

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UNITY HOUSE ANNOUNCES VOLUNTEER AWARDEE**

***David Bowman selected for 5<sup>th</sup> Fred Atkins Community Service Award***



Auburn, New York – The Fred Atkins Community Service Award selection committee is pleased to announce that Mr. David Bowman of Auburn has been chosen as its 5<sup>th</sup> annual awardee. Mr. Bowman, an outstanding community volunteer at a number of organizations in Cayuga County, will be honored at Unity House’s annual dinner on April 27 at the Hilton Garden Inn. There, he will receive a \$500 cash prize - \$250 for him to keep and \$250 to be given to a Cayuga County non-profit of his choice. Dave has chosen the E. John Gavras Center as this year’s recipient, and will give his own reward to the Shriners Children’s Hospital in Springfield, Mass.

Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc. introduced the community-wide fund and award in 2011 in memory of beloved Cayuga County volunteer and 30-year Unity House board member Frederick Atkins. The Atkins Award recognizes an outstanding individual who volunteers in Cayuga County and who exemplifies Fred’s high moral standards and philanthropic spirit.

This year’s awardee David Bowman is a Cayuga County native. He was nominated for the Atkins Award by The Rev. Eileen Winter of First Presbyterian Church. Dave grew up in the village of Cayuga and his wife Beth is from Union Springs; they moved to Auburn in the early 1980s. Dave received his bachelor’s degree and teaching certification from SUNY-Brockport, and earned a master’s in education from SUNY-Cortland. He was a teacher in the Union Springs Central School District for 39 years before his retirement in 2009.

“I was flabbergasted when the award announcement was made at church; I am so honored,” says Dave. “My parents were deeply involved in their community, so I was raised that this is what people did. We lend a hand when it’s needed – it’s just what you do. I view volunteerism as putting manners into action.”

Like previous award recipients, Dave's life has revolved around giving back to others. Taking the lead from his parents, Dave began a lifetime of service as a lifeguard with the New York State Park System in 1968. In order to keep current, he volunteered to give the Red Cross lifeguard certification course every summer. That eventually included first aid and CPR, and then teaching swimming lessons for more than 20 years. This will be Dave's 48<sup>th</sup> summer as supervisor of the Finger Lakes State Parks swim program, overseeing 100 guards at 12 parks.

Dave is also active with the Boy Scouts and First Presbyterian Church in Auburn. Through the church, he led the scouts for many years, serving as merit badge counselor, troop leader, and bookkeeper. An Eagle Scout himself, Dave sits on the Eagle board of reviewers. At the church, he has held nearly every leadership position possible in the four decades he has been a member: deacon, trustee, elder, youth group leader, and he has been singing in the choir since 1982.

Dave served as District Deputy Grand Master for the Free & Accepted Masons from 2008-2010, overseeing 16 lodges in Cayuga and Tompkins Counties. Through the Masons, he is also a Shriner. Perhaps most special about Dave is that he knew Fred Atkins personally from their time spent at the church and in service to others. As Fred advanced in years, Dave would drive Fred to church and to their mutual Red Cross and Masons meetings.

"To think that I'd receive an award given in Fred's honor is truly amazing," says Dave. Upon Fred's death, Dave planted two flowering trees on the grounds of the Masonic Lodge #124 on Route 34 just south of Auburn.

Mr. Bowman will be honored at Unity House's annual dinner on Monday, April 27 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 74 State Street, Auburn. The public is invited to attend; the evening will begin at 5:30 pm. Cost is \$35 per person. RSVP by April 20 to 315-253-6227 or email: [annualdinner@unityhouse.com](mailto:annualdinner@unityhouse.com).

Donations to the Atkins Fund are gratefully accepted at any time. Corporate sponsors for the dinner are Cuddy Law Firm and Key Bank. Table sponsors are Currier Plastics, Welch Allyn, Reagan Companies, Johnston Paper, MEDENT, and Lynch Furniture.

For more information about the Fred Atkins Community Service Fund and Award or Unity House's annual dinner, please contact Director of Marketing and Development Kelly Buck at 315.253.6227 or [kdbuck@unityhouse.com](mailto:kdbuck@unityhouse.com), and visit [www.unityhouse.com/fredatkinsaward](http://www.unityhouse.com/fredatkinsaward).

Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc. provides transitional and permanent housing, rehabilitative, and employment services for individuals with mental health illnesses, developmental disabilities, and/or chemical dependencies from which they are recovering. A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, Unity House partners with these individuals to develop their personal skills and potential, enabling them to live more full and independent lives. The agency serves more than 700 consumers a day in six central New York counties. Unity House is

committed to freeing our communities of misconceptions associated with disabilities through innovation, education, and advocacy. The agency will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.

*Unity House ~ Empowering Lives, Securing Futures*