



Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | February 2023

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SUWANEE YOUTH LEADERS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The award-winning Suwanee Youth Leaders (SYL) is a nine-month leadership program administered by the City of Suwanee. It is a community-based leadership experience that focuses on developing young leaders through structured educational programs and team-building activities. The program centers on civic involvement, leadership skills, and volunteer opportunities.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in monthly learning sessions, including a two-day retreat, listen to guest speakers, attend field trips, and participate in several hands-on projects including event planning and a community service initiative.

The new SYL Class of 2023-24 will begin meeting in August of 2023 with new sophomores and juniors, and will meet throughout the school year until April 2024.

The city will accept applications between February 15 and March 31. Eligible students will be current high school freshmen and sophomores who live in the North Gwinnett, Peachtree Ridge, and Collins Hill clusters, as well as home school and private school students who reside within those clusters.

Visit Suwanee.com for more information or to apply. If you'd like to speak to an actual human about the SYL program, students (not parents!) can contact Billqeece Naqawe at BNaqawe@suwanee.com or (770) 904-3376.



The mission of Suwanee Youth Leaders is to empower young leaders to connect inside the community and make an impact outside the classroom.

**SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD AN
APPLICATION**





Welcome Home,

FIRE STATION 13!

Gwinnett County and City of Suwanee officials celebrated the opening of Fire Station 13 with a ribbon cutting at the station's new home at 105 Main Street in Suwanee on December 5, 2022.

The \$7.8 million project was funded by Gwinnett's Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), and the land for the new station was provided by the City of Suwanee. The new facility replaces the outgrown original station 13, formerly located on Buford Highway. While the facility was under construction, Fire Station 13 crews responded to calls from nearby stations.

Buford Highway was the home of Fire Station 13 for nearly 20 years and served as an anchor to the creation of Town Center. This new location will appropriately serve as an anchor to the expansion of that same park. We are pleased to be a part of this city-county partnership and to welcome Station 13 back home!

-MAYOR JIMMY BURNETTE

Fire Station 13 serves more than 29,000 residents and local businesses across 25 square miles in and around the City of Suwanee. The new state-of-the-art 10,788-square-foot facility provides three drive-through apparatus bays, room for 24-hour staffing for an engine and a medic unit, and was built to accommodate Gwinnett's future growth with room for up to 12 personnel.

Gwinnett County's population keeps growing with no expectation for that growth to stop any time soon, and one of the ways we keep up with that growth is by ensuring we have the people and facilities to continue providing essential services to almost a million residents, plus our businesses and visitors. With the critical work that they do, it's essential that our first responders have adequate, comfortable facilities where they can be stationed between calls."

-CHAIRWOMAN NICOLE HENDRICKSON
GWINNETT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

HISTORY OF FIRE STATION 13



Suwanee's first Fire Chief, David Pierce, cuts the ribbon at Station 13

The Suwanee Fire Department was organized in 1953 - the same year the water system was installed - under the direction of Mayor George Pierce, Sr. (yes, of George Pierce Park) and Fire Chief David Pierce (yes, his son).

Residents signed \$100 notes in order to borrow the needed \$4,000 to purchase the first fire engine: a 1948 Dodge open cab, 500-gallon-a-minute pumper.

At first, the new fire truck's "station" moved around a bit, residing at the home of whoever had a shed large enough to cover it - first at Will Stonecypher's garage on Old Suwanee Dam Road, then in 1956 at Cliff Holbrook's garage on Highway 23 - before finding a more permanent location on Buford Highway in 1960.



Many residents volunteered for the Suwanee Fire Department, including my father, and the Methodist preacher, who was recruited because his church was in the middle of town," said Mayor Jimmy Burnette. "The central location of the church allowed him to keep an eye on things while everyone else was at work. When the preacher retired, he literally passed his boots and helmet on to the new - rather surprised - preacher!

-MAYOR JIMMY BURNETTE



FIRE STATION 13

BY THE NUMBERS

10,788 SQ FT

2,550 FEET OF ATTACK AND SUPPLY HOSE LINE ON APPARATUS

3 DRIVE-THROUGH APPARATUS BAYS

\$7.8 MILLION PROJECT FUNDED BY **SPLOST**

29,330 RESIDENTS & 25.03 SQUARE MILES SERVED BY STATION 13

2,322 CALLS FOR STATION 13 UNIT IN 2021

2 ACRES OF LAND PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF SUWANEE

BLOOD DRIVE

Looking for a way to show some love for your community?
DONATE BLOOD!



**SUWANEE CITY HALL
10 AM-3 PM | FEB. 10, 2023**

To register, visit RedCrossBlood.org and look for the red 'Find a Blood Drive' box in the top right corner. Enter the Sponsor Code COS and search for City of Suwanee dates.



From THE DESK of

NORMAN H. CUADRA

CHIEF JUDGE,
CITY OF SUWANEЕ MUNICIPAL COURT

“I got a ticket.”

You look at your teenager in disbelief as they utter these words. Your mind starts to count the zeros added to your monthly insurance premium. Maybe you can bake a cake with a file in it for when they go to jail?

“When is your court date?”

“Uh, tomorrow?”

Do you panic now, or later? Is there any “HOPE?”



The Suwanee HOPE Program was developed to educate first-time offenders under the age of 21 about the dangers of alcohol, drugs, texting, and speeding. By requiring conditions such as community service, educational videos, and in-person programming, HOPE allows these drivers the opportunity to reduce their charge. In the last eight years, approximately 4,000 young drivers have participated.

The first phase of the program consists of an initial court appearance: drivers watch a video produced by City of Suwanee court personnel on the dangers of texting, speeding, and drug use. The young drivers then meet with a prosecutor who makes a recommendation on sentencing, gives a reasonable period of time to complete the conditions of the program, and sets a return date for court review.

The next phase requires the driver to return to court for

disposition with a Suwanee Municipal Court judge. The judge will review the driver’s rights, acceptance and completion of requirements, and finally, approve the reduction in the charge. By completing the conditions of the program, most drivers avoid license suspensions and exorbitant insurance premiums.

HOPE provides an opportunity to educate young drivers, and hopefully eliminate repeat driving offenses. Rather than suspending driver licenses and increasing family insurance premiums, the HOPE program instead makes use of the opportunity to highlight the consequences of impaired and dangerous driving.

Judge Norman Cuadra has been a municipal court judge for the last 17 years. He has also been a practicing attorney for 27 years working on criminal, family, and personal injury law cases. He and his family live in the Suwanee area and are active in the community.

THE HISTORY OF **HOPE**

In 2015, a Georgia law was changed to allow offenders under the age of 17 to potentially appear in front of a jury, rather than a judge in a municipal court, as the law stated prior. Suwanee Chief Judge Norman Cuadra thought that this type of trial would be detrimental to a youth with a minor violation, and began creating a way to retain jurisdiction over these cases – and the City of Suwanee’s HOPE program was born. The Georgia Municipal Court Clerks’ Council recognized Suwanee Municipal Court with the distinguished Program of the Year award in 2017 for the HOPE program.



SUWANEЕ AMERICAN CRAFT BEER FEST

THE 2022 USA TODAY BEST BEER FESTIVAL WINNER RETURNS TO TOWN CENTER PARK ON MARCH 18!

Suwaneе’s annual beer festival boasts more than 350 craft beers from 100+ breweries, drawing over 6,000 beer fanatics to Town Center. Attendees come dressed head-to-toe in St. Paddy’s green with kilts, shamrocks, green beards and more, making for a truly unique beer festival experience.

Over the past decade, the festival has hosted an impressive musical lineup that includes nationally recognized cover bands like Departure and Slippery When Wet, as well as a variety of festival games such as axe throwing, giant beer pong, and cornhole. The festival is also known for its annual Homebrew Contest, a competition whose winners (and a beer judge) have gone on to open their own successful Georgia breweries, including StillFire Brewing, Jekyll Brewing, and Social Fox Brewing.

“ Each aspect of the festival – from the breweries, beer, games, and entertainment to the vendors and sponsors – has been meticulously curated to create a unique experience.

-TIFFANY BELFLOWER
BEER FEST COORDINATOR

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW AT
SUWANEЕBEERFEST.COM!



Local Cultural Assets SUWANEЕ CABOOSE

Like many Gwinnett cities, the City of Suwaneе dates back to the construction of the railroad. In 1871, the Georgia Air Line Railroad was completed from Charlotte to Atlanta, with a stop and depot on Main Street. In 1992, the city acquired a retired caboose from Norfolk Southern to honor Suwaneе’s roots as a town built on the foundation of transportation.

In order to receive the caboose, the railroad company required the closing of a railroad crossing. Not every city council member agreed with the conditions, which became a highly debated topic. Ultimately, the council voted three to two in favor of meeting the requirement and the process of transforming the \$25,330 symbol of transportation in Suwaneе was put into motion.

The 1950 caboose was rusty and in need of restoration. The local body shop donated paint and then volunteers got to work (notably, Atlanta Braves pitcher Mark Wohler volunteered during the 1994 baseball strike).

The completion of the large project required a celebration of equal magnitude. At the time, the City of Suwaneе did not have a Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Jeannine Haynes and Polly Holt took the opportunity to “light up the caboose,” and the beloved Caboose Lighting tradition was born on Thanksgiving 1994.

The landmark is stationed on Main Street near Pierce’s Corner overlooking the shops in Old Town Suwaneе.



SUWANEЕ HISTORIC DOWNTOWN PRESERVATION INITIATIVE

As her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, Ashlee Tam spent several months identifying Suwaneе’s local cultural assets, researching and writing about them, and interviewing the “local legends” who impacted the people and places (and some place names) in Suwaneе.



Visit Suwaneе.com or scan the QR code to read more and view the videos. You might see a few familiar faces, and learn something too!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FINISHERS OF THE 2023 SUWANEERUNNING SERIES

Amanda Kowalzyk
Andrew Trotter
Ashley Brooks Ross
Barbara Ingram
Brandy Weaver
Brenda Stultz
Brittany Grant
Chris Schmitt

Cindy Finck
Greg Herron
Jade Illeck
James Yeo
Jane Crawford
Jim Merritt
Karla Hernandez

Larry Mitchell
Lori Brown
Melanie Graham
Patricia Toms
Scott Weaver
Tara Varnadore
Tom Owens



Dig those shirts?

Earn your own! The City of Suwanee will host 18 different runs in Town Center and on the Suwanee Greenway in 2023, giving runners the opportunity to run nearly 66 kilometers without ever leaving the city limits! All you have to do is complete five of those races to earn your very own limited edition Suwanee Running Series finisher t-shirt, compliments of the City of Suwanee and Big Peach Running Co.

Proof of participation may include a photo of a racing bib, screenshot of a receipt, finishing times, or any other documentation that includes a name and date. More information can be found at Suwanee.com.



2023 SUWANEERUNNING SERIES RACES

Suwanee Sweetheart Sprint | **FEBRUARY 11**

Suwanee Half Marathon
and Old Town 5K | **FEBRUARY 19**

Beer Chaser 5K | **MARCH 4**

Kiwanis Shamrock 5K | **MARCH 18**

Care for Cops 5K | **MARCH 25**

Race to Cure Sarcoma | **APRIL 15**

HappyFeat Happy Hour 5K | **APRIL 15**

Max's Moon Run | **MAY 5**

Tacos and Tequila 5K | **MAY 6**

Go Gray for a Cure 5K | **MAY 13**

Great Strides Atlanta | **MAY 20**

Button Down Dash 5K | **AUGUST 5**

Annandale Village Extra Mile | **AUGUST 26**

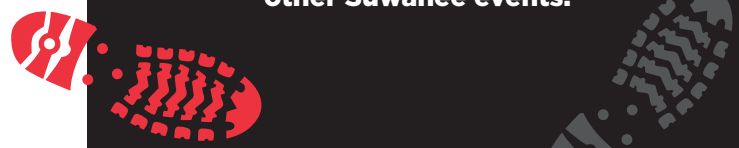
Care for Cops 5K | **SEPTEMBER 23**

Spooky Spirits 5K | **OCTOBER 14**

Walk to End Alzheimer's | **NOVEMBER 11**

HappyFeat Run, Run Rudolph 5K | **DECEMBER 2**

Visit Suwanee.com for more information on the Suwanee Running Series or other Suwanee events.



CHAFING the Dream 9th Annual Suwanee Half Marathon & Old Town 5K

Presented by
Performance Race Services
in conjunction with the
City of Suwanee, the
Suwanee Half Marathon
and Old Town 5K will run
again on Sunday, February 19.

HALF MARATHON
KICKS OFF AT
7:30 AM

FOLLOWED BY
THE 5K AT
7:45 AM

PROCEEDS FROM THE HALF MARATHON
AND OLD TOWN 5K BENEFIT THE
SUWANEES PUBLIC ART FUND.

For more information, including
route, registration, and volunteering,
visit SuwaneeHalf.com



The
13.1-mile
course includes a great mix
of flats and hills to challenge
all runners. Race finishers
will receive a medal and long-
sleeved technical shirt. Five-
time Suwanee Half Marathon
finishers qualify for a special
commemorative jacket.

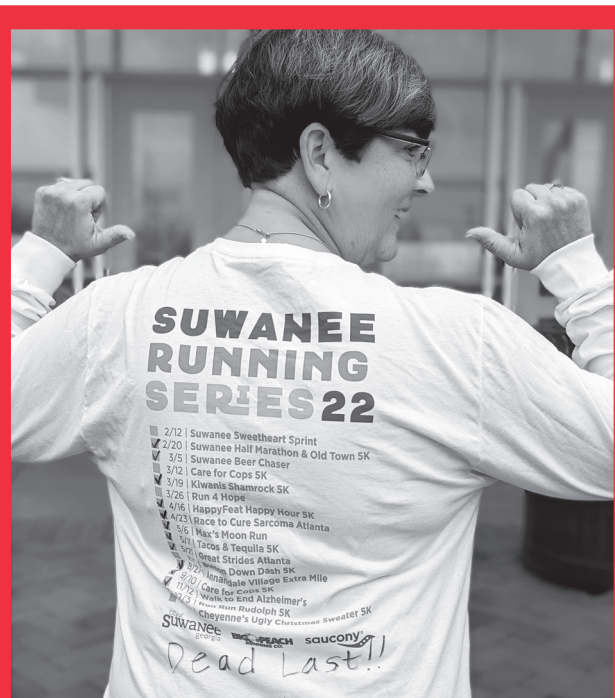


AMY DOHERTY: PROFESSIONAL TURTLE

The City of Suwanee has a long and proud reputation of hosting a variety of 5K races each year. As Suwanee's event organizer, I've witnessed over 250 5Ks in Suwanee over 17 years - that's nearly 800 miles of racing! The causes range from supporting local sports teams, bringing attention to rare diseases, raising funds for cancer research, and just plain old fun (and a little drinking)!

One of my favorite sounds is the rhythmic pounding of shoes hitting the pavement at the beginning of a race. My other favorite part is the end - because I AM the end. In addition to planning events, I am Suwanee's Professional Turtle - meaning that I purposely come in dead last in many of our hosted races.

Being last is a tough job, but someone has to do it. I notify staff when they can begin to pick up the course signage, water stations, and directional arrows placed to help runners find their way. I've also become the lost and found - I've returned dropped air pods, hats, car keys, and wallets - and I often pick up trash along the way. Finally, I alert the timing company, police, and staff that the race is officially over.



When you start five to ten minutes after everyone else, you can (and do) catch up to people along the route. But the fun part is the encouragement from the runners heading back when they know you are last: "You got this!" and "You can do it!" And then there are those who KNOW you are last and they say "Oh dear, don't let HER get any closer" or "She's sweeping the course!"

Believe it or not, it takes a real effort come in as the final person crossing the finish line. But you know, a turtle can only make progress if he sticks his neck out!

UPCOMING EVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

FEBRUARY 23

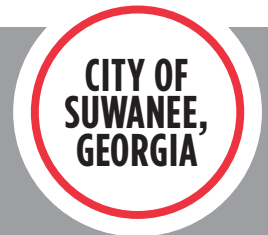
7	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
8	Public Arts Commission	6:00 pm
10	Red Cross Blood Drive	10:00 am
11	Rotary Sweetheart Sprint	9:00 am
11	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
13	Suwanee Fest Committee	6:30 pm
16	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
19	Suwanee Half Marathon & Old Town 5K	7:30 am
21	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
21	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
25	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
25	Arbor Day Celebration (Level Creek ES)	9:00 am
28	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm

MARCH 23

4	Beer Chaser 5K	11:00 am
7	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
8	Public Arts Commission	6:00 pm
11	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
11	Taste of Suwanee	noon
13	Suwanee Fest Committee	6:30 pm
16	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
18	Kiwanis Shamrock 5K	8:00 am
18	Suwanee Beer Fest	noon
21	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
21	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
25	Care for Cops 5K	8:00 am
25	Winter Farmers Market	9:00 am
28	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm

MAYOR Jimmy Burnette 770/868-7115
COUNCIL Pete Charpentier 770/757-3323
Heather Hall 410/979-7905
Beth Hilscher 678/546-3388
Linnea Miller 678/592-4150
Larry Pettiford 678/464-3651

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ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER Denise Brinson 770/904-3385
CITY CLERK Robyn O'Donnell 770/904-2790
FINANCIAL SERVICES Amie Sakmar 770/904-2797
PLANNING & INSPECTIONS Josh Campbell 770/904-3372
POLICE CHIEF Cass Mooney 770/904-7610
PUBLIC WORKS EDITOR Bob Dean 770/904-3373
Abby Wilkerson 770/945-3386



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Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check suwanee.com for updates.