

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Jordan Parker  
Email: [info@flintriverfresh.org](mailto:info@flintriverfresh.org)  
Phone: 229-942-9757



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### **Georgia's Mrs. United States Agriculture to Attend Volunteer day and Plant with Students at International Studies Elementary Charter Academy in support of Flint River Fresh's Youth Ag & Conservation Education initiative with DCSS department of School Nutrition Services.**

**Albany, GA --** Flint River Fresh, along with the DCSS department of School Nutrition and their partners of excellence, is very excited to have Paula Lewis, recently appointed as Georgia's Mrs. United States Agriculture, volunteer at International Studies Elementary Charter School on Tuesday, November 9th. Lewis and Flint River Fresh's Farm to School team will be planting winter crops with students, including collard greens, cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, carrots, mustards, turnips, spinach, swiss chard, brussels sprouts, and strawberries in the school's newly built raised beds. With the help of the great team at International Studies Elementary Charter School, the DCSS School Nutrition Services, Partners of Excellence, and 4C Academy, Flint River Fresh is looking forward to a fun day of planting and teaching students where their food comes from and the importance of growing their own food.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to have Georgia's Mrs. United States Agriculture volunteer with us and plant with students," says Jordan Parker, Flint River Fresh's School Garden Coordinator, "it is so important for students to see members of our community support local agriculture and show the many different avenues and possibilities of agribusiness. Paula is one of those many great community members who support us, and she has a lot to offer to the students in terms of experience and education in the agriculture industry."



Paula Lewis has been active in the agriculture industry since her youth throughout her time of service and participation in 4-H and FFA. She grew up on a timber and hog farm in Soperton, Ga and graduated with a BAS in Diversified Agriculture from ABAC in Tifton Ga. Currently, Paula and her Husband are ranchers, poultry farmers, and have a boxed beef business. She is also a first year flower farmer!

Lewis will represent Georgia this coming summer on the National level for a shot at the overall title of Mrs. United States Agriculture. The Miss United States Agriculture Pageant is an organization based on teaching and enhancing the American Agricultural Story. Lewis and her fellow competitors will advocate for agriculture and compete for scholarships. She is currently sponsored by Goodson Pecans, Southwest Georgia Farm Credit, J&B Tractor of Waynesboro, GA and West Ag Aviation. The goal of the Miss United States Agriculture program is to promote and educate others on the agriculture industry.

Lewis is passionate about sharing her knowledge of agriculture with others and especially youth. She believes that students need to know where their food comes from and how much the agriculture industry needs them; “We need future farmers and ranchers and commodity traders who have the USA’s best interest at heart,” Paula says, “we must feed our nation through the fruits of our labor and [give them] the knowledge and wisdom to make it better and better for generations to come.”

Flint River Fresh’s Farm to School program with Dougherty County’s School Nutrition Services department is continuing to implement a Youth Ag & Conservation Education Initiative through an NCRS Technical Assistance Grant with all 15 elementary school in Dougherty County. Teaching students where food comes from,



the importance of soil health, germination rate, garden maintenance, and safe harvest practices are many ways in which the Farm to School team educates about agriculture. Partnering with role models and leaders in Agribusiness for fun, educational volunteer days is another great way to educate our youth on ag and conservation practices from new perspectives and fields in the agriculture industry.

The project partners in this collaborative project include Dougherty County Cooperative Extension, the National Farmers Union, Albany Recreation and Parks Department, 4C Academy, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital, The Georgia Farm Bureau,

Dougherty County School System, and the Flint River Soil and Water Conservation District. Individuals and organizations will provide subject matter expert guidance and support throughout the various phases of the program.

Flint River Fresh is a 501(c)(3) organization that aims to make fresh, locally-grown produce accessible and affordable for people throughout the Flint River Region, while empowering community and youth through education and outreach opportunities. Visit [www.flintriverfresh.org](http://www.flintriverfresh.org) to learn more.

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Attached photo 1: Paula Lewis, Georgia’s Mrs. United States Agriculture.

Attached photo 2: International Studies Elementary Charter School’s students and Assistant Principal, Mrs. Nancy Gay, with Flint River Fresh’s School Garden coordinator, Jordan Parker, and 4C Academy’s Construction teacher, Randin Burley with his work study program students— standing in the school’s newly built garden space.

