



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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It's Not About the Crown, It's About Making A Difference for Miss Suwanee Organization
Pageant Winners Turn Volunteerism Into Meaningful Experience for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

August 2, 2011 - Suwanee, GA – For 16-year old Olivia Diedrich and 13 of her fellow pageant winners from the Miss Suwanee Organization, winning titles and tiaras is not their number one priority. It is having the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of individuals in their own community. This has never been more apparent than with their volunteer service working with adults with developmental disabilities at Annandale Village.

For eight weeks, title holders and organizers from the Miss Suwanee Organization have worked side-by-side with forty-six residents, both men and women, in preparation for Annandale Village's first annual *Blue Jeans & White T-shirt Pageant*. Taking place on Saturday, August 6, the pageant will allow competitors to showcase their personalities and creativity as they walk the runway in their original painted jeans. Unlike traditional pageants, the focus is not on outer beauty, but to celebrate the individual spirit and personality of each participant. Tammy Severino, Annandale Village's Director of Admissions says, "Being a part of this event has really boosted the confidence and self esteem of our Villagers. Walking with style has been no problem for our Villagers with the help of the Miss Suwanee team. They have been on hand to train and support our Villagers every step of the way."

Diedrich, a rising Junior and member of the swim team at North Gwinnett High School, has found that this type of collaboration has fueled her passion for volunteerism. "It has given me a greater understanding about some of our community's most critical needs and how each of us can make an impact." Being a part of the Miss Suwanee Organization has allowed Olivia to accumulate more than 400 service hours – well beyond the 100 required for a community service seal on her diploma. Beyond the numbers, Olivia feels she has gained more awareness from the friendships she has developed with the residents of Annandale Village. "I now know that there are no limits to what a person can achieve regardless of their challenges." Olivia's mother and organizational leader, Gail Diedrich, added "our organization is humbled by the Village contestants' love and friendship they offer each and every one of us. It is a joy and a fabulously fun process as we work together to create a pageant of our lifetimes."

The pageant is free and open to the public. For more information about this event or Annandale Village, please call (770) 932-4887 or visit us online at www.annandale.org.

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BLUE JEANS AND WHITE T-SHIRT PAGEANT

Date and Time: Saturday, August 6, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Location: Annandale Village, 3500 Annandale Lane, Suwanee, GA 30024

Cost: Free

ABOUT ANNANDALE VILLAGE

Located on a beautiful 54-acre campus in Suwanee, Georgia, Annandale Village is an award-winning nonprofit organization dedicated solely to serving adults with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries. Characteristically, individuals served at Annandale Village are 18 years of age or older with a primary diagnosis of mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, other developmental disability, or have experienced a traumatic brain injury. Annandale Village is the only nonprofit in the state of Georgia to offer residential living and training alternatives that provide a continuum of service and care for adults with developmental disabilities.

The mission of Annandale Village is to perpetuate a Village community to provide progressive life assistance to adults with developmental disabilities and traumatic brain injuries so that they can maximize their abilities and maintain their independence in the least restrictive environment.

For more information, please contact Keith Fenton at 770-932-4887 or keith.fenton@annandale.org.

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