

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SSRI and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Announces 2017 Cherry Blossom Princess

The State Society of Rhode Island and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council are pleased to announce that Meagan C. Delaney, a former Rhode Island resident, now living in Virginia, is the 2017 Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Princess.

Chris Simeone, the Chairman of the State Society of Rhode Island stated, "The State Society of Rhode Island was very impressed with Meagan's passion for Japanese culture and the Cherry Blossom Festival through her work at the Japan-America Society. We are excited to have her represent the Ocean State in our nation's capital."

"Meagan makes a great candidate for our 2017 Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Princess. She is well suited to represent our state and will honor our past Cherry Blossom Princesses with her great ability." said Robert Billington, President of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.

ABOUT THE 2017 CHERRY BLOSSOM PRINCESS:

Meagan Delaney is currently a substitute teacher in the Fairfax County, VA school system; and is a graduate student at George Mason University, where she earned her B.A. in Communications in 2015. She is a member of the Japanese National Honor Society since 2012; member of Japanese Club at West Springfield High School 2007-2011 and president from 2009-2011; actor in student-lead Japanese play at George Mason University (GMU) 2012 and 2013, co-director in 2014 and director in 2015; recipient of Outstanding Contribution to the Promotion of Japanese Language and Culture award, April 2014 and May 2015 (GMU). Volunteer at First Book book drive, Baltimore, MD (February 2014). Co-speaker at Foreign Language Association of Virginia (FLAVA) Conference (September 2015), topic centered on student-lead Japanese plays at GMU. Trained in Tae Kwon Do for five years, second degree black belt; classically trained on flute; artist, digital and traditional; avid reader.

"Being a Cherry Blossom Princess has always been a dream of mine, and I am very excited to be able to represent Rhode Island; I believe it is crucial to share Japanese history and culture, and create a better understanding of it. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity," Ms. Delaney said upon her selection.

ABOUT THE CHERRY BLOSSOM PRINCESS PROGRAM

Each year a new representative is crowned to represent Rhode Island and join other Princesses representing other States in the National Conference of State Societies' Cherry Blossom Princess Program during the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C. The 2017 Cherry Blossom Princess Program will run April 2 - April 8, 2017.

The Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Princess is a young woman 19-24 years old that is annually selected to represent Rhode Island at the National Cherry Blossom Festival, held in April, in Washington, D.C. The winners are chosen based upon their background, academics, leadership, community service and future ambitions. The Princess represents Rhode Island at Congressional receptions, visits with international dignitaries, attend the Cherry Blossom Ball, engage in cultural and educational activities and participate in the National Cherry Blossom Parade. During the Cherry Blossom Ball, one Princess is chosen at random to become the U.S. Cherry Blossom Queen and has the opportunity to travel to Japan in May.

"The State Society of Rhode Island is excited at the opportunity to continue hosting the Rhode Island Cherry Blossom Princess during her trip to Washington," said Chris Simeone, Chairman of the State Society. "Rhode Island has benefited from being represented by great Rhode Islanders in the past years, who have used the program as a platform to showcase their appreciate for the State and the work they are doing in the Rhode Island and Washington communities."