



Unity House

Transitional Living ~ Permanent Housing ~ Rehabilitative Services ~ Employment Services

Unity House Expands Cayuga County IRA Program with OPTS AWARD



AUBURN, NY – Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc., a leading provider of transitional housing, permanent housing, rehabilitative, and employment services and programs daily in six Central New York counties to more than 700 individuals with developmental disabilities, mental health illnesses, and those recovering from a chemical dependency, announced today that the NY State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) had approved its Options for People through Services (OPTS) proposal to expand its residential program for individuals with developmental disabilities in Cayuga County.

“We are pleased and excited to be able to expand residential housing and our assistance and services to Cayuga County consumers, as a result of OMRDD approving our OPTS proposal,” said Unity House Executive Director Joyce Williams, in announcing OMRDD approval of the Unity House plan submitted in February 2006. “Our five year OPTS contract, which will provide funding annually in excess of \$300,000 for operational expenses in addition to annual reimbursement to cover the program expansion’s physical property costs, affords us more opportunity to house and integrate into our community our most valuable asset, those consumers who can and do contribute to our diversity and prosperity.”

Williams said Unity House on April 12, 2007 began housing and supporting in two apartments at its 133 Prospect Street OPTS expansion site in Auburn four similarly aged women intending to integrate into the community. In order to fulfill the requirements of the OPTS program, Unity House will be hiring appropriate full- and part-time staff, she said. Screening of eligible candidates for the program was coordinated between Unity House and the Cayuga County Committee on Residential Opportunities, a focus group of the Cayuga County Mental Health Subcommittee, she added.

The expansion increases Unity House’s current Cayuga County Independent Residential Alternative (IRA) residential population of individuals with developmental disabilities to 30 from 26.

Started in 2004, OMRDD designed OPTS to provide a wider array of options to individuals with developmental disabilities receiving services and to the public and nonprofit providers who care for them. Those options, based on integrating community services and consumer choice, have provided funding mechanisms that strengthen a provider’s capacity to deliver individualized services; have improved access to needed services and supports for eligible individuals; and have enhanced consumer and family participation in the available programs and services.

A licensed OMRDD provider, Unity House of Cayuga County Inc. is beginning its 30th year of providing transitional and permanent housing, rehabilitative, and employment services in Cayuga, Tompkins, Seneca, Wayne, Onondaga, and Ontario counties.