



Main Story / 07.22.08

## Unity House Holds 2008 Annual Staff Appreciation Event



Agency staff enjoying the 2008 annual staff appreciation picnic

**AUBURN** – About 100 Unity House of Cayuga County Inc. administrative, managerial, and direct care staff representing the agency’s multiple services and programs convened from noon to 4 p.m. on July 18, 2008 at Myers Park on Cayuga Lake in Lansing, N.Y. for the agency’s nineteenth annual staff appreciation picnic.

The four-hour event, organized by a ten-person staff appreciation event committee that begins its annual event work each January, featured a country western ‘hoedown’ theme this year with an outstanding food buffet, a half-hour awards ceremony during which agency executive director Joyce Williams

recognized three-, five-, ten-, 15-, and 20-year employees, and an afternoon of fun that included dunking booth, water balloon toss, dance contest, and sack race games and activities.

“I don’t know any of our staff who attends our yearly appreciation event who doesn’t enjoy spending the afternoon with his or her peers to socialize and just have plain old fun,” Williams said. “This year’s event was great. I think the dunking booth drew the most attention, if only because staff had the chance to dunk their supervisors. The weather was great, the food was great, and our hats go off to the committee members for another outstanding effort. Our event is the least we can do to show our appreciation for our staff, which has the most challenging job in the world and which does its work with consumers so well, day in and day out.”

In addition to recognizing Independent Housing Manager Judy Fisher for achieving 20 years of continuous service to Unity House, MRDD Residential (Cayuga County) and Day Habilitation (Cayuga and Tompkins counties) Services’ Director Darlene Podolak for her 15 years of agency service, and HR Director Catherine Becker, Facilities and Maintenance Director Gary Fellows, MRDD Residential Services (Tompkins County) Director Amy Dunham, MRDD Supportive Apartments Manager (Tompkins County) Val Klinnert, Mental Health Community Residence service (Cayuga County) Senior Counselor Evelyn Suarez, MRDD Supportive Apartments (Tompkins County) relief staff Mary Gallagher, Mental Health Community Residence service (Cayuga County) residential counselor Raven Huddson, and Day Habilitation service (Tompkins County) staff member Paul House for their ten years of service, Williams touted the invaluable contributions made by an additional 15 staff who achieved five years of agency service and another 25 staff who have worked for the agency for three years.

Event committee members Amy Dunham and Louis Pelino lauded the contributions made to the event by Cayuga and Tompkins County businesses, including WAL-MART, P & C Foods, Blockbuster, Hess Oil, Tompkins Trust Company, Pizza Hut, Domino’s Pizza, Auto Zone, Lowe’s, the Syracuse Sky Chiefs, Auburn YMCA, Applebee’s, Bol’s Flower Shop, Mary Ott Jewelry, Green Shutters Restaurant, Allure Hair Salon, Underground Inc., Expert Tire, Arnold Palmer Putting, Fox Toyota-Subaru, 10,000 Villages, Sally’s Beauty Supply, The Ale House, Toad’s Ice Cream, Volume Records, and staff members Catherine Becker and Deb Leone.