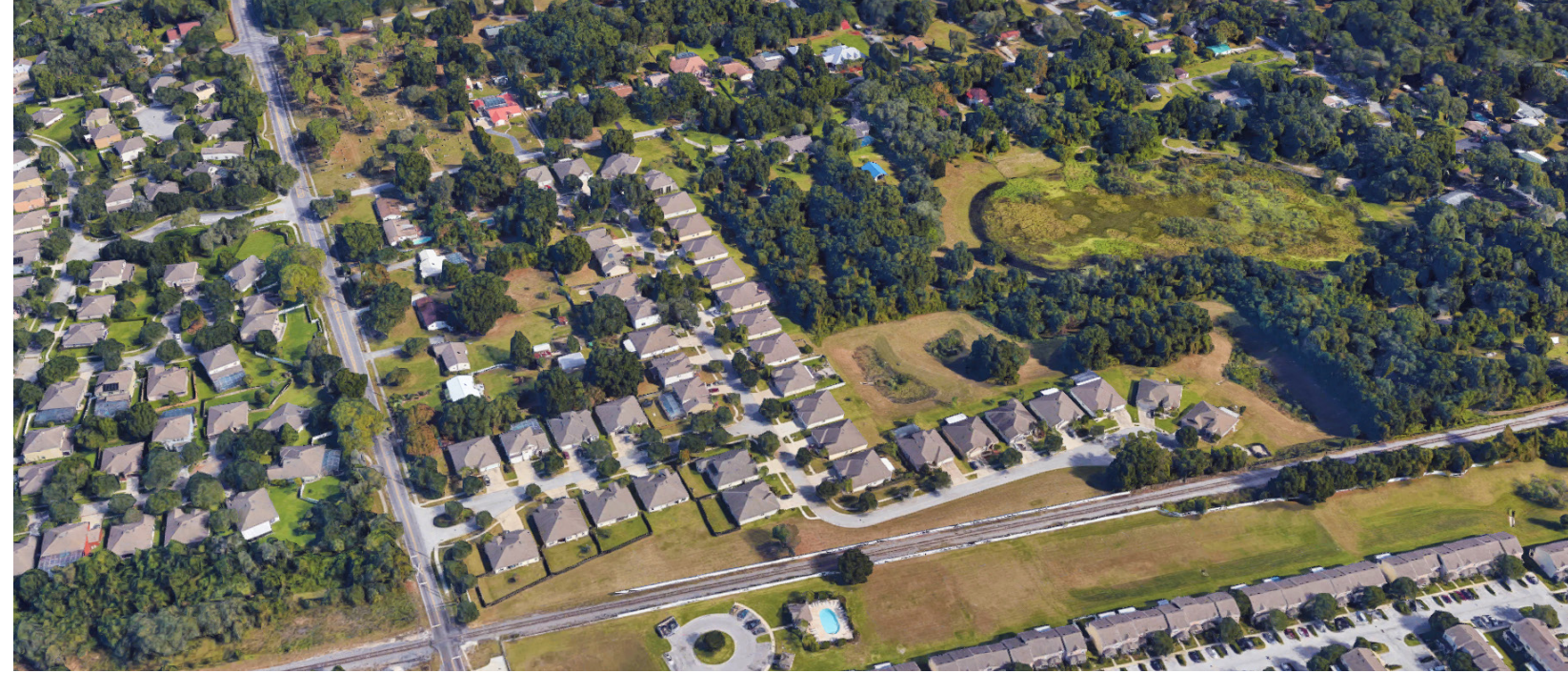
BOARD SPOTLIGHT Catherine Bennett LAKEWOOD RIDGE ESTATES - TAMPA



which has enabled the community to form a violations committee, which is now addressing the standards in the community with greater efficiency. Regarding what lies next for the community, Catherine said that she would like to see a monthly or quarterly newsletter in addition to adding some irrigation to the common areas. She has plans for how the county can help with specialized grants and it is clear that she is not finished with making her community a better place to live.

You can see the video created by Hillsborough County, Florida, documenting the work done by the board and management team at: <https://bit.ly/2z3Cu00>

Written by Joseph Hansen
Division President - DFW & Florida



Federal Laws Affecting Community Associations:

A community association derives its legal obligations from several sources:

- 1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND CASE LAW**
- 2. LEGAL DOCUMENTS UNIQUE TO THE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**
- 3. LENDER REQUIREMENTS:**
 - i.e., requirements set by secondary mortgage institutions such as FHA, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, etc.
- 4. STANDARDS SET BY PROFESSIONAL BODIES:**
 - i.e., auditing standards set by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).

There are many federal laws that impact community associations. Failure to comply with these regulations can result in significant penalties against the association. Many states have additional laws that may add another layer of compliance requirements. Provisions most relevant to community association operations include:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)
- Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA)
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA)
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act of 1940
- U.S. Bankruptcy Code
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Fair Housing Act

Community Associations are well advised to find a resolution that protects the association's interest while addressing individual complaints. Sometimes it is more important to resolve a problem amicably than to stand firm, especially when the disagreement has the potential to escalate into a discrimination allegation. Whenever in doubt, consult with your legal professional.



7 Block Party/Community Ideas For A HOA Summer Party

It is summertime and many condominium and homeowners associations across the country are looking to throw a nice summertime get-together for everyone in their community to enjoy to appreciate. The challenge for many HOAs is figuring out what type of party or event the residents in your community will enjoy. One of the major keys to the event being a success will be that the event is well-attended by those living in the HOA's specific community.

From the classic cookout to a pool party or a family fun day, the options of what type of event is appropriate are really endless. When deciding what, exactly, is an appropriate event for your community association will largely be determined based on the lifestyle the people in your specific community choose to live. The following are seven great ideas for events that a homeowners association can hold to help their residents and local community celebrate summer.

1. PLAN A COOKOUT EVENT

Planning a classic cookout is always a great way to get everyone in the community excited for summer. Nothing will scream summertime like burgers and hot dogs complete with the fix-ins (i.e. ketchup, mustard, relish, onions, etc.) with some potato salads, macaroni salads, pasta salads, baked beans, salad, and corn on the cob to go along with it. Wash it all down with a variety of beverages including ice waters, ice tea, or even soda. Perhaps add some entertainment such as a local band in which someone in the community plays or even some family activities and games that are able to include everyone. It will make for a fun time to socialize with neighbors, enjoy some great food, and get to catch up on recent events in the community.

2. MAKE IT A POOL PARTY

If your community has a pool, throwing a pool party can be a great way to start off the summer. Accompanied by classic cookout foods (mentioned above), this can make a great social setting for a summer get-together for everyone in the local community to gather and cool down, especially if it's a hot day.

3. PLAN A SCAVENGER HUNT

Plan some sort of scavenger hunt that has people team up into small groups of 6-8 people (make sure to include kids if a lot of people in the area have them) and requires them to work together to solve a "mystery" or to follow a series of prompts to help them find the end destination. Just be sure to keep the scavenger hunt to public property and ensure that no one's yard or home is a stomping grounds for the general population unless you get their approval to use their property beforehand. End the entire scavenger hunt at the common spot that was determined with either ice cream or a fun treat to reward everyone who was involved.



4. HAVE AN OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT

An outdoor movie night is a wonderful way to bring everyone together to relax under the beautiful summer sky. If anyone has or can rent a projector and a screen to play it on, everyone can lie out on the grass or sit in the lawn of the local park or common area in lawn chairs to enjoy the movie. Whether it has sound or just a black-and-white motion picture, providing popcorn and sodas as well as other light munchies can make a great movie night for everyone to get together and enjoy the warmer weather that is coming as the summer is rung in.

5. CREATE A FAMILY GAME DAY

If your community association is popular with families including younger children, a carnival or fair-like atmosphere will be a huge hit with the little ones. Parents will love there being something for the kids to do while they are out enjoying each other's company. Providing fun outdoor games for kids of all ages along with small "prizes" or gift bags for everyone participating can make it a fun-filled day for everyone. Top it off with some time for the parents to socialize and the neighbors to get together and talk over some refreshments and drinks and it will be a great time for everyone.

6. HOST A SPORTS DAY

Host a neighborhood or community sports day which everyone can participate in. Whether you prefer to do something like the family Olympics, or invite everyone out to use the community's various sporting facilities such as a golf course or bocce courts, tennis courts, shuffleboard facility, horseshoe games, or other local facilities, ensure to include something for everyone. An open field also makes the perfect place for a baseball, softball, kickball, flag football, or soccer game/tournament event for everyone in the community. Organize different games for different ages and genders at different times throughout the day. If room permits, possibly running more than one division at a time works also. Moreover, when you are done provide snacks and drinks or even dinner to your hungry "athletes" who worked hard all day to make the game day fun and successful.

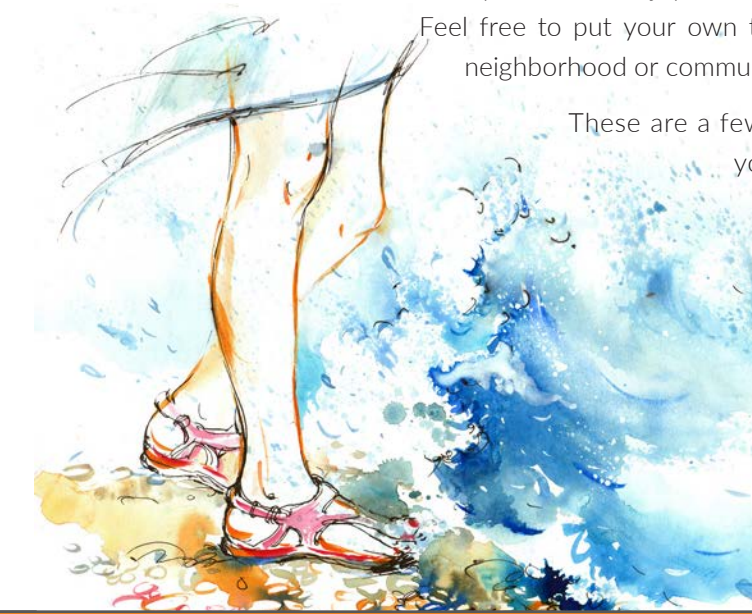
7. HOST A BONFIRE EVENING

Whether you choose to have songs or stories around the bonfire, roast some hot dogs, s'mores, snacks, and drinks and invite everyone out to enjoy a bonfire and a great evening with their neighbors from their community.

Feel free to put your own twist on the bonfire and add some activities that people in your neighborhood or community will enjoy to make the event appealing to everyone.

These are a few great ideas for some awesome community-wide activities that you can host to help your community association celebrate the summer season. Depending on your local population and their lifestyles and interests, different activities mentioned above may appeal more to certain communities than others.

These are some starting points for some great activities that everyone can enjoy. Be resourceful and customize each idea to fit the needs of your own community to ensure everyone has a great time socializing with their neighbors and getting out in their local communities throughout the summer season.



8 Tips For Setting Up A Community Garden

Community gardening is a trend that is growing in many communities as more and more people are seeking healthy eating alternatives and to do it in more affordable ways. This has led to many homeowner associations establishing community gardens that will produce fresh produce for everyone in the community to enjoy. The following are eight tips to keep in mind when you are implementing a community garden within your community association to ensure that everyone gets to enjoy the garden.

HOA Must Vote On & Pass A Gardening Regulation:

A board of directors that seeks to implement a community gardening program will have to set forth the rules to regulate and keep the program running seamlessly. Legal bounds should also be set to ensure that the program runs smoothly and does not create a possible conflict among residents or with the association's covenants or rules in place in the community. Boards should consider seeking the expertise of their legal counsel when necessary.

Request Community Volunteers

Set up a community volunteer day to allow residents who are interested to come out with their hoes, rakes and hands to set up the initial plots of land that everyone will be able to garden. Involving the whole community in making the garden plots can help everyone come together to complete a project for the greater good of their community. It also saves the community money in having to hire landscapers to create the entire gardening site from scratch, which helps stretch every dollar as far as possible to benefit the residents of the community.

Set Up Basic Rules That Everyone Has To Follow:

The community association should create a set of rules and regulations that will need to be followed by everyone when they are working on their plot of land in their community-based garden. Creating rules and regulations to which everyone is held to helps everyone ensure they are treated fairly and that their energy, work, and effort are protected on the patch of land they have been assigned (e.g. that someone else won't come and take their produce or ruin their plants).

Consider Raised Soil Beds & Decorative Fencing:

Raised soil beds will generally blend into the land better and not create as much of an "eyesore" to the local community landscape while still allowing residents to enjoy the fruits (and vegetables) of their labor and the work that they put in while working in their gardens. Also, consider some sort of fencing that, while decorative, can serve to keep out any animals that may otherwise try to get in and eat your resident's crops while they are not present. Remember, the fencing can look nice and keep animals out, because let's face it, it's never a nice surprise to come back to your garden and find out some pest ate your crops!

Create Individual Plots Of Land:

Most of these gardens are on common, public grounds within a homeowner association-controlled area. Assign each dwelling (home, townhome, condo, villa, etc.) an equal-sized piece of land and the basic tools to work the land and which plants they choose to grow. In some instances, but not all, money for the tools and the seeds to plant may be provided by the association, but it is up to each individual household if they wish to utilize the land and they may plant which foods they wish on that specific parcel of land assigned to that dwelling.

Residents May Help Each Other

Residents are free to help each other work their piece of land and share any produce they grow as they wish, however, the initial rights of all the crops sown go to the person whose piece of land the food was grown upon. Allowing residents to help each other create opportunities to bond over their gardens and get to work with and know people they may otherwise not get to meet.

Consider Installing Sprinklers

If the cost is reasonable, possibly consider placing sprinklers within the area where the gardens are planted. Watering the crops regularly can save residents having to come out every day or two during the hotter months of the summer and worrying about being able to water their crops, especially if no hoses are nearby. Investing in reasonably-priced sprinkling systems can provide dividends for all of your residents and their crops for years to come. If sprinklers aren't practical in price, consider providing a hookup for hoses and a few hoses so that residents can come water their crops on a regular basis.

Consider Getting A Farmer To Volunteer To Educate Your Community

If you can get a local farmer to agree to educate your local residents on how to work the land they are given, you are likely to be able to help them maximize the yield from the land they are given. Helping local residents learn about gardening and sowing their own crops can empower them to use the land they are given to grow quality produce to help feed their families and improve their general day-to-day diets by supplying themselves with fresh produce on a regular basis.

These are only a few tips to consider and ways to help you set up your own community-based gardening system that allows everyone who wishes to participate to grow fresh produce that their family can enjoy. Not only does it make a great use of some local land that may be available within the community, it also helps make produce and fresh items more affordable and encourages residents to eat a healthy diet richer in healthier foods, even ones that they helped grow!





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