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SullivanArc Honors Individuals Who Make a Difference, Presents New Award at the 14th Annual Community Recognition Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony

Monticello, NY... On October 7, 2004, SullivanArc, a leading not-for-profit agency that serves individuals with developmental disabilities who reside in Sullivan County will hold its annual Community Recognition Dinner Dance & Awards Ceremony at Fibber's at the Concord Monster Golf Course. Each year the agency honors those who have made a difference in the lives of individuals that SullivanArc serves, as well as the community of Sullivan County. This year, a special award honoring Consumer Derrick Finn, who passed away at the beginning of the year, will be presented to a SullivanArc Individual, John Anthony Palmer.

This year's recipient of the Ruth Bennett Humanitarian Award is Carol and Raymond Dunn. Mr. & Mrs. Dunn have been longtime supporters of SullivanArc. The Dunns fought diligently for the rights of people with disabilities, including their own son who nearly died when the Gerber Company discontinued the only food he was able to digest. With support from SullivanArc, and the Executive Director at the time, Marc Brandt (now the Executive Director for NYSARC, and who will present the award at the dinner), Mr. & Mrs. Dunn stormed the legal and organizational fortress of a major commercial entity to keep her son alive – and they won. The company produced its Meat-Based Formula exclusively for the "Gerber Baby" as long as he lived. After their son, Raymond Dunn Jr. passed away at the age of 21 in 1995 from his many disabilities, his parents established the Raymond Dunn, Jr. Rainbow Fund for the assistance of medically frail children. The 7 bedroom Raymond Dunn, Jr. Rainbow House was opened in 1999 in his honor, and serves SullivanArc's most medically needy individuals. Raymond Dunn served as a board member of SullivanArc until the couple moved south to Florida earlier this year. It is with great pride that we welcome them back to Sullivan County to receive this award of distinction.

This year's Employer of the Year Award will be presented to a very special company, Hometown Products, who provide work to SullivanArc's Sheltered Work Center, Sullivan Industries. Affectionately known as the "Bear People," Hometown Products designs and manufactures top quality, customized bears with a variety of outfits bearing the names and colors of local schools and organizations. "Working with Tom Keith & Susan Rutledge at Hometown has been a real pleasure. They have been dedicated to understanding the population that we work with, and have made contributions on many levels to our individuals. Working with them is both an honor and a delight. I'm extremely proud that they will be receiving SullivanArc's Employer of the Year Award," says Tom Maybank, Customer Service Representative for Sullivan Industries.

In addition to the two awards listed above, SullivanArc is proud to honor a consumer at this year's dinner with a new annual award, the Derrick Finn Memorial Award. This award will go to John Anthony Palmer, who was selected out of 15 nominees, which were submitted by direct care staff at SullivanArc and sister agencies including Crystal Run Village and New Hope Community. "This award was established to honor an individual served by SullivanArc who excels in sports and/or the arts and who also is active in his or her community. Derrick Finn, who was taken from this earth way too soon, embodied a quality of being an extremely talented athlete as well as an incredibly giving, community spirited individual. His passing came as a shock to all who knew him, and many people in the Sullivan County community and here at SullivanArc miss him very much. It is with great pleasure that we honor him with this award on an annual basis," states Ric Schwartz, Executive Director for SullivanArc. Derrick's family member, Josephine Finn, Justice for the Village of Monticello, will present the award at the dinner. John Anthony Palmer, the award recipient for 2005 was nominated by Vocational Coordinator Milton Hingen, who wrote in his nomination "John is a very caring individual who is very devoted to his family and loves helping out in the community in any way possible." John's volunteer efforts include working at the St. John's Church Food Pantry, where he is also an Altar Boy. He is also an active competitor in multiple events in the Special Olympics, and enjoys competition. "It was a difficult decision to choose the recipient of this award, because all of the

nominations were incredibly compelling,” says Allison Ruef, Public Relations Coordinator and Dinner Dance Committee Member. “But John truly captures the spirit of Derrick Finn in his giving nature, athletic dedication and community activism. We are looking forward to presenting this award in Derrick’s memory each and every year.”

This year’s event will feature dancing and entertainment by the Big Smoothies, who wowed the guests at last year’s dinner with their talent and enthusiasm. The Big Smoothies are an eight-piece band from the Hudson Valley region that plays popular hits from the 50’s through today.

The cost to attend the dinner is \$75 per person, or \$525 for a table of eight. To reserve seating and/or place advertisements in the Dinner Journal, contact Allison at 845-796-1350 x1050 for more information.

About SullivanArc:

SullivanArc is a not-for-profit agency that provides a broad range of services including vocational, family service coordination, independent support services, day programming including work and learning centers, senior services, clinical service and residential housing to more than 800 individuals with developmental disabilities and mental retardation. It is the mission of SullivanArc to enable persons of all ages with disabilities to live as contributing, valued members of the community by promoting inclusion, independence, individualization, productivity and self-determination.

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