

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Fall 2008

New Parolee Program Aims to Break Barriers to Recovery

Odyssey House has been chosen to run New York's first collaborative treatment program for chemically dependent parolees. The new 30-day program will serve up to 1,200 parolees a year at the recently renovated Edgecombe Residential Treatment Facility in Upper Manhattan.

Odyssey House will work with three state agencies to provide treatment services in this innovative joint agency effort to create a model for future prison rehabilitation and best practices in breaking the cycle of recidivism among chemically dependent parolees. Joining Odyssey House in this effort is the: Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), Department of Correctional Services (DOCS), and Division of Parole (DOP).

The Technical Violator Parole Diversion Program (TVPDP) will be available to men released from prison who are under parole or post-release supervision within New York City. TVPDP is designed to provide intensive services to parole detainees with the aim of returning them to their communities and engaging them in further addiction treatment. Each detainee will receive a full evaluation for treatment and an individual treatment plan that will be developed to address the specific reasons an offender violated parole.

Odyssey House president, Dr. Peter Provet, said it was "an honor to be chosen to run this innovative program targeting an

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Student Filmmakers Tackle Teen Drug Abuse

To help counter misperceptions among teens that marijuana is a benign drug, adolescents in residential treatment at the Odyssey House Teen Leadership Center have produced a series of original short films that take a hard-hitting look at the risky behaviors and harmful effects drug usage can have on young people's lives.

The films were produced as part of a workshop funded with a grant from the Citi Employee Community Fund. The goal of the project was to help engage teens in the treatment process and encourage them to explore

the various ways drugs have impacted their lives. The youngsters learned key filmmaking skills including creating a script, camera techniques and editing.

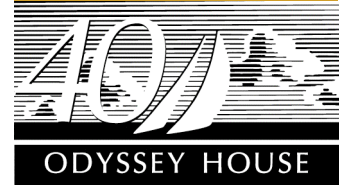
While making the films, the students interviewed their peers, ElderCare residents and people on the streets to present a comprehensive portrait of the devastating effects of drug abuse. They also researched the latest reports on the physical, emotional and social consequences of long-term drug use and were concerned to learn that marijuana can interfere with normal brain development.

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Girls Program Celebrates a Sweet 16

For many teenage girls, a Sweet 16 party is a much anticipated rite of passage to plan and share with family and friends. But for teens with substance abuse problems, while parties are often a source of family conflict and an occasion for high risk behavior, they also present counseling staff with an opportunity to reinforce treatment goals and techniques.

This summer, staff at the Odyssey House Lafayette Avenue Center were presented with just such an opportunity when one of the residents, Jasmine, announced that what she wanted more than anything else was a Sweet 16 party.

But while planning the party, the counseling staff ran into difficulty obtaining enough dresses for all 16 girls.

That's where Tina Ciampa, project manager at Odyssey House, came in. As she listened to staff describe the problem, Ms. Ciampa realized she could help. She posted a request for donations of gently used bridesmaid dresses on a forum called "LI Weddings." The response was overwhelming – she received nearly one hundred dresses, as well as shoes and other accessories.

For Jasmine, it was a dream come true. "I didn't have the best attitude when I started treatment. But when I saw how much every-



Jasmine, center, with young residents from Odyssey House adolescent programs.

one cared for me, it really turned things around. Now I'm more mature, and I'm thankful for Odyssey House."

More than 50 guests participated in the Sweet 16, which featured a traditional ceremonial dance, residents' families, guest speakers from local community organizations, and dancers from the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance.

In addition to teaching the teen girls how to behave responsibly at a party, the preparations were also extended to include a number of adolescent boys in treatment at the Odyssey House Teen Leadership Center who attended the party as escorts.

As for Jasmine, she says she'll never forget her party.

Children's Services Celebrates Autumn

Autumn is a fun-filled time of the year for children who live at Odyssey House Family Centers of Excellence programs. Recently, the children and their parents had the opportunity to visit a working farm and on Halloween, 100 children ranging in age from infants to school age enjoyed a costume party at the Manor Family Center in East Harlem.

On Thanksgiving, families in treatment will gather for a "Family Feast." Adriane Armstrong, director of Children's Services, said this time of year is especially difficult for struggling families. "Every holiday is an opportunity for us to create happy memories for the children. At Thanksgiving, we prepare the children for this important day by focusing our activities on sharing and giving back."



Odyssey House Alum Receives "Badge of Honor"

Kristina Sellers, an alumna of Odyssey House's Lafayette Avenue program, was one of ten recipients of a commemorative Badge of Honor from New York State's Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS). The award was presented at the state's first-ever Recovery Conference in September.

Ms. Sellers received the Badge of Honor for contributing her story to OASAS's new campaign, "Real People: Real Stories," which highlights twelve inspiring stories of recovery



Kristina Sellers with Janice Glenn Slaughter, director of community housing, at New York State's Recovery Conference.

from alcohol, drug or gambling addiction.

The goal of the campaign is to reduce the stigma of addiction and offer hope to New Yorkers in recovery. The stories will be posted on the OASAS website and stored in a searchable "Recovery Stories Bank." Since completing the program last year, Ms. Sellers, 22, works full-time for an employee assistance program and recently finished her first year of college at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she is studying criminal justice.

Program Targets Repeat Offenders

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at-risk population of chemical abusers who, without such intervention services, are in danger of returning to the criminal justice system as repeat offenders.

“Odyssey House,” he continued, “has a track record of working with a wide range of drug-abusing individuals in community-based and institutional settings, and of collaborating closely with several state and city agencies in ensuring vulnerable individuals return to their communities as productive, drug-free citizens.”

Starting this fall, Odyssey House professional counseling staff will provide group and individual therapy, vocational rehabilitation and life skills training, relapse prevention, family integration, and

anger management. The intensive treatment program will run seven days a week.

Family involvement

Edgecombe Residential Treatment Facility’s accessibility by public transportation and its central location in Upper Manhattan makes it easier for family members to visit program participants – a crucial component of parolees’ support systems.

To be eligible for TVPDP, a parolee must have a technical violation of drug use with no pending criminal charges. Participation is based on a contract between the parolee and DOP. Individuals with significant medical or mental problems, or those with histories of sex offenses, will be excluded.

Holiday Greetings from Odyssey House



Give to the “Friends of Odyssey House” online at odysseyhouseinc.org or contact us at:

Odyssey Foundation
95 Pine St, 17th Floor
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(212)361-1600

Helps Teens in Treatment Tell Their Stories

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One of the students interviewed for a film focusing on life in treatment described an experience common to teens with substance abuse problems: “I never thought I would end up in treatment. I come from a good family. When I was in junior high school, I was getting 90s and 80s, and then I started hanging out with negative people, started using drugs, started smoking cigarettes and then marijuana. After that, I just kept messing up everything around me.”

The workshop was enthusiastically received by the students and achieved its overarching goal of encouraging teens to stay and engage in treatment (of the teens that participated in the workshop, 87 percent completed the program, compared with the overall adolescent completion rate of 51 percent).

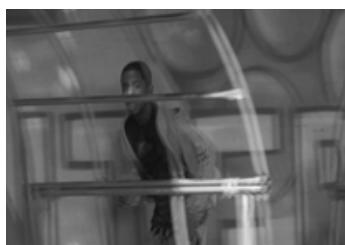
The films are available on the Odyssey House website at www.odysseyhouseinc.org and on our new YouTube channel, OdysseyHouseNY. Teenage girls in residential treatment at the

Lafayette Avenue center will have the opportunity to participate in the workshop later this year.

Marijuana Leading Drug of Abuse for Teens

While overall drug use by American teenagers has declined slightly in the last several years, marijuana and prescription drug abuse have not. According to the 2007 Monitoring the Future survey, at least 40 percent of high school seniors reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetimes. In addition, the national Center on Addiction and Drug Abuse (CASA) reported that daily marijuana use among teens tripled between 1992 and 1999, and has not declined since then.

For treatment centers, this has meant a 200 percent increase in the number of teens in trouble because of marijuana abuse, a figure in keeping with Odyssey House, where 98 percent of teens cite marijuana as their drug of choice.



Stills from Wish, a short film by Rogelio M., depicting the risky behaviors and negative consequences associated with drug use.

Run for Your Life 5K Celeb



Top female runners proudly display their trophies.



Don Manning, president of MPPI Insurance Services, far right, with members of Team MPPI.



The runners get off to a fast start.

At Odyssey House, nothing says ‘celebrating recovery’ better than families getting together to support loved ones who, through hard work and commitment, have changed their lives. And on a Sunday morning in late September, hundreds of men, women and children turned out to show just how much they value recovery and the organizations that support it.

For the third year in a row, people from all walks of life put on their sneakers, braved the threat of rain, and pounded the pavements on Randall’s Island in East Harlem. This year’s “Run for Your Life” race marked the culmination in New York City of a month-long series of events that recognize and celebrate people in recovery.

For Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo, of the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, who helped emcee the race day activities, the event was another valuable opportunity to congratulate New Yorkers in recovery and acknowledge the commitment – and sacrifices – of family members.

“Moving exercise to the center of drug treatment”

Peter Provet

“We know,” Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo said, “that recovery really needs to be defined more fully, as not simply abstinence from a substance, but a lifestyle, free from addiction, that is also based on wellness and healthy choices.

“Living in recovery also includes having the medical needs met, social support for a substance-free lifestyle, employment and housing.”

This sentiment was shared by Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House who has worked to include fitness and wellness into comprehensive treatment plans. “The bottom line,” he said, “is exercise makes us feel better, both mentally and physically, and that is why physical fitness is such a big part of the Odyssey House experience.”

Also key in making the day a big success for recovery programs were teams of runners and supporters from New York’s treatment community, corporate sponsors, and volunteer agencies. John Tivolacci, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Odyssey House, thanked them all their support, in particular our ‘Champion Sponsor’ ChemRx for their “steadfast commitment to recovery programs.”

Odyssey House thanks its generous sponsors:



rates Third Successful Year



Supporting recovery. From left, John Tavolacci, executive vice president and chief operating officer; Jody Silva Falk, vice president of ChemRx; Peter Provet, president; Karen Carpenter-Palumbo, commissioner of OASAS; and Jay Dow, a reporter for WCBS-TV, with young runners. Right, a children's race participant, and Adam Shalit, the winner of the adolescent's competition.

THE RECOVERY PROJECT



On the day before the race, Odyssey House residents and staff members joined The Recovery Project for a public rally to celebrate National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. Thousands of people from across the country, including local and national politicians, celebrities, nonprofit leaders, people in recovery, family members and supporters, gathered for a historic walk over the Brooklyn Bridge to reinforce the message that anyone can “cross their own bridge to recovery.”

The Recovery Project was created by A&E Television Network to raise national awareness that addiction is a treatable disease and recovery is possible. The Project supports leading national non-profit organizations that are promoting public education and providing quality addiction treatment and recovery services.



Young Residents in Recovery Reach Educational Goals

Milagros B. entered Odyssey House in March 2007 with only an eighth grade education. Now, a little more than a year later, she has earned her General Equivalency Diploma and was the Manor Family Center's valedictorian.

"I had to do it for my children," said Milagros, who was recently reunited with her three daughters, ages 7, 4 and 2. "Now I can lead by example and show my daughters that hard work and persistence is the key to success."

Milagros is one of 55 residents who were recognized for passing their GED tests at a ceremony earlier this summer. Keynote speaker Jo Ann Ferdinand, Acting Justice of the Kings County Supreme Court and a prominent supporter of substance abuse treatment as an alternative to incarceration, recognized several of the graduates – as the presiding judge of the Brooklyn Treatment Court, she had sent many of them to Odyssey House.

Judge Ferdinand congratulated the graduates for the progress they'd made since they first came before her in court. She also talked to them about the significance of their accomplishment. "Your high school diploma is not only proof that you can succeed in high school, it's proof that you can succeed in life. Everything you need to know to succeed in life, you learned studying for your GED at Odyssey House."

In addition to Milagros, three other residents were honored as valedictorians of their programs: Michael V., Teen Leadership Center; Anthony S., Mabon; and Loraine R., Lafayette Avenue.

Michael V. has been a resident at the Leadership Center since October 2007, where he has excelled academically and continues to serve as a role model for his younger peers. Motivated by his success in the GED classes, Michael enrolled in Kingsborough Community College to study radiologic technology.

Anthony S. dropped out of high school at age 17 and turned to selling drugs after the birth of his daughter. Now, he is "proud



Valedictorians Loraine R., Michael V., and Milagros B. at the GED graduation ceremony.

to be able to support my family legitimately." While working towards his GED, Anthony completed Environmental Remediation Technician training at Williamsburg Works and has a New York State license in asbestos abatement. He now works for a construction firm based in Brooklyn.

Loraine R., a resident of Lafayette Avenue since September 2007, recently completed vocational training and said she is looking forward to "giving back and helping her peers see that treatment works if you work it."

Education leads to treatment success

Odyssey House's Vocational Rehabilitation Services, in partnership with the New York City Department of Education and Project Restart, provides on-site educational services available to all residential clients and administers the GED exam five times a year. In 2007, Odyssey House helped 86 percent of those eligible to work find employment; increased the number of GEDs obtained by 25 percent; and contributed to a 66 percent successful treatment completion rate.

"Now I can lead by example and show my daughters that hard work and persistence is the key to success"

Milagros B.

Odyssey House Recognized at NASDAQ Opening Ceremony



Odyssey House joined Philadelphia Insurance Companies (PHLY) on Tuesday, July 22nd to ring the NASDAQ stock market opening bell. Brian O'Reilly, Regional Vice President of Sales and Marketing for PHLY, said, "Philadelphia Insurance Companies is committed to the nonprofit industry and serving the community; we support the mission of Odyssey House, whose innovative programs ensure that vulnerable individuals return to their communities as productive, drug-free citizens."

Representing Odyssey House were George Rosenfeld, board chairman; Janice Glenn Slaughter, director of community housing; Dr. Peter Provet, president and CEO; and two residents from our adolescent programs.

Foundation Funds Drama Curriculum

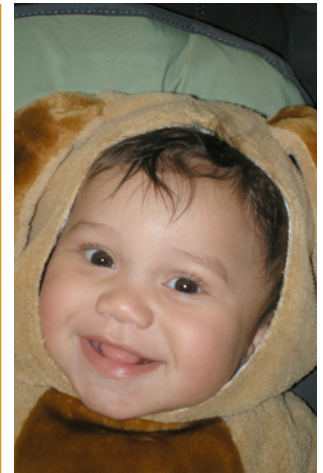
Teens in treatment at Odyssey House are offered a wide range of educational and creative opportunities. A recent grant from the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Charitable Foundation will further enrich their experience by funding a playwriting workshop for young people in our residential programs.

The workshop will engage participants in all stages of the playwriting process, from concept development to stage production. The finished play will be a comprehensive representation of the participants' growth and development during the treatment process.

Through the medium of playwriting, adolescents can tell their stories, improve their technical skills as they seek to express their ideas effectively, set and achieve accessible goals, and develop the leadership skills needed to mount a

production. The thrill of showcasing their own work builds young people's self-confidence, engages them with their peers, and gives them a powerful voice in their community.

"Creative activities such as playwriting not only enhance students' understanding of the world, they broaden their perspective on academics," said George Rosenfeld, chairman of Odyssey House's Board of Trustees, who was instrumental in securing the grant. "The arts give young people the opportunity to express themselves while challenging their intellect — the arts are essential in the development of the whole person."



MISSION

It is the mission of Odyssey House to:

Provide comprehensive and innovative services to the broadest range of metro New York's population who abuse drugs, abuse alcohol, have mental illness.

Provide high quality, holistic treatment impacting all major life spheres: psychological, physical, social, family, educational, and spiritual.

Support personal rehabilitation, renewal, and family restoration.

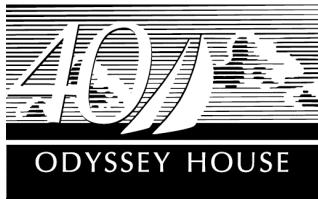
Throughout its activities, Odyssey House undertakes to act as a responsible employer and member of the community and to manage the assets of the organization in a professional manner.

Coming Soon, New Housing in Harlem



Construction is underway on the 50-apartment, long-term housing development at 123rd Street in East Harlem. It is on schedule to open in September 2009. The building will provide a supportive, independent living environment for individuals who have overcome mental health problems and drug, alcohol and/or significant medical conditions. Right, an architectural rendering of what the completed building will look like.





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www.odysseyhouseinc.org
 Tel: 212-361-1600

Odyssey House Community-Based Services



Founded in 1967, Odyssey House is an Enhanced Therapeutic Community (TC) providing innovative services and programs for a broad population of drug-troubled individuals and families, including:

- Mothers & children
- Pregnant women
- Adolescents
- Elders (55 years and older)
- Mentally ill chemical abusers (MICA)
- Single adults
- Court mandated clients
- Homeless adults

Odyssey House runs the largest and oldest parent and child residential/outpatient TC program in the country and the only residential/outpatient TC program for senior citizens.

For more information about Odyssey House programs, call 212-987-5100 or visit us online at www.odysseyhouseinc.org