



Main Story / 05.02.08

Unity House Elects Board Officers, Features Agency Volunteering at 2008 Annual Meeting & Dinner



2008 Unity House Board officers (L to R) Atkins, Sterling, Merritt, Baird

Unity House of Cayuga County Inc. re-elected its 2007 Board of Directors' President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary to one year-terms for 2008 at its 2008 Annual Meeting and Dinner held April 28, 2008 at The Point at Springside Inn in Auburn, N.Y.

Karen Merritt was re-elected President of the Board of Directors at the meeting and dinner. Joining her as Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary of the agency's Board for 2008 are Betsy Sterling, Fred Atkins, and Jeannette Baird, respectively, who also served in those same capacities in 2007.

Unity House 2008 Annual Meeting & Dinner Features Auburn Day Habilitation Presentation on Volunteering



Volunteer presenters (L to R) Blowers, Davis, Vanacore, Spearing, Dudley, Signor

Unity House of Cayuga County Inc.'s 2008 Annual Meeting and Dinner held April 28, 2008 at the Point at Springside Inn in Auburn, N.Y. featured a presentation by the agency's Day Habilitation (day hab) staff and consumers on the many values of volunteering in community activities and events.

Angie Dudley, manager of the Auburn day hab program and leader of the presentation, told the 75 agency staff, supporters, stakeholders, and consumers and families that attended the event that volunteering by day hab consumers and staff was integral to the program's primary goal of helping consumers achieving self-sufficiency and independence. Dudley added that community volunteering also is a central tenet the fourth and fifth Priorities driving Unity House's 2005-2009 Strategic Plan.

"Our day hab program in Auburn in 1995 when I started with the agency had about eight, maybe nine consumers involved and it was out at our New Life residence," she said. "Today, day hab in Auburn and Ithaca involves about 140 consumers. And volunteering is a key element of us empowering consumers. We've had to create and innovate our way to volunteering, and it's been worth every thing we've done. The expansion of our internal and external volunteer activities goes hand in hand with our consumers achieving their goals and our growth. And it's fulfilling our agency goals of educating the community about our program and consumers in it and of advocating for them."

Dudley and her presentation team of Auburn day hab Community Integration Specialist Doreen Vanacore, day hab consumers Jim Signor and Marcie Blowers and her mother, Linda

Davis, centered their presentation around the program's affiliation with Auburn's Meals service, arguably the program's most successful volunteering accomplishment.

Vanacore told the meeting attendees that one benefit of Signor and Blowers participation in the meal preparation and delivery service was the genuine connections they made with the service's clients they deliver to, and vice versa. Davis added that her daughter's volunteering has been responsible for much of her growth in the program. Signor told the attendees how much he looked forward to working with the service twice a week and how important it was for him to help feed those in need.

Tessi Spearing, Director of the Auburn Meals on Wheels service and part of the day hab presentation, declared that without the day hab volunteers' help, the service would come to a standstill.

"I love having these special people work with and for me," she said. "For me and my staff, it has been one of the best gifts of our lives. They are super workers and never let us down."

Spearing added that the Auburn day hab program consumers and staff prepare and deliver over 100 meals a day now, five days a week.