

ODYSSEY HOUSE

news

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Saving lives, rebuilding families, restoring communities

Fall 2006

And the winner is ...



CBS2 News weekend anchor Kirstin Cole with Helen Marcucci, top female runner in the Odyssey House Fun Run.

See story and photos, pages 4 & 5

New Housing Initiative Helps Reduce Risk of Relapse

\$200,000 SAMHSA grant targets individuals coping with homelessness, chemical dependency, and mental illness

Odyssey House has been awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide housing placement assistance for adults coping with homelessness, chemical dependency, and mental illness.

The federally-funded grant will allow Odyssey House to hire a housing specialist to work exclusively with mentally ill residents in treatment for substance abuse problems at Odyssey House. Known as co-occurring disorders, these difficult-to-treat problems often lead to overall poorer functioning and increased risk of relapse, making it harder for individuals to both obtain and maintain housing. The housing specialist will help men and women

diagnosed with mental health problems manage their transition from treatment into permanent housing, and thereby reduce the vicious cycle of relapse and homelessness.

The addition of housing placement assistance for this vulnerable treatment population is part of the Odyssey House continuum of care, an intensive program of services which includes: substance abuse treatment; mental health services; medical care; vocational and educational services; outpatient services; and employment assistance.

Dr. Peter Provet, President of Odyssey House, underscored the importance of housing services in reducing the costly societal impact of substance abuse and mental illness.

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INSIDE OUT: Art Exhibit Celebrates Identity

INSIDE OUT is the third art exhibit by members of the Odyssey House Art Project — individuals in treatment coping with mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness. The exhibit features a series of large canvas paintings adapted from hand drawn portraits of residents in treatment.

Merlin Cunningham, a resident in treatment at Odyssey House Harbor, painted the exhibit's feature piece — a self portrait. He is an avid participant in the Odyssey House expressive arts program.

"I really liked being part of the show and having my work displayed. People complimented my paintings and that was a good feeling," Mr. Cunningham said. "I encourage new clients to join the Odyssey House Art Project because

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The INSIDE OUT exhibit is on display at the Odyssey House Haven Gallery, 239 E. 121st, in East Harlem.

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ODYSSEY HOUSE

Getting the Word Out About Treatment and Prevention

Agency experts speak out and win awards

As advocates for treatment and recovery programs, experts from Odyssey House are often called upon to speak about the challenges people with substance abuse problems face when they seek comprehensive services.

At an international conference earlier this fall, Odyssey House President, Dr. Peter Provet, gave a plenary address to treatment leaders from more than 50 countries gathered in New York City to share information on the latest treatment innovations.

Looking to the future of substance abuse treatment, Dr. Provet spoke to

members of the 2006 World Federation of Therapeutic Communities about the increasingly complex ways today's treatment agencies help men and women in recovery cement their new found sobriety.

"With the support of educational and job training services, housing placement, and medical care," Dr. Provet said, "treatment agencies are doing even more to help fill the psychic and behavioral void which the cessation of drug use and its related lifestyle has by definition created."

Monitoring Drug Trends

Treatment and prevention issues were also at the forefront of a national forum convened by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy to address the alarming increase in the number of drug-related deaths linked to abuse of Fentanyl, a powerful synthetic narcotic used as a pain management tool during surgery.

Susan Plaza, director of Odyssey House's residential programs, shared the floor with national drug enforcement officials, emergency medical personnel, and community leaders at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School.

According to John Walters, director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, there have been more than

500 confirmed deaths due to Fentanyl overdose. While few such deaths have occurred in New York City, Ms. Plaza urged treatment providers to be alert to this lethal drug which is often used with, or in place of, heroin.

Recognizing Excellence

Helping people overcome drug abuse and develop healthy, productive lives requires dedication and determination — a trait shared by all substance abuse counselors.

Odyssey House Chief Operating Officer, John Tavalacci, was recently honored for his commitment to helping others by Empire State College, New York. Mr.



John Tavalacci, award-winning advocate

Tavalacci was named Distinguished Graduate for 2006 for his contributions as a social work advocate, innovative administrator, and substance abuse educator.



Susan Plaza and Director Walters join forces to raise awareness of a deadly new drug.



"Welcome to Our New Home"

Connie Pacheco, director of the Family Re-Entry program, poses with Elizabeth Tingle and her two children in front of the program's new site. Families in the program have moved into brand new two and three-bedroom apartments in the Hunt's Point area of the Bronx. The Family Re-Entry program provides temporary off-site housing with intensive substance abuse education and counseling for families in the final phase of treatment.

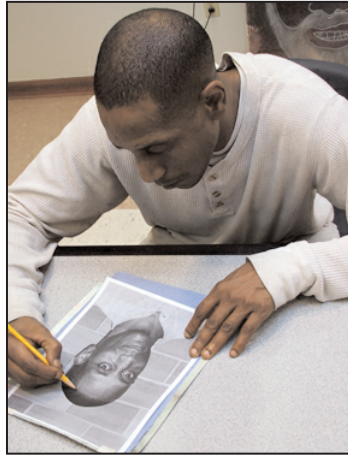
"This transition helps families manage their new way of life and successfully reintegrate into society," Ms. Pacheco said.

Art Program Encourages Creativity and Self-Awareness

Continued from page 1

it will give them a positive feeling.”

Odyssey House has an active and vibrant expressive arts program. Creating art helps residents find new ways to access feelings and a new medium to express these feelings. Many residents, who were socially and culturally isolated by their addiction and mental illness, are encouraged to become engaged in the creative process.



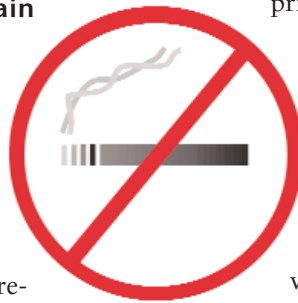
The photographs above document the creative process behind Merlin Cunningham's self portrait.

Funding for Smoke-Free Program Supports a Healthy Recovery

The New York State Department of Health has awarded Odyssey House a \$450,000 grant to help substance abusers in recovery reduce or abstain from smoking.

The Odyssey House Case Management Smoking Cessation program is a step-by-step intervention that addresses the physical, psychological, and social aspects of tobacco addiction through individual and group counseling, nicotine replacement therapy, and education.

Most substance abusers suffer from multiple correlates of addiction such as poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and time in prison — all conditions that can foster a high smoking rate and reduce the likelihood of seeking help or paying



for smoking cessation therapy. Mainstream public health measures such as smoking bans and restrictions, increasing the unit price for tobacco, and anti-smoking prevention campaigns are less relevant for this population which is typically outside the usual delivery systems for smoking cessation interventions.

“While individuals are in treatment at Odyssey House we have an opportunity to reach a population that current smoking cessation interventions have had very little impact on,” said Frank Dominelli, vice president and director of health care. “With the support of the New York State Department of Health we can develop programs that will be successful in reaching these groups and saving lives.”

Housing Assistance Helps Address Chronic Homelessness

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“Housing assistance for a mentally ill substance abuser is about more than keeping a roof over someone's head — it's also about giving a fragile person a chance at living an independent, dignified life. These extra resources go a long way in preventing individuals who have achieved a sustainable level of sobriety from losing the gains they made in treatment and ending up on the streets, in city shelters, or the criminal justice system,” he said.

Teaching Real-Life Skills

Before mentally ill homeless residents leave treatment they will now participate in a Wellness Self Management Techniques Workshop. This series of hands-on sessions includes individual coaching in such real-life skills as budgeting, making

rent payments on time, and grocery shopping. Teaching residents how to manage everyday tasks is a key component of the new initiative — preparing individuals with co-occurring disorders for the next step in independent living, finding and maintaining their own home.

Once a resident completes the workshop and demonstrates an ability to live independently, the housing specialist begins work on housing placement. This process involves helping residents find affordable apartments, accompanying them on interviews, and negotiating rental agreements. It also includes a six-month follow-up visit.

This grant supplements the federally-funded Pathways to Housing Initiative, an Odyssey House housing assistance service

that extends the agency's outreach into the shelter system, enrolls homeless persons with substance abuse problems

“Housing assistance for a mentally ill substance abuser is about more than keeping a roof over someone's head — it's also about giving a fragile person a chance at living an independent, dignified life.”

into residential or outpatient substance abuse treatment, and provides assistance with housing placement.

CELEBRATING NATION

In support of National Recovery Month, Odyssey House hosted its inaugural *Run for Your Life 5K Fun Run — 2 Mile Walk*. This family-friendly event exemplified Odyssey House's 40 years of strength in community. Recovery Month is an important time for Odyssey House clients, staff, and supporters. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the challenges of ongoing sobriety and celebrate the achievement of recovery. Every year Odyssey House marks the occasion with a variety of reunions, special events, workshops, guest speakers, recreational activities, and outings.

Recovery Race is a Runaway Success



Family-friendly day got underway with the Kids Run 100-meter dash.

“Taking part in *Run for Your Life* is a great way to support National Recovery Month. Being in recovery can be hard, this event shows it can also be fun.” — Kirstin Cole, Weekend Anchor, CBS2 News.

As many as 1000 people gathered at Icahn Stadium on September 23, 2006 to celebrate National Recovery Month. The race was hosted by the Odyssey Foundation and included participants from treatment programs across New

York City as well as families and supporters of people in recovery.

The family-focused event included children's 100 meter races, an adult 5K race, and an all-ages 2-mile walk. More than 500 people ran or walked the course which started at the new stadium, looped around Randall's Island City Park along the banks of the East River, and finished in front of cheering crowds back at the stadium. The event raised \$57,000. All proceeds benefit men, women, and children in treatment at Odyssey House.

Fitness Fits With Treatment

As well as showing support for people in recovery from drug and alcohol problems, the event highlighted the importance of regular exercise as part of a sober lifestyle. While the health benefits of exercise, from weight control to improved cardiovascular function are well known, many treatment experts also see a link between positive feelings and physical fitness for individuals learning to live drug and

alcohol free lives. This approach is endorsed by the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) in its guidelines for treatment agencies.

At Odyssey House, program participants are encouraged to take part in physical fitness programs as soon as they are given the all-clear by the medical team. Each treatment site offers access to fitness equipment and residents can enroll in a range of exercise programs from low-impact running and walking, to yoga and pilates classes, weight training, basketball, and competitive running programs.

Odyssey House Chief Operating Officer, John Tavalacci, spearheaded the



Having a great time. Participants in 2-mile walk share a joke at the starting line.

Odyssey House wishes to thank our generous sponsors



AL RECOVERY MONTH



Participants in the 5K Run approach the finish line. Peer and community support played a large role in the day's events.

development of regular fitness sessions into the treatment regimen. A marathon runner himself, Mr. Tavolacci is a firm believer in the psychological benefits of exercise and counsels residents — many of whom are novice exercisers — on how to start and maintain a physical fitness program.

“Treatment” he said, “is a time to learn a new way of life. Everyday we challenge residents to conquer negative behaviors that damaged their lives. I see exercise as another tool we can use to expose residents to new activities and help them see that being sober offers a richer, more

fulfilling life — and that they have control over their own bodies.”

Partnership Pays Off

Mr. Tavolacci says he emphasizes running because it is an accessible form of exercise that people can enjoy at their own speed and in their own time. He also encourages residents to join sports club such as the Achilles Track Club of New York which welcome people with disabilities and offer low-cost or free membership.

“The volunteers from Achilles Track Club are phenomenal,” Mr. Tavolacci said. “They are positive people who are committed to overcoming obstacles. We couldn’t have a better fitness partner.”

Odyssey House is also fortunate to have the support of a large number of individual, government and corporate partners whose commitment to recovery makes a real difference to hundreds of New York families.



Over a thousand Odyssey House friends, supporters, and other NYC-based treatment agencies came out to run or walk in support of National Recovery Month.



Saying it with flowers. Dr. Peter Provet thanks Kirsten Cole and the CBS2 weekend news team for raising awareness of recovery month with special live coverage of race-day events.





*Make it a
happy holiday!
Join “Friends of
Odyssey House” and
support families in
treatment this
Holiday Season.*

*Donate online at
www.odysseyhouseinc.org*

Families Show Support for Their Seniors

For many people in recovery, family gatherings can be particularly challenging. Family members do not always understand the lifestyle changes required of a loved one in recovery, and the newly sober individual can sometimes find it difficult to communicate their needs.

Family Day Fun

To foster this process and help families develop healthy new relationships, residents are encouraged to reach out to their loved ones and invite them to celebrations at the treatment center. More than 150 people participated in one such event at the Odyssey House ElderCare Program — a residential and outpatient service for men and women age 55 and older. While several ElderCare residents entertained the crowd with poems and songs they wrote in treatment, families had an opportunity to see their spouse, parent or grandparent in a healthy environment and on his or her way to recovery.

“Involving families in the treatment process is a win-win for everyone” James Waldron,



ElderCare resident Annie Yates with her daughter and granddaughter. Family involvement plays a critical role in helping clients embrace and maintain their recovery.

deputy director of the ElderCare program, said. “Residents put a lot of work into re-establishing themselves as productive members of society. If they can make it work with their family, they stand a good chance of succeeding in other areas of their life.”

“We’ll Meet Again”: Grads Moving On Choose to Stay in Touch

Program graduates from Odyssey House Camp LaGuardia gathered at the Odyssey House Bronx Outpatient program to celebrate their common journey in recovery during National Recovery Month.

Odyssey House Camp LaGuardia is an outpatient substance abuse treatment program for 150 homeless men referred to treatment from New York City’s 1000-bed Camp LaGuardia men’s shelter in Orange County, NY.

With the assistance of housing specialists, all of the program graduates at the alumni event moved into supportive housing upon completion of the treatment program.

Keeping Hope Alive

Jack Bennett, program administrator of Odyssey House Camp LaGuardia, offered inspiration and hope in his address to the alumni.

“All of Odyssey House Camp LaGuardia program graduates are pioneers,” he said. “I have to express my appreciation for the obsta-



Alumni association members get together to show support and renew their commitment to recovery.

cles this group has overcome. I hope our current Camp LaGuardia clients receive the message of hope that these alumni offer.”

Detlef Von Hahn, director of Odyssey House Outpatient and Housing Services, congratulated the alumni on their accomplishments and he encouraged them to take the initiative in shaping the alumni association and helping it grow.

The group parted at the end of this first gathering with a promise to stay in recovery and to meet again soon.

Volunteers Help Reach Teens with Art and Exercise

The pilates students file into the room, roll out their mats and patiently await instruction from their teacher, but this isn't your typical pilates class. The students are urban youth in treatment at the Odyssey House Leadership Center.

Volunteer instructor Nicole Hefner has been teaching pilates for five years, but this is by far her most eclectic group.

"I am surprised and delighted by how pilates speaks to these young men," Ms. Hefner said.

The teens at the Leadership Center participate in a variety of expressive arts activities. Dedicated volunteers, like Ms. Hefner, offer workshops in yoga, silk screening, and sculpture. Future workshops include photography, painting, and hip hop dance classes.

Colette Samman, deputy director of the Leadership Center, also organizes activities such as poetry slams, planting an herbal garden, and nurturing caterpillars/butterflies through the metamorphosis process.

"Tapping into their diverse interests and talents really gets through to this group. It helps them open up and embrace the treatment program," Ms. Samman said. "We parallel all of our activities to the treatment process and develop seminars and lesson plans related to each project. During the butterfly project, the teens learned about peer support and taking care of one another."

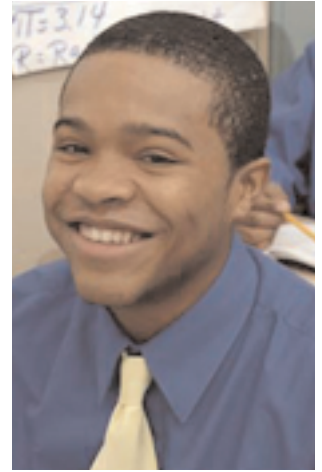
Ms. Samman hopes to secure funding that will allow her to institutionalize expressive arts in the teen treatment program.



(Above) Volunteer Nicole Hefner leads pilates classes twice a month at the Odyssey House Teen Leadership Center. (Below) Teens in treatment at Odyssey House participate in a variety of expressive arts, including mask making.

Terry Johnson, an eighteen-year old in treatment at the Leadership Center, didn't know what pilates was before he started taking classes in the program and now he doesn't miss a class.

"I can't wait until we start the hip hop dance classes," he said.



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.

McGraw-Hill Supports Odyssey House Educational Programs

The McGraw-Hill Companies donated 3,200 books to Odyssey House programs.

Textbooks for adolescents in treatment at the Odyssey House Teen Leadership Center will be used in the on-site Board of Education high school classes. A gift of early reading books for children in the Odyssey House

Family Center programs will be used in the on-site preschool classes and in the children's library. These generous donations will add tremendous value to the quality of academic instruction at the Teen Leadership Center and help the children in our programs develop a love of books and reading.

The McGraw-Hill Companies also donated professional and higher education books that will be used by counselors and residents in our educational classes and vocational training programs. This gift will improve the quality of Odyssey House's adult education classes and vocational training programs.

Give to the "Friends of Odyssey House" campaign online at

www.odysseyhouseinc.org or contact us at:

Odyssey Foundation, 95 Pine Street, New York, NY. Tel: 212-361-1609.



95 Pine Street
 New York, NY 10005
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