



Main Story 11.26.08

NY State Department of Correctional Services Donates Winter Clothing to Mental Health Residential Service Consumers



Supervised Comm. Residence Mgr. Amy Colvin (l), Exec. Dir. Joyce Williams, DOC Supt. H.D. Graham, consumer Tiffany Reese (r) inspect donated coats

AUBURN – For Tiffany Reese and other consumers of Unity House of Cayuga County Inc.’s Mental Health Residential Services, Christmas this year will come early thanks to the N.Y. State Department of Correctional Services (DOCS).

Reese, a consumer in Unity House’s Supervised Community Residence program at 108 South Street, Auburn, and other consumers of the agency’s Certified Apartments and Independent Housing programs, received DOCS surplus medium-weight winter coats as part of a collaborative campaign between N.Y. Governor David A. Paterson and the DOCS donating 7,000 of the never-worn, practically new coats to nonprofit organizations in 35 communities throughout the state. Delivery of the unused coats to the three programs of Unity House’s Mental Health Services took place Tuesday, November 25, 2008 at the agency’s South Street administrative office and program site.

“Knowing we are a nonprofit organization, DOCS contacted us a short while back and asked if we could take a donation of 50 unused coats,” said Unity House Supervised Community Residence program manager Amy Colvin, who oversaw delivery of the coats for the agency and its consumers. “We were thrilled to have been chosen for the donations, as these coats will really help us outfit our consumers who need and don’t have appropriate clothing for the cold winter months. We are incredibly thankful to the governor and DOCS for this terrific and timely donation.”

In 2006, DOCS switched the standard uniform for its nearly 20,000 officers to a single, multi-use coat from two separate heavy- and medium-weight coats, resulting in a taxpayer savings of about \$200,000 a year. The coats donated to Unity House were made by inmates at Clinton Correctional Facility’s apparel shop five to eight years ago, and are no longer part of the standard corrections officer uniform. All DOCS insignia and identifications were removed from the coats before they were donated.

Auburn Correctional Facility Superintendent Harold D. Graham, who delivered the 50 coats to Colvin, Unity House Executive Director Joyce Williams, said, “In this day and age, and especially in this economy, because DOCS no longer has use for these coats, we thought it made great sense to donate them and put them to good use. We’re honored to be able to help Unity House in its mission.”

The 65% polyester / 35% cotton waist-length, navy blue coats are made of 7.5-ounce twill with a 3-ounce, removable, zip-out quilted lining. Their flapped pockets have hand warmer insert openings on each side.

“This is great,” smiled Reese, upon finding and trying on a new coat that fit her. “The coat I’ve been wearing is sort of in tatters and getting this new one is just in time for the winter.”

In addition to donating to Unity House, DOCS gave 15 of the coats to Auburn VFW Post 1975, 12 to the Lock-Mor Thrift Store in Moravia, and 42 to Cortland Loaves and Fishes in Cortland, N.Y.