

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Summer 2010

Official Opening of Supportive Housing Building Brings Wide Support



Adolfo Carrion, Jr., Regional Administrator, US Department of Housing & Urban Development, cuts the ribbon for Odyssey House Park Avenue, together with (from left) architect David Hirsch, Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet; Caren Abate, Assistant Housing Director, New York State Office of Mental Health; and Odyssey House Chief Operating Officer John Tivolacci.

Odyssey House Park Avenue, a new 50-unit, single occupancy building for men and women with special needs, has officially opened. The building, located on E. 123rd Street, provides a supportive, independent living environment for individuals who have overcome many life challenges, including mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, and homelessness. The tenants here are all able, with minimal support, to live in community-based housing.

The new program is one of several Odyssey House is developing with state and city agencies to address the housing needs of an underserved population: individuals coping with

mental illness. Though mental disorders are widespread – one in four adults suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, according to the National Institutes of Mental Health – there remains an overwhelming and urgent need for services proven to help this population live productive, independent, and dignified lives.

Odyssey House President Dr. Peter Provet said, “It is testament to the vision and commitment of New York State and New York City government that we could build a place of dignity and hope.”

More than 100 community leaders, Odyssey House board members, staff and supporters attended the ribbon-cutting celebration held on June 23rd, which also featured speeches by

Continued on page 2

New Family Center Program Focuses on Pregnant Women and New Moms

Healthy Mothers Healthy Families (HMHF), funded by a multi-year \$1.4 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), addresses the substance abuse, medical, social and psychological needs of pregnant women and women with children. The enhanced program also includes resources to engage the resident’s extended family members and/or significant others in the treatment process.

Two dozen residents enrolled in the program and many have already completed the first phase, which included 12 sessions of Motivational Enhancement Therapy, an evidenced-based therapy that assists clients in building their motivation for self-change and recovery. The women are now

Continued on page 6

SAVE THE DATE

5th Annual
Run for Your Life
5K Fun Run/2 Mile Walk



September 25, 2010

Icahn Stadium
Randall’s Island,
New York City

For information
or to register:

www.odysseyhouseinc.org

Inside this issue:

- Teens in Treatment Make Their Broadway Debut p. 3
- New Board Members p. 3
- Measuring Success pp. 4-5
- ElderCare Residents to Participate in Research Study p. 6
- Celebrating Women in Recovery p. 7



New Building Provides a “Sanctuary” for Tenants



Park Avenue tenant Christina S. in her handicap-accessible unit.

Continued from page 1

Adolfo Carrion, Regional Administrator, US Department of Housing & Urban Development; and New York State Office of Mental Health officials Michael Newman (Director, Bureau of Housing Development & Support) and Caren Abate (Assistant Housing Director, NYC Field Office); and George Rosenfeld, chairman of Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation Boards of Trustees.

Mr. Carrion, a former Bronx Borough President and a longtime proponent of supportive housing, thanked Odyssey House for “helping people live their lives in more productive ways.”

Addressing the crowd, tenant Jack C. said the program has given him the

opportunity to improve his life. Jack, who has struggled with depression and substance abuse for many years, called his new home his oasis. “For the first time in a long time I know better days are ahead, and I’m optimistic for the future.”

Durga Vallabhaneni, Odyssey House chief financial and administrative officer, explained that the project was developed by Odyssey House with capital and operational funding from New York State Office of Mental Health and capital from low-income housing tax credits. The land was acquired from New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development through ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure).

*“For the first time in a long time
I know better days are ahead ...”*

Jack C.

Promoting health and fitness

At Odyssey House we pride ourselves on the quality of our programs and services – from the range of comprehensive treatment options, to our commitment to being good neighbors, and to the careful design of our buildings – both what the buildings look like to the outside world and how the space adds to the life of the men, women and children in our care and under our roof.

The apartment building, designed by Urban Architectural Initiatives to be as energy efficient as possible, optimizes the

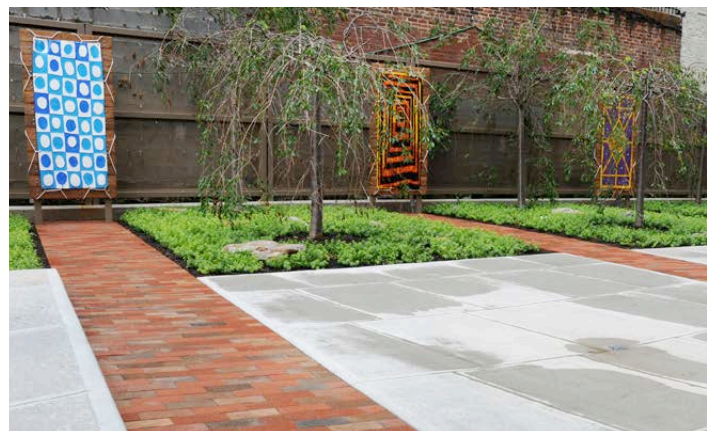
use of natural light with floor-to-ceiling insulated windows in the lobby, main staircase, and tenant lounges on each of the five residential floors. The all-new construction, built by Rende Contracting Corporation, also incorporates a number of specially adapted tenant-focused amenities such as a fully-equipped gym, communal kitchen, dining room and multipurpose recreational room, and a landscaped private backyard with an outdoor art exhibition area, designed to foster a sense of community and promote health and fitness among tenants.



The structure is a modern building that is also in keeping with the historic character of the neighborhood.



Living independently: The building has a number of amenities designed to allow tenants to live independently, including a well-furnished gym, laundry room, multi-purpose meeting room, communal dining room, and lounges on each floor to encourage socialization.



Exploring life’s journey through art: The landscaped backyard features an inaugural art installation by the Odyssey House Art Project, “Becoming Whole,” which explores life’s journey of discovery from infancy through adulthood.

Teens in Treatment Make Their Broadway Debut



“When You Shake the Tree” explores the dynamics of family life.

The Odyssey House Theatre Project returned to Broadway last weekend with a new cast and a daring original play. The ensemble, comprised of Odyssey House teens and directed by PossibleArts artistic director Tom Demenkoff, performed “When You Shake the Tree” at the Studio Theatre on 42nd Street. The play was written by the teenagers during a three-month theater immersion workshop.

Exposed to an intensive program similar to the training process of a professional ensemble, members of the Odyssey House Theatre Project embarked on a journey of self-discovery and creative discipline. The result is a bold new play that takes a fresh perspective on trouble at home. Broadway star Norm

Lewis, who mentored the teens, called the play “a vibrant shake up of family life: the secrets, the hurts, and the feelings.”

Funded by a grant from the Elizabeth & Baretts O. Benjamin Charitable Foundation, this is the second year the workshop has been offered to teens in treatment. Dr. Peter Provet, president of Odyssey House, explains the motivation behind the project: “Being in long-term residential treatment program is especially hard for teens. Writing and acting helps them deal with drug abuse and family problems in a creative way and opens them up to a deeper treatment experience.”

For more information on the project, including a blog chronicling the teens’ journey, visit the Odyssey House Theatre Project website at www.ohtp2010.org.



Members of the ensemble with teaching artist Lori Parquet (left), Broadway stars Norm Lewis and LaChanze, and Odyssey House President Peter Provet (back row, right).

New Board Members Bring Their Business Acumen to Odyssey House

The Odyssey House and Odyssey Foundation Boards of Trustees have added two new members to their ranks: Dwain Carryl and Michael Patent. Both have wide-ranging business expertise and are looking forward to using it to support people in recovery.

Dwain Carryl is an analyst at GoldenTree Asset Management, a multi-strategy hedge fund based in Manhattan. Prior to that, he was a vice president at Merrill Lynch in the equity research depart-

ment. Mr. Carryl started his career at Sidoti & Company in 1999, where he was a *Wall Street Journal*-ranked analyst in their annual “Best on the Street” survey in 2002. Mr. Carryl’s interest in joining the Boards was prompted by his ongoing desire to serve and enhance the community.

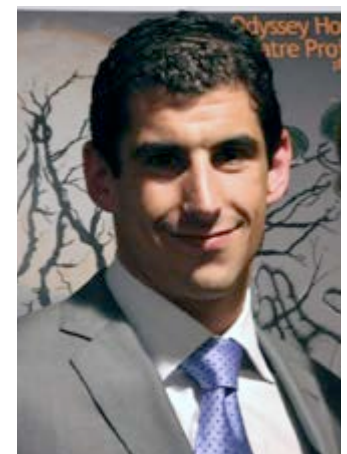
An account executive at Van Wagner Sports and Entertainment, Michael Patent focuses on business development. An avid runner, Mr. Patent became involved with Odyssey House through the “Run for Your Life” program. “As I’ve developed relation-

ships with the young men and women currently benefiting from Odyssey House’s programs, I’ve been inspired to take on a more active role,”

he said. “Being a member of the Boards affords me the opportunity to truly see the change that takes place day in and day out with our clients.”



Dwain Carryl



Michael Patent

MEASURING SUCCESS

At Odyssey House, helping clients stay drug free is the critical measure of our success. When an individual with a substance use disorder turns to us for help, we immediately seize the opportunity to save a life and reclaim a family. For the men, women, and children enrolled in our treatment programs, the implications of this decision to take control of their lives could not be more serious.

But helping people achieve a lasting sobriety is only the beginning of the journey we take with them. We are not satisfied until those who complete treatment are working, in school or training, have a safe home, and are connected to a

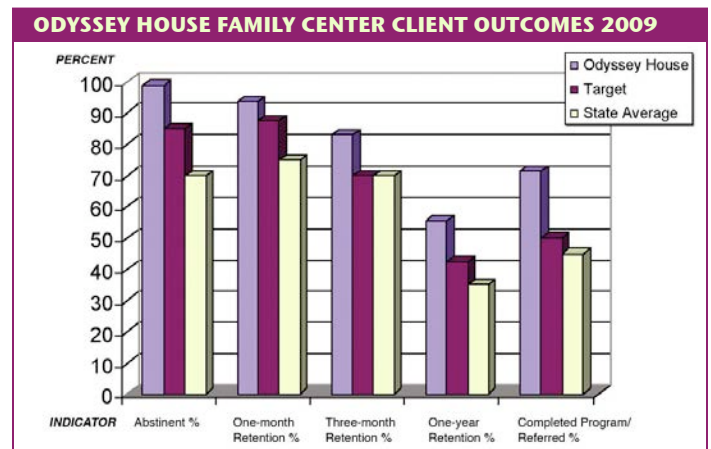
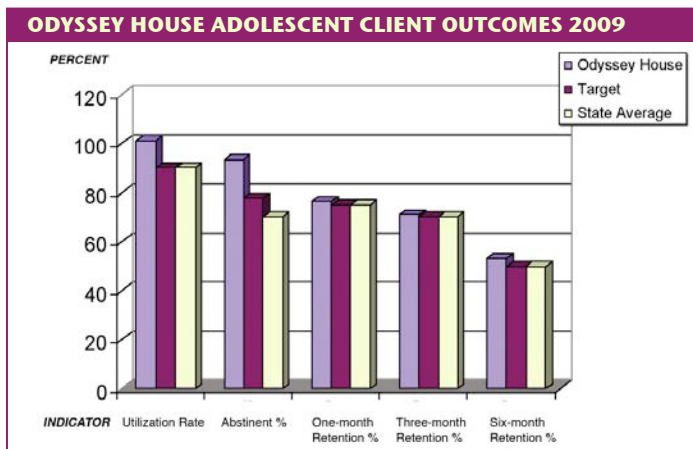
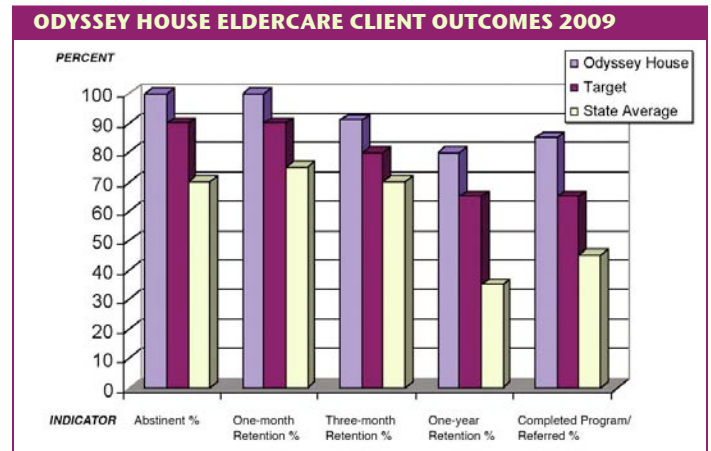
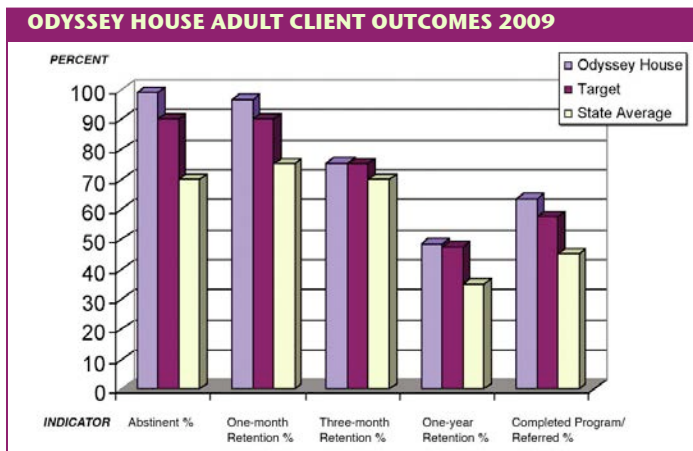
healthy support network. We hold ourselves to this high standard because so much is at stake.

In 2009, Odyssey House treated 2,400 men, women and children in 11 multi-service residential and outpatient sites across New York City. Our credentialed team of professional counselors delivered 22,000 group and individual counseling sessions; Board of Education certified teachers taught 1,000 hours of classes to teens in treatment; and vocational counselors conducted 3,000 hours of job training and placement.

According to research, the most reliable indicator of an individual's long-term recovery from substance abuse is the length of time they engage in treatment and the range of services to which

they have access. For the majority of program participants at Odyssey House, the recommended treatment plan is between 9-18 months, but because addiction is known to be a chronic relapsing condition (akin to other medical problems such as hypertension and diabetes), individuals may require multiple treatment episodes before they can sustain sobriety. At Odyssey House we regularly exceed our own targets and those set by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, our licensing body.

The following is a snapshot of some of the key indicators against which we measure ourselves to ensure the delivery of effective, high quality services for the people we serve.



WITH SOLID OUTCOMES

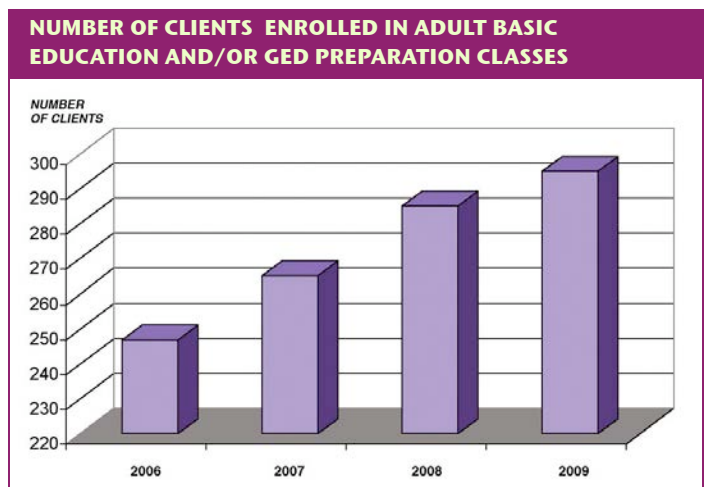
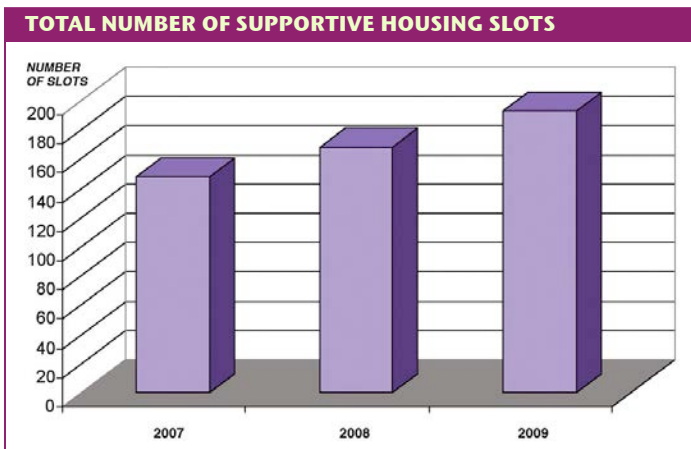
Wrap-Around Services Lead to Success

Preparing people for a lifetime of sobriety requires a service delivery system that provides educational and work skills, housing support and connections to community resources, and a professionally trained and dedicated staff to deliver the services.

Finding safe and affordable housing is one the greatest challenges facing our clients as they prepare to leave treatment. While we have several housing options available to individuals and families (including 70 subsidized Shelter-Plus-Care and scattered site apartments, 24 transitional family re-entry apartments, and 112 one-bedroom studio apartments for people with chronic medical and/or mental health problems), demand outstrips supply. But with the support of our partners from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, we have been able to place 470 people in affordable housing,

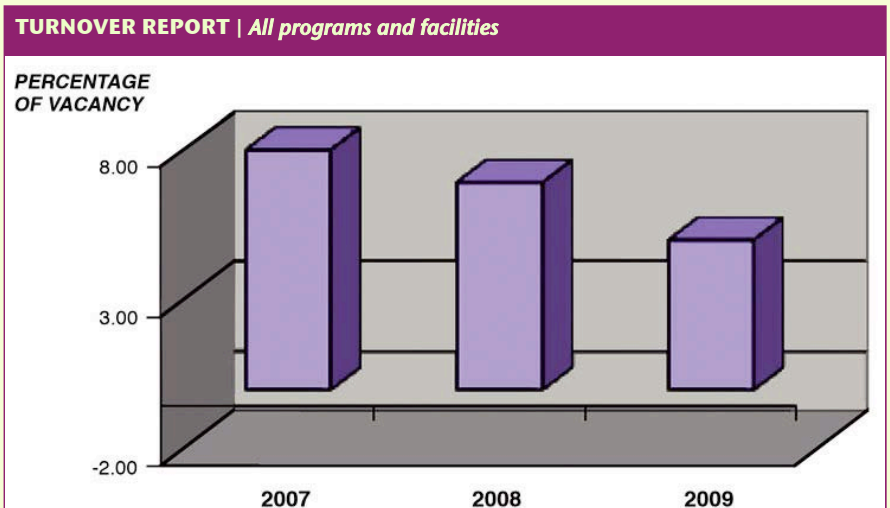
and we are currently working with the New York State Office of Mental Health to construct 110 one-bedroom apartments, in addition to the 50-bed supportive housing building we opened in June (see page 1).

Despite a difficult job market, 33 percent more clients obtained employment in first six months of the year compared with a similar period last year, and since 2006 the number of clients enrolled in GED or basic education classes has increased by approximately 25 percent.



Workforce Development Pays Off

A persistent problem facing treatment organizations across the country is the high job turnover among counseling staff. Over the last several years we have aggressively addressed this problem with improved training opportunities (the more than 350 hours of specialized training we offer each year exceed regulatory requirements), and workplace conditions. A 50 percent reduction in turnover in the last three years among counseling and other clinical and administrative staff shows these efforts are paying off.



Program Helps Moms Create a Nurturing Environment

Continued from page 1:

continuing to address their past traumas, family issues and other concerns in Seeking Safety group and Family Behavioral Therapy.

At a recent open house for referral sources, some of the mothers participating in HMHF spoke about the impact the program has already had on them. Elizabeth spoke about her gratitude. She said, "I am confident that this program will help many other mothers and babies with the same compassion and patience that they have demonstrated with me."

Lindsay, who chose her baby's father to participate in the family therapy component, said, "We are really learning the importance of positive and appropriate communication and the need to create a safe and nurturing environment as a family." Initially reluctant to enroll in the program, she also said she was gaining more confidence in herself and her abilities as a parent.

Meeting the needs of mothers in recovery

Women are typically confronted with multiple barriers when seeking substance

abuse treatment, including a lack of targeted programs for mothers and their children that allow young families to stay together while the mother participates in residential treatment. Odyssey House has been addressing this challenge with innovative programs since 1973 when it created the nation's first residential mother and child treatment program on Wards Island in Upper Manhattan. Since then, this pioneering family substance abuse treatment program has expanded to provide comprehensive services for up to 210 women and children in facilities that include discrete residential living areas, on-site nursery through pre-K childcare, on-site primary healthcare services (including pediatric and dental care), transitional independent living accommodations, educational and vocational programs.

Evidence shows that programs specifically catering to, and providing targeted services, for pregnant women and mothers lead to longer treatment episodes – up to three times as long as programs without dedicated children's services. Studies also found that women who entered treatment with their infants were less depressed and had higher self-esteem than mothers whose children did not accompany them into treatment.



Mothers learn how to create a safe home for their children.

Connect with Odyssey House

Recently, Odyssey House has taken steps to increase our online presence and encourage interaction with our audiences. In February, we launched a new, user-friendly website that features easier navigation, a more intuitive design and vibrant colors. It was built with a grant from the Taproot Foundation, which disburses grants of high-quality, professional consulting services in lieu of financial awards.

In addition, we have integrated several social media tools – including a blog, Facebook page, and Twitter and Flickr accounts – that will allow visitors to engage with Odyssey House in many different ways.

These new tools will enhance our role as a service provider for people with substance abuse and mental health problems; an advocacy organization championing the cause of recovery; and a resource for guidance and support for a range of constituents. Visit www.odysseyhouseinc.org and connect with Odyssey House!



Researching Impact of Exercise on Older Addicts' Recovery

Up to 60 ElderCare clients will be participating in a research study examining the impact of physical exercise – specifically IntenSati – on cognitive function. The study is being conducted by the New York University School of Medicine, the New York University Center for Neural Science and Odyssey House.

IntenSati (a merging of "intention" and "sati," the Buddhist word for "mindfulness") combines simple yet vigorous physical movements taken from yoga, martial arts, kickboxing and dance with spoken positive affirmations (e.g., "I believe I will succeed," "I am strong") that are recited simultaneously with the movements.

The objective of the study is to determine whether – in a population of adult volunteers with a history of longstanding substance use and who are in treatment in a residential therapeutic community setting – a twelve-week IntenSati intervention is associated with improvement in measures of cognitive and psychosocial function.

Women’s Day Celebrates Recovery

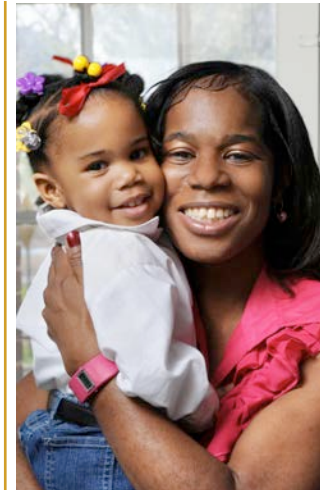
Every year, Odyssey House commemorates Women’s History Month with events that are aimed at boosting self-esteem and encouraging female bonding. It’s an important event here as many of the women in our programs are coping with low self-esteem and a history of domestic violence or sexual abuse. This year, the Odyssey House Haven celebrated the achievements of women in recovery with a special event for staff, residents and their families. The program included musical performances, two inspirational guest speakers – Adrienne Walker and Betty Jean Robinson – and poetry readings from Haven residents.

At the end of the program, the “Woman of the Year” award was presented to Cynthia S., a resident who is “leading by example” and has made significant strides in her life since moving into the Haven, including reconnecting with her family and encouraging her neighbors to maintain their sobriety. Accepting the award, Cynthia said, “I have the greatest support right here in this building to help me through. Thank you so much.”

Women’s History Month traces its beginnings to the first International Women’s Day in 1911. The idea was first put forward at the turn of the 20th century amid rapid world industrialization and economic expansion that lead to protests over working conditions. In the US, International Women’s Day came to commemorate the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. In 1981, responding to the growing popularity of the event, Congress passed a resolution recognizing Women’s History Week and in 1987, Congress expanded the focus to an entire month.



“Woman of the Year” Cynthia S. surrounded by Haven staff.



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.

Channel THIRTEEN Honors Residents at GED Graduation

Eight Odyssey House residents participated in THIRTEEN’s annual GED graduation ceremony on June 22nd. More than 120 graduates from THIRTEEN’s GED adult education program were honored at the ceremony, which was held at the Scholastic Auditorium.



Speakers included Dr. Ellen Bergman, superintendent of Mt. Pleasant Blythedale Schools; NYC Councilmember Robert Jackson; Jann Coles from the NYC Department of Education; and Paul Kim from the Mayor’s Office of Adult Education.

THIRTEEN is a flagship station of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) for New York City offering unique cultural and educational programming, including “GED Connection.”



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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