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Contact: Paul Marron 315-258-9531 ext 213

Tompkins County MRDD Services and Programs Stage Spring Beautification Event



Consumers and staff pruning and planting at Ithaca's beautification project.

ITHACA – Some 30 Unity House staff and consumers associated with the agency's Tompkins County MRDD residential and day habilitation services and programs joined forces Friday, May 23, 2008 to sweep, clean, weed, rake, mulch, plant flowers, and trim bushes at the agency's 408 E. State Street administrative office site as part of a spring beautification project.

Organized by Louis Pelino, assistant director of Unity House's Tompkins County MRDD residential and day habilitation services and programs, the three-hour event was a key recreational and therapeutic activity for all who participated.

“As just about all of us who work at our 408 E. State Street administrative site could see by the start of May, our office grounds were in need of some serious tender loving care,” said Pelino, who oversaw staff and consumers' work throughout the afternoon. “So, we decided to pick a Friday afternoon to get as many agency staff and consumers as possible to commit to coming to 408 and doing some afternoon cleaning up and sprucing up. It turned out to be a great day for everybody.”

Armed with rakes, picks, shovels, brooms, hoes, and gloves, several consumers and staff paired off to tackle bush pruning, leaf raking, weeding, flower planting, and cleaning tasks around the agency's historic three-story property. Agency maintenance staff supplemented their efforts using weed eaters, leaf blowers, and hedgetrimmers. Upon weeding and mulching various plots of soil adorning the property's immediate boundaries and front lawn, staff and consumers planted a variety of flowers there and also placed several large hanging plants at appropriate junctures around the property.

The agency provided food and refreshments to staff and consumer participants during the afternoon project.

“This has been a very rewarding project for all of us,” said agency executive director Joyce Williams, a project participant. “It gets staff and consumers out doors on a sunny spring day and the activity kills two birds with one stone in that it satisfies consumers' needs and greatly improves our location's appearance. It's a win-win for everybody.”

Pelino added that because of the successful staff and consumer response to the event, it will most likely become an annual ritual each May.