



**Main Story / 07.29.08**

## **Unity House's Fuel Efficiency Challenge To Help Employees With High Gas Prices**

AUBURN – Unity House of Cayuga County Inc., a leading provider of housing, rehabilitative, and employment services and programs in six Central New York counties to more than 700 adult individuals a day with developmental disabilities, mental health illnesses, and those recovering from chemical dependencies, is initiating effective August 1, 2008 a Fuel Efficiency Challenge aimed at helping reduce the impact of high gas prices on its employees.

The agency's challenge, requiring employees to accomplish four fuel efficiency tasks to become eligible for a \$75 gas card, is intended to help reduce staffs' personal transportation fuel costs, according to Unity House Executive Director Joyce Williams.

"We've created a fun and educational effort that will definitely help our employees keep more of their hard-earned money in their wallets and have fewer of their dollars going into their gas tanks," Williams said. "We have many employees who travel substantial distances to and from work and who also use their own vehicles while working. With gasoline prices being so high, this is becoming more and more burdensome financially. For the entire month of August 2008, by doing some basic things to become more fuel efficient, we also can cut down on this skyrocketing cost. We're challenging our employees to comply with four personal transportation requirements that make up our fuel efficiency program and that also are proven to increase gas mileage. Unity House will distribute a \$75 gas card to each employee who successfully complies with these requirements."

The four parts of the agency fuel efficiency challenge include attending a one-hour, Unity House fuel efficiency educational seminar conducted by the American Automobile Association (AAA), four each of which are scheduled be held Wednesday, July 30 at Unity House's Auburn administrative offices and Thursday, July 31, at its Ithaca administrative site; inflating your automobile's tires with air to the proper tire pressure or replacing the air in your tires with nitrogen; changing your automobile's air filter; and carpooling, bicycling, walking, or using public transportation to and from work for five days in August.

Williams noted that Unity House staff traveling from agency offices in Syracuse, Geneva, and Wayne County to attend the AAA seminars will receive mileage reimbursement if they carpool with co-workers. As of July 28, 2007, 87 agency employees had registered to attend the one-hour classes, she said.

She added that the agency's effort also was encouraging staff to take other steps to increase their gas mileage, including removing any excess items from their vehicle trunks to reduce excess vehicular weight; parking their vehicles at and walking in and out of establishments that offer drive-thru' services, rather than waiting in idling vehicles to use the service; using their vehicle's cruise control option when possible while traveling on highways; not exceeding 55 mph speed limits and accelerating and braking moderately; tuning up their vehicles at recommended intervals; using air conditioning only when necessary; and combining trips and/or walking, car pooling, or bicycling to their destinations, whenever possible.