



## NEWS

**Main Story / 8.3.07**

### **UNITY HOUSE of CAYUGA COUNTY INC. Celebrates 30<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary**



**AUBURN** - A festive atmosphere reigned at the main ballroom of the Emerson Park Pavilion Thursday, July 26, 2007, as nearly 150 supporters, stakeholders, and friends of Unity House of Cayuga County Inc. gathered and celebrated the agency's 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of providing services and programs to individuals with developmental disabilities, mental health illnesses, and those recovering from chemical dependencies.

The four-hour event, in recognition of Unity House's three decades of success of housing (permanently and transitionally), rehabilitating, and employing consumers in six Central New York counties, featured entertainment by the Stan Colella Orchestra and multiple food stations that offered a variety of hot and cold fare courtesy of Premier Catering of Auburn, NY.

"We were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support at our celebration by our community supporters and especially our event sponsors," said Unity House executive director Joyce Williams. "Our presenting sponsors Welch Allyn, NUCOR Auburn Steel, and WALMART; our table sponsors, Owens-Illinois's Auburn Facility and Auburn's Lynch Furniture; and our contributing sponsors, Wegmans in Auburn, SCHOTT North America in Auburn, Kinney Drugs, Johnston Paper in Auburn, Relph Benefit Advisors of Pittsford and Watertown, NY, Auburn Community Federal Credit Union, Empower Federal Credit Union, and Morgan-Foster Agency in Auburn, were all instrumental in our celebration's success. We cannot thank them and our celebration's attendees enough for their support of the event and their trust in and commitment to our mission. Our event proceeds will be used to enhance our agency Information Technologies."

Williams added that in addition to honoring 30 years of success at Unity House, the dinner dance celebration represented one component of an overall development plan aimed at strengthening the agency's service and program support functions.

"We are planning to have at least one such major fundraiser a year," she said. "We also will be undertaking a grant writing campaign, we'll be prospecting individuals and entities for gifts to Unity House, and we're starting a Planned Giving Program that fundamentally is intended to ensure the agency's mission over time. We're excited about our plans and look forward to developing and implementing them as 2007 progresses."

Highlighting the celebration event were presentations by speakers Tony Gucciardi, Cindy Cauley, and Timothy Van Riper.

A former Director of Unity House's Employment Services, a well-known Auburn native and resident, and current architect and overseer of Unity House's just-developed Planned Giving Program, Gucciardi lauded the evolution of services and programs at Unity House since 1977.

"The success of the agency rests with its commitment to helping consumers and their families meet their challenges and be able to live as independently as possible," he declared. "This success is directly related to the Board and Joyce Williams and her marvelous staff who achieve year in and year out."

Cauley delivered an inspirational account of her life of despair before accessing most if not all of Unity House's services and programs and how they changed her from "living totally in the dark to a life filled with light, happiness and hope.

"I experienced this wonderful agency's mental health community residence, GRACE House, MRDD and supportive apartments programs, and owe my life to them," she told the attendees. "I know God works with me and through me and through others, including several people in this room tonight. Unity House and its staffs are lifesavers, and I'm living proof."

Van Riper, a consumer of Unity House's Geneva, NY employment services office, told the attendees how important his job development skills have been in meeting the many challenges his disabilities have presented. To facilitate his presentation and help with his anxiety over addressing the attendees, he donned his current job uniform and displayed a large, smiling face he drew for the event to demonstrate the level of happiness he has attained through working with the agency's employment services staff.

"Without Unity Employment Services and my job coach, Bob Castor, I'd have never been able to accept everything that's happened to me and still gone as far as I have," he said.

A spectacular, 22-minute fireworks display staged by TELSTAR Fireworks of Liverpool, NY ended the evening's festivities.