

2025 Mayor's Environmentalist of the Year Nominations

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Jenna Crawford



Reason for Nomination: It is my honor to nominate Jenna Crawford for the 2025 Mayor's Environmentalist of the Year. I know Jenna to be an engaged environmentalist in our Village who gladly contributes her time, talents, education, and experience to our community.

Jenna has been an active member of the Palmetto Bay Tree Advisory board since 2000. She has served as recording secretary for her entire tenure of five years. I had the pleasure of working with Jenna on the Tree of the Year contest project. An enthusiastic advocate, Jenna put together the process and procedure for the contest, which continues today as part of the Village's Earth Month activities. Residents nominate favorite trees, the Tree Board selects semi-finalists, and the residents vote for the winner. The chosen tree is celebrated with a sign and ceremony, while the person nominating it receives recognition and a gift card. The goal of the Tree of the Month contest project is to raise awareness among residents about our beautiful trees. In advocating for it, Jenna presented the project to the Tree Board and the Parks Committee and worked with members to

refine it. Both the Board and Committee unanimously approved it and recommended it to the Council. The Village Council then passed it unanimously. Jenna then recorded a video encouraging residents to participate, which was placed on the Village's website and social media (attached - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_T5D4APks).

Jenna is the Branch Manager for Brightview Landscaping Services, Inc. a \$9.5 million branch for the national commercial landscaping company. Her branch covers a large area including Palmetto Bay, Doral, West Kendall, Coral Gables, and as far north as Coconut Grove. She oversees all the operations, manages the employees and oversees the finances. Last December, she appeared at the Council meeting on behalf of Brightview, which had applied for and received the contract for maintaining Thalatta Estate. Brightview is committed to green energy efficiency, using electric mowers, electric blowers, and electric vehicles to reduce pollutants. She said it was a proud moment for her to maintain and enhance the beauty of Thalatta as a resident and as a representative of the company.

In addition to her position at Brightview and her membership on the Tree Board, Jenna is an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist. Since September 2023, she mentors, trains, and teaches others how to care for trees. She is in the process of obtaining a professional mangrove trimmer (PMT) license through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and will be able to advise on how to trim mangrove trees, a unique and valuable specialty for our area.

Jenna grew up in Kansas, where her mother had her own lawn care business, so Jenna was always involved with the environment and nature. She was raised on a farm and describes herself as an outdoorsy person.

As a graduate of Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in horticulture, Jenna's specialty was landscape and turf management. She interned with companies in Arizona and Florida. She liked our tropical environment so much that she moved to the Miami area in 2007. She came to Palmetto Bay in 2018, because she loved the family-oriented community, big yards, and beautiful foliage. She wanted to have a family and settle down here, which she has. She and her husband, Carl, have two children, 6-year old Cash and 3-year old Ava. Cash attends Christ Fellowship Academy in Palmetto Bay, while Ava will start pre-school at Christ Fellowship Academy in the Fall. Carl is an independent real estate broker with his own firm, Crawford and Company Real Estate.

Women's empowerment is a special interest of Jenna's. She has volunteered with several women's groups that help support women and children. She volunteered at the women's prison in Florida City in the LEAP program, which stands for Leadership Empowerment in Action Program. The mission of the group is to help women prisoners create a small business, because they often cannot get jobs after they are released with a prison record. Jenna guided them on making a personalized business plan and discussing ideas with them. Since September 2020, she has been in a leadership role in GROW (Growth in Relationships and Opportunities for Women), a women's group at her company. She attends and serves at Christ Fellowship Church and is part of a women's group that meets on Wednesdays.

I urge you to select Jenna for this honor. She well deserves recognition by the Village for her achievements in volunteerism, leadership, and commitment to the environment, both personally

and professionally. She is a role model in many ways for her commitment to her family, the environment, and the community through her volunteerism, her involvement with her church, and her work life, all while being a wife and mother of young children. She is an accomplished and amazing person.

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Willy Cotto



Reason for Nomination:

Childhood

Willy grew up in Palmetto Bay and attended Perrine Elementary, Southwood Middle School, and Miami Palmetto Senior High. His passion for environmentalism began as a child learning about pollution in school. Concerned about pollution's effects on helpless plants and animals, Willy sought out to be a steward of nature and began volunteering at the original Parrot Jungle and Gardens, formerly located in Pinecrest, at the age of thirteen. His passion intensified, and he proceeded to volunteer at the Center for the Great Apes and the Falcon Batchelor Bird of Prey Center.

Higher Education and Career

Willy made a career and a lifestyle out of environmentalism, wildlife conservation and education. He graduated Barry University with a degree in psychology which he applied to animal behavior and proceeded to become an employee at Parrot Jungle, Monkey Jungle, and The DuMond Conservancy for Primates and Tropical Forests, Florida International University's Southern Environmental Research Center, Miami-Dade County (Zoo Miami), the Zoological Society of Florida (now the Zoo Miami Foundation), and the Dolphin Research Center. Willy's environmentalism did not stop after he clocked out of work, in 2011 he previously mobilized the South Florida community with DeforestACTION, a global collaborative movement of youth and schools actively working towards protecting rainforests and habitats for orangutans. The deforestation work led him to create a local call-to-action against the overuse of palm oil, which heavily contributes to deforestation and the loss of natural habitats for orangutans (source: Community Newspapers article <https://communitynewspapers.com/kendallgazette/zoo-miami-trainer-willy-coto-competes-to-help-orangutans/>). While at Zoo Miami, was a lead keeper focusing on animal training and behavior with the zoos great ape collection, in addition to being a wildlife show trainer where he presented animals to the public to educate them about conservation and was an active member of the cheetah ambassador team raising awareness of these critically endangered animals. During his career as an educator at the Zoo, he inspired thousands of children across Miami-Dade County and beyond to conserve wildlife and wild places and was part of a team who partnered with the Miami-Dade County Venom Response Team to provide educational displays and live presentations with venomous snakes at Zoo Miami.

Current Palmetto Bay Work

Willy, who is a wildlife biologist, works in Palmetto Bay at Bill Sadowski Park and Nature Center within the Engagement, Education, Conservation and Outreach (E.E.C.O) Division of Miami Dade County Parks Recreation and Open Spaces Department as a Naturalist where he helps Palmetto Bay's youth and young-at-heart residents and visitors connect with nature, animals, and plants daily. When he is working in his Palmetto Bay office at the nature center, he highlights the ongoing invasive species crisis in south Florida inspiring people to become citizen scientists and environmental stewards. He is passionate about educating Palmetto Bay and the greater Miami-Dade area about how to appreciate wild exotic animals and plants without contributing to the County's invasive species problem that affects our local flora and fauna. His office's proximity to Palmetto Bay's Policing Unit led to him assisting police with an injured ibis in 2024, where he and police reached out to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator to assist the injured bird.

Expanding Beyond Palmetto Bay

Willy also works as an authorized Sea Turtle Personnel with Miami-Dade Sea Turtle Conservation Program under a Florida State permit to survey sea turtle nesting activity and collect data on hatchling sea turtles across 19 miles of beach in Miami-Dade County, where he is authorized under that permit to rescue stranded sea turtles. He also travels around Miami-Dade County to educate the County's children about environmental issues while raising awareness on the positive impacts

every individual can have on our planet. On his free time, Willy helps with mentoring and coaching undergraduate university students on ecological research methodology and data collection in addition to volunteering his time at Dolphin Research Center in the Florida Keys where he spends time helping care for the dolphins and sea lions there while raising awareness of marine conservation. Willy helps Palmetto Bay residents recognize that local actions within the Village have global impact, and anything we do to help the planet does make a difference (source: interview with Grant Miller https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5T0U_XW5xM)

2025 Mayor's Youth Environmentalist of the Year Nominations

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Eddie Carneiro



Reason for Nomination: Eddie's passion for nature and the environment is apparent to anyone who meets her. For the past two years she has dedicated her summers to environmental study: First in the Florida Keys, where she spent a month learning about the conservation of native species in South Florida; next living on a sailboat in the BVI, where she caught and tagged sea turtles and studied sustainable farming methods; and finally on the coast of New England, where she took courses in marine biology and genetic engineering. Eddie brought those lessons back to Palmetto Bay to establish Budding Botanists, an initiative that hopes to act as a partner to local elementary education teachers by sharing her stories and activities to inspire the next generation of South Florida environmentalists. This year she dedicated her AP Research project to looking at the correlation between elementary school gardens and environmental stewardship, working with teachers at Palmetto Elementary and RAMBAM Day School. She also helped rebuild and revitalize the garden at Palmetto Senior High School as a member of the school's Environmental Outreach committee within the Student Sentate, and created and ran initiatives within the school to bring

awareness to environmental issues. Edie is a certified CLEO Climate Speaker through The CLEO Institute Climate Leadership and Information Program (CLIP).