

Education Hill has come up in the world

By Heather Rae Darval

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One of Redmond's oldest neighborhoods has come a long way since its early days with the downtrodden name of Poverty Hill.

Looking around among the wide, forested streets, sharp-looking modern schools, sprawling trails and parks and spacious homes of Education Hill, it is hard to imagine it was ever considered to be lacking.

To longtime residents like the Rev. Robroy Ranger, Education Hill is nearly ideal with its small community feel, good schools, big trees, abundance of parks and green space and even an annual block party.

"You come into Education Hill, and you just feel safe, and it's so green and beautiful," said Ranger, who runs the Redmond Assembly of God church in the neighborhood. "You come off the 520 and look up at Education Hill and you can't even see the houses. All you see are trees and green.

"You will get to know your neighbors, and people will come up and say hello."

Education Hill wasn't always as desirable as it is today. Back before the area was incorporated by the then-small city of Redmond in the 1950s, residents of Poverty Hill had to trek up and down the area's hilly roads to fetch water.

Years later the neighborhood residents wanted to focus on the area's strengths and decided to name it for the prominence of schools within its boundaries — including Redmond High, Redmond Junior High, Norman Rockwell Elementary and Horace Mann Elementary.



STEVE RINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES
On a clear day, you can see the Cascades from Northeast 108th Way in Redmond's Education Hill neighborhood. "All you see are trees and green," says the Rev. Robroy Ranger, a longtime resident.

Education Hill



Population: 14,422 (2006 est.)

Distance to downtown Seattle: 16.5 miles

Schools: Education Hill is served by the Lake Washington School District.

Parks and recreation: Jonathan Hartman Park, 17300 N.E. 104th St. — 40 acres. Five baseball/softball fields, featuring a new Field Turf infield on the Babe Ruth baseball field. Tennis courts, basketball courts, children's play area, soccer field, picnic area with tables, forested area, trails, restrooms and the Redmond Pool owned by King County.

Fun fact: Formerly known as Poverty Hill, its name derives from the numerous schools in the area, including Redmond High, Redmond Junior High, Horace Mann Elementary, Albert Einstein Elementary and Norman Rockwell Elementary.

— *Miyoko Wolf*

Education Hill has no true commercial area and has a mix of new and old houses, gated developments and apartment complexes.

One of Redmond's main trails, the Powerline Trail, serves as the neighborhood's northern border and connects joggers, walkers, bike riders and even horses to the Sammamish River Trail and the Bear Creek Trail.

"One of the most interesting things about Education Hill is that it isn't one big subdivision. It's a larger community connected by churches, schools and trails," said Sarah Stiteler, a senior planner for Redmond.

Don't let the Hill's former name fool you because when it comes to home prices, poverty is far from appropriate.

Older three-bedroom homes for sale run about \$400,000 while newer three- and four-bedroom homes can cost anywhere from \$750,000 up to \$1 million or more.

The median price of homes sold in the area that includes Education Hill was \$465,000 in October, up 22 percent over the past year, according to figures compiled by the Northwest Multiple Listing Service. Those figures include sales of single-family houses and condos.

Driving around Education Hill past large, mature evergreens looking out across the Sammamish Valley, Ranger is conflicted about whether he wants everyone to know what a steal the area really is.

"I think it is one of the best-kept secrets around, so on the one hand, I don't want people to know about it, but on the other hand I have to recommend it," Ranger said. "This area is so beautiful and has so many great perks. It's just a dynamite place to live."