



**Main Story / 06.09.08**

## **Unity House of Cayuga County Inc. Opens New Day Habilitation Recreation Center Service**



Day Hab Rec Mgr. Angie Dudley (3rd from L) and Asst. Mgr. Jen Hilts (6th from L) open service with consumers and staff

**AUBURN** – Unity House of Cayuga County Inc., a leading provider of transitional and permanent housing, rehabilitative, and employment services and programs to more than 700 individuals a day with developmental disabilities, mental health illnesses, and those recovering from chemical dependencies, announced effective June 3, 2008 the opening of its new Day Habilitation (Day Hab) drop-in Recreation Center at 31 Market Street in Auburn, N.Y.

Operating from 4 p.m.-7 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday at that location as a new program that is not currently provided to individuals with disabilities in New York State, the Recreation Center is a supplemental service to Unity House’s Day Hab program that will work in concert with the agency’s Day Hab programming options, provide an additional resource for individuals with developmental disabilities to participate in positive leisure activities with peers, and enhance skill development.

“The Recreation Center will offer individuals with developmental disabilities an environment that fosters socialization and recreation,” said Darlene Podolak, an architect of the Center and Unity House Director of Residential and Day Hab Services and Programs for Cayuga County. “Participants and visitors to the Center will find a variety of services to choose from including job club, crafts, computer and Internet access, music, exercise, and healthy living education activities. When not taking part in these formal structured activities, participants can just relax with peers and friends and also develop their social skills in that unstructured atmosphere, as well.”

A feature of the late day / early evening service is its consumer input panel, which will afford participating consumers the opportunity to make decisions about the service’s programmatic content and other program aspects and convey as much to a consumer liaison. That liaison, who will rotate among the participating consumers, will collaborate with Jennifer Hilts, assistant manager of the Recreation Center, to incorporate consumers’ decisions into the Center’s activities.

“The panel will encourage each individual consumer to express his and her choices about our program,” said Hilts. “It also will help boost consumers’ decision-making and bolster their self-advocacy.”

Light snacks will be provided to participating consumers during the service’s operating hours and transportation to and from the service will be available as well, Hilts said. She added that the Center eventually expects to accommodate a capacity of 20 consumers.

For more information about the program including eligibility, contact Jennifer Hilts at (315) 258-9531, extension 216.